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28th Dec 2018 | The Wine Advocate | 240 (Dec '18)

The third part of my annual Austria report assembles fine wines (that are exported) from two less well-known regions: the Weinviertel (13,858 hectares of vines), which is located north of Vienna, and the Thermenregion (42 communities with a total of 2,181 hectares), which lies south of the capital and is proud of a wine history that dates back to at least the 11th century. The region, whose modern name hints at the thermal springs between Baden and Bad Vöslau, gives birth to some of Austria's finest red wines, namely Pinot Noirs and Sankt Laurents but also some stunning Chardonnays and Pinot Blancs.

The Thermenregion is also the world's last and most unique region that cultivates two ancient white grape varieties—Rotgipfler and Zierfandler, also called Spätrot—that were once important in Württemberg in Germany, as well as in parts of Alsace in France, and which have become the signature varieties of the region. Both varieties once made up for the famous Gumpoldskirchner and deliver not just super aromatic dry whites but also terrific off-dry, sweet and even noble sweet wines that can be aged for decades.

Located on a geological fault line between the Northern Limestone Alps and the Vienna Basin and protected from western and north/northwestern winds and rainfalls by the Vienna Woods, the Thermenregion is a relatively warm cool-climate region with 1,800 hours of sunshine per year, 615 millimeters of average annual precipitation and an average yearly temperature of 9.9 degrees Celsius (49.8 degrees Fahrenheit). The remarkable contrast between day and night temperatures that is characteristic for the Thermenregion—and the wine regions along the Danube River—supports the long ripening of the fruit as well as its refreshing character.

The Vienna Basin was flooded by the Paratethys 19 million years ago, which resulted in soils that have an exceptionally high lime content. The Basin drained six million years ago, leaving deposits of marl, gravel and clayey sand. In the northern part close to Vienna, more white grape varieties are cultivated on clayey soils with a high shell limestone content, in villages such as Pfaffstätten, Gumpoldskirchen and Traiskirchen. The reds dominate the south around the village of Tattendorf, where the soils are built on glacial limestone gravel. This gives exceptional St. Laurents, a natural Pinot seedling of which 147 hectares (or 6.7% overall) are planted. It's an elegant and refined red wine with dark fruit flavors, remarkably fine tannins, good freshness and, if not chaptalized, a moderate body.



Although it ripens one to two weeks earlier here, there are 110 hectares planted (or 5% overall) to Pinot Noir, which has found a second home in the Thermenregion thanks to the Cistercian monks about 900 years ago. Rotgipfler (113 hectares or 5.2%) is a natural cross between Savagnin (Traminer) and Roter Veltliner that has always been used as a blending partner—i.e., with Zierfandler and Neuburger—but gives charmingly rich single-variety wines with rather delicate acidity and lots of fruit. Zierfandler (72 hectares or 3.3%) needs top, south-facing sites with shallow, calcareous soils and ripens 10 to 14 days later than Rotgipfler. The wines have zesty acidity and a clear mineral structure and start to shine years after the harvest. The sweet wines can be exceptional.

The wines from the vast Weinviertel DAC region are very diverse compared to the wines from the Thermenregion. Although you can find excellent wines from the Pinot family here as well, the region is predominantly planted with Grüner Veltliner (6,700 hectares) and is home to refreshing, very stimulating and charming white wines that are always excellent with food.

All of the wines for this report were tasted on different occasions between June and November 2018.



Austria: Part 3 – Highlights from the Thermenregion & Weinviertel

<input type="checkbox"/>	Vintage	Wine Name	Maturity	Color	Rating	Price
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Harald Zierer Zierfandler Rotgipfler Exklusiv	Early	Y	93 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Stadlmann Weisser Burgunder Ried Pfaffstättner Höfen	Young	Y	93 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Alphart Chardonnay Privat	Early	Y	93 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Alphart Chardonnay Riede Teigelsteiner	Early	Y	93 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2009	Johanneshof Reinisch Satzing Rotgipfler TBA	Early	Y	93 RP	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/>	2006	Karl Alphart Rotgipfler Rodauner Pur	Young	Y	93 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2004	Weingut Josef & Jana Piriwe Spätrot – Rotgipfler Trockenbeerenauslese	—	Y	93 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Stadlmann Zierfandler Ried Traiskirchner Mandel-Höh	Young	Y	92+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johanneshof Reinisch Pinot Noir Holzspur	Young	Y	92+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johanneshof Reinisch Pinot Noir Kästenbaum	Young	Y	92+ RP	\$160
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johanneshof Reinisch St Laurent Holzspur	Early	Y	92+ RP	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/>	2013	Johanneshof Reinisch St Laurent Holzspur	Young	Y	92+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Harald Zierer Rotgipfler Schatzberg Tradition	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johannes Gebeshuber "ried laim. rotgipfler"	Early	Y	92 RP	\$73
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johanneshof Reinisch Pinot Noir Holzspur	Young	Y	92 RP	\$80
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Alphart Rotgipfler Riede Rodauner	Early	Y	92 RP	NA



<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Alphart Rotgipfler Top Selection Riede Rodauner	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Biegler Rotgipfler Reserve	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Rotgipfler Ried Kreuzweingarten	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Zierfandler	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2013	Weingut Biegler Rotgipfler Trockenbeerenauslese	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2010	Weingut Alphart Rotgipfler Rodauner Top Selektion	Early	Y	92 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Stadlmann Rotgipfler Ried Pfaffstättner Tagelsteiner	Young	Y	91+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johanneshof Reinisch Zierfandler Spiegel	Young	Y	91+ RP	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Weingut Biegler Rotgipfler Ried Brindlbach	Early	Y	91 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Biegler Rotgipfler Spätlese	Young	Y	91 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johanneshof Reinisch Rotgipfler Satzing	Young	Y	90+ RP	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johanneshof Reinisch Zierfandler Spiegel	Early	Y	90+ RP	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Stadlmann Zierfandler Ried Traiskirchner Igel	Young	Y	90+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johanneshof Reinisch St Laurent Frauenfeld	Young	Y	90+ RP	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Johanneshof Reinisch Rotgipfler	Young	Y	90 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Weingut Biegler Zierfandler Ried Badener Weg	Early	Y	90 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johannes Gebeshuber "ried modler. zierfandler"	Early	Y	90 RP	\$73



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<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johanneshof Reinisch Pinot Noir Grillenhügel	Early	Y	90 RP	\$40
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Leo Aumann Rotgipfler Ried Badener Wiege	Early	Y	90 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Stadlmann Blauer Burgunder Rosenberg	Early	Y	90 RP	\$50
<input type="checkbox"/>	2003	Harald Zierer Rotgipfler Grande Reserve	Mature	Y	90 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Harald Zierer Zierfandler Schatzberg	Early	Y	89 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johannes Gebeshuber "vom muschelkalk. zierfandler."	Early	Y	89 RP	\$35
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Rotgipfler	Early	Y	89 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Weingut Schneider Pinot Noir Reserve	—	Y	89 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Weingut Christian Fischer Rotgipfler Premium	Young	Y	88+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Weingut Josef & Jana Piriwe Rotgipfler Selektion	Young	Y	88+ RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2013	Weingut Schneider Sankt Laurent Reserve	Young	Y	88+ RP	\$21 - 23 WineSearcher
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johanneshof Reinisch Pinot Noir	Early	Y	88 RP	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Johanneshof Reinisch St Laurent	Early	Y	88 RP	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Gregor und Eva Schup Pinot Noir Guntramsdorfer Eichkogel	Early	Y	88 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2014	Weingut Christian Fischer Ried Gradenthal Premium Edition	Early	Y	88 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2014	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Pinot Noir Graf Weingartl	Early	Y	88 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Schneider Rotgipfler Pfaffenstättner Ried Taglsteiner	Early	Y	87+ RP	NA



<input type="checkbox"/>	Vintage	Wine Name	Maturity	Color	Rating	Price
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Johannes Gebeshuber Gemischter Satz "querfeldein. in weiss."	Early	Y	87 RP	\$20
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Krug (Gumpoldskirchen) Pinot Gris	Early	Y	87 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2017	Krug (Gumpoldskirchen) Rotgipfler Die Vollendung	Early	Y	87 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Leo Aumann Zweigelt Ried Oberkirchen Gainfarn	Early	Y	87 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Schlumberger Wein- und Sektkellerei Cabernet Merlot Privatkeller	Early	Y	87 RP	\$21
<input type="checkbox"/>	2014	Weingut Josef & Jana Piriwe Pinot Noir [Pi] Not Noir	Early	Y	87 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johannes Gebeshuber "lage viereck. pinot noir."	Early	Y	86 RP	\$73
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Stift Klosterneuburg St Laurent Grosse Reserve	Young	Y	86 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2014	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Pinot Noir Reserve	Early	Y	86 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Pinot Noir Classic	Early	Y	85 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Johannes Gebeshuber "lage glas. sankt laurent"	Early	Y	85 RP	\$73
<input type="checkbox"/>	2015	Weingut Heinrich Hartl Pinot Noir Reserve	Young	Y	85 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2013	Leo Aumann Merlot Hartberg	Early	Y	85 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2012	Weingut Josef & Jana Piriwe Zierfandler Sinfonie	Mature	Y	85 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2016	Freigut Thalern Weingut & Stiftskellerei Heiligenkreuz Rotgipfler Ried Student	Early	Y	84 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2014	Weingut Josef & Jana Piriwe Chardonnay Tradition	Mature	Y	83 RP	NA
<input type="checkbox"/>	2012	Freigut Thalern Weingut & Stiftskellerei Heiligenkreuz Zierfandler-Rotgipfler (Ried) Wiege	Early	Y	83 RP	NA