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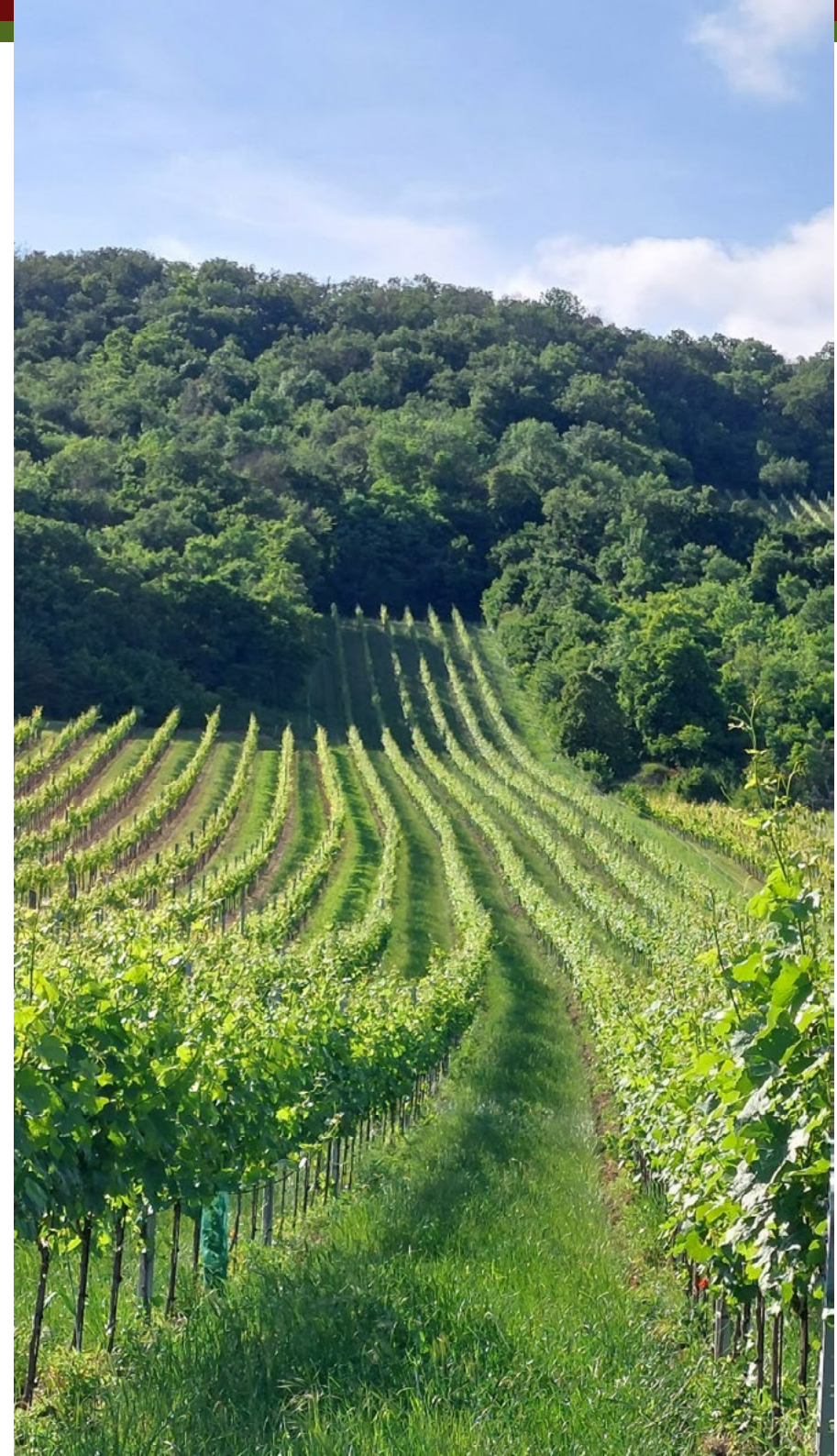
*Mercedes C 200 4MATIC Break
Testdrive*

*Vinalu Special Reports Austria/
The Burgenland (Part II)*

VINALU SPECIAL REPORTS AUSTRIA / BURGENLAND (PART II)

by Liliane Turmes, Helen Latour and Harry Montagnola

Vineyards in...



Austria's special geographic setting is the one of the most important factors for the fine quality of its wines. Although Austria is at the same latitude as Burgundy, it is much more centrally located in Europe, in a zone between the mild and damp Atlantic climate and the continental Pannonian climate, with its wide variations in temperature. Warm, sunny summer and autumn days with northerly, cool nights are beneficial to the development of fresh, aromatic wines with a good structure. In addition to the climate, the diversity of soils is a key element behind the individual characters of the wines.

Internationally successful varieties, such as Riesling, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon ripen in particular regions of the country, allowing the production of fine wines with regional character. In the last years autochthonous varieties as Grüner Veltliner have become more apparent. Furthermore Austria is well known for red wines, made with Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt, and Saint Laurent grapes and for noble sweet wines, especially those made with Welschriesling.

Wine has been a part of Austrian culture since hundreds of years, and today young vintners build up on the traditional knowledge and bring in their innovative ideas of wine-making as well as their experiences, made in wine estates all over the world. Currently Austria is world leader in organic farming and along with this the 'natural' and biodynamic wine scene is especially dynamic; and also our main focus for the press visits.

BURGENLAND

Burgenland, with 13100 hectares, is Austria's most easterly federal state, sharing a long border with Hungary and enclosing the Neusiedler See (Lake Neusiedl), Europe's most westerly steppe lake.

The designation 'Burgenland', with its four specific wine-growing regions, represents a broad spectrum from full bodied red wines to fresh white wines and to noble sweet wines.

The DAC (Districtus Austriae Controllatus) on the labels is part of the Austrian appellation system, introduced in 2003, indicating that the classified wines express the regional typicity of the wine growing region.

THE NEUSIEDLERSEE DAC

The Neusiedlersee wine-growing region to the east of the Neusiedlersee, between the town of Neusiedl and the Hungarian border, covers 6.675 hectares with the hills around Gols and the flat plain around the Seewinkel. Since 2012, the Neusiedlersee DAC stands for fruity red wines, produced with the grape varietal Zweigelt.

THE LEITHABERG DAC

This DAC region on the western bank of the Neusiedlersee is the only one in Austria to permit both white and red wines with regional typicity. The calcareous soils of the 3.097 hectares Leithaberg DAC region produce high quality white wines as well as mineral Blaufränkisch wines.

THE MITTELBURGENLAND DAC

Blaufränkisch is the dominant variety in the Mittelburgenland DAC, with 2104 hectares of vineyards, with its typical aroma of black fruits and spicy notes, developed on the warm, loamy soils, and with a good aging potential.

THE EISENBERG DAC

The smallest wine-growing region in the South of the Burgenland is stretching along the Hungarian border. On 515 hectares, mainly Blaufränkisch grapes are grown, the terroir giving exceptional minerality and freshness to the wines, bottled since 2009 under the labels of Eisenberg DAC or Eisenberg DAC Reserve.

... the Austrian Burgenland state



VISIT AT THE PRIELER WINERY

The Prieler winery is located in Schützen am Gebirge, a charming little village in the Burgenland. Georg Prieler took over the family winery in 2012 from his parents, who developed the existing estate in buying selected vineyards and planting them with grapes from the region. Today the 24 ha certified organic winery consists of many small parcels in different climatic microzones, allowing an optimal production of Pinot Blanc and Blaufränkisch.

Tasting with Georg Prieler





The selection for the tasting



THE MOST IMPORTANT IN THE WINE IS THE FINESSE

With regard to the tradition and with bringing in his own experiences and his knowledge, Prieler's idea is making precise, well balanced wines with finesse.

Georg Prieler likes rosé wines for calibration and so we start the tasting with the Rosé vom Stein 2023, 100% Blaufränkisch, 6 months on the lees, 13%

In the glass: brilliant pink colour

On the nose: red currant, floral

On the palate: freshness, mineral, with an elegant bitterness, full fruit and long in the aftertaste

Pinot Blanc Schützen, Ried Seeberg 2023 , 100% Pinot Blanc, without barrel influence, from young 3-10 year old vines, 13,50 %

In the glass: yellow, greenish colour

On the nose: nuts & almonds, floral

On the palate: ripe pears, herbs, spices, with a light saltiness at the end

Pinot Blanc Leithaberg DAC 2021, 100% Pinot Blanc, from 60-90 year old vines, 2/3 in 500 l big barrel and 1/3 in clay amphora for 18 months, 13%

In the glass: light yellow colour

On the nose: floral

On the palate: filigree, mineral, elegant

Pinot Blanc Leithaberg DAC 2009, 100% Pinot Blanc, 2/3 in 500 l big barrel and 1/3 in clay amphora for 18 months, 13 %

In the glass: straw colour

On the nose: ripe fruits

On the palate: soft tannins, complex, juicy, elegant

Ried Haidatz Pinot Blanc 2021, 100% Pinot Blanc, single vineyard, from 50 year old vines, 18 months in large oak barrels, 13%

In the glass: brilliant yellow colour

On the nose: ripe yellow fruits

On the palate: creamy, fruity, juicy, spicy, white pepper, mineral



An elegant rosé to start



Pinot Blanc Leithaberg DAC 2021

Ried Steinweingarten 2021 Pinot Blanc, 100% Pinot Blanc, single vineyard, 2/3 in barrels and 1/3 in clay amphora, 13%
In the glass: light yellow colour
On the nose: citrus fruits
On the palate: elegant, well balanced, freshness of lemon, mineral

Oggau 2020 Blaufränkisch, 100% Blaufränkisch, young vines from the best vineyards, 30 months in big oak barrels, 13%
In the glass: purple colour
On the nose: spicy, cherries, sauge
On the palate: red fruits, well balanced tannins, well structured,

Ried Marienthal 2021, Blaufränkisch, 100% Blaufränkisch, 3 years in large oak barrels, 13%
In the glass: ruby red
On the nose: red berries, cherries
On the palate: full fruit, strong tannins, red berries, lively acidity

Ried Goldberg 2021 Blaufränkisch, 100% Blaufränkisch, 3 years in large barrels, from the best vineyards in Schützen am Gebirge, 13%
In the glass: ruby red
On the nose: cherries
On the palate: ripe black berries, cherries, herbs, with an aging potential of 20-30 years.

After the tasting we enjoyed a savoury lunch in the Greisslerei, a cosy restaurant in the countryside, serving regional dishes with a modern twist.

Address: Weingut PRIELER, Hauptstrasse 181, 7081 Schützen am Gebirge AUSTRIA



Lunch in the countryside



*with Georg Prieler & the chef
Alain Weissgerber*

VISIT AT THE 'RED WINE' WINERY IBY

We are received for the tasting by the passionate Eva Iby in the renowned Iby family winery in the Mittelburgenland. The history of the estate, with many awarded wines, goes back to 1884. In 2017 Anton and Eva Iby took over in the fifth generation and they put the focus on the Blaufränkisch; their 40 ha organic winery, producing exclusively red wines, is mainly planted with Blaufränkisch. And as Eva explains: we don't only produce Blaufränkisch, we live Blaufränkisch...

Visit at Iby winery



THE TASTING

Frizzante Rosé

In the glass: light salmon colour

On the nose: strawberries

On the palate: red berries, citrus fruits, a pleasant summerwine

Herzenswunsch 2023 , 100%

Blafränkisch, elaborated in white, Blanc de Noir

In the glass: light yellow

On the nose: white flowers

On the palate: powerful, juicy acidity, spicy, citrus fruits

Hochäcker Blafränkisch 2022,

Mittelburgenland DAC, 100% Blafränkisch, from the oldest & best vineyards, 50 year old vines, 13,50%

In the glass: purple red colour

On the nose: red berries

On the palate: full fruit, mineral, complex

Chevalier 2021, Mittelburgenland DAC,

100% Blafränkisch, blend of grapes from the top vineyards Hochäcker, Gfänger & Dürrau, 18-24 months in oak barrels, 50% in used barrels and 50% in new barrels, 13,50%

In the glass: ruby red

On the nose: cherries, red & black currant

On the palate: sour cherries, pleasant acidity, soft tannins

Chevalier 2017, Mittelburgenland DAC,

100% Blafränkisch, 22 months in oak barrels, 50% in new and 50% in used barrels, 13,50%

In the glass: garnet red colour

On the nose: plums, violets, floral

On the palate: plums, red currant, with a long aftertaste



Tasting with the passionate Eva Maria Iby



The Iby Frizzante

Quintus Blaufränkisch 2019, Mittelburgenland DAC, 100% Blaufränkisch, 9 months in barrique, 3 years in big oak barrel
In the glass: dark ruby red
On the nose: black berries,
On the palate: powerful tannins, pleasant acidity, with good structure, good aging potential

Ried Dürrau Blaufränkisch 2018, Mittelburgenland DAC, 100% Blaufränkisch, 60 years old vines from the best vineyards, 9 months in barrique, 4 years in big oak barrel, 13,50%
In the glass: purple red
On the nose: black berries, cherries, herbs
On the palate: red berries, complex, juicy, well balanced tannins, full bodied, long in the aftertaste, good aging potential.

Address: Weingut IBY, Am Blaufränkischweg 3, A-7312 Horitschon / Austria



The Iby Herzenswunsch

The Quintus Blaufränkisch 2019

THE TOP RATED WINERY GESELLMANN

The family winery Albert Gesellmann, located in Deutschkreutz in the Mittelburgenland, near to the Neusiedl lake, with a microclimate with sunny days and cool nights, has a long tradition and is rated as one of the top Austrian wineries. The 50 ha dry farmed estate is certified organic since 2015 and is mainly planted with the red varieties Blaufränkisch, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, partly with 90 year old vines and with the whites Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc in the best vineyards, situated on a high plateau. The grapes are hand harvested and all the wines at the Gesellmann winery are elaborated in oak.



Tasting with Albert Gesellmann





The Chardonnay 2023



The field blend Hochberg 2022



The Pinot Noir Ried Siglos 2021

THE TASTING

CHARDONNAY 2023, 100% Chardonnay, 13%

In the glass: straw yellow colour

On the nose: exotic fruit

On the palate: ripe yellow fruit, pineapple, creamy

HOCHBERG WHITE FIELD BLEND 2022, Field blend: Gemischter Satz: 1/3 Grüner Veltliner, 1/3 Pinot Blanc, 1/3 Chardonnay, from old vines of 1959, 14%

In the glass: brilliant yellow colour

On the nose: ripe pears

On the palate: yellow stone fruit, freshness of citrus fruit, with salty notes in a long finish

CHARDONNAY RIED STEINRIEGEL 2022, 100% Chardonnay, single vineyard, 16 months on the lees, 14%

In the glass: straw colour

On the nose: citrus fruits

On the palate: filigree, juicy acidity, elegant, mineral, a gastronomical wine

PINOT NOIR 2021 RIED SIGLOS, 100% Pinot Noir, 13,50%

In the glass: cherry red

On the nose: red berries, floral

On the palate: almonds, red currant, soft tannins, pleasant acidity, long in the aftertaste

BLAUFRÄNKISCH CREITZER-RESERVE 2021, Mittelburgenland DAC, 18 months in 500 l used barrels, 14,50%

In the glass: purple colour

On the nose: ripe red berries, raspberry, herbs

On the palate: full fruit, spices, white pepper, complex well balanced tannins, good structure

BLAUFRÄNKISCH HOCHBERG 2013, top awarded wine of the winery

In the glass: ruby red

On the nose: plums, black cherries

On the palate: black berries, fine tannins, well balanced, elegant, long in the aftertaste.

Address: Weingut Gesellmann
A-7301 Deutschkreutz Austria



The Blaufränkisch Reserve 2021

The Chardonnay 2022 Ried Steinriegel

VISIT AT THE WINERY K+K KIRNBAUER

The K+K Kirnbauer family winery is located on a high plateau in Deutschkreutz, in the middle of the 'Burgenland', overlooking the vineyards. Since 2015 Markus Kirnbauer, director and winemaker, leads the 40 ha organic winery.

The K+K estate, with an impressive 1000 oak barrel cellar, with promising wine labels like the 'Phantom', with its success story of being the first red wine cuvée in Austria, or the 'Forever', because of its long aging potential, is also known for extravagant wine presentations and for creative wine events. Markus Kirnbauer brings the philosophy of the winery to this point: 'Our wines stand for pleasure, Pannonian joie de vivre and they reflect our identity'.

Terrasse at K+K with a view ...



... into the vineyards

Keeping this in mind, we are looking forward to the pleasure of discovering the K+K wines in a convivial atmosphere in the local restaurant 'Das Blaufränkisch', wellknown for tasteful traditional Austrian dishes, with a touch of the Hungarian Puszta.

The starter, a well seasoned tartar of salmon, with avocado cream and spicy paprika, is served with the juicy fresh 'Blaufränkisch 7301' 2021, from different vineyards, aged 14 months in barrique and with the complex 'Blaufränkisch Gold Reserve 2021', with a bouquet of black berries and hints of dark chocolate, cassis and with a pleasant freshness on the palate.



The K+K barrel cellar



Tasting with Markus Kirnbauer



The Blaufränkisch Gold Reserve 2021



The elegant signature cuvée Phantom 2021, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Blaufränkisch and Syrah, aged in French barrique, with well balanced tannins in a long finish, is perfectly pairing with the crispy fried suckling pig.

With the 'Forever 2019', the top wine of the winery, a cuvée of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, with 36 months in barrique, with tobacco and leather aromas, strong tannins, full bodied and full fruit in the mouth, we enjoy a top dessert selection of 'Palatschinken', a kind of fine thin French crêpes, 'Kaiserschmarrn', sweet cut-up pancakes with raisins, 'Topfenknödel', soft dumplings, coming with cherry compote. A great combination!

Address: K+K Kirnbauer, Rotweinweg 1,
7301 Deutschkreutz Austria



The Phantom 2021



The Forever 2019



..during a dinner served at the restaurant 'Das Blaufränkisch'

Mercedes-Benz C 200 4MATIC All-Terrain Wagon:

Subtle Off-Road Luxury Wagon

by *Sully Prudhomme*

(all pictures: Mercedes-Benz)

Since its market debut in 1982, the success of the Mercedes-Benz C-Class has been unbroken, with more than 10 million vehicles sold during this period. Now, a new offshoot of the current model range is being introduced, the Mercedes C 200 4MATIC All-Terrain Wagon.

LIFESTYLE - THE TESTDRIVE



Although the body style of wagons has somewhat lost popularity due to the massive emergence of SUVs in every vehicle category, the new C-Class All-Terrain proves that many buyers are still interested in a classic wagon with off-road capabilities. All-wheel drive, increased ground clearance, rugged plastic wheel arch cladding, front and rear skid plates, an effective downhill assist, unique design elements, and refined technical highlights make the All-Terrain a reliable companion for nature enthusiasts like anglers and hunters. The wagon, still referred to as the "T-Model" by Mercedes, has already been successfully positioned as an All-Terrain version in the E-Class. This version, with skid plates and an additional 4 cm of ground clearance, is now also making its mark in the current C-Class.

Our test vehicle was equipped with a classic 1.5-liter gasoline engine with 204 hp and 300 Nm of torque, a 48-volt electrical system, and an integrated starter-generator that can provide up to 15 kW of additional power. Alternatively, there's the 220d with 200 hp. The engine comes standard with the proven and further developed 9-speed automatic transmission; all components work well together, making for lively takeoffs at traffic lights that never fail to impress. The stated average fuel consumption is 6.9-7.6 l/100 km, with acceleration times of 7.5 seconds from 0 to 100 km/h, and a top speed of 230 km/h. Two additional driving modes, Off-Road and Off-Road+, help when driving on challenging terrain. However, one should be aware that this vehicle cannot keep up with a traditional SUV in truly rough terrain, primarily due to its limited ground clearance. Due to the raised suspension, the Mercedes C 200 4MATIC All-Terrain is slightly firmer than its wagon counterpart in the "Avantgarde look," but the ride comfort is perfectly fine. As expected from Mercedes, there is a wealth of driver assistance systems on board. These range from active lane-keeping assist and active steering assist to adaptive cruise control with traffic jam assist.

We are already familiar with the spacious and comfortable interior from the standard C-Class wagon, providing plenty of legroom and headroom for all passengers, premium materials, and a digital cockpit that conveys a sense of relaxation. However, the soft-touch controls on the steering wheel take some getting used to. Smartphone integration and wireless phone charging are standard features.

The Mercedes C 200 4MATIC All-Terrain Wagon we tested is priced from €58,149 including taxes. Prices in Luxembourg, as of September 2024. We thank MB Belgium and Merbag Luxembourg for providing the test vehicle.



Impressum

Based on an idea by Romain Batya



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