

AUSTRIA

- Landlocked country situated between Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia and Czech Republic
- Austria is broken up into four major winemaking regions or *weinbaugebiete*: Niederösterreich, Wien (Vienna), Burgenland, and Styria (Steiermark)
- “Antifreeze scandal” of 1985 led to very fast, very committed refocus on high quality
- Most common grapes include Grüner Veltliner, Müller-Thurgau, Welschriesling, Weissburgunder, Riesling, Chardonnay, Blaufränkisch, St. Laurent and Zweigelt
- Wine law designates various levels of quality based generally on source area, yield and must weight (sugar level at harvest); certain designations consider alcohol levels, grape variety and winemaking style
- Overall climate influenced by Pannonian Basin: makes for warm days and cool nights

1) Nigl Sekt Rosé '09 – Kremstal, Austria

- Kremstal is a sub-region or DAC (*Districtus Austriae Controllatus*) north of the Danube River, within larger Niederösterreich region; named for city of Krems
- Soil is mostly soft loess (rich, very fine mixture of sand, clay, silt)
- DAC is a new system based on origin and a corresponding “classic” style of wine
- Technically, this doesn’t officially qualify for Kremstal DAC labeling as it is sparkling — which is not a “legal” style for the DAC — although it is from the Kremstal area
- Sparkling wine made in traditional method: secondary fermentation happens in bottle
- Grapes for this rosé are Zweigelt and Pinot Noir

2) Glatzer Sauvignon Blanc '11 – Carnuntum, Austria

- Carnuntum is another sub-region of Niederösterreich, further east on the Danube and south of Vienna, bordering Slovenia
- Soil is mostly loam and gravel
- Warmer sub-region, particularly known for red wines and richer whites
- Glatzer focuses on higher-density plantings and low yields to derive concentration, and stainless steel fermentation to preserve freshness



3) Rudi Pichler Grüner Veltliner Federspiel '11 – Wachau, Austria

- Wachau is another sub-region of Niederösterreich and arguably its most illustrious
- Ultra-steep slopes overlooking Danube; soil types include loess, sand, granite, gneiss
- Vineyards can get very warm, yet cool night temperatures keep up grapes' acidity
- Wachau has its own classification system based on ripeness of grapes when picked and alcohol levels in the finished wine: Steinfeder is lightest, Federspiel is in the middle, Smaragd is ripest and richest
- Rudi Pichler, Jr., took over estate in 1997 after learning under local icon Josef Jamek; he favors some skin-contact for his whites to increase terroir signature and structure

4) Karl Lagler 1000 Eimerberg Riesling Smaragd '10 – Wachau, Austria

- Riesling and Grüner Veltliner are the two major grapes in the Wachau
- Smaragd has a minimum of 12.5% alcohol by volume
- Wachau is only 12 miles long yet has over 900 named vineyard sites
- 1000 Eimerberg is a terraced vineyard at 1100 feet near village of Spitz
- Lagler family has lived on estate and grown grapes since 1789, but they only began making own wine in late 1970s; now considered one of top producers in region

5) Hofer Zweigelt '11 – Weinviertel, Austria

- Weinviertel is Niederösterreich's largest sub-region
- Considerably north of Danube and away from influence of warm Pannonian Plain makes for fresh, light wines
- Great reds, particularly from local Zweigelt grape, with brambly red fruit notes, lots of black earth components and soft tannins
- Hofer estate practices organic viticulture and bottles this and their basic Grüner Veltliner in 1-liter bottles with screwcaps, designed for early and easy drinking

6) Nittnaus Blaufränkisch '08 – Burgenland, Austria

- Burgenland is the largest of Austria's four main wine regions
- Based around and reaching down from (climate moderated by) Neusiedlersee lake
- Blaufränkisch is the most planted (and likely most exciting) grape in the region, known for medium body, supple texture, spicy red and black fruit notes
- Annita and Hans Nittnaus were founding members of Pannobile: a local group of growers dedicated to quality
- Nittnaus style has remained true to its original ideals: fresh, pure, lighter bodied and avoiding international trends toward over-extraction or new oak

