

Weingut Schloss Gobelsburg

Press dossier

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Schloss Gobelsburg – Winecultural heritage of 1000 years

Gobelsburg's history of settlement goes back beyond 4000 years, which is documented by Celtic ceramics shown in a vitrine of the Gobelsburg cellars.

The castle was first mentioned in a contract dated **1074** in relation to Azzo de Gobatsburich, Earl of Kuenring. The Monastery of Zwettl – also a Kuenringer foundation of **1138** - in the northern parts of lower Austria is today the owner of the property. But till the 12th century the fortress remained in the belonging of the Kuenringer family but changed hands until **1740** to as many as 19 different families on the estate and castle Gobelsburg. The last aristocratic owner - Freiherr Achaz Ehrenreich von Hohenfeld - instigated the alterations of the Renaissance manor house of the 16th century into a handsome Baroque chateau in the first half of the 18th century. On the 17th of September **1740** Ehrenreich sold the property for 40.000 Gulden to the monastery of Zwettl, which had already a Manor estate in Kammern since **1171**. With the purchase important vineyards on the Gobelsburg side (Steinsetz, Haide, Redling) were added to the existing vineyards on Heiligenstein, Gaisberg, Renner and Lamm. When in **1784** the old Manor in Kammern burned down, the two properties were brought together at Schloss Gobelsburg.

In the beginning of the 19th century the cellar capacity is reported to be of 1410 Eimer, which is about 85000 liters of wine, partly brought to the monastery and sold there, partly sold from the castle. The wines were named either after their origin (Nussberger, Zöbinger, Gobelsburger) or for their use (Messwein, Conventwein, etc). Since the middle of the 19th century estate bottling is reported, but the biggest share is sold in small casks.

Until 1930 the wines of the winery in Nussdorf (Vienna) were also brought to Schloss Gobelsburg. Due to the difficult economical situation in the late twenties the property was then sold to the monastery Schotten in Vienna. The Manor, which is very similar in form and appearance to Schloss Gobelsburg, is still existing.

Between world war one and two the castle was also used as a summer camp for apprenticeships. During world war II French soldiers were imprisoned and left the castle 1945 in a devastated state and emptied the vinothek with the reserves back to the last century.

Father Bertrand Baumann – a monk of the monastery, who took over in **1958** – was an extraordinary winemaker. He not only achieved to establish the ‘altar wine’ as an Austrian Classik, he also established the winery as the leading winery of the area. The wines of the vintothek still show the great skill of this period of the winery.

Since February **1996** the estate is managed by *Eva & Michael Moosbrugger*. Michael originates out of a Hotel family in Lech / Arlberg (Hotel Post in Lech), but turned into winemaking after some years of Univerity and Hotel business. In **2006** Michael was awarded with the title ‘**Winemaker of the year**’ by the wine magazine Falstaff. In **2007** followed the ‘**Golden Glass**’ by the Swedish Food & Wine magazine ‘Àlt om mat’ and ‘Alt om vin’ the first time for an Austrian winery.

Primary goal is to preserve, develop and bring the cultural heritage of Schloss Gobelsburg with its prime vineyards on the oldest documented sites of the area into a new generation.

The Castle and its Architecture

The castle, situated next to the church on the Burgberg, forms jointly with the church a fortification. A four-winged building complex with a Renaissance core. Documented in 1178, Schloss Gobelsburg evolved from a castle in the 16th century. It was completely rebuilt in 1725 by Joseph Mungenast.

Exterior Building

The castle presents itself today as a two-storey, four-sided building complex with a massive mansard hipped roof and a high compensatory base rising to the north. The main façade of the south tract is 13-axial with 5-axial protruding façade bays, with interlacing plaster work beneath the window roofing and in the fields following. In the middle-axis is a gabled portal with pilasters on the sides and the Zwettl Monastery coat of arms. A double coat of arms is also to be found in the gable field. The windows of the ground floor are furnished with baroque gratings. In the lenticular courtyard are arcades with groin vaulting on the north and south sides, remains of the building from the 16th century. As a main accent to the courtyard in the north wing, a tri-axial central pavillion rises a half-storey higher, emphasized on the exterior and courtyard side in the upper storey by round-arch windows and oblique oval oculi between gigantic pilasters, respectively, standing volutes. In the raised part one can admire the sundial of 1743 (renovated in 1966). The entrance door is equipped with metal fittings and handles from around the middle of the 18th century. In the drive-through entrance hall, on the north side, a wrought-iron door with metal bands and hand grips is still retained from the 16th century.

Interior

One reaches the upper floor up a triple stairway with a wrought-iron grill from the middle of the 18th century. These grandiose rooms, of which there are six in number, are found in the south tract. In the south-west corner is the chapel with a stuccoed flat ceiling. There is an oval frame on the curved mirror containing the oil painting "The Birth of Christ" from Martin Johann Schmidt, from the middle of the 18th century. It is decorated with a sarcophagus altar, with a picture-frame altarpiece from 1769, with a side pilasters with volute extensions. The altar picture depicts "St. Bernard Before the Cross", also from M. J. Schmidt.

The rooms in the upper storey are almost completely decorated with leaf work and interlacing stucco. The south tract is characterized by grooved flat ceilings with stuccoed or painted scenes from Roman or Greek mythology. A further characteristic of these rooms are the four tiled ovens from the second half of the 18th century. These are glazed in various colors, with partly unglazed, respectively, gilded interlacing decoration with figural additions.

Vineyards and Grape Varieties

In 1996, the Schloss Gobelsburg Winery was accepted as member of the renowned *Verein der Österreichischen Traditionsweingüter* (Association of Austrian Traditional Wineries). This association was the first in Austria to classify vineyard locations in Kamptal and Kremstal. Some of these – usually locations with a long history – produce wines with great potential year after year and stand out from the other conventional vineyards.

As one of the oldest wineries in Austria, Schloss Gobelsburg has some 35 hectares in historical vineyard sites around the castle. Every site has its specialties and particularities with different soil and micro-climatic conditions. From the sun-exposed terraces on Zöbinger Heiligenstein and the Gaisberg mountain to the extensive garden facilities around Gobelsburg castle, the vines are subjected to a wide range of conditions. In accordance with their respective potential, the best possible development conditions are established for every grape variety. At Schloss Gobelsburg, ecological winegrowing is not just simply en vogue at the moment. The monks of the Zwettl Monastery, who had managed the winery themselves until 1995, used organic fertiliser, abstained from employing herbicides, and endeavoured to reduce the use of plant protectants.

The most important grape varieties are Grüner Veltliner and Riesling. Over the centuries, these varieties have proven to be the most suitable for the surrounding soil structure. The Riesling feels at home on the meagre and stony terraces of Heiligenstein and Gaisberg mountain, the Grüner Veltliner thrives on the sandy loess soils of the environs.

Red wine has also enjoyed a very long tradition at Gobelsburg Castle: the abbots of all Cistercian monasteries meet once a year in Burgundy (origin of the religious order). In this way, the monks are continuously in contact with winegrowing in Burgundy. It is therefore no big surprise that all Cistercian monasteries of Europe practicing viticulture also have Pinot Noir. This is how the Blauburgunder found its way to Gobelsburg Castle. The variety is ideal for this region, as the soils are suitable for its cultivation and the climatic conditions are just perfect to develop that elegance and depth in fruit lovers of this variety are always on the look-out for.

Individual Sites

The best sites of the vineyard are bottled in accordance with the individual vineyard sites. The designations "Klassifizierte Lage" (Classified Site) and "Erste Lage" (First Site) are taken from the classification scheme of the Verein Österreichischer Traditionsweingüter:

Zöbinger HEILIGENSTEIN, <i>Erste Lage</i>	Riesling
Kammerner GAISBERG, <i>Erste Lage</i>	Riesling
Kammerner LAMM, <i>Erste Lage</i>	Grüner Veltliner
Kammerner GRUB, <i>Erste Lage</i>	Grüner Veltliner
Kammerner RENNER, <i>Erste Lage</i>	Grüner Veltliner
Gobelsburger STEINSETZ, <i>Erste Lage</i>	Grüner Veltliner

Grape varieties used

Grüner Veltliner	50 %
Riesling	25%
Zweigelt	6%
Blauburgunder	6%
St. Laurent	8%
Merlot	5%

Cellar and Vinification – gearing for the ultimate reduction

The oldest part of the cellar dates back to the castle facilities of the 11th century. Over the centuries, the cellar was continuously expanded.

When Moosbrugger and Bründlmayer took over the winery in 1996, they had a wine cellar that met modern technological requirements.

In times when many large international cellars are attempting to produce uniform wines which cater to the widest range of tastes possible, Moosbrugger is convinced that the future of wineries like Schloss Gobelsburg lies in individuality and character. As a high level of technology is necessary to warrant uniformity, Moosbrugger believes that a maximum of individuality can only be achieved through reduction.

This is why plans do not revolve around the question of what machines the cellar can still add to its pool, but which machines can be done without. Moosbrugger therefore developed the '*Dynamic Cellar Concept*' for Gobelsburg. The key point here is to have flexible cellar operation where – to put it simplistically – wines are no longer pumped from one location to the other, but transported in '*barrels on wheels*' from one section of the cellar to the other.

The containers used to mature wines also help shape the character of these wines. Timber from Manhartsberg (a region north of Langenlois) is used for the large and small oak casks. Of course, this wood has a different character than oak from Allier or America. But it's the regional character that forms the authentic personality of the Schloss Gobelsburg wines, which comes from a symbiosis between the trees that are grown under same climatically conditions then the grapes of the later wines.

This approach is also based on important findings derived from the study of old wine-making techniques, which also resulted in a wine series by the name of 'Tradition'. These wines are made using the traditional method of the 19th century and do not only have old and sound ageing structures, but also pave the way to (almost) forgotten Austrian culture of taste.

The Wines

SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG Brut Reserve

The basis of this sparkling is a cross-section of varieties (Pinot Noir, Riesling, Grüner Veltliner) from throughout the wine estate and its locations. The grapes from Heiligenstein, Gaisberg, Grub and Lamm are harvested at the right moment, laid in small boxes and immediately pressed, whereby only the core of the basic wine is used. After six months of cask storage, it is filled into bottles for the second fermentation. It then rests for two to three years on the yeast, which contributes a creamy texture, until it is turned slightly and shaken by hand, then degorged.

Gobelsburger **STEINSETZ** *Erste Lage* – Grüner Veltliner

Is, together with Ried Renner, the classical full-bodied Grüner Veltliner with mineral flavours and the typical spicy element as well as natural acidity. The vineyard is located on an elevated plain south of the Chateau, its soil is based upon alpine pebbles transported here by the primeval Danube and covered by black and loamy soil, loess and gravel.

Kammerner **RENNER** *Erste Lage* – Grüner Veltliner

A full bodied Grüner Veltliner with great depth and natural acidity. It does provide this spicy element that is beautifully encrusted by wild flower flavours.

The vineyard nestles against the hill Gaisberg, hence shielded from cold and wind. The soil is loam and loess by halves with sand from Waldviertel gneiss in places.

All these Grüner Veltliner have a natural affinity to seafood and shellfish but also to pork, veal, domestic and game birds.

Kammerner **GRUB** *Erste Lage* – Grüner Veltliner

Rieden Lamm & Grub are very concentrated Grüner Veltliner with long body but grace. Connoisseurs will enjoy the powerful and complex Grub together with goose liver and Asian food. Ried Grub is the hollow between Heiligenstein and Gaisberg. There is very deep loess soil

brought into these places after the last glacial epoch. Archaeological excavations found traces of Eolithic settlements and huge quantities of mammoth and reindeer bones. These bones get perforated by deep-rooting vines. Ried Grub is maturing in oak-casks.

Kammerner **LAMM** *Erste Lage* – Grüner Veltliner

At the foot slope of Heiligenstein - where the mountains form into gentle hills - lies the Lamm Vineyard. Here finds Grüner Veltliner the most ideal conditions in which to grow beyond its own greatness. Ideal slope gradients facing south and a soil of Loess, clay and the minerals of Perm (silt, etc) are the base for the thriving of strength, body and grace. The wine is fermented and matured in 27 hl casks of Manhartsberg oak..

TRADITION – Grüner Veltliner

It all began during a vertical tasting at Schloss Gobelsburg in June 1999, when we tasted Grüner Veltliner from our vinothek 30 years back. A journalist asked me then – after a very exciting tasting – how these wines may have tasted in these ancient years, when they were young. This question did not leave me and so I started to try to get more information about the winemaking of these former ages. Father Bertrand helped me a lot – for he was responsible for the winemaking of the estate between 1958 and 1980. So I started the revival of the character of wines and their taste, that had been in our cellars for centuries.

The grapes were pressed in the same way as it was done with the tree presses – soft, long and only with a few crush ups, without sedimentation the wine was fermented without temperature control in a 25 hl oak cask from the Manhartsberg. After fermentation the wine was raked every 3 – 4 months until he was clear and bottled after 18 month.

Riesling **URGESTEIN**

This is our lightest Riesling. The grapes are selected from the vineyards around Langenlois and Gobelsburg. But also grapes from the Heiligenstein and the Gaisberg are used, specially from the younger vines under twenty years.

Kammerner **GAISBERG** *Erste Lage* - Riesling

Rieden Gaisberg & Heiligenstein: Both hills are facing south towards the plain of the joining rivers Kamp and Danube, their vineyards are all terraced, protected by hill-top forests in addition.

The terroir of the Gaisberg is Gfoehl gneiss with vertical mica-schist structures. The soil is rougher and poorer than on the Heiligenstein. The Riesling vines here are trained in Lyre method providing maximum leaf surface on both sides of the vine (Y-shape) resulting in improved micro-climatic conditions, e.g. 1 centigrade higher temperature on the fruit.

Zöbinger **HEILIGENSTEIN** *Erste Lage* - Riesling

Rieden Gaisberg & Heiligenstein: Both hills are facing south towards the plain of the joining rivers Kamp and Danube, their vineyards are all terraced, protected by hill-top forests in addition.

The meaning of Heiligenstein has developed curiously over time from "hell's rock": most likely because of the great summer heat here, to today's "rock of saints": certainly because of the venerable wines originating here.

In geological terms Heiligenstein is also something special: a cone of primeval rock which had pushed through the surrounding area. The top soil consists of weathered crystalline rock, volcanic and desert sands that provides a fine mixture of minerals to the vines and, in addition, accumulates heat till long.

The sun-loaded site and the specific terroir offer the ideal conditions for Schloss Gobelsburgs Riesling and Pinot Noir.

Zöbinger Heiligenstein Riesling is an elegant wine finely chiselled with finesse and great length.

ALTE REBEN - Riesling

Our oldest vineyard is situated on the Gaisberg and was planted shortly after the last war, and now serves as the basis for our Riesling, 'Alte Reben'. The old stocks produce low yields and few berries and represent a genetically material from the oldest times of the winery.

CUVÉE BERTRAND

The Cuvée was first composed on the occasion of the former Abbot Prelate Bertrand Baumann's 80th birthday, and has enjoyed great popularity ever since. The elegance of the Blauburgunder, the fullness of the Merlot, and the suppleness of the St. Laurent all give this Cuvée a very special harmony. Father Bertrand had slowly and with great effort put the castle in order and did tremendous work as a vintner. This wine is to be seen as a homage to his influence and work for Schloss Gobelsburg.

HAIDEGRUND - St. Laurent

St. Laurent belongs to the Pinot family. The name relates to the Saint Laurentius, because the grapes start to ripen on the 10th of August. The early ripening grape brings wines with a little more colour than Pinot Noir and a distinctive bouquet.

In the last years we are concentrating our efforts more and more on this varieties, because it is a very fine match to our soils, especially on the dry soil of the gravel vineyards on the Gobelsburger Haide.

ALTE HAIDE - Pinot noir

Around 1960 Frater Bertrand visited his brothers in Citeaux (Burgundy) and also inspected their vineyards. There it came to his mind, that he could also try to grow this elegant and fruity sort of wine. So he organized several seedlings, planted them in the best vineyard on the Heiligenstein and started as one of the first to cultivate Pinot Noir in Langenlois. Even today this vineyard with its 40 years old vines exists and is being extended separately every year. What is very interesting to us is to find well-situated places with the best climatic conditions and the best conditions of the ground for this sensitive sort of wine.

PRIVATKELLER - Merlot

Merlot is the only exception concerning the Pinot family. Because of the climatic condition required for this sort of wine it is better known in the Bordeaux region. To even out the climatic differences we use the Lyra-training-system. The vineyard was planted in the mid-eighties as one of the first Merlot-vineyards in Austria and now gets into a good age.