WACHAU
TOP 20
GRÜNER VELTLINER
SMARAGD
The Wachau is an Austrian enological zone in central Europe. More precisely, it is located in the subzone of Lower Austria. Since 2000 the Wachau is listed as World Heritage sites. In total, the Wachau is made up of about 1344 hectares of vineyards, including the cities of Melk and Spitz.

One of the determining factors of the landscape, but above all, of the quality of the wines produced here, is the presence of the Danube. The river is not only capable of reflecting the light and the heat in the cold months, but also helps to mitigate the temperatures in the colder season. As well as this aspect of fundamental importance, it is necessary to note that in the Wachau different climatic aspects intersect each other (it is a generally continental climate with fresh winds from the Pannonia). The result is an alternation of warm and dry days with cool nights.

The geology of the area is rather varied, even if the most common structures are loam, kaolin, and gneiss. The terrain is very steep, so much so that often it must be terraced.

The principal varieties cultivated in the Wachau are:

- **Grüner Veltliner**: white berry married with the Traminer and not related to the Roter Veltliner or the Frübroter Veltliner. With reference to all Austrian vineyard soil, the Grüner Veltliner occupies 29% of the total surface. This grape tends to produce a lot; therefore, it must be kept in check, by the vineyard.

- **Riesling**: late white berry that is not related to the Welschriesling. In the Austrian territory, the Riesling does not occupy many hectares, making up 4% of the land. However, in the Wachau, is the
second most important grape in the area. Generally, in the cantina, these two varietals are fermented naturally in large barrels so old that they do not give up anything in terms of aromas, taste, or tannins.

Since the mid-1980s, most of the vintners are members of the regional association, called Vinea Wachau, that used its own classification system, divided into three categories: Steinfeder, Federspiel, and Smaragd.

**Steinfeder:** the name is derived from a type of grass that grows abundantly in the vineyards of the area. This type includes light wines, in which the alcohol grade never exceeds 11.5%.

**Federspiel:** the name comes from the practice of falconry and the hunting of a particular falcon that was very common in centuries past. The wines have an alcohol grade between 11.5 and 12.5%.

**Smaragd:** this category derives its name from a lizard of emerald color that is often encountered in among the vineyards of the area. It regards strong, rich, and complex wines that in many cases manage to age well for decades.
The targets are three: short (5-8 years), medium (10-15 years) and long (more than 15 years), which denote the aging potential of the wine.
Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Harzenleiten 2017
WEINGUT HOFSTÄTTER
The attack is of a great fineness, with notes of litchi and green apple, then it seems to get com-fortable in a lounge with velvet sofas and Persian carpets. The mouth is clean, comforting and very pleasant, and the finish is not excessively long, but mineral and compact until the last drop, so much to lead us into temptation.

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Sophie 2016
ALFRED SCHWAIGER
This generous 2016 grüner of a great compactness seems, just by smelling it, very rich in mineral-ity, with a clearly sapid attack presenting notes of green olive, but then tasting exceptionally wide in the mouth and resonating, in the finish, evocative and ancestrally balsamic echos.

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Kaiserberg 2017
WEINGUT POMASSL
Creamy and persuasive, its nose reveals yellow-pulped fruit and chives. The mouth has more a wide than an incisive minerality. The good alcoholic content on the palate is completely well-defined, ending with comforting freshly-cut grass notes.

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried 1000-Eimerberg 2017
WEINGUT HOFSTÄTTER
This complex nose wine has a remarkable alcoholic content. It presents notes of macadamia nuts and coffee, lime, white-pulped peach, and a very complex and muffled minerality. The mouth is vertical and structured, the finish is definitely iodated, on green-peeled fruit compositions.

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2017
WEINGUT LAHRNSTEIG
About quality and fineness! Amazing and accurate aromatic profile that opens on delicate green apple and nectarine impressions, then moving forward to the palate with determination and with a soft, very refreshing mouthful, which is never excessive.

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Süssenberg 2016
ANDREAS EDER
This 2016 grüner shows up an excellent nose of a great complexity. Its mouth is compact, struc-tured, juicy and plump, almost edible, with a light acidity and a likewise contrapuntal finish, which presents balsamic notes of softwoods resin and a very wide and aromatic palate.
The targets are three: short (5-8 years), medium (10-15 years) and long (more than 15 years), which denote the aging potential of the wine.

**Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Best Of 2017**
WEINGUT SCHMELZ
From a great historical winery, this wine presents a sapid attack with hints of fennel, star anise and also a pleasant acidity. It is held by citrus and kiwi notes. It is creamy, soft and light in the mouth, with a great elegance. The finish is satisfying and persistent.

**Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Zwerithaler 2017**
WEINGUT PRAGER
Its resolved nose reveals pink grapefruit and yellow-pulped fruit, peach, mango and pineapple aromas. The powerful structure on the palate is complex, and it is never excessive. This wine has a strong minerality and a very long finish, which plays with the same fruity flavors.

**Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Meine Welt 2017**
GEORG FRISCHENGRUBER
This one, fermented in oak barrels, represents a good instance in Austria of the potential of this grape. Its nose reveals pippin and freshly-cut grass, it has both acidity and velvet fatness in the mouth. It tastes very juicy, compact and complex. In the finish, it plays with tones of white-pulped peach.

**Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Kreuzberg 2017**
JOSEF FISCHER
This one presents ripe kiwi and ginger notes with an intense nose which reveals herbaceous un-dertones. It is full, very juicy and drinkable in the mouth, with acacia honey, mango and pineapple aromas. He finish is quite moderate and with white-pulped fruit notes.

**Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Frauenweingarten 2017**
JOSEF FISCHER
This wine is characterized by intensity and great minerality. Its nose has not only a litchi attack but also, just below the surface, toasted and smoked notes. It is very decisive, clear-cut, intense and moderate in the mouth. It has a compact and equally full and round finish.
The targets are three: short (5-8 years), medium (10-15 years) and long (more than 15 years), which denote the aging potential of the wine.

**Short (5-8 years)**

92-

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Hoch Wachau 2017
WEINGUT PIEWALD

With an iron fist in a velvet glove, this powerful grüner shows up notes of lemon and apricot, with a very intense nose. It is sumptuous in the mouth, also Majestic and elegant. Wine on major ol-factory and gustatory width.

92

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Vorderseiber 2017
WEINBAU SCHNEEWEISS

It presents a rare balance, a nose cleanliness and scents of fresh fruit and star anise. Its mouth is pleasantly tense, not excessively alcoholic, and plays with very sharp pineapple juice and barley sugar nuances. The finish is long and extremely impressive.

92

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Ried Kollmitz 2017
FRANZ PICHLER

This wine, of a pleasant acidity and a good thickness, is both resolved and rounded. Its nose, of a great fineness, reveals acacia honey and pink grapefruit aromas, then a little smoked note. The body is conspicuous, intense and fulfilling, mostly in the sumptuous and magniloquent finish.
WACHAU GRÜNER VELTLINER
WINE RANKING BY
LUCA GARDINI
THE WINE KILLER

FEBRUARY 2019

75

TASTING PERIOD
DICEMBRE 2018