

VINTNER OF THE YEAR MARKUS HUBER

He is young, but he's already a complete professional in the wine business. Markus Huber has converted his parents' enterprise into a thriving business, and meanwhile his wines have become very much in demand abroad. Falstaff has selected the Traisental winemaker as »Vintner of the Year 2015.«.

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What is responsible for the quality of Huber's wines? The determining element for the grapes is the lime content of the soil.

In his youth, the Traisental native dreamed of a glamorous career as a professional footballer. The talent was undoubtedly there. Today he's been long since playing in the big leagues, but in the field of fine wine. And this way, in the long term he's making many more people happy than he would by scoring some goals. Markus Huber has developed his parents' small business into one of the best-known wineries in Austria, and is counted among the biggest exporters of domestic white wines. With his excellent Grüner Veltliners and Rieslings, he has quickly acquired a brilliant reputation, particularly in the USA. And incidentally he has given the until recently unknown winegrowing region of Traisental a lasting image boost. Reason enough to explain why Falstaff has selected him as this year's "Vintner of the Year."

Coming from Reichersdorf, Huber graduated from the vocational school for winemaking (HLBA) in Klosterneuberg, and did intern-

» My aim is to reflect the uniqueness of origin, soil and climate in my wines«

MARKUS HUBER, Falstaff »Vintner of the Year 2015«

ships at famous Austrian wineries such as Mittelbach, Jurtschitsch and Bründlmayer. These were followed by stints with top South African producers such as Lammerschoek, Kaapzicht and Spice Route. Along with technical knowhow, this 36 year-old Lower Austrian also acquired the language skills that make it possible for him to succeed internationally with his own wines today. Of the 30 markets he has already conquered, his wines are especially appreciated in the USA, which means traveling to the States regularly. Since

he has gotten married and had two daughters, his traveling has been somewhat limited, but he knows all about the meaning of a personal presence in countries he exports to. Today, more than 70% of his wines are already sent abroad, a remarkable share.

In 2000 he took over his parents' small winemaking business, and in the last 15 years he has built it up into a respectable vineyard with 40 hectares of vines. At the same time, Markus Huber is the flagship winemaker for the small (around 800 hectares) but fine winemaking region of Traisental, which originated in 1995.

What is responsible for the quality of Huber's wines? The determining element is lime. Although it is not always obvious in the vineyards at first glance, the top individual sites in Traisental are defined by a high lime content in the soil. This gives the wines a specific lightness and freshness, and they exhibit an excellent shelf life. Grüner >

> Veltliner now dominates his own 25 hectares of vines, occupying over three quarters of the vineyards. His excellent terroir allows the pressing of very puristic wines, distinct for their minerality and finesse. This style is a recurring theme in the offerings of this winemaker.

OUTSTANDING INDIVIDUAL VINEYARDS

Grüner Veltliner is the most important, as well as the most impressive variety of the winery. The individual vineyards, and their marquee wines, called “Obere Stiegen” (high steps), “Alte Setzen” (old seat), “Berg” (mountain), and the very new “Zwirch” produce year after year the highest ratings and most awards, already including four winners of Falstaff’s Grüner Veltliner Grand Prix. The vintner describes the recipe for the success of his best vineyard Berg as, “The combination of a steep terraced eastern exposure with sparse limestone soil, long ripening times, and therefore fully physiologically ripened grapes – all together these produce wines that despite their strong concentration and density display an incredible fineness and elegance.” But Markus Huber’s Riesling wines



Grüner Veltliner is the most important grape variety planted on the Markus Huber wine estate.

FACTS

WHAT IS THE SECRET OF SUCCESS FOR THE TOP VINEYARD SITE »MOUNTAIN«?

»The combination of steep, east facing terraces, meager limestone conglomerate soil and full physiological ripe grapes - is what gives the wine despite strong concentration and density an incredible delicacy and elegance«, says Huber.

also make the grade. The DAC Traisental Riesling is delicate and playful, the Engelreich Riesling seduces with a minerally finesse, the late-harvested Berg ‘Erste Lage’ Riesling presents itself as puristic, powerful, juicy. In specific vintages, such as 2007 and 2012, ice wine was produced, and a genuine “Troockenbeerelauslese” was even made from the Riesling in 2008. Markus Huber has led his winery to the top in Traisental, and firmly established it among the best wineries in Austria. “I would like to reflect the uniqueness of the region, the soils and the climate in my wines. Sustainable business practices, rigorous yield restriction and meticulous vine care are the basis and indispensable requirements for my cellar work.” Small amounts of Gelben Muskateller, Sauvignon Blanc and a site-specific Pinot Blanc from Hochschopf round out the product range. But everyday, good value wines can be found within. The inexpensive light Hugo Grüner Veltliner is pressed from grapes obtained from contract vineyards or purchased on the market, and it has developed into a regular “best buy” from China to

the USA, as well as in Austria., Huber bottles a region-typical Grüner Veltliner and a Traisental DAC Riesling for the supermarket chain Spar under the name Nussdorfer. Many young winemakers have followed the example of Markus Huber, and are working together with him to promote the Traisental wine region. Naturally, Huber has also placed himself in the service of the community as the chairman of the Association for Traisental Wines. The active exchange with this younger generation creates a climate that has brought about a detectable upside: that Traisental is a growing wine-producing area, a situation not to be taken for granted in Austria’s wine landscape. <

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