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Ried Spitzerberg 2014



Site & soil

We cultivate ten hectares of Blaufränkisch on the south-facing slope of the Spitzerberg. It is a very special place with extremely poor soils of limestone, where the annual rainfall does not usually exceed 300 to 500mm. The sandy limestone soils have little capacity for retaining the water, which very often comes in the form of heavy thunderstorms during the month of June. In summer the Spitzerberg very often represents the heat peak of Austria's continental climate, suffering 35°C and higher for weeks.
The ten hectares of Blaufränkisch are divided among more than twenty parcels of differing ages, with slightly different exposition. We try to pick, vinify and mature them separately in order to observe their evolution. Every year the finest and most expressive (yet not the most massive) wines are made from the oldest vines, which are between 40–60 years old.
We select and blend those finest wines together and call it SPITZERBERG, while the wines from younger vines are bottled as SAMT & SEIDE.

Harvest & vinification

During the warm summer the Blaufränkisch vines just 'shut themselves down', and the grapes stop maturing until the first humid autumn mornings provide some nutrition. These very challenging natural conditions result in wines marked by aromas and fruit characteristics which are unique: charming aromas of red berries, violets and a spicy touch of what we tend to describe as cumin. Blaufränkisch is always marked by a rather pronounced acidity, which also guarantees a slow evolution in the bottle and a very long life.
We don't use sulphur on the grapes; we don't use selected yeasts and we don't use pumps or any other mechanical tools during maceration. A portion of the harvest is trodden by foot, while the rest is fermented in open vats, the same way as one hundred years ago. We don't cool or heat up the must and we make only one very gentle soutirage during two years of maturation in the barrels. In many years we even bottle the Spitzerberg without filtration.

Vintage 2014

2014 saw an exceptionally difficult end to the vegetation cycle. Rain began in mid-August, sometimes in massive volume, and soggy conditions persisted for several weeks. Berries and stems of the already ripening clusters were threatened by a great risk of rot, which is why many winegrowers tended to harvest as early as possible. But we went the other way and waited for perfect maturity, with the disadvantage that we found many clusters unusable. Ultimately, the total yield this year was barely 40% of an average harvest.

Basic Information

VARIETIES	Blaufränkisch 100%
ALCOHOL	12,5%
RESIDUAL SUGAR	1,4g
TARTARIC ACID	5,4g
BOTTLES	600 / 0,75l

Ratings

A LA CARTE	93
ROBERT PARKER WINE ADVOCATE	93+
JANCIS ROBINSON	16,5