



VDP. DIE PRÄDIKATSWEINGÜTER

## NEWS FROM THE VDP

Mainz, 20th August 2022

### **The winegrowers of the VDP celebrate 20 years of VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®**

#### **International wine world comes together for anniversary celebration in Wiesbaden**

The year was 2002, the place was Berlin, when the VDP launched the VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® wines concept for all of Germany in Berlin for the first time. A milestone for the association of today 200 top wineries and the classification that highlights the origin of great wines in Germany.

International personalities of the wine world, such as the two British wine critics Hugh Johnson and Michael Broadbent, accompanied this step at that time, so to speak as godfathers of the "GGs". 20 years later, the winegrowers of the VDP look back on an internationally recognized classification of origins and the renaissance of the great dry wines from the best vineyard sites. Today, the brand VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® enjoys worldwide esteem on a par with the Grands Crus of the well-known wine-growing countries.

The VDP celebrates its anniversary party on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at the Jagdschloss Platte in Wiesbaden. The celebration will take place with the winegrowers of the member wineries as well as all loyal and supportive fellows who accompanied this path over the past 20 years. A look back is not to be missed: with top wines from the last 20 years from 2001 to 2021 and the words of those who had the vision and the perseverance over almost 30 years to lay the foundation for today's success.

#### **The great dry wines then and now**

20 years ago, 78 wineries showed wines from about 100 sites for the first time in Berlin. They heralded the renaissance of the great dry wine. The average price determined at that time was about 16 euros. Today, the GGs, as the wines with the designation VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® are abbreviated by wine fans, are exported to almost 100 countries worldwide. Many of the wines are subscribed to months in advance, and some rare examples from special sites are even auctioned off at top prices.

#### **A review as a movie: 30 years of classification - 20 years of GG**

In order to tell and document the story of the path and the wines, the VDP has taken the anniversary as an opportunity to summarize the last 30 years in the form of a film in words and pictures that is both documentary and entertaining. The film will premiere on the evening of the anniversary in Wiesbaden, but simultaneously will go live online on all VDP channels. ([Click here for the film](#)).

"The fascinating thing that has become clear to all of us in this process, is that these vineyards and wines have become personalities that have recognizable characters year after year. So, what we thought about as theory at the beginning has now become reality in the glass," says VDP President Steffen Christmann at the end of the film, summing up what has been achieved today.

#### **Visionaries and companions**

As always, a visionary idea would be nothing without the people who bring it to life. Thus, there were internal impulses from association personalities such as the former VDP presidents Erwein Graf Matuschka-Greiffenclau and Michael Prinz zu Salm-Salm as well as the current president of the VDP, Steffen Christmann. Always accompanied from the former vice presidents, such as Michael Graf Adelman, Armin Diel and Paul Fürst, as well as the regional chairmen who are still in office today. Particularly valuable were external impulses by wine personalities who placed the initiative of the VDP in the context of the international wine world and who accompanied the VDP optimistically, benevolently, but always also critically. Above all, these were the British wine author Jancis Robinson and the German wine journalist Mario Scheuermann, in addition to the aforementioned wine critics Hugh Johnson and Michael Broadbent.

### **The golden pin of honour of the VDP for the "spiritus rector" Bernhard Breuer**

It would be simply inconceivable to talk about the anniversary of today's VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® without acknowledging a "spiritus rector" who played a major role in initiating and shaping the classification of German top crus: Bernhard Breuer, winemaker from the Rheingau and mastermind of a stringent site classification for Germany. The visionary, who died much too early in 2004 at the age of 57, was one of the tireless pioneers of today's Grosses Gewächs wines. Early on, he initiated the "Comitée Erstes Gewächs" together with Mario Scheuermann - who had already been honored by the VDP for his contribution - and thus laid the foundation for a rethinking of the wine classification at that time. Then, many things went too slowly for him, which is why he ended his membership in the Rheingau Regional Association and thus in the VDP in 2000. Sadly, his statement that he no longer had so much time for the lengthy discussions came true. His pioneering work regarding to the terroir idea and his merits for the German wine industry and wine world remain. 22 years later and on the occasion of the anniversary, the VDP posthumously awards Bernhard Breuer the golden pin of honour of the VDP for his great services to classification. The VDP. pin of honour in gold is the highest award of the VDP and recognizes the commitment of personalities who, through their work, have spread the credo of German wine across borders and have personally rendered outstanding services to the cause. Theresa Breuer, daughter of Bernhard Breuer and winemaker who now runs the Georg Breuer winery in Rüdesheim, accepted the award on behalf of her father. "I'm sure my father would be very touched to experience the self-evidence with which we can position ourselves in the world today with the wines from our most valuable vineyard sites and that his feeling for the uniqueness of these sites has been confirmed". Theresa Breuer is pleased about the recognition.

### **Looking ahead**

Much has been achieved in the past 20 years. And even though the anniversary of the VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® wines is being celebrated this year, the German wine industry is once again at a crossroads against the backdrop of the new German Wine Law. With the new Wine Law, a first tentative step has been taken in the direction of profiling origin for Germany, but the consistent realization and establishment of the criteria will take a long time. It has always been the idea of the VDP to finally transform the classification into a Wine Law regulation that is generally binding. However, this presupposes a credible and stringent implementation, which is based above all else on the creditworthiness of the origins and the understanding of great terroirs and does not represent a new type of "selection". Another prerequisite is that the regional boards "Schutzgemeinschaften" (Comités interprofessionell) feel able to establish criteria for the levels of the legal pyramid of origins, and to reach a consensus on them. The responsibility, also for a homogeneous implementation for the whole of Germany, thus lies with the regions. The winegrowers of the VDP are ready to make their experience of more than 20 years available in order to save the German wine industry from detours that they have made themselves. At that time, it was not possible without distancing oneself from the German Winegrowers' Association. Today, the prerequisite for the winegrowers of the VDP is that they feel represented in an all-German classification. Because only if the successfully established wines

of great origins of Germany are found in this classification, a failure as with all previous attempts can be prevented. It is therefore important that caution should be taken against rash actions.

For the VDP, this does not mean sitting back at all: The VDP continues to work on the classification in order to make it even more stringent. In addition, the next major goal has been set: By 2025, all members will be certified sustainable. - But over the next three days, the focus will be on the Preview VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® 2022, where tasters from all over the world will form their opinions on the vintage 2021 (red 2020). We look forward to the voices on this.

[Click here](#) for the film *20 Jahre VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®*.

[Click here](#) for the stages of classification

[Click here](#) for the review of the event "*Preview VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®*".

#### *About the VDP*

The Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter (VDP) brings together 200 of Germany's best winegrowers. What unites them is individualism. What drives them is their timeless ideal of handcrafted wines that are characterised by distinctive origins. Just as unmistakable as they are. And their internationally respected trademark: the VDP.Eagle.

[www.vdp.de/en/](http://www.vdp.de/en/)

*If you have any questions, please contact*

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