



VDP. DIE PRÄDIKATSWEINGÜTER

NEWS FROM THE VDP

Mainz, August 27th 2023

Sneakpreview VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®

The dry top wines of the VDP celebrate their vintage debut

When wine lovers see a bottle bearing the “GG” initials and characteristic eagle logo of the VDP (Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter), they know immediately what’s inside: a world-class dry wine from one of Germany’s finest vineyards. Only those vineyards classified as VDP.GROSSE LAGE® offer the optimal terroir on the one hand and decades of proven performance on the other needed to bring forth outstanding wines.

These remarkable wines are raised under the strictest of quality criteria and must pass a comprehensive gauntlet of sensory tastings. After all, they are intended to serve as the quintessential expression of the high standards for VDP.growers of their wines. They are shaped not just by intensive hand labor, meticulous yield regulation, a concentration on varieties suitable for their sites, and encouraging terroir character in the glass. Grand wines are inherently products of time, best revealing their true potency to the patient. This is why roughly twelve months are allowed to pass after harvest before the white VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® wines are released on to the national and international markets, on September 1st of each year. And some VDP.winegrowers wait even longer. Their reds are granted at least two full years before they are bottled for drinking, although it is understood that they will benefit from years, if not decades, of further time to mature.

On average, roughly 3,000 bottles are produced from the 599 GGs (2023) that successfully pass through the testing and analysis process. At an average price of 45 euros and many spanning up to 225 euros or more, their success shows not only that a knowledgeable public is willing to pay for a bottle of fine wine, but also just how effectively premium German wines have claimed the mantle as worthy of such cost.

Sneakpreview VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® 2023

Even before market launch of the current vintage of wines bearing the coveted VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® label, another crucial hurdle remains: the "Vorpremiere (Sneak Preview) VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®" in Wiesbaden's Kurhaus. It draws top tasters from the domestic and international stages, representing renowned wine publications, specialized retailers, and star hospitality establishments alike. Over three days, this expert audience is granted an exclusive — and intensive — initial introduction to the vintage.

At the Vorpremiere VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®, the wines are served at their ideal temperature, in the correct sequence, and brought by order to the taster's spot. They are organized by origin, allowing wines from the same site to be tasted side by side across different estates. The VDP pioneered a procedure that has since drawn numerous international imitators: each individual bottle is pre-tasted by wine professionals prior to serving. 46 refrigerators have been set up to keep this year's 83 flights of approx. 460 GGs cool before delivery to the tasters' tables. 50 servers have been engaged to tend to the needs of the roughly 200 tasters from 25 different countries.

Even with a year (or two) of maturation under their belts before market launch, these wines are always still very young at the tasting. Only guests with a world-class knowledge of Germany's sites and years of tasting experience are capable of forecasting the potential in these wines, how they will give voice to their terroir and develop over time, and when they will be ready to drink in the coming years... or decades. With this time frame in mind, some VDP.winegrowers go a step further and only send their wines onto to the market as "Late Releases." Such wines are held back for an additional two or even five years before presentation to the public. This process underscores the passion for perfection on the part of these winegrowers and emphasizes just how much they see the maturation process for their grand terroir wines as an essential part of their philosophy.

A retrospective, and look ahead, on successful site classification

As the Vorpremiere VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® in Wiesbaden approaches, the VDP can now take stock on a fascinating past twelve months. A year ago marked 20 years of the VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® — an anniversary celebrating two decades of German grand crus that inspired emotional retrospectives on the early days of that success story. The association looks back proudly on 30 years since the start of classification and 20 years since the introduction of VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®. It is clear that their many sacrifices, lengthy discussions, and willingness to accept incremental change ultimately played a crucial role in the current success of VDP wines. It is also clear that the journey hasn't yet reached its final destination.

"Twenty years later, the members of the VDP met at Jagdschloss Platte near Wiesbaden to celebrate their Großes Gewächs wines — and it was more than just a thrilling party. It was a triumphant celebration, because the GG very likely represents the grandest success story ever in German winegrowing."

- Jakob Strobel y Serra

In fact, those retrospectives on the VDP's role as a vanguard for Premier Crus and Grand Crus in Germany served as a timely reminder of the importance of patience and sensibility in recent months as the German Wine Law has undergone significant, and often difficult, revisions. The revision of the VDP's own classification history in the event of the anniversary, but also the dialogue with the neighbours from France and Austria as well as the developments in wine law, strengthened the internal questioning process and the determination to take the next step together in the VDP.

We embrace the idea that historical assessments, which understandably formed a starting point for early classification efforts, will be de-emphasized in favor of an evaluation of actual recent performance in and with the vineyards. It is with this in mind that the VDP heads towards the next

stage of classification. A classification document is to be created for each site and each VDP member estate, attesting to the strength of the site and its wines based on the historical, qualitative, and economic relevance, as well as its reputation. This will frame classification in a more multi-dimensional and transparent way: a vineyard's proven reputation, not its mere potential, will take precedence. It is an approach which establishes a unity between the vineyard and the skill of the winegrower.

[Here](#) you can read more about the opportunities and challenges inherent to the upcoming changes to the German Wine Law for the overall German wine market and the VDP in particular.

The Vorpremiere VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® in Wiesbaden is once again showing us that "GGs" from the VDP have developed into calling cards for German viticulture and enjoy an outstanding reputation internationally. They are the result of decades of passion, innovation, and hard work on the part of our winegrowers and represent a symbol for the deep connection between vineyard and the people who work them. All of which reinforces us in our mission of bearing the unique nature of top vineyards and wines from Germany out into the wider world.

- Steffen Christmann

How are the white wines from the 2022 vintage presenting so far?

To taste the new GGs inherently means reviewing the weather conditions during that vintage. For the 2022's, a warm spring spared growers from late frost damage and the vines progressed quickly during that season. Warm days in May drove canopy growth and flowering moved forward apace. Quick and precise vineyard management was required to keep step with nature as she worked her vine magic. The summer that followed will be remembered for many hours of sun and an extended dryness, even drought, that massively accelerated ripening. Sites with good water supplies found the summer to their liking, while younger vineyards showed signs of stress. As in 2018, the hot summer days led in many regions to a late August start to harvest. Growers engaged in meticulous selection in advance of the main harvest, often seeking to reduce yields in reaction to the dryness to achieve the highest quality standards. In some cases, the VDP.GROSSE LAGE® sites were harvested before other vineyards, as their ideal exposures and beneficial interplay between soil and climate encouraged the fruit to mature fast. The rain in autumn turned the harvest into a race against time at some points. Choosing the right moment to launch harvest was crucial in bringing in optimally ripe fruit without compromising on quality. Unstinting manual labor and precise selection were unavoidable, but our member estates are largely reporting healthy and ripe fruit despite conditions that were at times downright difficult.

Now, 12 months later, the white VDP.GROSSE GEWÄCHSE® wines embody as a more refined vintage with round acids and lovely concentration. A fine example of just how well our winegrowers have learned to handle to warmer and dryer years.

How is the 2021 vintage presenting for the reds?

The grape harvest of 2021 actually came unusually late. Why? If you look back to early 2021, warm temperatures in spring were nowhere to be found. As a result, bud break began later in the vineyards. The growth of the vines was further slowed by relatively cool weather. Spring such as it was had barely come to an end when the warm days finally arrived in June, but explosive growth coupled with

plentiful rain pushed winegrowers to the limits of the skills. The summer itself was also far from what we'd imagined. Rainy day upon rainy day was good for nature in general, replenishing crucial water reserves, but in no way made things easier for winegrowers. August, typically one of the warmest months, was surprisingly cool, which further delayed harvest. The warm and dry September seemed to want to make amends, lending the grapes the time they needed to mature. The 2021 vintage of whites has been celebrated in the wine world for its razor-sharp acidity and tension. Anticipation of a fantastic 2021 vintage of reds is corresponding high.

This year's reds reflect the weather conditions unmistakably. The vines had plenty of water, cool temperatures, and much attentive care by our winegrowers, allowing the grapes to hang longer on the vines; the result are wines with cool but distinctive aromatics and a fascinating acidic backbone.

Note

On the [VDP.website](#) the tasting impressions of the professionals will be continuously published.

Facts and Figures

599 VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS® wines went through the testing process this year, earning the right to come onto the market on September 1st, 2023. These wines were produced in 327 sites.

By variety			By region		
	Wines	In Percent		Wines	In Percent
Riesling	345	58%	Ahr	28	5%
Spätburgunder	129	22%	Baden	82	14%
Weißer Burgunder	37	6%	Franken	59	10%
Silvaner	27	5%	Mittelrhein	9	2%
Grauer Burgunder	23	4%	Mosel-Saar-Ruwer	68	11%
Lemberger / Blaufränkisch	20	3%	Pfalz	123	21%
Chardonnay	16	3%	Rheingau	59	10%
Frühburgunder	2	>0%	Rheinhessen	66	11%
			Sachsen-Saale-Unstrut	9	2%
			Württemberg	61	10%
			Nahe	35	6%
TOTAL	599	100%		599	100%

VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter

VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter is the world's oldest association of premium winegrowing estates and home to around 200 of Germany's most talented winegrowers. Across diverse regions and philosophies, all share one common thread: a tireless dedication to the timeless ideal of handcrafted wines that express their origins. Bottles as inimitable as their makers. Joined under a symbol revered the world over: the VDP.Eagle.

If you have any questions, please contact:

VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter

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