

Wojciech Bońkowski MW

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Job description: Master of Wine

Where and how did you get the wine bug?

With a modest bottle of 1995 Bordeaux a friend brought for my 21st birthday...

Your first encounter with German wines?

...goes back to the dawn of time. Mosel Kabinett was the go-to wine of my early days.

What is your favourite story to tell about German/VDP.wine – did you have highly emotional experience with our wines / producers?

In my student days I had no driving licence and no money, so the only way to reach wineries was hitchhiking! In the late 1990s I was also fortunate enough to meet many German wine legends, from Hans-Leo Christoffel who generously shared bottles from his final vintage to Franz Werner Michel, who had incredible first-hand stories about selling German Riesling in the 1950s.

How many bottles of German wine/VDP.wines do you have in your cellar?

Not enough! But the Excel catalogue of my long-term offsite storage tells me I have exactly 112 bottles stored for long ageing. As for the short term, it simply goes to fast to count...

What is your favourite vineyard in Germany – and why?

I have very many—I love Rudesheimer Berg Schlossberg for the vertiginous climb and the privileged view from the top; Ürziger Würzgarten, which was one of the first great sites I personally visited; Würzburger Stein, which I find has a special genius loci; Forster Pechstein, because I seem to always pick it in blind tastings, and so on...

If it comes to German grape varieties, what is your favourite? Riesling, Spätburgunder or other?

I am a white wine drinker, so of course Riesling has a special place. I am also a big fan of the underrated Silvaner. But my secret love is Weissburgunder: so sensual and elegant...