



A View Outside the Cellar– an Update of Biodynamic Winemaking

Press Folder **respekt-BIODYN** Version 2020

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Foreword

"Like every living thing, a meaningful philosophy also leads its own life. It breathes and grows, changes and evolves. In this sense biodynamic principles are no exception. The goal of biodynamic agriculture is to restore the healthy balance in soils, plants, animals and people, and to strengthen their natural defenses.

How does this work? One must imagine biodynamics as a type of medicine for agriculture, that makes use of holistic, in any case naturally occurring healing powers – while it orients itself on one hand to the state of knowledge, expertise and technology in modern agriculture – and on the other hand tries to understand the interrelationships of naturally occurring forces, and to complement existing methods to strengthen the natural defenses."

Dr. Andrew C. Lorand

*Personal details: Andrew C. Lorand intensively advised and supervised the **respekt** group in all areas of biodynamics, particularly in the early years. After an apprenticeship as a farmer and winemaker in Switzerland, he studied agroecology in the US and wrote his dissertation on biodynamics. He was a teacher and consultant for many renowned biodynamic wineries in Europe. Andrew C. Lorand died in 2017.*

"We see biodynamic work as a harkening back to the forces of nature. We have realized that here lies the key to the further development of our own wine quality. If you want to bring the origin, the soil, even more clearly into the bottle, then the first commandment is as follows: work without chemicals. Through chemistry, problems are only disguised, which prevents the true strengths of the wines from breaking through."

respekt-BIODYN

1. What is **respekt-BIODYN**?

respekt-BIODYN is a quality ideal

- for the wine and the processes of agriculture,
- living together with plants, animals and people.

respekt-BIODYN is a search for quality in the greatest possible sense. **respekt-BIODYN** respects nature, plants, animals and people to the highest degree imaginable. **respekt-BIODYN** was founded to reflect jointly in the group on the principles of biodynamics, and to consistently implement them in viticulture.

2. Who is **respekt-BIODYN**?

respekt-BIODYN is a biodynamic winemakers association with the goal of producing outstanding wines. **respekt-BIODYN** is based in Austria and currently has 23 members.

Paul Achs, Neusiedlersee, Austria

Judith Beck, Neusiedlersee, Austria

Clemens Busch, Mosel, Germany

Steffen Christmann, Pfalz, Germany

Kurt Feiler/Weingut Feiler-Artinger, Neusiedlersee-Hügelland, Austria

Karl Fritsch, Wagram, Austria

Martin & Georg Fußer, Pfalz, Germany

Michael Goëss-Enzenberg/Weingut Manincor, South Tyrol, Italy

Andreas Gsellmann, Neusiedlersee, Austria

Gernot & Heike Heinrich, Neusiedlersee & Leithaberg, Austria

Johannes Hirsch, Kamptal, Austria

Fred Loimer, Kamptal & Thermenregion, Austria

Anita & Hans Nittnaus, Neusiedlersee & Leithaberg, Austria

Bernhard Ott, Wagram, Austria

Gerhard Pittnauer, Neusiedlersee, Austria

Claus Preisinger, Neusiedlersee, Austria

Hansjörg Rebholz, Pfalz, Germany

Karlheinz & Franz Wehrheim, Pfalz Germany

Franz R. Weninger, Mittelburgenland, Austria & Sopron-Balf, Hungary

Fritz Wieninger/Weingüter Wieninger & Hajszan Neumann, Vienna, Austria

Philipp Wittmann, Rheinhessen, Germany

Herbert & Carmen Zillinger, Weinviertel, Austria

respekt-BIODYN is an open association. Each member has the right to propose potential new members. With a unanimous acceptance, the individual conversion process begins (for conventional applicants three years, for organic farms two years), as defined in the **respekt-BIODYN** guidelines.

3. When and why was respekt-BIODYN founded?

The vision of the respekt members is to achieve the highest possible environmental, social and spiritual quality in their work. Through their work, they want to expand the quality of their wines and simultaneously conserve natural resources. Their goal is to optimize expression and typicality, and to bring the terroir and regional character of the wines ideally into the bottle.

The first talks about a biodynamic association occurred many years ago. They were initiated in 2005 by eleven leading winemakers from Austria, and one from South Tyrol. These were Paul Achs, Judith Beck, Kurt Feiler, Karl Fritsch, Michael Goëss-Enzenberg, Gernot Heinrich, Johannes Hirsch, Fred Loimer, Hans Nittnaus, Bernhard Ott, Gerhard Pittnauer and Claus Preisinger.

This was based on their search for individual quality in wine. The winemakers mentioned above eventually founded the biodynamic association "respekt" in 2007. In 2009, Andreas Gsellmann, Franz Weninger and Fritz Wieninger joined the group. The group's first respekt-certified vintage was presented at VieVinum, Vienna's largest wine trade fair, at the Hofburg in 2012.

The high quality level of their wines, and their biodynamic guiding principles – expressed in their common operating principles and above all in their wines – developed a strong attraction over the years, on the one hand for the international trade audience and on the other hand for their winemaking colleagues.

In 2015, four highly renowned winemakers joined, all members of the traditional German wine growers association "VDP. Die Prädikatsweingüter": Clemens Busch from Mosel, Steffen Christmann and Hansjörg Rebholz from Pfalz and Philipp Wittmann from Rheinhessen. Three additional wineries were accepted into the association in 2017: Dr. Wehrheim from Palatine (Pfalz, and also member of VDP), Hajszan Neumann in Vienna, (the second Fritz Wieninger winery) and Herbert and Carmen Zillinger from the Weinviertel, in 2018 Martin & Georg Fußer from the Palatinate also joined. A number of winemakers who are friends of respekt-BIODYN are in professional exchange with them.

respekt-BIODYN remains open. To discourse and input within the group, and from outside.

4. Why is **respekt-BIODYN** more than biodynamics?

respekt-BIODYN is respectful. This attitude goes beyond producing biodynamic wines.

respekt-BIODYN sees farming as a "holistic being", that is treated with appreciation, respect and care.

respekt-BIODYN combines their expertise as vintners with the ideas and methods of biodynamics (= environmental sustainability).

In their operations, the **respekt** members create secure livelihoods and healthy living and working conditions (= economic sustainability).

They pay attention to respectful relationships within their operations and foster their relationships with their employees, partners and customers (= social sustainability).

5. **respekt-BIODYN** and **Rudolf Steiner**

respekt-BIODYN has formulated its goals based on the search for quality and sustainability. The top priority is the production of more individual, origin-specific wines. "Enjoyment at the highest level" is the mission. Biodynamics represents – as all **respekt** members are convinced – the best way to achieve this goal.

There are numerous organizations worldwide that describe their work as "biological-dynamic" or simply "biodynamic". Many of today's biodynamic production methods derive directly or indirectly from the Austrian scientist, philosopher, educator and social critic Rudolf Steiner and his "humanities foundation for agriculture".

respekt-BIODYN members take from this work those parts of the approach that contribute to a higher quality of wine, but consider themselves independent – and non-dogmatic. In light of contemporary developments, particularly those in agroecology, modern technology and today's social conditions.

6. ethical orientation

respekt-BIODYN attaches great importance to a comprehensive awareness of quality. This concerns not only the wine and soil, because **respekt**-BIODYN thinks further. **respekt**-BIODYN pulls families, employees, partners and customers into their quality-conscious thinking.

respekt-BIODYN as a group learns from each other, exchanges knowledge, and respects the individual operation of each winery

The purpose of the group is, in addition to their common path of biodynamic winemaking, mutual education and support. In addition, **respekt**-BIODYN seeks open, friendly and professional technical dialogue with like-minded people.

7. agricultural orientation

With **respekt**-BIODYN, it is all about the contemporary use of both old and new agricultural knowledge, and the internal coherence of nature. The current practices of the group are based in the broadest sense on a modern synthesis of ideas from Steiner, from modern agroecology and practical experience in the field of biodynamics in recent decades.

The fact is that **respekt**-BIODYN members have not given up certain modern techniques and methods in their striving for quality. At the same time, however, the group is always looking to supplement and improve the function of modern agriculture in the sense of gentler and more sustainable methods. This striving also applies to the achievement of a biodiverse environment.

respekt-BIODYN seeks to implement the ideal care of plants and soil as well as effective methods to protect flora and fauna. **respekt**-BIODYN works with materials from nature to support these tasks. At the center of all this is the pursuit of a greater expression of the origin, variety and the thumbprint of the winemaker in the wine.

8. flavor orientation

The style of the wines is characterized by vitality, a moderate but vintage-typical alcohol, a complex body and well-integrated acidity. These wines stand out with their aging potential and intense origin-typical traits. They are authentic and have an individual flavor profile. The **respekt** members are convinced that wine lovers can detect, experience and judge the results of their work with all the senses.

9. production guidelines

9.1. legal foundation

With the founding of the association in 2007, **respekt**-BIODYN enacted their own guidelines, which were revised and refined in 2016. The basis for these are local and national laws, as well as EU regulations (EU-Bio-Regulation (EG) 834/2007 for ecological/biological production and labeling of organic/biological products). Every **respekt** member is required to comply with the applicable laws and specific regulations of his home country, and is annually certified according to these regulations and the **respekt** guidelines.

In addition, the biodynamic guidelines developed in the group based on the work of Rudolf Steiner also apply. These are guaranteed by regular monitoring by Lacon in Austria, by Abcert in Italy, by the Karlsruhe inspection team and the GfRS Society for Resource Protection in Germany, and by Biocontrol in Hungary.

9.2. conversion program

All member operations commit to aligning their production with the **respekt**-BIODYN guidelines. The initial phase lasts three years for wineries converting from conventional farming, and two years for companies already working organically. To do so, seven programs must be implemented:

1. Site-appropriate production
2. Biodiversity
3. Soil fertility
4. Plant care
5. Animal life
6. Dealing with accompanying growth, pests and diseases
7. General farming methods

9.3. **site-appropriate production**

Site-appropriate production means ensuring that the necessary measures are suitable for the soil, plants and animals on the ground in terms of maintaining health and productivity and supporting the natural immunity of the organisms. Regional and local conditions in particular should be considered.

9.4. **biodiversity**

Every winery must perform the groundwork necessary to protect and enrich the local natural biodiversity. One thinks here of the "helpers" of agriculture, such as worms, ants, bees and butterflies. **respekt** members promote their preservation and proliferation through nesting boxes, "useful animal" hotels, sowing flowering plants and by the planting and maintenance of the slopes and trees.

9.5. **soil fertility**

respekt-BIODYN sees the building up and care of humus (the "vitalization of the soil") as a central task. Wherever possible, the four pillars of this building are practiced:

1. gentle soil care
2. appropriate greenery
3. ground spraying, at least once a year with nettle tea and horn manure preparations
4. application of composts

9.6. **plant care**

To support the health of crops, mainly through appropriate soil management and foliage management measures, the cyclical application of appropriate (depending on the moon and weather) biodynamic and homeopathic treatments are preferred. To increase the immune response of the plants, teas and extracts of biological origin from nettle, horsetail, chamomile, birch leaves, yarrow, valerian, dandelion and oak bark must be used.

9.6.1. animal life

Every **respekt** member is aware of the importance of animal life in nature, and of how this aspect is ignored in conventional agriculture. All members undertake to bring animals into their operation during the conversion period, in order to promote biodiversity. Whether by propagating worms, ants, bees or butterflies, supplying nesting boxes for birds or building their own sheep or cattle herd. All strive for a customized solution to promote animal life in their vineyards – consciously, visibly and sustainably. This affects not only agriculture and horticulture, but also farms with livestock. It includes variety and site adaptation.

9.6.2. dealing with accompanying growth, pests and diseases

The interpretation of the term "weed" depends heavily on subjective human perception. For example, some types of plants are classified generally as weeds. This doesn't work as a basic principle because any kind can occur as weeds, crops or herbs. Within **respekt**-BIODYN, the term "accompanying growth" is preferred. For the necessary regulation of undesirable accompanying growth, **respekt**-BIODYN members may use only mechanical methods, preferably regulating them by implementing targeted greening measures.

The ultimate goal of all these measures is to establish or to continue to promote the vines natural resistance. Humus building and maintenance ("vitalization of the soil") in particular are the basis for achieving this goal. Biodynamic and homeopathic plant care, in cyclical application, contribute significantly to strengthening the immune system of the crops.

10. general farming measures

respekt-BIODYN strives for a holistic view of agriculture, the conservation of ecosystems, the economical use of energy, the joy of farming and the ongoing recovery and productivity of their vineyards with the least possible adverse side effects for the earth and mankind.

respekt-BIODYN is committed to the concept of "farm individuality." The production of a largely closed production cycle (alone or with partnerships) should be sought to further the creation of a secure existence based healthy living and working conditions.

respekt-BIODYN recognizes the concept of "social decency". Each member strives consciously, and with concrete steps, so that all employees are treated and respected in a responsible manner. This is an integral part of the overall operational measures, as well as the dignified care of soil, plants and animals.

Sustainable management and a responsible use of resources ("reduce-reuse-recycle") characterize work on the vineyards.

Fallow fields and compensation areas are a valuable component of the operation and must also be maintained according to the guidelines ("to each vineyard his tree").

respekt-BIODYN rejects genetic engineering without exception.

11. quality guarantee

“**respekt**-BIODYN” is found only on those bottles of wine that have been certified according to **respekt** guidelines. These wines are guaranteed to be produced biodynamically. The **respekt** logo functions as a seal of quality.



19 of the 23 respekt vintners (2015)

12. future

respekt members have committed themselves to produce only wines from biodynamic or biological-organic grapes (from contractually controlled grape producers) starting with the 2017 harvest. Which means that, in addition to the winery's own wines with a **respekt**-BIODYN certification on the label, there will also be wines classified only as organic wine, and bearing no **respekt**-BIODYN logo on the bottle.

In the coming years **respekt**-BIODYN will also place greater emphasis in its certification on the areas of economic and social sustainability, alongside environmental sustainability, and will continue to develop in these directions.

13. the respekt members

Weingut Paul Achs

Neusiedlersee, Austria

Paul Achs' winery is located some 60 kilometers south of Vienna in Gols, Burgenland, between Neusiedl Lake and the Hungarian border. The convinced biodynamics devotee cultivates 26 hectares, spread over 42 different vineyards with a plot size of 0.11 to 2.30 hectares. The focus is on red wines and dry white wines. For whites, Paul Achs focuses on Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. For reds, on the domestic varieties Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch (ten hectares) and St. Laurent. Paul Achs is also known for the international varieties Pinot Noir and Syrah. The grape harvest is done exclusively by hand in order to protect them and to ensure the best possible selection.

"We have converted to biodynamic farming, because we want to bring the wine in the bottle naturally. Spontaneous fermentation is only possible with healthy grapes and enough natural yeasts."



Paul Achs

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Weingut Judith Beck

Neusiedlersee, Austria

Working close to nature has always been the be-all for Judith Beck, and in **respekt**-BIODYN she has truly found herself. Since 2007, Judith Beck has produced wine according to biodynamic guidelines. Two years before, she brought her new production facility in the middle of the Gols vineyards into operation. The system is optimized for processing of the harvest from fifteen hectares. Instead of increasing production, the preservation and improvement of quality is paramount. The majority of her assets are located on the Wagram Parndorfer plain, the crown jewel of the Neusiedlersee wine region. Her range extends from light whites to bold reds. All the grapes are handled and processed with the same professional care. This winemaker passionately champions the traditional red wines of the region: Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch and St. Laurent.

“Naturalness and identity are the features I want to see and show in all my wines, therefore the conversion to biodynamic viticulture. My wines are genuine and authentic, rather modest than boisterous in any case. Always worth a second look. Anyone can do wines of international interchangeable styles, anywhere. But wines like mine, just me. Here and now. And for me that is the most beautiful thing there is.”



Judith Beck

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Weingut Clemens Busch

Mosel, Germany

For Clemens Busch, the Riesling grape is not any old variety, but rather a passion and a commitment. The weathered slate slopes of his vineyards produce simultaneously delicate and powerful Rieslings of international caliber. That the passionate biodynamic winemaker, also a member of the "VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter" association since 2007, does not want to interfere with the natural and ecological processes in his vineyards, is a matter of course.

Clemens Busch cultivates a total of 16 hectares of vines, mainly on steep slopes of weathered slate. The individual Pündericher Marienburg and Pündericher Nonnengarten vineyards are inclined towards the south, southeast or southwest, ensuring optimal sunlight. The majority of the vineyards, namely eleven hectares, make up the Marienburg. It is divided into individual areas: Fahrlay with blue slate, Falkenlay with gray slate, and Rothenpfad with the rare red shale. Gentle pressing, slow and long spontaneous fermentation and subsequent aging on fine yeast in tuns (the traditional 1,000-liter wooden barrels of Mosel) give the wines of Clemens Busch their special character.

*"We already converted to organic farming in 1984, then in 2006 came the big step to biodynamics. Constant development and exchanges with colleagues are absolutely important and necessary for us. Through membership in **respekt-BIODYN** we make our stand clear, to meet even more stringent guidelines in addition to the requirements for organic viticulture and to let these be checked as well."*



Clemens Busch

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Weingut A. Christman

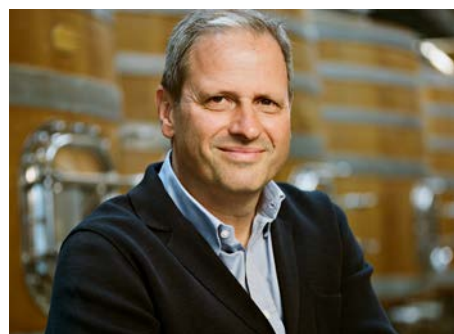
Pfalz, Germany

The Christmann winery originated from a great passion in the mid-19th century. Professor Dr. Louis Häusser of Heidelberg acquired a vineyard out of his enthusiasm for the noble growths of the Mittelhaardt region, and thus laid the foundation for the winery. His granddaughter married Eduard Christmann, and so the Christmann winery was born. Today, VDP president Steffen Christmann is leading it in its seventh generation.

His goal is to create authentic and at the same time excellent wines, in harmony with nature. Wines that can only be grown in Pfalz. He has therefore relied on biodynamic farming since 2003. Three quarters of his 21 hectares are planted with the "perhaps most noble grape for white wine" in the world, the Riesling. In the Mittelhaardt region of Pfalz it matures fully in the intense sunlight. But it's also cool enough to give it a deep minerality and delicate acidity.

His other vineyards are dedicated to the Pinot family. The world famous "VDP.GROSSE" and "VDP.ERSTE" individual vineyards such as Idig and Ölberg in Königsbach, Mandelgarten and Kapellenberg in Gimmeldingen, Reiterpfad in Ruppertsberg, and Langenmorgen and Paradiesgarten in Deidesheim form the basis of the highest international renown of Christmann's influential wines.

"Nature is, next to all human knowledge, still full of secrets. But with our biodynamic work we are on their trail. This is a way we can scarcely cover alone. This route can be successfully pursued only in exchange with fellow colleagues who have the same passion and the same goal in mind."



Steffen Christmann

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Weingut Feiler-Artiner

Neusiedlersee-Hügelland, Austria

The winery is located in the heart of the historic freetown of Rust. Kurt Feiler currently manages 27 hectares in the best vineyards of Rust. The range of cultivated varieties is varied, which is typical of the region. Approximately 65 percent of the vineyards are planted with red grape varieties. The most important variety is the Blaufränkisch, followed by Zweigelt and Pinot Noir. 35 percent of the area is planted with white grapes, divided among a total of eight varieties. The main ones are Chardonnay, Neuburger, Welschriesling and Gelber Muskateller. A great love for the wine produced, for nature and the vines characterizes and marks the dealings and thoughts of the Feiler family. Therefore, the vineyards as well as the wines are handled with care, which can be tasted and experienced in the Ausbruch wine from Rust, the "liquid gold" of the region.

"To ensure that our long wine tradition has not only a history, but also a "golden" future, we live by biodynamic production and sustainability. Our estate is more than just wine a producer. In addition to wine, we want to offer people in the area the opportunity to buy organic fruits, vegetables and herbs from us."



Kurt Feiler

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Weinberghof Frisch

Wagram, Austria

The Fritsch winery is located in Oberstockstall, around 60 kilometers west of Vienna in the Wagram region. Karl Fritsch has managed his vineyards, covering an area of around 25 hectares, biodynamically since 2006. In 2008, the winery was included in the circle of traditional wineries of Austria. In the early 1970s, Karl Fritsch was already committed to the production of quality wine, and made a name for himself in the Wagram as a red wine pioneer. In 1999, Karl Fritsch Jr. took over the family business and has been the spiritual and dynamic head of the Fritsch vineyards since then. Its excellent reputation is based on its innovative strength in viticulture and its commitment to the entire region of Wagram. The winery in peaceful Oberstockstall provides a green idyll with a Mediterranean flair, built over decades.

“At the beginning, pure quality improvement measures were in the foreground, but after a very short time, our philosophy has been the attitude that biodynamics belong in the foreground. It has become our determination to work with the forces of nature. Only then is it possible for us to achieve more independence and individuality.”



Karl Fritsch

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Weingut Martin & Georg Fußer

Pfalz, Germany

The winery of brothers Martin and Georg Fußer is located in Niederkirchen in the Palatinate. While they were still studying in Geisenheim, they decided to take over their parents' operation, which until then had exclusively produced grapes, and to slowly transform it according to their own ideas. They spun off individual vineyards, and in 2006 founded their own winery with a focus on Riesling and Pinot Noir. In 2007 they vinified their first vintage, switched to organic farming after a short time, and became involved with biodynamics. Their major annual goal: "Honest wines that reflect the vintage, the grape variety and their origin"! Meanwhile the brothers manage twelve hectares according to biodynamic guidelines, as since 2018 they have been members of respekt-BIODYN.

"Our path was clear very quickly, biodynamics is a crucial mosaic in our work! Once you've understood that, you can't see it otherwise"



Georg & Martin Fußer

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Weingut Andreas Gsellmann

Neusiedlersee, Austria

Andreas Gsellmann took over the winery in Gols from his father Hans Gsellmann in 2010, and also changed in that year to biodynamics. The measure of all things is for him nature, so everything in the world is not yet self-evident. So is his interest in the great insights of biodynamics, which meets nature with the greatest respect. The methodology: support rather than exploitation. Strengthening the immune system of plants, soil and the microorganisms that make the soil fertile. The thanks from nature are authentic wines rich in finesse. Andreas Gsellmann manages some 20 hectares of vineyards, of which 75 percent produce red wine and 25 percent white wine.

“Our vision is to be able to close the cycle of biodynamic viticulture. We want to produce original, recognizable wines with an incomparable thumbprint.

We want to promote and anchor sustainability through projects with foresight, and independent research into nature.”



Andreas Gsellmann

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Weingut Hajszan Neumann

Vienna, Austria

The Hajszan Neumann winery is located in Döbling, Vienna at the foot of the Nussberg, the most traditional and famous winegrowing vineyard in the city. With plenty of passion, Fritz Wieninger produces fine wines with a natural, authentic flavor here on 20 hectares of vineyards. This pioneer of Viennese quality wine took over the vineyard in 2014 from a friend Stefan Hajszan and his business partner Heinz Neumann, and now concentrates on terroir-emphasizing wines with real expression and a multi-layered character. The shell limestone and weathered limestone soils of the Nußberg, and biodynamic viticulture, form the basis for this. Fritz Wieninger also creates white wines under the "natural" designation, fermented on the mash without any influencing processes such as fining, filtration or sulfurization.

Hajszan Neumann has been working under biodynamic guidelines since 2004. Fritz Wieninger's focus today is on the vineyard ecosystem with all its facets, supported by extensive effort and intensive handwork. Every single Hajszan Neumann wine has a characteristic soul from the natural flavors of the grape and terroir. Of particular note is the Viennese Gemischte Satz, as it always is with Fritz Wieninger. He regards it as a joy and honor, from the year 2017 to also be a part of the value-community **respekt**-BIODYN with his second winery.

"If one appreciates the vineyard and acknowledges it as the basis of high quality, one comes automatically to biodynamics. Only a respectful handling of the vines allows the production of grapes rich in character as the basis for unique, great wines."



**Heinz Neumann, Fritz Wieninger,
Stefan Hajszan**

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Weingut Gernot & Heike Heinrich

Neusiedlersee & Leithaberg, Austria

Exploring potential is one of the cornerstones of the thinking of Gernot & Heike Heinrich. The assumptions for their creations are cool limestone slopes on Leithaberg and a modulated topography surrounding the winery in Gols. Biodynamic farming, a few selected indigenous varieties with Blaufränkisch as the spearhead, and careful and thoughtful cellar work set the tone. Manual work and craft pave the way, time brings it to the end. Curiosity lays the foundation for an ongoing evolution, exchanges with the friends and partners of **respekt-BIODYN** open up additional perspectives. All with the aim of getting natural, authentic and individual wines into the bottle, that tell of their origins and yet leave room for interpretation.

“We were looking. We wanted to get away from ‘faster, higher, further, more’, towards more elaboration and individual development. To understand our own operation as an organism and question ingrained patterns of thought and action. ‘Get to the root’ in the truest sense of the word, and develop free, responsible and creative thinking in all fields. In all of this it is about growth in transformation.”



Gernot Heinrich

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Weingut Johannes Hirsch

Kamptal, Austria

The wines of Johannes Hirsch are full of strength, a firm minerality and luster, depending on the location and soil. They excel in their clarity and due to their moderate alcohol create a desire for the next glass. This “lightness of the wine” is particularly dear to the winemaker’s heart. Just as are the two varieties Riesling and Grüner Veltliner, which he has devoted himself to since the late 1990s. The best wines of the winery bear the vineyard designations Lamm, Gaisberg, Heiligenstein, Renner and Grub. All his vineyards, a total of 35 hectares, are farmed biodynamically today. The quality of his wines speak for themselves since the transition to this ur-traditional way of working.

“Biodynamics brings many benefits. The employees work in the vineyard much more precisely than previously. Even more consideration for species and plant diversity is taken. And our children grow up in a healthy environment. Our soils are healthier than ever, thanks to decades of composting. With wine we are concerned with the ‘Hirschen’s hoof print’ – ie the thumbprint far from mainstream – this can only be achieved with biodynamic operation. The result is wonderful food companion, wines with great shelf life and perfect acid balance thanks to healthy grapes.”



Johannes Hirsch

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Weingut Fred Loimer

Kamptal & Thermenregion, Austria

“I’m happy to be surprised,” says Fred Loimer. He himself is and has always been full of surprises. Around when he began to convert his vineyards to biodynamic farming in 2006. The move sparked a chain of unexpected findings and conclusions for Fred Loimer and his team, and the confirmation of his way.

Today Fred Loimer farms around 70 hectares in Langenlois and Gumpoldskirchen, in two completely different areas of Kamptal and Thermenregion.

Kamptal means hot days and cool nights. Loess, gneiss, sandstone, gravel, clay – a variety in a small area. Grüner Veltliner and Riesling as the main varieties expressing this terroir, but also Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

In Gumpoldskirchen it is warmer, the Thermenregion is under a strong Pannonian influence with a wind that quickly dries the rain and dew, and strong sedimental soils with Alpine limestone gravel. Here the indigenous varieties Zierfandler and Rotgipfler flourish, as well as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Ideal conditions for expressive wines.

“Whoever produces wine with an ecological and spiritual responsibility for soil, plants, animals and humans, his everyday life is soon penetrated by a basic attitude: respect. The beautiful thing is that ecologically friendly methods give wines with incomparable regional character and typicality. This is ultimately not just a matter of conservation of soils and resources, but also of quality.”



Fred Loimer

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Weingut Manincor

Kaltern, Italy

The Manincor winery is situated directly above Lake Caldaro in a prime south-facing location. For many generations, the Enzenberg family have devoted themselves to agriculture and viticulture. Today Sophie Countess and Michael Count Goëss-Enzenberg give this tradition a modern face, with full respect for the old values. "Preserve what's valuable and create something new," is their credo. Nearly 20 years of fundamental development work are now bearing fruit. The natural diversity of the total of 50 hectares of vineyards, rich soil, well exposed biodynamically farmed plots and an entirely unapologetic striving for quality are the basis for unique wines of character. South Tyrol as a wine region, due to the diversity of locations at 200 to 1,000 meters above sea level, a mountainous region with diverse rock formations of dolomite lime to volcanic porphyry quartz, is ideal for elegant minerally white and red wines. Manincor's wines impress with finesse, clarity and long-lasting drinking pleasure.

"Whether too much or little sun, a wet or dry summer – the grapes used to not have the quality that we wish for our wines. This was due to too little life in the soil. So we went in search of the lost terroir and converted to biodynamics. Since we pay attention even more to soil health and biodiversity, our wines have achieved an unbelievable fineness. They are a reflection of the soil on which the grapes are grown."



Michael Goëss-Enzenberg

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Weingut Anita & Hans Nittnaus

Neusiedlersee & Leithaberg, Austria

Anita and Hans Nittnaus have run the winery since 1985, and have modernized it over the years. Today they cultivate 40 hectares, with 90 percent of these planted with red wine grapes, the rest dedicated to white wine. The main varieties are Blaufränkisch and Zweigelt, but St. Laurent and Merlot are also cultivated. For white wines, the winemaker couple focuses on Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc. Characterful long-lived wines that reflect the soil, the origin and style of the winery are the goal of the winemaker couple.

On the Leithaberg, Grüner Veltliner is gaining more and more importance, especially thanks to the help of his son Martin. Around half of the Nittnaus' vineyards are located on the east side of the lake (Heideboden, Parndorf, Wagram, the Parndorf plain) with sandy-clay soils and higher or lower flint content. The other half is in the Leithagebirge with their limestone and slate soil, where Blaufränkisch in particular develops a unique style

*"We converted for a number of reasons. On the one hand, management in harmony with nature has always been a concern for us, which we actually implemented with colleagues from **respekt-BIODYN** in 2006. And secondly, we want to get and bring terroir of a location pure and unadulterated into the bottle. We believe this requires biodynamic farming. We have dealt with many biodynamic wines of the world and are fascinated by their power, expressiveness and typicality."*



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Weingut Bernhard Ott

Wagram, Austria

Bernhard Ott manages 35 hectares – 95% of which is planted with Veltliner – and four hectares of apricot orchards in Wagram. Where the Weinviertel and the Waldviertel are within touching distance, and Pannonian mildness mixes with Waldviertel's coolness. For over four generations, the Ott family has worked and gotten to know this terroir, and they know what the vineyards need to reach their most magnificent development. Since 1993 Bernhard Ott has managed the winery with his wife Maria. In 2006 the vintner decided on a paradigm shift. The limits of technology allowed no improvement in quality for him with conventional viticulture, which is why he converted the operation to biodynamic farming. The way was already paved by his father, who began to use exclusively compost fertilization in 1970. Bernhard Ott's most important individual vineyards are called Rosenberg, Spiegel and Stein, where the soils are made up of mainly a mixture of Wagramer loess, gneiss and flint.

“We pay attention to the closed circuits that favor the life of beneficial organisms and ensure a diversity of varieties in the vineyard. We green our vineyards, use lighter machinery and support soil fertility. For the coming years we have set ourselves the goal, of continuing to scale back to give nature the place it deserves. To produce even more authentic wines from Wagram!”



Bernhard Ott

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Weingut Gerhard & Brigitte Pittnauer

Neusiedlersee, Austria

Gerhard and Brigitte Pittnauer cultivate 18 hectares of vines and are passionately dedicated to the cultivation of St. Laurent. The "Pittis" are convinced of the potential of this variety, which thrives on the calcareous gravel soils of their different individual vineyards. In 2006, the transition period to biodynamic viticulture began and since then Gerhard Pittnauer has entirely given up using selected yeasts, any enrichment and aromatization with wood. Only the moderate use of sulfur is permitted at Pittnauer, which provides the necessary stability to the wines. The result is vivid, durable wines with origin-specific typicality, individual stylistics and low alcohol content.

"I want to maintain my path of the past years, and continue to press purist wines which are defined exclusively by grape variety, origin and our personal style. The findings from the biodynamic cultivation of our vineyards extend to the wine in the cellar; resulting in a pronounced individuality and vitality in our wines."



Gerhard Pittnauer

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Weingut Caus Preisinger

Neusiedlersee, Austria

The vineyards of Claus Preisinger lie on the northern edge of Lake Neusiedl. Different single-sites and soil types are cultivated on an area of almost 30 hectares, which offer a lot of variety and requires concentration on the essentials of each. Claus Preisinger's focus lays on the domestic red varieties Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch and St. Laurent, and extends its portfolio with Pinot Noir and Merlot. Ten percent of the area is devoted to white wine: Pinot Blanc and Grüner Veltliner.

This winemaker who – architecturally as well as with his winery – shows a very individual style from modernity and tradition, converted to biodynamic farming for more individuality in his wines. The vibrant flora and fauna in his vineyards today reflect this, even when the Pannonian heat makes the air shimmer. In the cellar, the conscious renunciation of any means of treatment and filtration creates living witnesses of the biodynamic movement.

“Biodynamic farming is the most sustainable and exciting method of land management and winemaking for me. It raises awareness of people, vineyards and nature in general. And above all, it raises the profile of my wines.”



Claus Preisinger

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Weingut Ökonomierat Rebholz

Pfalz, Germany

The Ökonomierat Rebholz winery in Siebeldingen, Pfalz, represents 22 hectares of vineyards in excellent locations. The special, somehow different, wines of the "Rebholz type" owe their existence and success very much to their terroir and to the family philosophy, well-kept for three generations: little intervention, but consideration of the soils and regional conditions. For three generations, the white and red wines of the house have had to make due with what nature has given them: these are the deep, old geological formations of the Rhine and Queich valleys: rotliegend (Permian), red sandstone (Triassic), limestone (Triassic), keuper (Triassic), slope and terrace gravel (Quaternary), loess and loam (Pleistocene).

These, and the proximity of the climate-regulating Pfalz Forest, produce wines that have always displayed a lot of character and rarely follow the usual fashions of taste: leading international dry Rieslings and white – recently also red – Pinot varieties, Muscat and Gewurztraminer. The craft of Hansjörg Rebholz, who has been a member of "VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter" since 1991, and his passionate devotion to biodynamics do their part.

"Biodynamics is a very decisive factor for us, to constantly create new and unique wines every year from different vineyards. This only occurs by and with nature, and only with an all-encompassing sustainable approach. It is incredibly interesting that much of what affects wine and nature, man cannot yet scientifically explain."



Hansjörg Rebholz

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Weingut Dr Wehrheim

Pfalz, Germany

The fourth generation of the Wehrheim family produces classically dry wines in the southern Palatine region at the highest level of quality. Together with his son Franz, Karlheinz Wehrheim is the owner of the estate, which has been a member of the "VDP.Paradikatsweingüter" association since 1991. Both are concerned with optimally bringing out the original characteristics of the mature wine. Today they cultivate around 20 hectares of vineyards, and since 2006 the Wehrheims have worked according to biodynamic guidelines.

The best known single-site vineyards on the estate are Kastanienbusch, Mandelberg and Sonnenschein; their soils consist largely of shell limestone, and on Kastanienbusch also weathered sandstone and red slate. They offer the climatic conditions and the appropriate terroir to produce great wines. The focus is on Riesling and Pinot Blanc. Pinot Gris and Chardonnay are cultivated as further white varieties; for their red wines, Karlheinz and Franz Wehrheim rely on Pinot Noir.

"Because the idea of sustainability is decisive for family wineries. The vineyard, the winemaker, the family and the environment form a union."



Franz & Karlheinz Wehrheim

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Weingut Franz R. Weninger

Mittelburgenland & Eisenberg, Austria und Sopron-Balf, Hungary

For 35 years, the family Weninger have devoted themselves with all their passion to Blaufränkisch, and now have six Blaufränkisch vineyards in three areas, with a total of 28 hectares in Austria and Hungary. Their vines grow on clay in Horitschon in central Burgenland, on slate in Eisenberg in South Burgenland, on lime in Ritzing in central Burgenland and on mica in Balf-Sopron. Very early on, father Franz Weninger and son Franz R. Weninger agreed that the character of a vineyard is only detectable on a healthy living soil, which is why converting to biodynamic farming in Austria and Hungary in 2006, was the logical conclusion. Both winemakers took this step out of inner conviction, with great mutual support and a lot of exchange. In 2000, son Franz Reinhard took over management of the winery in Hungary, and in 2011 also in Austria. In addition to his main grape variety Blaufränkisch, Franz R. Weninger has also been producing a pioneering Welschriesling in wooden barrels from Eisenberg for a few years.

“Biodynamics just feels right, the operation is balanced. The family and our employees are happy. Even our wines shine, as do our vineyards.”



Franz R. Weninger

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Weingut Fritz Wieninger

Wien, Austria

The Wieninger winery stands for top wines from Austria's capital, the only metropolis in the world that has its own wine-growing area within the city limits. Vienna is situated on the final eastern slopes of the Alps and has very sandy loess soils such as on the Bisamberg, and sandstone and weathered limestone soils with a high lime content on the Nussberg. Another highly characteristic element of Viennese wine is the Danube, which separates the two vineyards and influences the climate. Fritz Wieninger cultivates 50 hectares of vineyards, where the Viennese Gemischte Satz (vineyard blend) plays an important role. So the passionate Viennese seeks to bring out the typical Viennese character in his wine. In addition, for him every wine also reflects the personality of the winemaker and has much to do with emotion and individuality. In 2006, Fritz Wieninger converted five hectares to biodynamic farming as a trial, and harvested the first biodynamically produced grapes in 2007. The results pleased him so much that he decided to switch the entire vineyard to biodynamic operation in 2008.

"Biodynamics is a way of life that doesn't focus only on the vineyard. Resource efficient and sustainable production is one thing, but also social responsibility towards our employees is a key issue. A winery with twenty-five employees can be a family – if you treat your employees like family."



Fritz Wieninger

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Weingut Philipp Wittmann

Rheinhessen, Deutschland

The Wittmann winery, a member of the prestigious "VDP.Die Prädikatsweingüter" association since 1990, is one of the leading estates in Rheinhessen in Rhineland-Pfalz. Since 1663, the Wittmanns and their winemaking forefathers have been in the old market town of Westhofen in the south of region. Today Philipp Wittmann and his wife Eva Clüsserath-Wittmann jointly manage the 28-acre estate whose vineyards have been organically farmed since 1990, and biodynamically since 2004. Most of the vineyard is planted with Riesling, although the white Pinot varieties and Sylvaner also have a long tradition at the winery.

Through biodynamic cultivation and its accompanying intensive vineyard management, and traditional winemaking methods, wines with profoundly specific character, great terroir features and high quality are produced. The "VDP.Grosse" rated individual vineyards are Morstein, Brunnenhäuschen, Kirchspiel and Aulerde, the soils of which are mainly characterized by clay marl with limestone deposits. Philipp Wittmann is a member of the VDP Steering Committee.

*"For me, the most interesting aspect of becoming a member of **respekt**-BIODYN is the pragmatic agricultural approach, with the help of biodynamics, to producing the highest quality grapes – and discussing this with colleagues."*



Philipp Wittmann

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Weingut Herbert & Carmen Zillinger

Weinviertel, Austria

Since 2007, Herbert Zillinger has been managing the sixteen hectares of vineyards together with his wife Carmen. Zillinger's vineyards are located in the Vienna basin, where a sediment sets the tone: the loess. The fine loess sand (Schluff) consists of quartz, feldspar, mica silicates and clay minerals. Zillinger's most important single-sites are called "Weintal", "In Haiden", "Steinberg" and "Vogelsang".

Herbert Zillinger is one of the leading winemakers in Austria's largest wine-growing region, the Weinviertel. The high quality and diversity of his wines make all the difference. He devotes himself body and soul, especially to Grüner Veltliner and Traminer, and he renounces compromises, following his gut feelings especially in the vineyards and in the cellar. He has consciously decided against modern methods of cultivation, and allows his wines the time and leeway to develop and mature, as his grandfathers did. The fact that he has gone a step further after his conversion to organic agriculture into the most primordial production methods – biodynamics – simply follows. He has been a member of respekt-BIODYN since 2016.

*"We are respekt members,
because the name is the program."*



Herbert & Carmen Zillinger

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14. further information

An overview of the main differences between the following forms of cultivation:

1. conventional cultivation
2. integrated production
3. biological-organic winemaking
4. biodynamic winemaking

14.1. conventional cultivation

Insecticides, herbicides, botryticides and artificial fertilizers may be used. The soil must be kept permanently open, which leads to erosion and humus decomposition.

- Insecticides are used to combat pests, yet beneficial organisms are also affected.
- Herbicides are used in weed control (called "accompanying growth" in biological wine production) and destroy living microorganisms.
- Botryticides are used in cases of Botrytis (gray rot), they have a large influence on the physiological ripeness of the grapes and on the natural yeast population.

14.2. integrated production

Integrated production is similar to the conventional winegrowing, but with restrictions.

- Certain pesticides that spare beneficial insects are allowed. By changing often between the approved drug groups, farmers try to prevent resistance.
- Artificial fertilizers are allowed, however there are limits on the amounts.
- The amount and frequency of the use of chemical agents are checked by competent inspection bodies.
- Insecticides, herbicides and botryticides are allowed.

14.3. biological-organic winemaking

- Allowed agricultural control agents: sulfur and copper.
- Insecticides, herbicides, Botryticides and artificial fertilizers are forbidden.
- Vineyard ground must be planted and may only be kept open only for temporary periods.

14.4. biodynamic winemaking

- Allowed agricultural control agents: sulfur and copper.
- Use of teas and homeopathic preparations for the strengthening of vitality and immunity.
- The build up of humus serves the nutritional security of the plants, and as a habitat for microorganisms.
- Compost from straw and cow manure.

15. Contact

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