

Weingut Gruber Rössitz  
Rössitz, Weinviertel, Austria

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*Spiritus vinosi Gruberialis*

*biologicis*



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## **The power of three**

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*Three generations, three siblings, three spirits united: Maria, Ewald and Christian have found common ground in the family-run business in the western part of the Weinviertel region: wine. Whether in the vineyard, the wine cellar or in sales, each sibling concentrates on what they love and know best at the Gruber Röschitz winery.*

## **Family business at its best!**

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The Gruber family has been growing wine in Röschitz since 1814. Until the middle of the last century, the wine was grown almost solely for private consumption. The grandfather began to create solid foundations for the winery. At that time, there were three ha of vineyards.

Ewald Gruber Senior started dreaming about converting the farm into a model winery as a young man. Therefore, it has always been important to him to cultivate the vineyards himself in order to ensure the top quality of his grapes. This is a goal he has pursued with passion.

Today, the Grubers cultivate about 80 ha of vineyards around Röschitz. In 2012, Maria, Ewald and Christian took over the winery – a new era has begun.

*“We only use organic methods in all our vineyards and always work in harmony with nature. By doing so, we would like to raise awareness through our natural and sustainable cultivation methods: awareness of nature, awareness of the environment and sustainable cultivation for future generations,” the siblings say.*

The three siblings are certainly not new to the business. Their parents gave them enough time to find their place in the winery. Furthermore, they also had the opportunity to gain experience in wineries in other countries, and in other business alike – all of which was very important in the early stages of their profession.

### **Three of six children**

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#### Ewald – The winemaker with natural flair

Ewald has been responsible for the vinification of the wines for more than ten years. This ensures the consistent style and quality of the wines. However, he is always eager to try out something new.

*“In the past, the opinion was wide-spread that wine is made in the cellar. Therefore, I often say that my cellar is the “hatchery of our wines”. I am excited about their development, but I hardly ever intervene in the process. What I need are healthy grapes, time and necessary instinct. I endeavour to produce wine with care but without any frills – as natural as possible. But I like to experiment and my urge to do so grows stronger and stronger. This makes it possible to create very interesting wines that need time,”*  
Ewald explains.

#### Maria, the woman behind marketing and admin

Meanwhile, Maria has created a new advertising concept with the “Wine Spirits”. She is also responsible for the intensive exchange of information with the customers. At the same time international sales has been continuously expanded.

*“Wine lovers all around the world appreciate the unique characteristics of our Grüner Veltliner and Riesling, which both reflect the minerality of the granite soil on the one hand and the fruity and spicy taste of loess soil on the other,”* Maria emphasises.

Today, Gruber wines are available in 17 different countries. In this respect, it has been a great advantage to get Franz Hofstätter on board, as he is an expert in exports with many years of experience.

#### Christian, the man in the vineyard

The youngest of the Gruber brothers has committed himself to the vineyards. Some vineyards are rather small, but the wine estate comprises a total of 150 of them. This often makes work in the vineyards a real logistical challenge, but it also means that the advantages of the different microclimates can be optimally exploited. This means that

the wines have distinct character, reflecting the unique terroir of Röschitz. *“I have always spent a great deal of time outdoors. When I was a little boy, I loved to walk around in my red boots all day and discover the surroundings. I developed a close connection with nature at an early age and it made me more sensitive to it. Today, in my (nearly) daily work in the vineyards, I listen to the signs of nature. This gives me a greater affinity with the plants, the soil and the environment in general. And this is exactly what we want to pass on with our wines.”* Christian says.

Since 2015, Christian has been responsible for the transition to organic certification for our wines. This process is supported by the “helpers” we mentioned before, and whose significance is explained on the wine labels.

## **In the vineyard – The soil makes the wine**

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Since 2015, the Grubers have cultivated their vineyards according to organic guidelines. As we are passionate about this, this decision was easy to take. It hasn't made work easier, though, but it has made it more sustainable and exciting.

### organic – biological agriculture

The most important characteristics of organic agriculture include the prohibitive use of easily soluble mineral fertilizers and herbicides; a conscious cultivation of the vineyard, to naturally promote the health and fertility of the soil, and a respect for its natural cycle.

The organic-biological viticulture is also known as organic viticulture or bio-wine. It differs from integrated production in that chemical/synthetic nitrogen-based fertilisers, freely soluble phosphorus fertilisers and chemical/synthetic pesticides may not be used, and no chemical herbicides may be employed in soil management.

## The characteristics of Röschitz

Röschitz offers great conditions for growing wine. It may even be the best place for growing wine in the entire Weinviertel region. Because Röschitz is an exception: There are no rich black earth soils – instead, arid soil over primary rock (granite) which is partly covered with loess. “We carefully select the type of vine according to the soil. On the one hand, it is possible to grow Grüner Veltliner on both types with the following difference: The primary rock makes the wine more intense and strong, but not fat. The loess soil turns the Veltliner into a full-bodied wine with a fruity finish, and very mature in its youth. This means that nature determines the characteristics of the wine. On the other hand, Riesling is, of course, always grown on primary rock.” The vineyards are located between 250 and 350 m above sea level.

Primary rock (granite)



Loess and clay



## **In the cellar – Vinification**

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“Only healthy grapes are allowed into my cellar,” Ewald Gruber explains. The grapes are already selected in the vineyards according to strict rules. And in the cellar the principle of gravity applies. The grapes are handled with utmost care. The use of pumps is avoided whenever possible. Patience has top priority. The wine gets all the time it needs.

White wines are fermented in stainless steel tanks at approx. 18 °C which allows the fruit to be preserved.

A few white wines, such as Chardonnay and some Grüner Veltliner (Mühlberg), are partly fermented (10-15 %) in wooden barrels like 2.000 Liter.

## **Black Vintage**

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The main grape variety grown in the vineyards is Grüner Veltliner. However, over the last couple of years, the Gruber family has also directed their attention on growing regional red wines: great Burgundy wine such as St. Laurent and Pinot Noir feel right at home in Röschitz. This can be guaranteed by finding the perfect picking time and the ideal degree of maturity of the grapes. The grapes picked according to this principle are well-selected and processed in a very gentle way. Now, what is the best wine? The Gruber family has the answer: Black Vintage.

From now on, there will be a Black Vintage series every year, dedicated to the best and most interesting wine of the winery. For this series, we pick the most pleasant and charismatic wine of the year, regardless of its type or location. The vintage hero will only be selected and bottled at the very end of vinification. The first two members of the Black Vintage series are unsulphurated and unfiltered red wines of the St. Laurent and Pinot Noir wine varieties from the great year 2015 – they will shortly be followed by splendid curiosities in white.

By the way: Every Black Vintage year will be represented by a different Wine Spirit sitting on the label and looking after its precious contents inside. The two red wines herald the dawning of a new era in a limited and hand-numbered edition. Therefore, it is clear that the Gruber siblings, Ewald, Maria and Christian, along with their little helpers, are writing another two successful chapters in the family history.



## Grüner Veltliner

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Grüner Veltliner is THE Austrian white wine. It is a widely cultivated grape variety which is, except for some smaller growing areas in neighbouring countries like Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, most closely associated with Austria. This is also the place where Grüner Veltliner is planted with great care and where it is treated with respect. With the discovery of the “St. Georgen” vine in 2009, Austria truly deserves to be the place of origin of this grape variety.

### The history of Grüner Veltliner

The variety was first mentioned in a document in the 18th century, albeit as Grüner Muskateller. At the end of the 19th century Grüner Veltliner was traded as a new vine variety, mainly in the Retz area. Michael Much, a native of Straning, was said to have served his father Radetzki in Italy and taken vines from there to Austria, which he then grafted onto his vines at home. When this grape had become very successful, many of his colleagues secretly cut off vines for themselves and therefore increased the number of these grapes in and around Straning, but also throughout Lower Austria.

### Characteristics

Even today, the origins of Grüner Veltliner are not absolutely clear. One parent grape variety was Traminer, but the second parent grape cannot be defined for certain. The name Grüner Veltliner is relatively young. The wine was also known as Weissgipfler (because of the white tips of its young leaves), Grünmuskateller or Grüner Muskateller.

The big, greenish-yellow grapes are mid- to late-ripening and have a peppery, spicy and fruity aroma. The vines grow on arid as well as on fertile soils.

## Weinviertel DAC – The peppery Grüner Veltliner from the Weinviertel region

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DAC: Origin is crucial

DAC (Districtus Austriae Controllatus) is Latin for “Controlled District of Austria”. The DAC label is used for tested regionally typical quality wines in Austria. The Weinviertel was the first Austrian region to be approved as a DAC region in 2003 as it was the first winegrowing area which decided to focus on the distinct and always recognisable character of its Grüner Veltliner. The internationally known guarantee of quality and origin has been a priority ever since. The “Weinviertel DAC” can be easily recognised by the “bänderole” (around the neck or on top of the cork) showing the outline of the Weinviertel region.

The Weinviertel: a unique region, a unique wine!

If it is a Weinviertel DAC wine, it is characterised by the peppery, fruity Grüner Veltliner – just as many wine lovers like it. Strict rules guarantee its high quality which is regularly checked. If the tests are passed, the denomination Weinviertel DAC can be kept.

Checks & strict taste criteria: Quality consumers can rely on

The basic requirement for the Weinviertel DAC is that the wine has to meet all the strict criteria of an Austrian quality wine. There is an additional tasting of Weinviertel DAC wines: A committee determines whether the wine has not only meets the high quality required but also the regionally typical taste. The wine tasters get some help in the form of reference and gauge wines. Only after having passed this examination is it allowed to use the Weinviertel DAC cap and to be treated as a representative and ambassador of the Weinviertel region.

(Source: [www.weinvierteldac.at](http://www.weinvierteldac.at) )

## **The Weinviertel region – Its special climate**

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The first thing which springs to mind when you see or hear the name “Weinviertel” (wine district) describes the region perfectly. It really is the largest winegrowing area in Austria with approx. 13,365 hectares. It is also known as “Viertel unter dem Manhartsberg” (region at the Manhartsberg) and is located in the northeastern part of Lower Austria.

The area around Röschitz, with just over 400 mm of precipitation, however, does differ significantly from the rest of Lower Austria. The Weinviertel region is characterised by the Pannonian climate: it is thermally continental, but in terms of humidity, it has an oceanic character.

For years, this climate generates the following mean values (1971-2000):

- Average annual temperature: +9 °C to +10 °C
- Average maximum annual temperature: +33 °C
- Average minimum annual temperature: -18 °C
- Duration of sunshine: 1750 to 1900 hours per year
- Average annual precipitation: 400-600 mm
- Days with precipitation of more than 1 mm: 80-90 per year
- Days with snow cover of more than 1 cm: 30-35 per year
- Summer days (max. temp. over 25 °C): 55 to 65 per year
- Hot days (max. temp. over 30 °C): 15 days per year
- High wind days (peak wind speeds higher than 60 km/h): 15 to 35 days per year

Roughly speaking, this means hot summers and cold winters with generally very little precipitation. The abrupt change from winter to spring is particularly characteristic. Most precipitation is in summer – with short but heavy thundery showers. There are hardly any long lasting rainy periods. In winter, there is not a lot of snowfall and when there is, it is often immediately blown away by the wind.

(Source: ZAMG Wien, E.Rudel; Geologische Bundesanstalt Wien, T. Hofmann.)

## **Röschitz**

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Most vineyards are located to the west of the village centre. When you drive into the village, you do not realise that this is a wine-growing municipality with 300 hectares of vineyards. The only clue is the granite soil. Some vignettes are surrounded by a wood, which gives the wine its fresh and cool character. The chilly nights and the breeze from the Weinviertel region make the grapes particularly fruity. The wind ensures that the grapes dry faster after rainfall. This prevents nearly all kinds of rot.

The flowering of the vines can usually be seen from early to mid-May. The Grubers harvest from the middle of September (light wines) and don't finish before the beginning of November. Compared to other winegrowing areas in Austria, the harvest time in Röschitz starts nearly three weeks later. The long maturing time ensures that the grapes can mature physiologically and at the same time develop individually. Quite often, an Indian summer comes back in autumn with some warm temperatures and a lot of sunshine.

### **Gruber Röschitz vineyards**

#### **Reipersberg**

Exposure:	facing south-southeast
Altitude:	350 m
Grape variety:	Grüner Veltliner
Age of vines:	50-60 years
Soil:	arid soil over primary rock with a high humus content

Reipersberg is the Grubers' exemplary vineyard. It is unique due to its arid soil over primary rock (granite). The soil over primary rock is the reason why thinning out the grapes is so important. Otherwise the vine would be exposed to drought stress. The roots of the 60-year-old vines have already grown deep into the granite soil. They provide the grapes with essential nutrients. The vines are planted from west to east. The foliage protects the grapes from too much sun, but they can enjoy the sunshine until late afternoon. This means they can ripen gently, and a long ripening period is guaranteed.

### Hundspoint

Exposure:	facing south
Altitude:	300 m
Grape variety:	Grüner Veltliner
Age of vines:	40-50 years
Soil:	loess soil with a high humus content

The south-facing vineyard is located right next to the famous “Weberkeller” wine cellar with its loess-clay carvings. This is where you will meet all kinds of celebrities – not at the table, but on the cellar walls!

The clayey loess soil stores water perfectly, which is particularly important in dry years. The wines are characterised by juicy grapes. On fertile soils, clover is also planted in every other row. This not only looks attractive – it also has a positive effect as clover naturally supplies nitrogen and loosens the soil.

### Mühlberg

Exposure:	facing south
Altitude:	330 m
Grape variety:	Grüner Veltliner
Age of vines:	60 years
Soil:	arid soil over primary rock

The oldest Gruber vineyard is located not far from Hundspoint, but boasts arid soil over primary rock. The microclimate is very distinct. In former days, the south-facing vineyard faced towards an old mill; today the two church towers dominate the landscape. The vines are extremely thinned out with only one grape per shoot. This enhances the concentration of taste in every single grape. The grapes are healthy and ripen more easily. They are hand-picked – never before the beginning of November. The south-facing location guarantees many hours of sunshine and increases the physiological ripeness of the grapes.

### Königsberg

Exposure:	facing south
Altitude:	320 m
Grape variety:	Riesling, Grüner Veltliner
Age of vines:	Young plants of up to 25 years
Soil:	arid soil over primary rock

This is where a lot of Riesling grows, along with some Grüner Veltliner which has been newly planted here. The Grubers plant the young vines close together in order to take away stress from the individual vines: double trunk, distances between rows of 2.30 m (instead of 3.50 m), vine distance of 0.70 m (instead of 1.20 m). Additionally, careful pruning also reduces stress: 1 cordon per vine.

### Hinterholz

Exposure:	facing south
Altitude:	350 m
Grape variety:	Chardonnay
Age of the vine:	30 years
Soil:	primary rock covered with loess

The literal translation of this location would be “behind wood”. Wood is a popular word for forest – and as the name suggests, this vineyard is surrounded by a small wood. Therefore, cool nights are the result, which make the grapes particularly fresh and fruity. The vines are planted from south to north. A lot of sunshine makes for strong wines. Good conditions for Chardonnay.

### Galgenberg

Exposure: facing south-southeast  
Altitude: 330 m  
Grape variety: St. Laurent, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon  
Age of the vine: 15 years  
Soil: rich loess soil with chalk content

### Lauschen

Exposure: facing south-southeast (located in a basin)  
Altitude: 320 m  
Grape variety: Zweigelt  
Age of the vine: 25 years  
Soil: clayey loess soil

## **The wines**

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The dry climate and the good aeration make for particularly healthy grapes. In terms of precipitation, it comes down to its distribution: Rösschitz is mainly well-known for its straightforward and elegant wines. However, it is also possible to produce full-bodied and strong wines due to partly rich loess soils. The dry climate and the primary rock force the roots of the vines to grow down deep into the soil. Therefore, the Grubers agree on the following point: "It is extremely important to select the right type of vine according to the soil. Grüner Veltliner is planted on loess soil as well as on soil over primary rock." The primary rock makes the wine more intense and strong, but not fat. The acidity has a youthful and refreshing effect. Nature provides for the characteristics of the wine.

### Grape varieties

White wine:

Grüner Veltliner (50 %)

Riesling (7 %)

Other grapes: Gelber Muskateller, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Welschriesling

Red wine:

Zweigelt (25 %)

Other grapes: Pinot Noir, St. Laurent, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon

## **Contact**

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