

LAY & WHEELER
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Austria

New
RELEASES

THE 2019 VINTAGE

A FUTURE LEGEND



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Using this Guide

We are delighted to present the latest releases from Austria.

More specifically, all the wines selected are white, and from vineyards located to the north-east of Vienna where the great Danube river and its tributaries flow.

These producers grow Riesling and Grüner Veltliner plus small quantities of other varieties, to produce world-class wines in the regions of **Wachau, Kremstal** and **Kamptal**.

Grapes & Maps

To help you explore these wines we have included a map of the region, a guide to the grape varieties and an explanation of key designations.

Prices

At the time of print, all prices are up to date, and quoted in bond. Any changes will be reflected on our website.

@ Instagram

Our growers are generous with their social media presences, so we encourage you to follow them, and to see behind the scenes. We'd like to help you discover their accounts by indicating their handle, where applicable, next to this symbol.

[@ @laywheeler]

Region Report

When looking to impress wine aficionados, I've found some of the most consistently high performing dry whites are Austria's Rieslings and Grüner Veltliners. These bottlings amaze time and time again with their balance of intense fruit and thrilling minerality. They age spectacularly. They're infinitely complex.

These wines are crying out for a place at the top table, and so we have found them one.

I've developed this range for you of Austria's greatest dry whites, from a year, 2019, that will go down as a legendary vintage for the country.

I started tasting a few wines in early May, and quickly realised that they were something out of the ordinary. These wines have a vibrancy that's only found in the greatest vintages.

The more I've tasted, the clearer it is that 2019 is special: a vintage that I'm sure will be spoken about for decades to come.

It continues the "legend of the niners", following 1999 and 2009 which were both outstanding vintages in Austria.

The product of a warm and dry vintage, with perfect harvesting conditions, what's most remarkable is that the wines maintain a freshness and lift, alongside intensity of fruit. Reading over my raw notes, I find one word time and time again: 'explosive'. These are wines that wow with their power.



This is our most extensive Austrian offer yet. There are seven producers, all of whom are found in Niederösterreich, or lower Austria. More specifically, their vineyards all run along the Danube river, and its tributaries, from the sub-regions of Wachau, Kamptal, and Kremstal.

Austria's most legendary names are here, including F.X. Pichler, Knoll, and Franz Hirtzberger. There are historic estates like Stadt Krems and Schloss Gobelsberg. And there are up and coming stars: Mathias Hirtzberger and Rainer Wess.

These Rieslings and Grüner Veltliners are bottles that will go toe-to-toe with the world's finest whites, thanks to their quality, value, and longevity.

Best wishes,

Robbie Toothill
September 2020



Austria

The Sub-regions

Wachau

Undoubtedly Austria's most famous winemaking region, the narrow valley of the Wachau runs along the Danube between the cooler Spitzer Graben in the west, to the warmer Loibenberg in the east.

Two powerful climatic systems meet here - the western Atlantic and eastern Pannonian - and that creates tension. When one considers the microclimatic differences that come about due to the presence of the wide Danube, the steep, rocky slopes, and the cool downdrafts that comes from the forested Waldviertel, it's clear there are perfect conditions for some of the world's greatest Rieslings and Grüner Veltliners to develop stark tension between ripeness and piercing acidity.

Kremstal

Named after the town of Krems an der Donau, Kremstal sits between Wachau and Kamptal. The 'Stein' area of the region touches the Wachau, and is geologically similar to its better-known neighbour.

In general, Kremstal is a region where the terraced river valley is well protected from the cool northerly winds, but where the warm air currents of the Pannonian climate zone from the east can make themselves keenly felt.

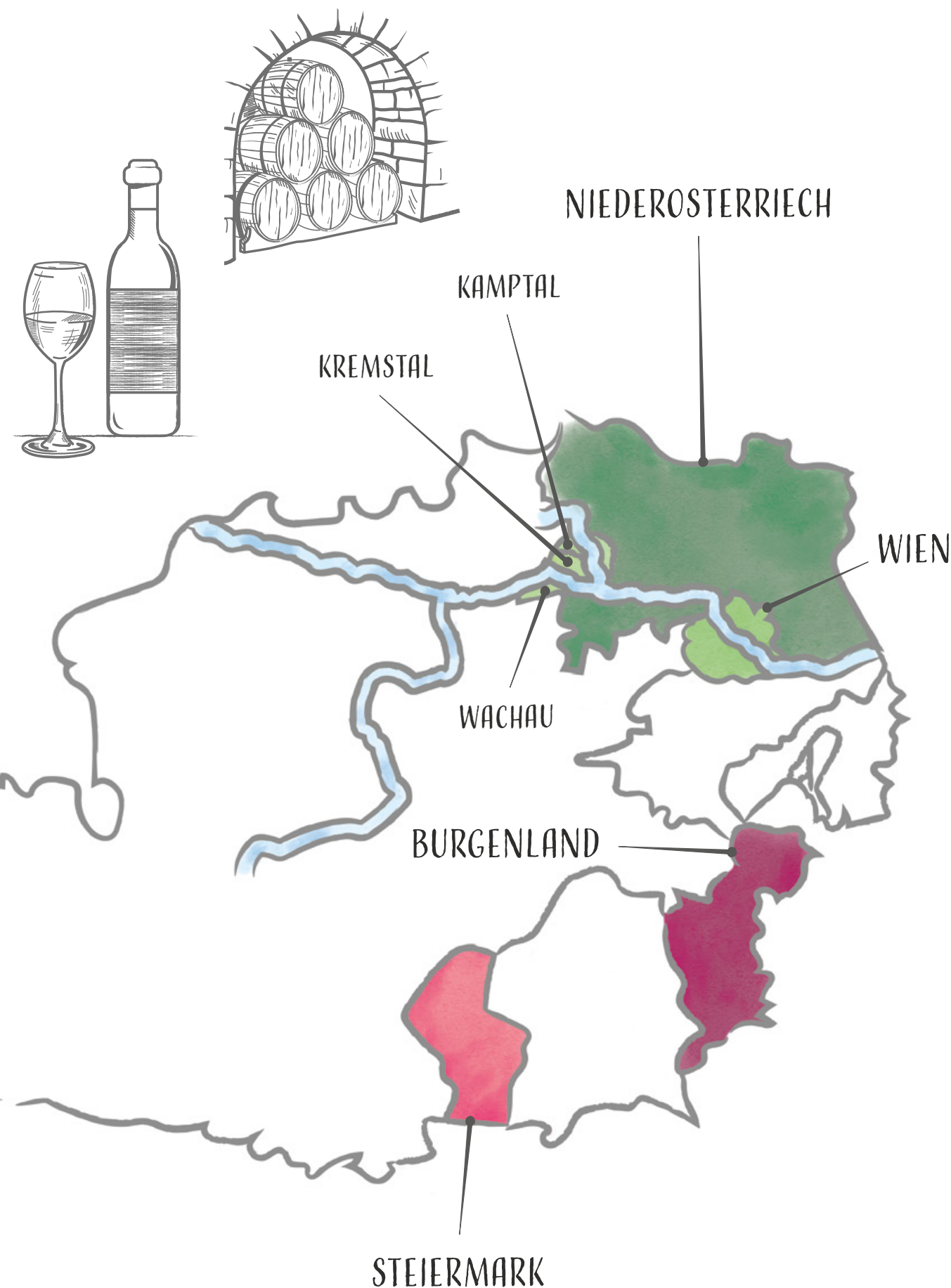
This is a warmer, riper region than the Kamptal, or the Wachau. The wines are juicy and focussed, with more ripeness and intensity of fruit than those of Kamptal, and much of the Wachau.

Kamptal

Named after the Kamp river, which flows into the Danube near Krems, the region of Kamptal centres on the town of Langenlois, a wine lover's paradise. It's a complex region geologically, with a mix of volcanic soils and wind-blown loess, with plenty of gravel, too.

At the heart of the region is the legendary Heiligenstein vineyard, with its red desert sandstone. And although "heilig" might mean "holy" in German, the name actually refers to the "hellish" sunshine: this is a hot, dry vineyard.

Schloss Gobelsburg are the pinnacle here, with a history of winemaking dating back to 1171.



Key Designations

Steinfeder, Federspiel & Smaragd

Within the region of the Wachau, these terms designate the ripeness of the wines - and generally too, their position up the hierarchy.

Steinfeder wines are the lightest, at under 11.5% abv.

Federspiels come in at between 11.5% and 12.5%, and are generally delicious for drinking young, or as an aperitif.

Smaragd are the most serious wines, that come in at 12.5% or over. These are the region's real calling card: the best marry the weight of fruit with sizzling acidity, and are ageworthy bottlings.

Erste Lage/1.OTW

In Kremstal and Kamptal (as well as a few other Austrian regions, but not the Wachau), these are the top sites - loosely translated as premiers crus. There are now just 81 sites in Austria that are designated as such.



The Grapes

Grüner Veltliner

The most planted grape variety in Austria, and often considered the national grape, Grüner Veltliner is incredibly versatile. Often peppery and spicy, the best examples tread the line between Chardonnay's weight of fruit and texture, and Riesling's minerality. This white grape is an outstanding conduit of terroir.

Riesling

For many wine lovers, Riesling is the pinnacle: the grape that produces the world's greatest whites (alongside Chardonnay). In Austria, these wines show more body and richness than you'd find in Germany, but maintain spectacular minerality in the greatest sites. Examples will age for decades.

Wachau



WEINGUT KNOLL UNTERLOIBEN

With some of the world's most recognisable labels, Weingut Knoll is found in the village of Unterloiben, at the eastern edge of the Wachau.

It's run by Emmerich Knoll, the third generation winemaker here, who took over from his father, also called Emmerich. For many, they are the pinnacle of Austrian wine. While the label is memorable, Emmerich himself doesn't enjoy showy wines. These are as elegant, poised, and focussed as any you'll find. They are unforgettable, ageworthy wines, that speak of a sense of place with real precision. They're a must-have addition to any fine wine cellar.



2019 Grüner Veltliner Loibner, Federspiel

Plenty of lime on the nose, with a hint of spice, and sea spray, too. The palate is so vibrant and focussed. Beautiful tension, with a grippy, mouthwatering finish. Stunningly good value.

£ £12.50 per bottle

£ £75 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2021 - 2033

2019 Grüner Veltliner Ried Schutt, Smaragd

A relatively opulent nose, with notes of ripe lemons and Seville oranges, and a hint of candied pineapple. There's lovely weight on the palate, but with dancing acidity, and plenty of spice. Outstanding length.

£ £28 per bottle

£ £168 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2022 - 2040

2019 Grüner Veltliner Ried Loibenberg, Smaragd

This needs plenty of swirling, but with air come notes of blood orange, and plenty of creamy minerality. The palate is powerful and intense, with lots of spice and a very savoury, saline finish. Impressive.

£ £28 per bottle

£ £168 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2022 - 2040

2019 Riesling Loibner, Federspiel

Very floral and elegant, there's a lightness of touch here. Notes of orange blossom and plenty of citrus zest, and just a hint of spearmint on the finish. Vibrant.

£ £17 per bottle

£ £102 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2021 - 2033

2019 Riesling Ried Pfaffenberg, Kabinett

Really lovely lemon sherbet character to this, with notes of wild flowers, and just a hint of bitter orange. The finish is very clean and dry, and there's excellent persistence.

£ £17 per bottle

£ £102 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2021 - 2033

2019 Riesling Ried Loibenberg, Smaragd

Really explosive and intense on the nose, with notes of grapefruit pith, as well as some minty, herbal notes. Very long and focussed, but with impressive weight, this is a stunningly pure expression.

£ £32 per bottle

£ £192 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2022 - 2045

2019 Riesling Ried Kellerberg, Smaragd

Such a pure, focussed, explosive wine, the 2019 Kellerberg is a future legend. This is so tense and textured, but with such depth and weight to the fruit. A finish that lasts for minutes, and a texture that coats the mouth. Bravo.

£ £32 per bottle

£ £192 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2022 - 2045



F.X. PICHLER

OBERLOIBEN


Now run from their modern, spaceship-like winery overlooking their vines by Lucas and his German wife, it was his father, Franz Xaver (F.X.), who put the estate on the map. He built the winery in 1971. But the family have been farmers in the region for five generations, so few understand the terroir better here than the Pichlers. Their wines are monumental: bottlings that stun with their texture and weight of fruit. These are more upfront than their near neighbours Knoll. This is a winery making true Grands Crus, from the Wachau's spectacular terroir.

 @weingut_fxpichler

2019 Grüner Veltliner Ried Liebenberg, Smaragd

The Liebenberg vineyard - or "love mountain" - is all planted to Grüner, with vines aged up to 65 years old. Spicy and intense, it's a wine all about texture and complexity, with spice, herbal notes, and intense fruit all swirling from the glass.


 **£42 per bottle**


 £252 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2022 - 2042

2019 Grüner Veltliner M, Smaragd

M stands for monumental, and this wine is only made in the finest vintages here. It comes from select parcels, and is picked later than the other wines. That makes it a richer, more powerful, more intense expression of Grüner. Tiny production, and not to be missed in 2019.

 **£62 per bottle**


 £372 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2022 - 2044

2019 Riesling Burgstall, Federspiel

Burgstall is a sunny site, yet the constant prevailing wind ensures that it's one of the later ripening vineyards here. That leads to an interplay between intense fruit and a cool freshness. This is racy, rich, and delicious.

 **£23.50 per bottle**

 £141 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2021 - 2035

2019 Riesling Ried Steinertal, Smaragd

A cooler site, the Steinertal yields to Rieslings of pure elegance and definition, with plenty of white pepper, and fresh white peaches. There's bracing acidity, and a cleansing, tonic-like finish. A real delight.

 **£38 per bottle**


 £228 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2022 - 2042

2019 Riesling Ried Kellerberg, Smaragd

Many of those in the know call Kellerberg one of the Wachau's greatest vineyards. Here, a large diurnal range ensures wines that are impeccably ripe, but also with racy acidity and stunning definition of fruit. This is a true Grand Cru.

 **£65 per bottle**

 £390 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2022 - 2050



MATHIAS HIRTZBERGER

WÖSENDORF IN DER WACHAU

Brother of Franz, from the legendary Weingut Hirtzberger in Spitz, Mathias didn't originally want to follow the family tradition and work in wine. Yet the pull of the vineyards was too much. He initially returned to the Wachau to work with his brother, before starting his own estate at the other end of the valley, in 2014. He and his wife, Hanna, are producing Grüners of the very highest level, benefitting from the ripeness of the eastern end of the valley, alongside an impressive lightness of touch. This is a young winery destined to be a future great.

 @weinhofmeisteri

2019 Grüner Veltliner Treu, Federspiel

Floral and delicate on the nose, there's notes of lemon sherbet and a hint of tarragon on the palate. There's so much energy: this is mouth tingling and very long. An impressive wine for the price.

 **£15 per bottle**

 £90 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2021 - 2030

2019 Grüner Veltliner Spitaler, Smaragd

Quite rich and broad on the nose, there's a lovely herbal element here which keeps it very focussed. There's plenty of bitter orange and also a pomegranate character, with notes of rose petal alongside. Pure, long, and complex.

 **£27.50 per bottle**

 £165 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2022 - 2038



FRANZ HIRTZBERGER

SPITZ

Situated at the far western end of the Wachau, where the wines tend to be cooler and more mineral, Weingut Franz Hirtzberger crafts some of the most viscerally thrilling white wines that we've come across. Franz himself is a perfectionist, and his wines show remarkable balance of fruit and vibrant acidity. Of particular note is the Singerriedel Riesling. From the vineyard behind the estate's 13th century home, this is surely one of the world's greatest whites.

2019 Riesling Steinterrassen, Federspiel

A blend of Setzberg, Hochrain and Singerriedel, this is a stunning value white. Picked a few weeks before the Smaragd, it's incredibly pure and delicate on the nose, while there's density on the palate, and a long, focussed finish. This is elegant, yet explosive.

 **£18.50 per bottle**


 £111 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2021 - 2032

2019 Riesling Setzberg, Smaragd

The coolest site at almost 300m of altitude, on gneiss soils, this is so vibrant and energetic. Notes of lime blossom and grapefruit pith, and such a stony, mineral texture. This is long, pure, and incredibly focussed. Such a delight.

 **£40 per bottle**

 £240 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2022 - 2040

2019 Riesling Singerriedel, Smaragd

From the vineyard just behind the winery, this is a true Austrian Grand Cru. So elegant, finessed and expressive on the nose. There's notes of wet stones and vibrant acidity. This is beguiling, and so, so long. It's a cerebral wine - one that encourages reflection. But it does so while remaining delicious.

 **£65 per bottle**

 £390 per 6 bottles

 Drink 2023 - 2050



Kremstal



STADT KREMS

KREMS AN DER DONAU

Founded in 1452 as a source of revenue for the hospital of Krems, Weingut Stadt Krems remains owned by the municipality of Krems. They own 31 hectares of vineyards, all located within the city limits of Krems and its neighbouring district of Stein. Fritz Miesbauer and his team took over here in 2003, and immediately set about modernising the estate, replanting vineyards and smartening up the cellar. The wines have depth of fruit and real regional character. They're some of the most delicious examples of Austria's legendary grape varieties that you'll come across. The value for money is astonishing.

[@weingut_stadt_krems](#)

2019 Grüner Veltliner Stein

A charming Grüner with plenty of ripeness and intensity to the fruit. Notes of tarragon and white pepper, and a real grip to the palate. There's an impressive texture here, and a long and mouthwatering finish. This is an outstanding Grüner, and a brilliant introduction to the style.

£ **£11.50 per bottle**

£69 per 6 bottles

Drink 2021 - 2030

2019 Riesling Stein Schieferterrassen

A lovely floral element to the nose on this Riesling, with honeysuckle, and even rose petal shining through. There's a beautiful creaminess to the fruit here: this is so approachable, and so delicious. The finish has notes of white peach, and a vibrancy and energy that's hard to ignore. Excellent value.

£ **£11.50 per bottle**

£69 per 6 bottles

Drink 2021 - 2030

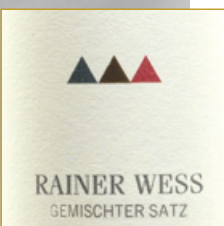
2019 Riesling Schreck

Schreck means fright in German, and takes its name from the watchmen who would scare away potential grape thieves. It's an incredibly steep site, and in 2019 has crafted a layered, complex, and enduring Riesling. There's a ripeness to the fruit, with notes of candied pineapple, and exotic spices. Quite a hedonistic wine, glorious in 2019.

£ **£25 per bottle**

£150 per 6 bottles

Drink 2022 - 2038



RAINER WESS

KREMS AN DER DONAU

Rainer Wess had worked all over, particularly in Bordeaux, before returning to his native Austria in the late 1990s. He fell in love with the Wachau, and even more so with Kremstal, and finally started his own estate here in 2003. The vineyards are farmed sustainably, which in practice often means organically, with the family now farming 15 hectares across Kremstal. He's now been joined by his daughter Christina and son David, and this young estate produces some of the most crystalline, elegant wines you'll find anywhere.

[@weinguttrainerwess](#)

2019 Gemischte Satz

This is a field blend of Grüner Veltliner, Muskateller, Sauvignon Blanc, Frühroter Veltliner, Müller Thurgau, Chardonnay and Neuburger, all from cooler sites, fermented together. Lovely nose of mandarin oranges and creamy citrus. So explosive on the palate, with mouthwatering acidity, and a savoury, saline finish. Delicious and cleansing.

£ **£10 per bottle**

£60 per 6 bottles

Drink 2021 - 2030

2019 Riesling Pfaffenberg 1.ÖTW

From a steep, south-east facing vineyard, located very close to the Danube, this site sees extreme temperatures and lots of wind. More intense and savoury than the Kogl, there's loads of fresh acidity and lots of grip on the palate. This is very long and saline, with excellent purity to the fruit.

£ **£19 per bottle**

£114 per 6 bottles

Drink 2022 - 2036

2019 Riesling Kogl 1.ÖTW

This is a south-facing vineyard that's protected from the strongest winds, and the wine results in a really rather opulent expression of Riesling, but one with lovely purity to the fruit. With coaxing come notes of nectarine and peach, as well as a floral element. The palate has nice roundness to it, with a generosity and creaminess, but still the explosive freshness that marks out the 2019s.

£ **£19 per bottle**

£114 per 6 bottles

Drink 2022 - 2036



Kamptal



SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG

LANGENLOIS

Few wineries globally have as impressive a history as Schloss Gobelsburg. A monastery dating back to the twelfth century, remarkably the monks were still producing the wine at the estate as recently as 1995 from their spectacular old vineyards. But in 1996 winemaker Michael Moosbrugger took over the winemaking responsibilities on a long term lease. It was evolution not revolution here, with slow restructuring of some vineyards, and winemaking that remains traditional, but is now more precise. The wines are stunning, with minerality, texture and soul in spades.

📷 @winery.schlossgobelsburg

2019 Grüner Veltliner Ried Renner 1.ÖTW

From the Gaisberg vineyard, this is from the slope. It is very intense, with plenty of cool acidity: this is so explosive and powerful. There's a smoky character to the minerality, with a finish that lasts for minutes. Brilliant at this price.

£ **£19 per bottle**

🍷 £114 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2021 - 2034

2019 Grüner Veltliner Ried Grub 1.ÖTW

This is from relatively high up the slope, from a well-protected site. There's a pepperiness here, and a ripe peach character. Lovely acidity and intensity, and a crystalline purity marks this out. There's a savoury, mouthwatering finish, with just a hint of candied orange peel.

£ **£23.50 per bottle**

🍷 £141 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2022 - 2036

2019 Riesling Gaisberg 1.ÖTW

A really beautiful nose on the 2019 Gaisberg, that comes from some of the winery's oldest vineyards. This is sometimes called the baby Heligstein, due to the similarities in terroir. The palate is so intense and concentrated, but with a lightness of touch about it. Notes of honeysuckle and pure lemon oil last for minutes. Bravo.

£ **£18 per bottle**

🍷 £108 per 6 bottles

🍷 Drink 2022 - 2036



Austria

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