

ZILLINGER*

A Weinviertel radical

A purist, uncompromising, origin-conscious and modern in the sense of "back to the roots". This describes Herbert Zillinger and his wines perfectly.

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CONTENTS

1. The Herbert Zillinger Winery in the Context of the Weinviertel.....	3
2. The Winemaker's Philosophy	3
3. A Quick Look at the History of the Winery	4
4. The Soils and Locations (Single-Site Vineyards).....	4
5. The Varieties	5
6. The Wine Product Lines	7
7. The Weinviertel Climate	9
8. Zillinger's wines Abroad	10
9. Press Quotes.....	11
10. Contact.....	12

1. The Herbert Zillinger Winery in the Context of the Weinviertel

Outstanding. A large number of winemakers are located in Austria's largest wine-growing region, the Weinviertel, with 15,800 hectares of vineyards. Only a few succeed in standing out from this multitude. Herbert Zillinger is one of them. The high quality and diversity of his wines, all from Ebenthal in the southern Weinviertel, make all the difference. He dedicates himself heart and soul to Grüner Veltliner, the most important grape variety in the region, and to Traminer. He refrains from compromising and follows his gut feelings in the vineyard and the cellar. His wines are an expression of his philosophy and are a puristic Weinviertel avant-garde.

2. The Winemaker's Philosophy

Honesty and depth, calmness and expressiveness. These attributes apply equally to the Weinviertel native Herbert Zillinger and to his wines. He stays focused on his wines and their inner development, and on craftsmanship in league with nature, which he pursues with passion. His decision to employ traditional agricultural methods naturally led him to a natural cycle management system, as envisaged by biodynamics.

Herbert Zillinger deliberately chooses not to use modern methods of production, and gives the wines time and leeway during fermentation and aging. It is only logical that after his conversion to organic farming in 2015, he took a step back into the most primeval – the biodynamic - cultivation methods, with a certification by respekt-BIODYN.

Herbert Zillinger's wines are perfect for those who prefer to drink unique wines with character, rather than all-purpose wines. He wants to produce wines with USPs, unique selling propositions, and he succeeds in this like no other. His wines are puristic and without any additives, just as he and his biodynamics-based winemaking philosophy are puristic. Sometimes he rubs people the wrong way, but he can live with it. He rewards himself and his customers with unique wines.

3. A Quick Look at the History of the Winery

In 1998, the then 20-year-old Herbert Zillinger took over the family winery with seven hectares of vineyards. In 2005, his wife Carmen Zillinger joined the company, which has been managed jointly by the two winemakers ever since. Over the years, they have gradually been able to expand their vineyards, which were certified organic in 2015, with good single-site locations, and they are not aiming for further growth. Since 2016, they have been working according to biodynamic guidelines and belong to the *respekt-BIODYN* winemakers' association (www.respekt-biodyn.bio). Their first *respekt*-certified vintage is the 2017.

4. The Soils and Locations (Single-Site Vineyards)

Zillinger's vineyards are located in the Vienna basin, where a sediment sets the tone: loess. The fine loess sand (slurry) consists of quartz, feldspar and mica silicates, and clay minerals. Zillinger's most important single-site vineyards are called "Weintal", "In Haiden", "Steinberg" and "Vogelsang".

* **Weintal.** Zillinger's most important Veltliner vineyard is found on the very cool, wind-exposed Weintal. The loess soil here is very deep and rich in limestone, with a humus layer. The old vines annually produce superb ripe, powerful Veltliners with a wonderfully cool elegance and mineral notes. The specific fresh microclimate of this vineyard gives the wines their fine flavors and complexity.

* **In Haiden** is dedicated to Traminer. The soil consists of light loess with a high proportion of calcium. This location produces delicate, minerally, spicy wines that captivate with their elegance - and with a wonderful acid structure, even in the warmest years.

* **Steinberg.** As the name suggests, the Steinberg site has very barren, rocky soil. On sand and sandstone, the small-berry Zweigelt grapes produce enormously spicy, minerally and close-meshed wines.

* **Vogelsang.** Zillinger's Sauvignon Blanc and a Grüner Veltliner are grown on Vogelsang. The soil is lime-rich and light, with loess (topsoil), sand, and sandstone. The wines are very finely structured and minerally with a wonderful elegance and spiciness.

5. The Varieties

The winery's main grape variety by far for this staunch Weinviertel resident is Grüner Veltliner, but great attention is also paid to the Traminer, Sauvignon Blanc and Zweigelt varieties.

* **Grüner Veltliner** is Austria's most important grape variety, accounting for 30% of all vineyards, and is a natural cross between Traminer and St. Georgen. No winery in the Weinviertel can ignore the Grüner Veltliner, and it is also the most important grape variety for Zillinger with a 65% share.

What Grüner Veltliner means to Herbert Zillinger: Grüner Veltliner is our absolute showpiece, and I put my blood, sweat, and tears into it. This variety is an all-rounder: from light and fruity through classically spicy, burgundian and mash, to sweet.

* **Traminer** represents only a small share of 0.7% of the total vineyards in Austria. A contrast to Herbert Zillinger's vineyards, where Traminer accounts for 4% of the cultivated area. It probably originated in southern Europe, coming to Austria via South Tyrol, and at some point to Zillinger's vineyards.

What Traminer means to Herbert Zillinger: Traminer is one of the oldest grape varieties and has a long tradition in the southern Weinviertel, which I would like to continue. Next to Veltliner, it's my second lifeblood.

* **Sauvignon Blanc** is associated more with Styria, where it had already arrived in the 19th century as Muskat-Sylvaner (a term that is no longer allowed) from its French homeland in the Loire Valley. Like Veltliner, Sauvignon Blanc is half descended from Traminer, the other half is Chenin Blanc. In Austria it accounts for 2% of vineyard area.

What Sauvignon Blanc means to Herbert Zillinger: This normally overly aromatic variety can convey its terroir perfectly if handled well. The Sauvignon from our Vogelsang is wonderfully ripe, very minerally, close-meshed and finely structured.

* **Welschriesling** is often dismissed by many as a characterless wine. They are often right. But it can be a wonderfully expressive wine with great potential for aging if treated accordingly. It's getting more popular as a quality Prädikatswein. Its share of Austrian varieties is 7.2%.

What Welschriesling means to Herbert Zillinger: The Welschriesling in our Neuland line has also become a wine with a strong character. You just have to know how to approach it, and I really appreciate it as a relaxed wine for everyday.

* **Chardonnay & Weißburgunder.** It was not until the end of the last century that **Chardonnay** gained importance in Austria, but it had already been present for a long time – especially in Styria. In the past, no distinction was made between Weißburgunder and Chardonnay. According to recent knowledge, it is a cross between Burgundy and Gouais blanc (Heunisch), and requires good, warm locations with deep soil, a good water supply, and higher lime content. It grows on 3.5% of the domestic vineyard area.

Weißburgunder is a mutant strain of Pinot Noir, and slightly more susceptible to Botrytis than its white cousin Chardonnay. Young wines are flowery with a piquant acidity, mature wines develop flavors of bread and nuts. In Austria it covers 4.2% of vineyards.

What Chardonnay & Weißburgunder mean to Herbert Zillinger: I like both grape varieties very much. They can each be on the one hand boring, and on the other hand produce fantastic wines, if you know how. They are very comfortable on our calcareous soils, and they become finely engraved, minerally and elegant.

* **Zweigelt** was originally called Rotburger, and is a young cross between St. Laurent and Blaufränkisch (1922). Sometime in the 1970s, Rotburger was renamed after its creator. Today, the Zweigelt grape occupies 14.1% of Austria's vineyard area, making it Austria's most important red variety. At Zillinger's, however, it is not "charming and sour cherry fruity" but rather taut with a lot of structure.

What Zweigelt means to Herbert Zillinger: Zweigelt is THE red wine variety of the Weinviertel for me, with a cool red berry fruit. The sweet fruity flavors it develops in warmer regions are missing here, thank God. On the contrary, it has a proper structure and backbone.

6. The Wine Product Lines

Herbert Zillinger develops his wines in four stages of maturation. From the light fruity varieties to the ripe and radical. Each one stands on its own, and each stakes its own claim to the highest quality.

* **Neuland.** Explore with confidence instead of standing still, awkwardly. Herbert Zillinger wanders towards the horizon, in order to leave the surface. Only those who set off on their own way will discover new lands. Welschriesling, Grüner Veltliner and the "Springbreak" Zweigelt-Rosé.

* **Horizont.** Herbert Zillinger's contribution to the expansion of the glass horizon. Elegant and hearty at the same time, almost a classic. With an intensive view of roots, origin and variety – and far beyond the borders of the past: Grüner Veltliner, Weißburgunder, Chardonnay and Zweigelt.

* **Lagenselektion.** Here, the soil speaks. Whether sand, sandstone, limestone or loess, its expression can be found in the wine. The grape variety is the vehicle, and it leaves the stage to the terroir, while Herbert Zillinger points the way with his signature. Once you've gotten a taste of it, you'll see. The wines of the single-site vineyard selection are unmistakably Zillinger: Weintal Grüner Veltliner, In Haiden Traminer, Vogelsang Sauvignon blanc & Grüner Veltliner, and Steinberg Zweigelt.

* **Edition Z.** Zillinger's radical, profound and indiscreet winemaking. Wines that are a bit more difficult, that you have to get involved with. Edition Z is the spearhead of the estate:

"Radikal" stands for Herbert Zillinger's ultimate Grüner Veltliner. Harvested late, he gives it time, so as not to end up in the bottle too quickly. It receives intensive mash contact, is unfiltered, and is dense and powerful without being high in alcohol. Its defining flavors are mostly yellow fruits, quince and above all that wonderful Veltliner spice.

"Elementar" is another Grüner Veltliner in extreme form, bottled for the first time in 2015. It is a border crossing between the poles of lightness and strength. Vinified with intensive mash contact, untouched and spontaneously fermented, and bottled from large wooden barrels. Extremely calm and spicy, with notes of Acacia blossoms,

rosemary and basil. Despite its lacy alcohol, it is very powerful. Earthy, lush, and with a cool mineral vein.

"Profund" is the Traminer. A wine with many facets, highly elegant with a fine acidity. An excellent accompaniment to food and, like all Edition Z wines, harvested very late. Depending on the vintage, it enchants more or less intensively with notes of cinnamon, mandarins, rosewood and roasted nuts.

"Essenziell" is the name of our trockenbeerenauslese, and not without reason. It is a concentrated and rare extract from nature. It is produced only when conditions are just right, harvested in November from Chardonnay grapes shrunk into raisins. An elixir of sweet tropical fruit, fine citrus tones and powerfully creamy sweetness, underlaid with a fine acidity and perfectly balanced.

7. The Weinviertel Climate

The Weinviertel is characterized by a Pannonian climate, which means that it is thermally continental but hygrally oceanic. This means hot summers, cold winters and very little rainfall. A rapid change from winter to spring is characteristic for this region. The most, usually heavy, precipitation falls in summer, but long periods of persistent rain are rare. Snowfall in the winters is relatively light.

In numerical terms:

- Annual median temperature from +9 to +10 °C
- Duration of sunshine from 1,750 to 1,900 hours per year
- Total annual rainfall from 400 to 600 mm
- Summer days (max. over 25°C): 55 to 65 per year
- Hot days (max. over 30°C): 15 per year
- Strong wind days (peak windspeed higher than 60 km/h): 15 to 35 per year

8. Zillinger's wines Abroad

The highly positive – and international – press response of the last few years has brought with it a wide range of commercial interest. As is often the case, the reputation of the prophet in his own land is growing based on the attention of foreign countries. Today, Herbert & Carmen Zillinger export 70% of their total production to these sixteen countries:

- Australia
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Germany
- Great Britain
- Italy
- Canada
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Russia
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Slovakia
- Thailand
- Czechia.

9. Press Quotes

2016 Gault&Millau Guide: "Herbert Zillinger has once again managed to create a magnificent Veltliner collection in 2015. From his HORIZONT, rich in finesse and yellow fruit, through the discreetly spicy Weintal and the dense and taut Vogelsang, to the as always extremely close-meshed and profound RADIKAL, every one is a stunner. The puristic Veltliner ELEMENTAR from 2014 has great tension and lightness."

And **Master of Wine and specialty journalist Jancis Robinson wrote in 2016:** "News from an underpriced and under-celebrated Austrian producer. I am very impressed by Herbert Zillinger's Grüner Veltliner [...] They vary in potential longevity and density but not in drinkability or purity." 2015: "By chance I have recently been sent wines from several Austrian producers new to me. The real discovery as far as I am concerned is Herbert Zillinger, whose whites are exceptionally good."

"DELICIOUS! Honestly, I really really really loved the wines from Zillinger," **Michael Madrigale**, 2012 Sommelier of the Year of the renowned US magazine Wine Enthusiast in 2013, when he first tasted Herbert Zillinger's wines and served them in his own bar.

www.havel-petz.at

10. Contact

HERBERT ZILLINGER WINERY

Hauptstraße 17, 2251 Ebenthal, Austria

Tel. & Fax: +43 2538 85 395

Mobile: +43 676 724 29 60

Email: office@radikal.bio

www.radikal.bio

PRESS CONTACT

Mag. Sylvia Petz

havel & petz og

Fillgradergasse 15/11, 1060 Vienna, Austria

Tel. +43 699 1100 8040

Email: s.petz@havel-petz.at

www.havel-petz.at