



Vienna, June, 2018

And that was VieVinum 2018: a brilliant celebration, with a special guest of honour

15,000 attendees from nearly fifty nations, 550 exhibitors from Austria and elsewhere in the world of fine wine: From 9–11 June 2018, Austria's showcase wine festival proved itself more attractive and inspiring than ever before. And the exhibitors – winegrowers and wine merchants – could take particular satisfaction in the greater numbers of professional attendees from all over the world, as well as an overall larger contingent of visitors from the wine trade and the hospitality industry. And these special moments were rendered even more special by the presence of wine legend Hugh Johnson, an honoured guest on the occasion of VieVinum's twentieth anniversary.

Twenty years of VieVinum also means twenty years of 'the Austrian wine wonder'. Alexandra Graski-Hofmann, the organiser of VieVinum expressed this in her opening remarks: 'I would like to extend my most heartfelt thanks to all winegrowers for their loyalty, and of course especially for their excellent wines'. A dedicated thank-you goes out to all cooperative partners, as well as the attendees, whether they are wine experts or friends of wine, who through their interest provide significant motivation for the winegrowers. Willi Klinger, managing director of the Austrian Wine Marketing Board (AWMB/ÖWM), drew special attention to the significance of solidarity and cohesiveness among the growers, as a proven factor in the success of Austria's wine industry. Visitors to VieVinum listened with great attentiveness to the speech delivered by British wine author Hugh Johnson, who characterised numerous Austrian winegrowers as his friends. The deputy head of the Swiss Mission, Dr Michele Coduri, greeted the attendees as the official representative of this year's guest country Switzerland. The opening address was given by Johannes Schmuckenschlager, president of the Austrian Viticultural Association and Member of Parliament. In his remarks he placed the achievements of Austria's winegrowers on centre-stage, and along with them the great significance of the festival VieVinum – not least for the fine reputation that it enjoys in international quarters. A great service that is also attributable to good organisation, and which was singled-out for particular praise twice over the course of the opening ceremony. Josef Bitzinger honoured Alexandra Graski-Hoffmann with a certificate of appreciation from the Viennese Chamber of Commerce, while Professor Walter Kutscher presented the Certificate of Special Merit from the Vienna Sommelier Association for distinguished service to the Austrian wine industry.

A legend as guest of honour for the jubilee edition

VieVinum was privileged and proud to have one of the wine-world's most legendary personalities as guest of honour on its twentieth anniversary. A visit by the much-lauded wine author Hugh Johnson was taken as a great compliment to the event, as well as one for Austria's winegrowers. He said, 'To tell the truth, I don't attend any large wine events any



more. But the invitation was so graciously phrased; the photos that I saw from the wine festival were so pleasing, and wine-expert friends of mine also recommended that I come.' Hugh Johnson went on in his address to praise the wines of Austria's growers, as well as their excellent hospitality. He showed particular interest for the wines made by Austria's younger generation of growers. Leading up to the festival, Hugh Johnson had already visited wine estates in Niederösterreich, Burgenland and Vienna. In an interview, the British author summed it up thus: 'To simply say that Austrian wine is good; that's not nearly enough. Austria is becoming quite a big player in the international world of wine.'

The engagement of the Austrian Wine Marketing Board

For twenty years now, Austria's international wine festival has been documenting the careers of the nation's winegrowers in biennial rhythm. From the very beginning, event promoter M.A.C. Hoffmann and the Austrian Wine Marketing Board (AWMB) combine expertise with innovative spirit, in equal measure. This year for the first time, more than 1,000 international wine merchants, sommeliers, restaurateurs and journalists attended VieVinum at the invitation of the AWMB. A great number of these trade visitors came from Austria's primary export markets such as Germany, the USA, Switzerland and Russia, as well as up-and-coming export destinations from Asia and South America. AWMB's objective is to expand international sales even further. Thanks to an excellent and also satisfyingly ample 2017 vintage, the prospects for success in this regard are better than ever before.

More trade visitors

Also on the part of VieVinum's organisers, the focus in the advertising campaign was to reach out to trade visitors. Here M.A.C. Hoffmann intensified its collaboration with wine merchants and restaurateurs, in addition to cooperating in a focused way with the wine media. These efforts clearly bore fruit, and were generously recognised by the exhibiting winegrowers.

Our guest country Switzerland

International exhibitors also played a significant role. Their participation helped VieVinum to develop the element of complexity that renders the subject of wine so deep and exciting. This year, Switzerland took centre stage as guest country at VieVinum, with their winegrowers exciting the interest of the attendees with their noble indigenous grape varieties such as Petit Arvine, Bondola and Completer. Two master classes offered an opportunity for deepening one's knowledge of these rare wines. Friends of wine also found new opportunities for discovery in the Wein & Co lounge, and in the Falstaff lounge, while Germany's VDP, who had been the international guest representatives in 2016, showed their flag once more. Equally of interest, the dynamic group called New Europe offered the chance to strike up an acquaintance with top-flight wines from the southern European regions. Additional diversity



was provided by wine specialties from Argentina, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Slovenia and Hungary.

Austria versus Germany – 7:4 with a wink and a smile

VieVinum's support programme has developed beautifully as a draw for visitors. Nicely arrayed with a wealth of specialised lectures and moderated discussions – led by recognised greats of the wine industry – this programme provides a marvellous sense of variety. Once more, the traditional wine-country contest between Austria and Germany, sponsored by the trade magazine Vinum, was an event with audience appeal. On this occasion the team leaders and amicably associated 'rivals' Prof. Dr Walter Kutscher (Austria) and Rudi Knoll (Germany) sent their personally chosen 'eleven' top sparkling wines into the pitch. With a brilliant score of 7:4, the match went to the lively and brilliantly developing sparkling wine country Austria. Further highlights were provided by the tasting of the biodynamic group RESPEKT, and the tasting presented by Wachau growers with its four-decades-deep historical retrospective. Along with this the group of growers known as the Young and the Wild (Jungen Wilden Winzer) posed the question if they or their wines had in fact matured better... Another search for answers was undertaken in the tasting of wines from Leithaberg, exploring the nature of the vineyard site. Open-minded Pinot Noir fans found great pleasure in the Institute of Masters of Wine (IMW)'s tasting entitled 'The world's greatest Pinot Noir outside Burgundy'. And with a vertical tasting reaching back to the year 2003, Austria's Sekt committee delivered a comment upon the nature of maturing potential, while 'a look into the depth of terroir' was provided by growers from the Steiermark with Sauvignon Blanc, observed in combination with various types of soil.

The starting gun goes off for the next generation

It was clear to many attendees as well that there were more booths manned by the coming generation, and that in general more young and ambitious individuals were making a career in the wine industry, producing impressively good wines. This bodes well for the continuing high standard of Austrian wine over the next twenty years of VieVinum.

The best sommeliers of Europe and the latest Sommelier Edition

They returned to the 'scene of the crime': in spring 2017 top sommeliers from thirty-seven nations competed in Vienna for the title 'Best Sommelier in Europe & Africa'. Now, a group of them were invited to visit VieVinum by the Sommelier Union Austria (SUA). Instead of nerve-wracking competition and taxing examinations, this trip was characterised by the relaxed opportunity to get to know Austria as wine country. Among other treats, the SUA could offer a premiere: for the first time the new edition of a sommelier-Sekt was presented, which had been developed with Weingut Bründlmayer under the direction of Andreas Wickhoff MW. The Sommelier Union Austria has been working since 2009 with selected winegrowers, in order to promote particular specialty wines and Sekts.



The culinary promenade

For the bodily well-being of exhibitors and attendees there was a rich variety of creatively designed food trucks parked in front of Vienna's Hofburg Palace, with a marvellously diverse offering ranging from Vienna's street food to fine, internationally inspired canapés. And as a refreshing diversion from wine, the CULTURBrauer – in cooperation with A la Carte – presented their beer specialties for tasting in the Craft Bier Lounge directly in front of the Hofburg.

Steirereck at VieVinum

Starting in 2010, Steirereck's *patronne* Birgit Reitbauer and her team led the internal service. So exhibitors at VieVinum could enjoy the finest and best care that could be expected at a wine festival. The service brigade was composed of students from the tourism school MODUL Vienna. All participants received great praise from the exhibitors and attendees for their friendly and focused attention.

Comments, quoting exhibitors and attendees:

Martin Feichtner, buyer for Wein & Co

'I very much like the fact that winegrowers who folks have heard little about are exhibiting here. I like to focus upon these at VieVinum. And I consider the model of having a guest country to be a particular enhancement'.

David Schildknecht, wine critic

'Particularly for the international visitors, the ambience of Vienna's Hofburg Palace is quite an experience – one that separates Austria from the other wine trade fairs'.

Luzia Schrampf, wine journalist

'For me the Junge Wilde winegrowers were the most exciting. There is an incredible number of fine young growers, who are sure to lead the Austrian Wine Wonder even further'.

Tomasz Prange-Barczynski, journalist, Poland

'I have visited every VieVinum since the beginning. My experience here makes me always feel I want to spend a whole week, not only three days – so many good wines but never enough time to taste them all!'

Josef Fritz, Winzer, Wagram



'For me it was an absolutely successful VieVinum, with many trade attendees who were particularly interested in our indigenous grape varieties.'

Franz Hofbauer, Weingut Grabenwerkstatt, Wachau

'This was the first time for us at VieVinum, and we found it simply the best. Many international trade visitors – we hadn't expected so many contacts.'

Silvia Heinrich, winegrower, Mittelburgenland

'For me, VieVinum is an important platform for introducing my wines to an international audience.'

Mathias Hirtzberger, winegrower, Wachau

'The resonance for our wines was unbelievably positive. There were many Austrian restaurateurs who visited – I am especially happy about this. I would like to express particular appreciation for the students from the tourism school MODUL, who took great care of us exhibitors.'

Christian Madl, Sekt producer, Weinviertel

'VieVinum was a total success for us – on all three days, the audience was open to Austrian Sekt, and competently appreciative of it.'

Michael Meyer, Weingut Bad Osterfingen, Schweiz

'For us, the appearance as guest country was very positive. We were able to make a great many new contacts, and also got to know quite a number of Austria winegrowers. I can certainly imagine coming here again.'

Martin Muthenthaler, winegrower, Wachau

'VieVinum is our Austrian wine fair. We had a great number of visitors, many of whom had attended at the invitation of the AWMB.'

Stefan Potzinger, chairman of Wein Steiermark and winegrower, Südsteiermark

'M.A.C. Hoffmann and the AWMB accomplish great things for VieVinum; this excellent cooperation is a recipe for success. For us the timing was perfect, to show the elite wines of our region and above all the sensational 2017 vintage.'

From 6th to 8th June, 2020, Austria's most important wine fair will find its way into the Vienna Hofburg for the twelfth time.

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