



Marking A Milestone Ahead of the VieVinum Countdown – The Concluding Presentation at the Gerd A. Hoffmann Academy

Mentees & mentors reflect on their work together...

Sharing knowledge and benefiting from a mutually rewarding exchange: since the beginning of the year, 13 young winegrowers have been engaged in a programme bringing them together with experienced figures from the varied worlds of business and society – part of the third instalment of the Gerd A. Hoffmann Academy. Shortly before VieVinum, the young growers and their mentors presented a report on their collaborative experiences.

Networking with the Hospitality Sector

The topics of greatest interest to the winegrowers ranged from internationalization and digitalization to marketing and target audiences, as well as expanding their own professional networks. The team at M.A.C. Hoffmann supported the pairs throughout their collaboration and introduced them via profiles shared on their [digital channels](#). In addition, the mentees had the opportunity to attend lectures on topics such as brand management (*KR8 Bureau*) and e-commerce (*SRG Group – Digital & Software Agency*). Another new feature this year involved graduates from previous years serving as ‘buddies,’ to offer advice and guidance to the young folk. The budding winegrowers received further practical insights through collaborations with restaurants, traditional taverns and wine bars in Vienna, each of which served as the hospitality industry home base for one of the mentees. Leading up to VieVinum, the young growers’ wines are being featured prominently at these venues – offered by the glass or showcased in special promotions such as wine-pairing menus and events.

The summaries of the mentees and mentors

Shortly before VieVinum, the young winegrowers – together with their mentors – shared an account of their collaborative experiences. Of particular delight and value to all the mentees was the commitment shown by several mentors toward the entire group. For instance, *INTERSPAR Weinwelt* offered to list a wine from every single mentee. From Stefanie Wareka, Head of Marketing at *Marzek Etiketten+Packaging GmbH*, they received vouchers for a consultation session with the company’s in-house design agency, each valued at €320. Following VieVinum, *Stölzle Lausitz* will host a VIP party where all the mentees can present their wines, served by a top-shelf team of young sommeliers. And from Sandor Döry, they received an invitation to continue attending the lectures organized by the *E-Commerce Initiative Austria* over the coming months.



The mentees' reports frequently highlighted the expansion of their professional networks, tips for their online presence, the value of the feedback they received and opportunities to showcase their wines.

Martin Bergkirchner & Peter Aufreiter, Mag.

Martin Bergkirchner from Mitterarnsdorf in the Wachau had the pleasure of having Peter Aufreiter, Mag. – Director General of the Vienna Technical Museum and the Austrian Mediathek – serve as his mentor. 'I was able to present my wines at a high-profile event at the Technical Museum and establish valuable contacts there. Further joint events are a possibility, and my mentor will also be visiting me during the Wachauer Weinfrühling festival. My home base is the wine bar 'Die Wachauerin,' which will also be open during VieVinum.'

Weingut Gerhard Deim & Josef Pröll, DI

'I've brought along some wine from Deim,' announced Josef Pröll, DI – CEO of *Leipnik-Lundenburger Invest Beteiligungs AG* – as he opened the joint presentation with his protégé, Gerhard Deim from Schönberg am Kamp. Deim reports having enjoyed a lively exchange with his mentor; furthermore, he had the opportunity to present his wines at a football match held at the VIP Club. Additionally, a visit to a large milling operation is on the agenda – an outing that will provide insights into the operational processes of a major concern. He maintains excellent relations with his home base, the Wirtshaus Meixner, where a 'Wine & Dine' event with his mentor is also currently being planned.

Markus Eichberger & Stefanie Wareka

'We are probably the youngest duo in this group,' Stefanie Wareka – Head of Marketing at *Marzek Etiketten+Packaging GmbH* – remarked with a wink as she opened their joint presentation. Her mentee, Markus Eichberger from Eibesbrunn, continued: 'We visited each other at our respective businesses. I gained valuable insight into the workings of Marzek Etiketten, and at *Blaha Büromöbel* I was able to attend an event focused on business acquisitions – that was especially interesting.' At his hospitality home base – Restaurant Stellas in Vienna's 3rd District – his wines and non-alcoholic beverages will be available to enjoy by the glass leading up to VieVinum.

Alexander Fritsch & Stefan Schauer

Alexander Fritsch from Kirchberg am Wagram was paired with Stefan Schauer, Managing Director of *STAUD'S*. 'I visited my mentor at his business in Vienna and took away a great deal regarding their organizational structures and technology. We are going to launch a joint project titled 'Fritsch & Schauer Biodynamic' and intend to stay in touch.' Herr Schauer tells us: 'I have enjoyed a long-standing friendship with Weingut Fritsch, and I was absolutely delighted to be paired with my mentee. I take my hat off to him for possessing such



detailed knowledge at such a young age.’ Alexander Fritsch’s home base is Heunisch & Erben; he has already reserved his table there for the duration of the VieVinum trade fair.

Katharina Gessl & Christine Klimaschka

Katharina Gessl from Zellerndorf formed a duo with Christine Klimaschka, Co-editor and Head of Communications & Partnerships at *myGiulia*. ‘We met several times and shared a lively, vibrant exchange of ideas. I also had the opportunity to present my wines at the ‘Rise! Women’s Voice of Change’ event at the opera house – a pretty cool experience,’ she says, offering an enthusiastic summary. Her home base is the wine bar MAST, where her wines are served by the glass and featured in tasting sessions.

Clemens Krutzler & Hans Bergmann

‘Initially, we had a long-distance relationship because I was still doing an internship in South Africa,’ reports Clemens Krutzler from Deutsch Schützen, recalling the start of his collaboration with his mentor, Hans Bergmann – Head of Wine Portfolio Management at SPAR and INTERSPAR wine expert. During the mentor’s visit to the Krutzler estate, the philosophy of the family business was analysed, among other topics, and a presentation for the ‘INTERSPAR *weinwelt Winzertalk*’ series was planned. At Pub Klemo – his home base – Clemens Krutzler’s wines will take centre stage leading up to the VieVinum trade fair.

Verena Langmann & Waltraud Scharnagl

Verena Langmann from Stainz had Waltraud Scharnagl – SPAR Portfolio Manager and INTERSPAR wine expert – by her side as a mentor. ‘I had an intense exchange with my mentor; thanks to her, I gained a wealth of experience and knowledge and established exciting new contacts.’ And her mentor comments, ‘For me, Verena Langmann was a stroke of luck. I admire the way she pursues her chosen path with such determination, never letting herself get distracted.’ Furthermore, an appearance on *INTERSPAR weinwelt Winzertalk* is currently being planned. Verena Langmann’s gastronomic home is the restaurant Reznicek, where a collaboration is also being arranged.

Stefanie Leitner & Prof. Christoph Madl

Stefanie Leitner from Ilztal formed a pairing with Prof. Christoph Madl – a tourism professional and court-appointed expert witness. ‘My mentor pulled me out of my bubble and helped me reflect on the visibility and public perception of our wine estate. He provided me with feedback time and again, which truly helped me move forward,’ she enthuses. Her home base is the wine bar ‘kostbar,’ located near the Naschmarkt in Vienna (1060), which specializes in wines and culinary delights from the Südsteiermark.



Florian Masser & Wolfgang Reichl

Florian Masser from Glanz an der Weinstrasse was paired with Wolfgang Reichl, Managing Director of *Reichl & Reichl GmbH*. 'My mentor lined me up for numerous events; the second half of the year is practically fully booked already. We also spoke on the phone frequently between meetings.' As his home base, he has the pleasure of working with Pichlmaiers zum Herkner, where his wines are presented with great enthusiasm. He has already reserved his table there for the upcoming trade fair.

Maximilian Pröll & Brad Knowles

'I really lucked out with my mentor,' says Maximilian Pröll, expressing his delight at the collaboration with Brad Knowles – Vice President of the Burgenland Sommelier Association and Brand Ambassador & Head of Sales for Austria at *Stölzle Lausitz*. 'He has a massive network and gave me many opportunities to showcase myself and my wines. It was a cool experience.' His home base is the restaurant Sophie7, which is on the verge of opening its doors and is already whetting appetites in its current pop-up mode.

Verena Schmid & Dr. Gabriele Straka

Verena Schmid, coming from Gobelsburg near Langenlois, was paired with Dr. Gabriele Maria Straka – a certified Beer Sommelier, Editor-in-Chief of *MANZ's NIU: Sustainability in Business*, and Board Member at *RespACT*. 'I am grateful to have been assigned a mentor with such extensive professional experience. I gained a great deal from her insights and stories, and I even had the opportunity to present my wines at an event attended by a very discerning group of business professionals.' I also struck gold with my home base – the tavern Zum Bretschneider – where my wines have been extremely well received.

Lena Skringer & Attila Janos, Ing. Mag.

'We met frequently, both in person and online. I was able to ask him every question I had on my mind; it was fantastic to have such a seasoned professional as my mentor,' enthuses Lena Skringer from Leutschach, reflecting on her collaboration with her mentor Attila Janos, Ing. Mag., – Founder and Proprietor of *supseven TYPO3* web agency. 'He helped me overhaul and improve my website – tasks like that often tend to fall by the wayside amidst the hustle and bustle of daily business.' And her mentor comments, with evident satisfaction, 'We established a clear roadmap, and Lena worked on it with real diligence.' Lena Skringer's home base is the Gasthaus Stern, located in Vienna's 11th District.

Sophie, Katharina & Max Wieninger, with Sandor Döry

The three siblings – Sophie, Katharina, and Max Wieninger from Vienna – founded their own winery, 'Wieninger.Next.' They were paired with Sandor Döry – Founder and Chairman of the E-Commerce Initiative Austria, as well as CEO of *SRG IT & Marketing GmbH* – to serve as their mentor. 'Our mentor devised an intensive program for us; he offered tips on optimizing



our self-designed website and integrated us into his E-Commerce Initiative, where we were also able to showcase our wines. We also learned a great deal about branding.' Their gastronomic home base is the restaurant *Zum Fuhrmann*, located in Vienna's 8th District.

All mentees with their mentors, buddies and hospitality industry home base:

Bioweingut Bergkirchner

Martin Bergkirchner & Mag. Peter Aufreiter, Director General of the Vienna Museum of Science and Technology with the Austrian Media Library

Buddy: Johannes Hofbauer-Schmidt, Weingut Hofbauer-Schmidt

Homebase: Die Wachauerin, 1090 Wien, diewachauerin.at

Weingut Gerhard Deim

Gerhard Deim & Josef Pröll, CEO of Leipnik-Lundenburger Invest Beteiligungs AG (LLI)

Buddy: Gregor Nimmervoll, Weingut Nimmervoll

Homebase: Meixners, 1100 Wien, meixners-gastwirtschaft.at

Weingut Eichberger

Marcus Eichberger & Stefanie Wareka, Head of Marketing at Marzek Etiketten + Packaging GmbH

Buddy: Julia Kroiss, Weingut Kroiss

Gastronomische Homebase: Stellas, 1030 Wien, stellas.at

Weinberghof Fritsch

Alexander Fritsch & Stefan Schauer, Managing Director of STAUD'S GmbH

Buddy: Benita Lobner, Weingut Lobner

Gastronomische Homebase: Heunisch und Erben, 1030 Wien, heunisch.at

Weingut Katharina Gessl

Katharina Gessl & Christine Klimaschka, Co-Publisher, Communications & Partnerships at myGiulia

Buddy: Johann Gisberg, Weingut Gisberg

Homebase: MAST, 1090 Wien, mast.wine

Weingut Krutzler, Deutsch Schützen

Clemens Krutzler & Hans Bergmann, Wine Department Head at SPAR and INTERSPAR, Wine Expert

Buddy: Katharina Baumgartner, Domäne Baumgartner

Homebase: Pub Klemo, 1050 Wien, pubklemo.com



Weingut Lex Langmann

Verena Langmann & Waltraud Scharnagl, Wine Category Manager at SPAR and INTERSPAR

Wine Expert

Buddy: Simon Gattinger

Homebase: Reznicek, 1090 Wien, reznicek.co.at

Weinhof Leitner

Stefanie Leitner & Prof. Christoph Madl, Tourism Business Specialist and Court-Certified

Expert

Buddy: Paul Zimmermann

Homebase: kostbar, 1060 Wien, [instagram.com/die_kostbar](https://www.instagram.com/die_kostbar)

Weingut Masser

Florian Masser & Wolfgang Reichl, Managing Director of Reichl & Reichl GmbH, Organiser of the Haute Couture Austria Award

Buddy: Alexander Paul

Homebase: Pichlmaiers zum Herkner, 1170 Wien, zumherkner.at

Weingut Pröll

Maximilian Pröll & Brad Knowles, Certified Sommelier, Vice President of the Burgenland Sommelier Association, Brand Ambassador & Sales Austria, Stölzle Lausitz

Buddy: Julia Eichberger, Weingut Eichberger

Homebase: Sophie7, 1070 Wien, sophie7.at

Weingut Schmid

Verena Schmid & Dr. Gabriela Maria Straka, Certified Beer Sommelier, Editor-in-Chief at MANZ “NIU Sustainability in Business”; Board Member of RespACT

Buddy: Florian Adam-Lieleg

Homebase: Zum Bretschneider, 1120 Wien, zumbretschneider.at

Weingut Skringer

Lena Skringer & Attila Janos, Founder & Owner of supseven TYPO3 Web Agency

Buddy: Gabriel Graßl, Weingut Nepomukhof

Homebase: Stern, 1110 Wien, gasthausstern.at

Weingut Wieninger, Hajszan Neumann, Wieninger.next

Sophie, Katharina & Maximilian Wieninger & Sandor Döry, Founder/Chairman, E-Commerce Initiative Austria; CEO, SRG IT & Marketing GmbH

Buddy: Matthias Reckendorfer

Gastronomische Homebase: Zum Fuhrmann, 1080 Wien, restaurantfuhrmann.com



VieVinum 2026 Facts

Location: HOFBURG Vienna, Heldenplatz entrance

Dates: Saturday, May 16 through Monday, May 18, 2026

Opening Hours:

- Saturday to Monday from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Trade professionals & Press: Sat. to Mon. from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Admission:

- Online ticket: € 75 at www.vievinum.at/tickets
 - Trade visitors upon accreditation: € 55 at vievinum.com/tickets/trade-visitor
 - Programme School of Wine: www.vievinum.at/school-of-wine
 - Programme Zone Zero: www.vievinum.at/school-of-wine/zone-zero
 - Programme Fokus Tasting Orchestergang: www.vievinum.at/fuer-besucherinnen/tasting-zone
 - Gerd A. Hoffmann-Akademie: www.vievinum.at/aktuelles/gerd-a-hoffmann-akademie
 - [Exhibitor directory](#)
- www.vievinum.at

Press Accreditation

Accreditation for trade media representatives is available at Dagmar Gross, dagmar@grosswerk.com. Required documentation includes written accreditation (letter from the editor-in-chief or by-line mention in the publication's masthead for a wine-related article published within the past six months)

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