

THE SOTHEBY'S WINE ENCYCLOPEDIA



THE CLASSIC REFERENCE
TO THE WINES OF THE WORLD
— TOM STEVENSON —

4TH
EDITION
FINELY
REVISED

184

FRANCE

ALSACE

Contrary to the New World's belief that they invented the concept, Alsace has built its reputation on varietal wines. This is a region that traditionally produces rich, dry white wines, but they have in recent years become increasingly sweet.

THE GRANDS CRUS OF ALSACE

In the 2001 revised edition of this encyclopedia, I wrote: "The original *grand cru* legislation was introduced in 1975, but it was not until 1983 that the first list of 25 *grand cru* sites appeared. Three years later a further 23 were added, and there are now 50, although this number is the subject of much controversy, not least because it excludes what is acknowledged as one of the most famous, truly great *crus* of Alsace – Kaefferkopf in Ammerschwihr. While the *grand cru* will be of long-term benefit to both Alsace and the consumer, the limitation of *grand cru* to pure varietal wines of just four grapes – Muscat, Riesling, Pinot Gris, and Gewurztraminer – robs us of the chance to drink the finest quality Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc, Sylvaner, and Chasselas.

THE SOTHEBY'S WINE ENCYCLOPEDIA

TOM STEVENSON

To Philippe family
Hope you enjoy the
latest edition.
Best, Ben Stevenson

SCHLOSSBERG

Kientzheim and Kaysersberg

The production of Schlossberg was controlled by charter in 1928, and in 1975 it became the first Alsace *grand cru*. Although its *grand cru* looks equally skewed by the two sites, less than half a hectare (1¼ acres) belongs to Kaysersberg. Schlossberg is best for Riesling, but Gewurztraminer can be successful in so-called "soft" vintages. The wine is full of elegance and finesse, whether produced in a classic, restrained style, as Blanc often is, or with the more exuberant fruit that typifies Weinbach Valley. The local *grand cru* has reduced the chaptalization of Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer from an allowable 1.5% to 0.9%, and increased the minimum ripeness of these grapes from 12.5% to 15%. The chaptalization and minimum ripeness of Riesling and Muscat remain the same.

☞ Paul Blanck • Joseph Dreyfus • Albert Haver • Weinsbach Valley • Ziegler-Haber

FURSTENTUM

Kientzheim and Sigolsheim



This estate is best for Riesling, although the vines have to be well established to take full advantage of the calcareous soil. Gewurztraminer can also be fabulous – in an elegant, more floral, less spicy style – and Pinot Gris excels even when the vines are very young. The local *grand cru* has reduced all chaptalization from the allowable 1.5% to 0.9%. It has also increased the minimum ripeness of Riesling and Muscat from 11% to 11.5%, and Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer from 12.5% to 15%.

☞ Paul Blanck • Ben-Geyf • Albert Haver • Weinsbach Valley