DOMÄNE
WACHAU

RIED KELLERBERG

The Kellerberg vineyard is the home turf of the Domäne Wachau, but even more than that, it is an exemplary vineyard for the entire Wachau. The Kellerberg Rieslings and Grüner Veltliners are synonymous for the very top quality of white wine from Austria. Kellerberg rises just behind the Kellerschlössel (Baroque Cellar Palace) in the outskirts of Dürnstein and borders the Schlossberg vineyard to the west. On the edge of the Kellerberg is one of its sub-sites Wunderburg that falls steeply towards the railway tunnel where the vines meet the city wall.

On the eastern border, the Flickatal gorge cuts northwards, making a decisive impact on the style of the Kellerberg wines. The site merges with the Hollerin vineyard to the southeast. The prominent Napoleonic war monument calls attention to the Höhereck slope farther to the east, which with its protected dry grassland biotope represents another special feature of the Wachau landscape.

The various expositions of the Kellerberg contribute to the vineyard's complexity. Because the site opens directly towards the south, it is generally quite pampered by the sun. Some parcels fall towards the southeast and the vineyard terraces that cross the slope towards Flickatal face east. The grapes from this section of the Kellerberg are responsible for the coolest Kellerberg expressions. This is due not so much to the slope aspect as it is to the cool air masses that flow through the Flickatal gorge from the Waldviertel (Forest Quarter) to the north. This preeminent cool influence distinctly distinguishes the Kellerberg from the second great vineyard of the eastern Wachau, Loibenberg.In contrast, the section of the vineyard that slopes towards the Kellerschlössel (Baroque Cellar Palace) is exposed to warm Pannonian air from the east, which also leaves its signature on the wines. The altitude amplitude of this vineyard is less dramatic than that of Loibenberg. Kellerberg is steep, but relatively low, beginning with 200 m at the foot of the vineyard and rising to 340 m.

Primary rock dominates the Kellerberg with Gfoehler gneiss exhibiting a high degree of weathering. Gfoehler gneiss is the form of orthogneiss that also builds the foundation for the upper Achleiten and Loibenberg. Gfoehler gneiss is a metamorphic rock formed out of magmatic granite-like rock. Metamorphosis took place under much higher temperatures and pressures than was the case for paragneiss.

Recent soil profile drillings within Kellerberg show that paragneiss is also present in certain places, something that had not been documented in previous geological maps. Another special attribute is the white material that fills the numerous crevices, demonstrating astonishingly high calcium carbonate content.

Gfoehler gneiss is usually foliated and light grey, but darkens with exposure. It most frequently appears in its dark form in the Dürnstein area, but is pale once broken apart. The Gfoehler gneiss of Kellerberg is very porous and crumbles when thrust against a hard surface. It contributes greatly to the soil's mineral content (feldspar, quartz, and mica) from which vines can source nourishment. There is a small island of loess in the middle of the Kellerberg vineyard that possesses slightly deeper topsoil than that of Achleiten – another feature resulting from the high degree of weathering.

Looking up towards the Dürnstein castle ruin, a bare face of Gfoehler gneiss is apparent as the mother rock of the Schlossberg. The pointed rock pinnacles were formed by the wind as it blasted sand against the cliff over a period of millions of years.

Next to the Wunderburg, there is a second sub-site with the unusual name "Küss den Pfennig" (Kiss the Penny). It was first mentioned in 1378 as "Chüssenphennich unter Tirnstain". Its name stems from the toilsome labour required to tend the steep vineyard. Every penny that could be earned from this slope was deserving of a kiss. The entire Kellerberg vineyard, including both of its sub-site, encompasses 11,5 hectares that are planted predominantly with Grüner Veltliner, followed closely by Riesling. A good share of the vines were planted in the 1950s, the major share in the 60s and 70s.

Ten vintner families of the Domäne Wachau cultivate 2.5 hectares of this vineyard slope to produce powerful, deeply spicy Grüner Veltliner and Riesling Smaragd wines. Within the Domäne Wachau's single-vineyard wine series, the Riesling Smaragd Kellerberg is more powerful than that of Loibenberg due to the cooler, higher altitude of the parcels in that site.

Grüner Veltliner Smaragd RIED KELLERBERG
Riesling Smaragd RIED KELLERBERG

Our Kellerberg vignerons:
Hermann Böhmer, Florian Draxler-Todt, Martin Fink, Doris Fügerl, Philipp Fügerl, Markus Mayer, Herbert Pfaffinger, Martina Stöger, Paul Stierschneider, Andreas Stöger

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