



HARM

Wachau, Austria

Maria Harm and her husband Andreas started in 2010 with some prime vineyards in the Wachau, Durnsteiner Hollerin and Kellerberg and the Wachtberg vineyard in the Kremstal. The wines impressed us immediately for their transparency of terroir and the obvious focus on balance over power. The Harm wines have lighter alcohol and at the same time, do not compromise on ripe fruit. Each wine carries its village and vineyard name, but because the winery itself is located outside of the Wachau (just over the border in the Kremstal), the winery cannot be a part of the Vinea Wachau, and so they do not use the designations of Steinfeder, Federspiel, or Smaragd. For them, it also does not make sense to wait to pick because you want to make a Smaragd wine and need a certain level of alcohol, again the primary goal is the expression of terroir and elegance.

Harm has ten hectares of vines, nearly evenly split between the Kremstal and the Wachau. Looking out over the vineyards from a very steep hillside on the Danube, Maria described the Wachau as “a paradise lost.” It’s normal in the Wachau to see bare ground or dry, herbicide-treated grass in most of the vineyards. In the Harm vineyards, you see a lot of bright green grass, wild flowers, and vibrant, healthy vines. As far as treatments go, they are using low amounts of copper sulfate and various plant extracts (in 2017, they followed biodynamic principles and are certified by Demeter in 2019). In one vineyard in the Kremstal they have planted a vegetable garden with different heirloom tomato varieties, cucumbers, peppers, herbs and garlic. In the Wachau, Maria and Andreas have apricot and peach trees as well as almond trees between the Riesling vines. “For us”, Maria said, “organic viticulture is the understanding of processes in the vineyard’s ecosystem and interaction with these natural circumstances. Andreas’ knowledge (PhD in organic agriculture) as an oeno-scientist and consultant in organic viticulture are an indispensable instrument in this context. In his view, the vineyards are biospheres, which must be protected and supported. Through our work we can observe the return of endangered species, such as the bee-eater [a bird that’s been adversely affected by commercial farming].” It’s the same with newly-acquired old vineyards, which must carefully be re-cultivated to preserve the enormous potential of the old vines.

Minimalism is the obvious concept in the cellar. During the harvest, a fastidious selection of the grapes guarantees perfect initial conditions for spontaneous fermentation which can last from three weeks to eight months. The pressed grapes “go their way”; during the fermentation, they are very patient and they trust in the energy of their grapes and natural yeasts. A very long yeast contact is important for the character of the Harm wines, and they are mainly bottled after at least one-year aging period in the tanks or wooden barrels. Andreas Harm explained to us that because the fermentations last so long, the wines can be quite shy when they are first bottled and really express their terroir best after having some time in the bottle. In that vain, there is not a rush to have the freshest, youngest vintage as is often the case for Austrian wine.

It’s tremendous to find such an exciting winery that has remained relatively unknown. The wines have a great complexity and a purity of terroir, emphasizing elegance over power.

Unglaublich schön, dieser Ausblick. Hoheitsvoll thront der einzigartige **WACHTBERG** über dem Kremstal. Sein Fundament ist gefestigt und fruchtbar. **Löss und Granit** mit dichter Humusaufgabe, ideal für Grüner Veltliner. Vor allem, wenn die Reben schon sehr alt sind, wie in diesem Fall. Dann ist die schöne Aussicht auf einen feinwürzigen und dynamischen Wein garantiert. Aber nur aufmerksame Genießer entdecken dabei den Aufstieg in den mysteriösen Turm, nach dem dieser Weingarten benannt ist.



Harm *Grüner Veltliner*
Weingut Wachtberg

Grüner Veltliner Ried Kremser Wachtberg 2016 6/750ml

Wachtberg is among the best and most famous vineyard sites in Krems. The vineyard lies right behind the historical section of the city, above Pfarrplatz. The soil is a combination of loess and granite and the vines are 60-70 year-old, which is significant because it means that they are a true Grüner, not the hyper-productive clone widely planted in the seventies. Harvest took place on October 9th. No added yeast. Fermented and raised in stainless steel on the fine lees. A truly spectacular Grüner with a lot of depth. 13% ABV with bright acidity and 2 g/L RS.

Technical Specifications

Product Type: White Wine

Varietal: Grüner Veltliner

Farming Type: Organic