



Wine in Terlan

Hiking through vineyards and history





The Wine Path around Terlan

Winegrowing aficionados embarked on the realisation of the wine path in Terlan. This theme path took two years to come into being and is now there to entice you to explore the gentle vineyard landscape of our village. Following the information boards along the path, you will enter vineyards at various altitudes and with different climatic conditions, see the varieties grown in the area and the vine training systems, and be introduced to soil and quality management.

For those of you who want more information there is this brochure in English, German and Italian, which also features a hiking map and details about viticulture in the villages of Terlan, Andrian, Siebeneich and Vilpian, all located in Etschtal. You will read about the history of winegrowing, the vineyard plots, the varieties, the vine-training systems, and the estates and mansions you will encounter on the path.

Set off at the Terlan Winery and explore old settlements, paths and vineyards steeped in history. The hike will take you 1.5 to 2 hours and hopefully give you some insight into winegrowing in Terlan and its surroundings.

Klaus Runer, mayor of the municipality of Terlan
Georg Höller, president of the Terlan Winery
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Helmut Huber, president of the Tourism Association
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History of Winegrowing in Terlan

Two pre-historic secateurs dating from the late Iron Age, which were found in Siebeneich near Terlan, are evidence that the origins of winegrowing go back to the ancient Rhaetians, a people that lived in the area when the Romans reached the Alps. The Romans, in turn, did not leave any significant archeological vestiges in viticulture in Terlan. However, it is believed that they introduced new varieties and viticultural practices to the area.

In the Middle Ages South Tyrol was a winegrowing area renowned in Bavarian monasteries, who bought their mass wine in this area, such as at the estates Poschenhof and Burgstallerhof. Both the fluctuating yields and the high prices of table wines were registered in the monasteries' accounts. The Steindlhof Estate was owned by the Benediktbeuern Monastery in northern Bavaria.

To safeguard their incomes the grape-growers of Terlan founded a cooperative as early as in 1893. At that time grape-growers farmed 222 hectares of vineyards and produced 13,000 hl of crush.





At the turn of the 20th century phylloxera spread and made the introduction of American rootstock for grafting necessary. The wine industry in the area was hit by several crises, such as after the First World War in 1919, when South Tyrol was made part of Italy, a renowned wineproducing country, and then in the 30s during the Great Depression.

Since the 50s varieties have not been blended. White varieties, such as Pinot Blanc, Sauvignon, and Riesling, have always been more important than red varieties in Terlan. In fact, the autochthonous variety Weissterlaner seems to have significantly contributed to establishing the star status of white wine from Terlan.

The Terlan Winery, the Stocker Champagne winery and the Kiemberger Winery are situated in Terlan.



The Winery of Terlan

The winery was founded by twenty-four winegrowers in 1893. It was first housed by Baron Eyrl at the Köstenholz Mansion and then by the Counts of Enzenberg at Marstall. September 1900 marked a happy event for the winery: at the World Exhibition in Paris it was rewarded a silver medal for innovative winemaking.

Then the beginning of World War I caused the plans for rebuilding the winery to be postponed, and in the following years the winery fought for its economic survival. The economic consequences of South Tyrol becoming a part of Italy made the future of the winery look uncertain. Finally the new winery was built at its present location in 1926.

The World Financial Crisis in the 30s caused another financial crisis for the young winery. However, the winery's financial situation gradually improved in the 50s and the following decades largely thanks to Josef Mair-Larch, who headed it for many years, and to Sebastian Stocker, who was its cellarmaster from 1955 to 1993. In the 60s the winery was equipped with a cooling system, which was a first in the region. In 2008 it merged with the winery of Andrian, which had been founded in 1893, after intense negotiations. The latest renovations took place from 2008 to 2009, and on June 7th the new cellar and bottling and shipping





facilities were presented to the public during an inauguration party with many guests and cooperative members present. At present there are 235 members, who together own 240 hectares of vineyards, of which roughly two thirds are planted with white varieties. At the international wine fair Vinitaly in 2010 President Georg Höller was presented with an award for his engagement in the development of viticulture and for furthering wine culture.

In 1998 the winery was joined by a number of asparagus growers, who ship their produce to the winery, where they have it stored, processed and marketed under the label "Margarete". So far this enterprise has been crowned with remarkable success. The winery of Terlan is trying to make the most of the natural resources of the vineyards and asparagus fields while paying attention to the growers' as well as the consumers' interests.



Sauvignon

This variety has gained a degree of superstar status in Terlan. It originated in France and has been grown in Terlan since the early 20th century.

The shoots tend to grow upward, ripen and change to orange and become hard as canes. In spring the canes break easily when being tied to the trellis. Sauvignon grows vigorously and canes ripen late. The grape is compact and medium-sized with longish berries.

This white wine has a good sense of body with intensive flavours. It is reminiscent of fresh, fruity elderberry, black currant and tropical fruits. In Terlan it is often served with asparagus dishes.



Köstenholz Mansion



This estate was first mentioned as “Kestenholzer” in 1556. In 1742 Marie Charlotte von Reding sold it to Johann Dominikus von Eyrl, whose heirs, the barons von Eyrl zu Waldgries und Liebenaich, have run the estate for 270 years. It has been enlarged and refurbished several times and, in its long and varied history, it has seen sericulture as well as viticulture and mixed farming.

The chapel's patron is the martyr Boniface, and its 43-kg bell was made by the renowned Grassmayr bell foundry in Innsbruck in 1995.



Montigl

This place name derives from the Latin word for “small mountain”. It is situated on a sunny terrace at 450-760 m of altitude, which spreads on the south-western slope of Tschöggelberg right above the ruin of Neuhaus castle. In the south-east it borders on Margarethenbach, a small creek. The gradient of this site is 20-60%. Six estates cover an area of 18 hectares. Pinot Noir especially thrives here. However, other varieties including Sauvignon, Pinot Blanc, Müller-Thurgau, Ruländer and Chardonnay grow well here too. The soil is light, sandy and gravelly, and the climate temperate with light breezes.



Liebeneich Mansion

Liebeneich Mansion consists of a 3-floor, palace-like building, a corridor, the chapel and the former courthouse. Its first owner, Heinrich Schenk von Liebeneich, was mentioned in old documents in 1321. The next owner was Veit von Andrian, who acquired the mansion as a dowry. Then the mansion changed owner again. Abraham Widmann, Baron Eyrl und Giovanelli, passed it on to the Barons of Tannenberg in 1799, whose last heiress married Count Franz von Enzenberg. His heirs still run the estate today.

Its heyday was in the 18th century, when the counts Josef and Ignaz von Tannenberg, the then dwellers of the mansion, renovated the building in baroque style. In 1827 the court of Neuhaus was abolished, which marked the beginning of a long period of gradual decay of Liebeneich Mansion. Finally, in 1907, counts Hugo and Sighard von Enzenberg had the buildings renovated. The chapel, which was consecrated in 1736 and dedicated to Saint John Nepomuk, is decorated with a fine picture of Terlan, painted in 1771 by Christoph Anton Mayr. The surrounding vineyards yield fine white grapes, which are vinificated in the Manincor winery in Kaltern by Count Göess-Enzenberg.



Pinot Blanc

Like all other Burgundy varieties, this variety also stems from the namesake region in France. It has been cultivated in Terlan for more than a hundred years. This grape is yellow-green in colour, large and compact, and the shoots tend to grow feebly. This variety is not very demanding. Pinot Blanc is planted at higher altitudes above 400 m to ensure the right amount of acidity.

Pinot Blanc is a neutral white wine reminiscent of apples and citrus fruits. It is served with light dishes and fish. It is also used as a basis for champagne production and is often served as an aperitif.



Winkl-Dorf

This site spreads from the village of Terlan to Petersbach, a creek, at an altitude of 250-470 m, with Silberleitenweg separating the site Winkl from the site called Village. The vineyards are situated on the hillside and face south-west. Fourteen estates cover an area of 30 hectares.

Winkl is famous for its fine Sauvignon wines especially, but Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay and Ruländer are grown here as well. The soil is sandy and loamy, and gravelly in places. The area is well aerated and the climate is mild.



Weissterlaner

This variety has put the white-wine-producing area of Terlan on the map. Blended with other white varieties, such as Pinot Blanc, Ruländer and Rheinriesling, it constituted the basis of the homonymous wine. Fine Weissterlaner was renowned far beyond its original cultivation zone of Etschtal. Expert Josef Mader, who worked at the research station San Michele all' Adige, wrote in 1921: "The wines produced in Terlan, which have gained a degree of star status, mainly stem from this variety."

The origin of this vine is not known. According to Franz Zelger, a renowned wine expert, ampelographers, thought that it was identical with the varieties Garganega and Biancavizza. However, it has now been proved that it is an autochthonous variety. The typical mock hermaphroditic flower and the barren pollen yield small, seedless berries (so-called virgin berries) when the conditions for crosspollination are not favourable. Yields significantly varied from year to year, which may have been one of the reasons why this variety was abandoned and replaced with high-yield white varieties.

Today a few wine-growing aficionados still grow this variety as a speciality and make a slightly acidic wine.



Geology and Vineyard Soil

The scree slopes of Terlan were formed by recurrent mudflows caused by Petersbach, a nearby stream, in the course of thousands of years and this has led to today's geological formations. They contain igneous porphyry rich in quartz originating from Tschöggelberg, a nearby mountain.

Due to the action of running water coarse rock debris was deposited especially on the upper part of the scree slope. This is why the vineyard plots in Oberkreut are called "Steinacker", i.e. rocky field. In contrast, the sloping lower part of the scree slope consists of sand and loam, which formed light, porous soils. These soils are warm, permeable and easy for roots to penetrate down to a depth of 2-3 m. They allow the canes and the grapes to ripen early and thus give the white wines of Terlan a long shelf-life.

These soils are geologically young. The topsoil is 10-20 cm thick and rich in humus. Below the subsoil there are layers of sandy and chalky soils at depths of 30-50 cm. The fine earth is characterised by little to some calcium-carbonate. The pH-values range from slightly acidic to neutral, which favours the vine's uptake of nutrients and trace elements.





Vine-Training System

The Guyot system is the most used training system worldwide. It has been replacing the traditional pergola since the late 20th century in the winegrowing area of Terlan. This training system allows the grape-grower to plant more vines (5,000 to 10,000 vines per hectare). It positively affects grape quality due to lower yields per vine.

The grape zone is kept close to the trunk and soil. The high canopy develops above this zone on a 1.5m-high trellis. This allows quick drying and perfect exploitation of sunshine. Additionally it decreases the onset of fungal grape diseases, such as peronospora, botrytis and powdery mildew. This training system also allows mechanical canopy management and pruning of green shoots and ripened canes.



Viticultural Measures

In April caterpillars must be removed to protect the green shoots from feeding damage. Starting in May the excess shoots are removed and then the remaining shoots are either fixed between the wires of the Guyot trellis or spread out and tied to the pergola trellis. In the flowering period in early June the section of leaves around grape clusters is stripped away from the vine to permit more direct sunlight and wind to reach the grapes. In this period the green shoots and grapes must be sprayed to protect them from detrimental fungi, such as peronospora, botrytis and powdery mildew. The green soil cover is mulched 2-3 times a year. The tips of the shoots are pruned several times during the summer months. In July and August immature grape bunches are removed to restrict the yield and improve quality.

The grapes are hand-picked between September and October depending on variety, plot site and climatic conditions. After the vines shed their leaves, they are pruned.



Chardonnay

Up to the 80s this variety was called “yellow Pinot Blanc” in South Tyrol. It is of French origin and is grown all over the world. Chardonnay has a medium-sized grape, which grows in loose clusters and gets golden-yellow in colour during the final ripening stage. Even if grown under warmer climatic conditions, it can reach the right amount of acidity. Consequently it is planted at lower altitudes.

Chardonnay much resembles Pinot Blanc when it comes to aromas, and it is often described as having the scent of bananas. Fine Chardonnay is kept in oak barrels to produce a durable, complex wine.



Kreuth and Vilpian

This site is adjacent to the main road from Bozen to Meran and extends as far as the foot of Tschöggelberg; in the north it reaches as far as Vilpian and in the east as far as Petersbach. The hillsides have a gradient of 5-30%. Chardonnay thrives here and is grown by twenty-two estates on 35 hectares of vineyards. Thus it is one of the most prominent sites of Terlan.

Besides Chardonnay, other varieties, such as Sauvignon, Pinot Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Ruländer, and Lagrein are grown. The plots of Vilpian cover a mere 4 hectares worked by nine estates. The soil is sandy and loamy and the climate is warm with light breezes.



Vorberg

This site spans an altitude of 350 m up to 900 m on Tschöggelberg and is very steep in some parts (20-70%).

In the north the vineyards overlook the village of Vilpian, and in the east they border on the road to the village of Mölten and the stream Petersbach. This site is famous for its fine Pinot Blanc, but Sauvignon, Müller-Thurgau and Ruländer are also grown here.

Twelve estates cover an area of 20 hectares. The soil is porous, sandy and gravelly and the climate is warm with light breezes.



Lagrein

Lagrein is an autochthonous red-wine variety which is grown almost exclusively in South Tyrol. In old documents it was mentioned as early as 700 years ago as a white variety. It grows vigorously with long shoots and large, shiny leaves. Depending on the shape of the grape, it is classified as either short-pedicelled or long-pedicelled Lagrein.

Lagrein is very demanding when it comes to sites and soil warmth and structure, which is why it is especially planted on the valley floor around Bozen, where conditions are favourable. In former times it was used for the production of a light Rosè wine called Kretzer. Nowadays it is produced as a big wine with tannins and chocolate and violet flavours. Like all other expressive wines, Lagrein is also said to have salubrious qualities.



Gewürztraminer

The village of Tramin claims to be the origin of Gewürztraminer, which is highly probable in view of the place name. This has not been proved, though.

This vine has tiny leaves and many tendrils. When ripening the berries become reddish-brown in colour. It is very demanding when it comes to soil qualities and sites. To produce fine Gewürztraminer the winegrower has to invest a lot of manual labour and grow the vine in the best vineyard plots. Constant canopy management and low yields are a prerequisite of harmonious wines. This variety is very aromatic and is reminiscent of cloves, rose flowers and spices. It has a high content of sugars, which results in durable, aromatic wines with a noticeable body.



Winegrowing Village Andrian

The gently rolling hills surrounding Andrian are covered with about 50 hectares of vineyards. The low mountain ranges, consisting of porphyry rich in quartz, and the high mountain range of Mendel, consisting of limestone, and Gantkofel protect the village against westerly winds. The fan-shaped scree slope, where the village is situated, was formed by numerous mudflows from the Höllenstein Valley over centuries. The soil consists of loamy limestone with traces of white dolomite. Light soil structure allows good water retention, constant aeration and depth of vine roots.

On the slightly east-facing slopes of the village the low altitudes ranging from 260 to 340 m allow varieties such as late-ripening Lagrein, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon to grow. On the north-facing slopes varieties such as Sauvignon, Chardonnay, and Ruländer develop fine, aromatic wines.



Lehenegg Mansion

The mansion was first mentioned in a document dealing with negotiations for building rights in 1529 and was called “Lechnerhof”. At that time it was owned by Fuchs von Fuchsberg zu Valtein Lehenberg und Jaufenburg. Karl Siegfried Graf Fuchs sold the estate to Jakob Eberschlag zu Koflegg for 850 guldens. He added another floor and the “oculi”, the round window frames, to the building.

After the death of the last Eberschlag zu Koflegg around 1854, the estate was inherited by the Lemmen family, who added “zu Kofl und Lehenegg” to their name.

On November 12th 1890 Alois von Lemmen sold the mansion to Alois von Mackowitz for 16,500 guldens. Hans von Mackowitz extensively analysed every variety between 1919 and 1949 and published the data in the book Terlan and Wine. 100 Years at the Terlan Winery. The grape and apple-growing estate has been owned by the family since 1890 and is now run by Heinz Mackowitz.



The Pergola



The pergola has characterised the South-Tyrolean wine-growing regions for centuries. High yields made this training system attractive in the past. Vertical posts and a tilted trellis carry the canopy and the grapes. This canopy training system is gradually being replaced. Canopy management is labour-intensive. Additionally, grapes are not spread uniformly on the vine and canopy management cannot be mechanised. With experience and suitable viticultural measures the wine-grower can achieve good results in pergolas as well. On the other hand, on steep slopes the pergola is more suited to difficult terrain and is therefore still in use.



Climate in Terlan

The climate in the winegrowing area around Terlan is mainly affected by altitude, which ranges from 250 to 400 m in the core area, whereas the vineyard plots of Montigl and Vorberg are situated at 700-900 m. The topography of the area, such as altitudes, hillsides, slopes and orientation toward the sun, contributes to a microclimate that allows grape-growers to plant the wide range of varieties which Terlan is famous for. These vineyard plots are characterised by Mediterranean microclimate with not too cold winters, springs with strong breezes and a lot of precipitation, warm summers, and sunny autumns with many hours of sunshine. There are perfect climatic conditions for every variety. Other typically Mediterranean plants, such as cypresses, olive trees, laurels, pomegranates, almonds, or Japanese medlars, also grow on these slopes. Precipitation reaches 700-800 mm a year, with occasional snow and mild frosts (rarely below -5°C) in winter. Spring frosts rarely create a hazard for the vines due to the fact that they grow at higher and thus warmer altitudes. Bud break usually occurs in late spring. In summer temperatures can reach up to 33°C . The best vineyard plots get 2000 hours of sunshine a year. Other hazards, such as hail, are very rare.



Quality and Harvest



To increase quality the amount of grapes per vine must be monitored. Green harvesting is used to produce high-quality grapes. Soil management, fertilisation and irrigation are strictly monitored to suppress excess vigour. Still, fertile vines often carry too many grapes, which are removed in summer. At the onset of veraison whole bunches or portions of grapes are trimmed. The best time for harvest is determined after analysing sugars and acids and after subjective determination of ripeness by tasting. In warm plots and for fast-ripening varieties harvest begins as early as at the end of August.



Siebeneich and Klaus

The sites Siebeneich and Klaus are located on the scree slopes of Etschtal to the east of the village of Siebeneich in the municipality of Terlan.

The soil contains porphyry and traces of limestone originating on Tschöggelberg, a nearby mountain. The percentage of clay and loam is higher due to the fact that creeks originating on Tschöggelberg have transported and deposited sediments from “Wieser Lahn” and its surrounding area.

The climate is very mild and there are many hours of sunshine. Fifteen winegrowing estates cover an area of about 30 hectares in Siebeneich and eight estates covering 14 hectares are located in Klaus. As these soils are rich in minerals and clay, Merlot, the variety mainly grown here, develops a typically spicy aroma. Nowadays these winegrowers also grow white-wine varieties, such as Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer and Sauvignon.

Three estates also run their own winery, namely the estates Braunbach, Kornell and Lackner.



Terlaner wine soup

Terlaner wine soup was first served in Berlin in 1965 at a culinary event presenting South-Tyrolean specialties. Andreas Hellrigl, Josef Theiner, and Franz Tauber, three renowned South-Tyrolean chefs, have elaborated old recipes and created Terlaner wine soup. Many South-Tyrolean restaurants serve this delicious soup.

Recipe for 4 people

What you need:

½ litre broth

4 yolks

50 ml cream

¼ litre Terlaner Pinot Blanc

bread cubes of 1 stale roll

1 tablespoon butter

cinnamon, nutmeg, salt

What to do:

Roast bread cubes in butter and sprinkle with cinnamon.

Pour broth and wine into a saucepan.

Mix cream and yolks until smooth and add to the soup.

Mix until smooth on low heat.

Add a pinch of salt, a little nutmeg and cinnamon.

Pour into bowls.

Top with bread cubes and sprinkle with nutmeg and cinnamon.





Credits

Published by

Arbeitskreis Terlaner Weinweg, ©2010

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Beratungsring, Foto Tappeiner, Othmar Seehauser,
Heinrich Targa, Gudrun Muschalla.

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Printed by

Druckstudio Leo, Frangart

This project has been supported by the Municipality
of Terlan, Raiffeisenkasse Terlan, the Terlan Winery,
the Tourism Association and private sponsors for the
information boards and publicity.

Powered by:



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