

## **2 Marketing of Austrian Wine**

### **2.1 Qualitätswein of regional origin (DAC)<sup>1</sup>**

On an international level a distinction is made between Roman and German wine law. While the German wine law (Austria, Germany) rather concentrates on the grape variety, the Roman wine law (Italy, France and Spain) distinguishes and characterises the wine according to its origin. For example: If you ask a consumer here in Austria who is acquainted with the German wine law, “Which wine have you had yesterday?” he will probably name a grape variety (“Yesterday, I had a good Zweigelt.”); a consumer from a Roman country will name the origin of the wine (“I had a Chianti/ Bordeaux/ Rioja etc.). As the wines within the Roman system are defined according to their origin, this classification corresponds more or less to a wine description; the German wine law however does not define any wine by its individual origin. In case somebody replies “I had a Kamptaler.” no information is given about the character of the wine (white? red? sweet?).

Thus, the Roman wine law offers 2 big advantages:

1. Wines which are named and defined according to their origin are not exchangeable! Austria experienced this bitter fact when large quantities of Grüner Veltliner, Welschriesling Zweigelt or Blaufränkisch were exported from Hungary and consumed by Austrian consumers – who primarily focus on the variety – believing they would drink Austrian wine. In addition, from now on the indication of the grape variety and vintage will be also allowed on the label of a Tafelwein. Therefore, the emphasis on the specific origin will become even more important.
2. The Roman wine law knows the principle of self-determination. The fact that Chianti has to taste like Chianti every year necessitates an accurate definition of the wine (grape variety, production measures, maturation). All the details are defined by persons involved in the wine business within the Chianti region (grape producers, wine producers, retailers etc.) – we thus talk of self-determination respectively of the system of inter-profession (cooperation between the individual occupational groups in inter-professional committees). It is a great advantage of self-determination that the responsible professional groups are obliged to focus intensively on the wine and the region to create not exchangeable and unmistakable wines.

The already mentioned imports from Hungary in the late 90ies brought about that the Austrian wine business started to discuss the Roman legal system. An amendment of the wine law provided the opportunity to set up inter-professional committees for the individual Austrian wine-growing regions with the aim to develop suggestions for origin-specific wines. Only those origin-specific wines may carry the name of the region; the designation “DAC” respectively “Districtus Austriae Controllatus” instead of “Qualitätswein” notifies the consumer that he buys a wine with a specific origin. Of greater significance than the abbreviation DAC is however the geographic denomination.

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<sup>1</sup>Austria Wine Marketing Board, Willi Klinger 2008

This means that a DAC-wine is not generally something totally new. Based on the existing Austrian system for Qualitätswein, DAC-wines are those which typically display the taste of a local wine-growing region. Therewith, Austria follows the appellation systems of renowned wine-growing regions in Italy (Chianti, Soave), France (Bordeaux, Burgundy, Chablis) or Spain (Rioja). There the denominations read DOC/DOCG, AOC/AC or DOC/DO.

Up to now, 5 DAC regions were defined according to a regulation by the Ministry of Agriculture: Weinviertel DAC (a distinct Grüner Veltliner), Mittelburgenland DAC (a Blaufränkisch in various styles), Traisental DAC (two levels of Grüner Veltliner or Riesling), Kremstal DAC (two levels of Grüner Veltliner or Riesling) and Kamptal DAC (two levels of Grüner Veltliner or Riesling).

After all, how does the self-determination system in Austria's wine-growing regions work?

It is based on the so called regulation concerning the organization of branches by the Ministry of Agriculture which encompasses a large number of regulations. The Regional Wine Boards (in every wine-growing region) include decisive representatives of the regional wine business, whereby the structure of the members has to represent the specific characteristics of the wine-growing region. Marketing measures which take regional requirements into account can be taken in cooperation with the Austria Wine Marketing Board. Provided that a DAC-wine will sharpen a region's profile, the Regional Board has the possibility to suggest regulations for typical origin-related Qualitätswein (DAC-wines) to the Federal Minister. In addition to the Regional Boards in the wine-growing regions a National Wine Board has been established. It functions as a filter between the decisions of the Regional Wine Boards and the regulations of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The intensive discussion of regional characteristics and the related types of wine (Which wine type links the consumer to the region? How can individual types of origin be distinguished?) has set up a very creative process within the Austrian wine business. In the medium term, it can be expected that the major part of Austria's wine-growing regions will define origin-specific DAC-wines.

#### Legal regulations DAC

##### Weinviertel DAC (as from vintage 2002)

Grape variety	Grüner Veltliner
Levels:	Classic: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of January 1 in the year following the harvest.
Alcohol:	minimum 12 Vol %
Taste profile:	Grüner Veltliner: fruity, spicy, peppery, no notes of botrytis or wood

##### Traisental DAC (as from vintage 2007)

Grape variety:	Grüner Veltliner, Riesling
Levels:	Classic: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of January 1 in the year following the harvest Reserve: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of March 15 in the year following the harvest
Alcohol:	Classic: minimum 12 Vol % Reserve: minimum 13 Vol%
Taste profile:	Grüner Veltliner: fresh, fruity, spicy, peppery, no notes of botrytis or wood

Riesling: powerful, structured, aromatic, mineral  
no notes of botrytis or wood

#### Kremstal DAC (as from vintage 2007)

Grape variety: Grüner Veltliner, Riesling  
Levels: Classic: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of January 1 in the year following the harvest  
Reserve: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of March 15 in the year following the harvest

Alcohol: Classic: minimum 12 Vol %  
Reserve: minimum 13 Vol%

Taste profile: Grüner Veltliner: fresh, accentuated fruit, delicate spiciness, no notes of botrytis or wood  
Riesling: fragrant, aromas of stone fruit, elegant, mineral  
no notes of botrytis or wood

#### Kamptal DAC (concept, as from vintage 2008)

Grape variety: Grüner Veltliner, Riesling  
Levels: Classic: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of January 1 in the year following the harvest  
Reserve: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of March 15 in the year following the harvest

Alcohol: Classic: minimum 12 Vol %  
Reserve: minimum 13 Vol%

Taste profile: Grüner Veltliner: accentuated fruit, fine spice,  
no notes of botrytis or wood  
Riesling: fragrant, aromatic, elegant, mineral  
No dominant notes of botrytis, no tone of wood

#### Mittelburgenland DAC (as from vintage 2005)

Grape variety: Blaufränkisch  
Levels: Classic: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of January 1 in the year following the harvest  
On sale as of March 1 in the year following the harvest

Reserve: Reserve: Application for obtaining state inspection numbers as of January 1 in the second year following the harvest  
On sale as of March 1 in the second year following the harvest

Alcohol: Classic: minimum 12,5 Vol % (maximum 13 Vol %)  
With designation of single vineyard (e.g. Hochäcker) minimum 13 Vol% (maximum 13,5 Vol%)  
Reserve: minimum 13 Vol%

Taste profile: Classic: fruity, spicy, powerful, matured in traditional large oak casks or used barrique barrels  
Reserve: fruity, spicy, powerful, matured in traditional large oak casks or used barrique barrels