

F.X. Pichler,

‘Ried Kellerberg’ Wachau Riesling 2021

Wachau, Austria



PRODUCER

F.X. Pichler is located in Wachau, a region so remarkably beautiful it has earned a spot on Unesco's World Heritage list. The Pichler family have been farmers in the region for five generations. Franz Xaver (F.X.) built a winery in 1971, and his son Lucas makes the wines today. Lucas' grandfather began with three hectares of land, which have now grown to 20 hectares because Lucas finds it hard to say no when rare vineyard plots are made available for sale. The climate in the Wachau is influenced by several sources: the moderating Danube River, cold air from the forests in Waldviertel and Dunkelsteiner and warm air from the Pannonian basin. From a need to adapt to the effects of global climate change, F.X. Pichler have left the Vinea Wachau association and the 2020 vintage is the first to fall under the Districtus Austriae Controllatus (DAC) regulations. Going forward, the wines will drop the 'Federspiel' and 'Smaragd' classifications based on must weights and will be labelled according to a three-tier system, either as regional, village or single site wines.

VINEYARDS

There is an international consensus that Kellerberg is the absolute model vineyard. The vertiginous, barren and purist primitive-rock terrace creates a very special microclimate. The Kellerberg vineyard benefits from the sun early in the morning and much-needed shade in the afternoons. At night, cool air currents from the surrounding woodlands help to retain aromatic freshness and provide complex texture and finely nuanced minerality, which produce tropical and seductive aromas in the wine. The fruit for this wine comes from south/south-eastern slopes at 200-330 metres above sea level.

VINTAGE

The 2021 vintage started with a cool late winter and spring, and led to an unusually late budbreak. This however protected young shoots from any late frost damage. Ample rainfall until early June ensured a nourishing supply of water to the vines. The summer that followed was generally cooler than previous vintages. Heavy rainfall, thunderstorms, and hailstorms were common throughout July and August, leading to a later harvest date – the grapes were left largely unharmed by these weather events. Pleasant weather conditions in September led to further ripening and ultimately the prolonged growing season resulted in perfect physiological ripeness coupled with fresh and vibrant acidity levels in the grapes.

VINIFICATION

The hand-harvested and sorted grapes were destemmed and macerated for 9-12 hours on the skins. Fermentation took place partly in stainless-steel tanks and partly in large Austrian oak barrels at controlled temperatures. The wine was then aged on fine lees for eight months before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

This Riesling displays superb elegance and concentration. There are lifted aromas of peach, mandarin, lime and crushed stone on the nose. The palate is expertly balanced with vibrant acidity, glossy stone fruit and supple texture.