

F.X. Pichler,

‘Ried Loibenberg’ Wachau Riesling 2023

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

The Loibenberg is one of the steepest and most barren terraced vineyards in Loiben. This site is also one of the largest continuous individual vineyard sites in the Wachau, almost entirely south-facing, sun-blessed and warm. During the day the sun warms up the dry-stone terraces, and this retained heat is gradually released during the evening hours back into the vineyards. The high-grade bedrock soil is geologically dominated by Gföhler gneiss, a transformation rock that consists of acidic, granite-like protoliths. The sandy-stony soils naturally provide ample water drainage, thus encouraging root growth.

VINTAGE

The 2023 vintage was characterised by a late spring, so the vines did not burst their buds until later in April, avoiding spring frosts. However, despite the delays to vegetation, the summer brought higher temperatures leading to a good flowering season. July and August recorded extreme temperatures, but rain towards the end of the summer had a positive impact on the vine's health, while advancing the grape's ripeness. Optimum harvest conditions contributed to a very good vintage.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand harvested over multiple dates at the end of October. Upon arrival at the winery, the grapes were destemmed and sorted by hand before undergoing six to nine hours of skin contact. Fermentation took place in a mix of stainless steel tanks and wooden casks, the wine then spent eight months on fine lees before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

Loibenberg is known for its rich, bold and elegant wines. Bright yellow-green with silver reflections, this Riesling has delicate yellow peach, mango and hints of honey nuances. On the palate, the clean acidity adds wonderful length and great ageing potential to the wine.