

F.X. Pichler,

‘Ried Steinertal’ Wachau Riesling 2024

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

This unique site is situated at the most eastern end of the Wachau, between the Loibenberg and the Pfaffenbergs. Its form depicts a rift, which broadens into an amphitheatre as it reaches down toward the vineyards landscape in Unterloiben. The site is clearly characterized by its proximity to the nearby forest, from which nocturnal northerly breezes cool the vineyard as they pass through on their current to the Danube. This makes Steinertal the cool, slow ripening single-vineyard site within the Loibner vineyards, which is unique for its ideal harvest picking time and mineral character.

VINTAGE

The 2024 vintage was challenging in the Wachau region. A relatively warm but wet winter that helped to replenish the water reserves, was followed by a warm spring that encouraged very early budburst, three weeks earlier than the long-term average. This early start left vines vulnerable to the late frosts which occurred in Wachau in April and resulted in reduced yields. Spring was followed by very hot temperatures starting from July and lasting into late summer. Flooding during harvest created further challenges in the vineyards and contributed to a very early harvest. Despite the challenges, the resulting wines are very elegant, high quality and approachable in their youth.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were hand harvested on various dates at the start of October. Upon arrival at the winery, the grapes were destemmed and sorted by hand before undergoing 12 to 16 hours of skin contact. Fermentation took place in stainless steel tanks, the wine then spent nine months on fine lees before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

The ‘Ried Steinertal’ Riesling displays superb concentration with well-defined aromas of mandarin zest, white peach, a hint of blossom honey and a smokiness on the nose. The palate is lean and juicy with a fresh, racy acidity. Delicate, very well balanced, culminating in a long, mineral finish.