

F.X. Pichler,

‘Ried Kellerberg’ Wachau Grüner Veltliner 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

The Kellerberg is an internationally critically acclaimed vineyard site par excellence. This vineyard has steep inclines and barren bedrock terraces. It faces due south to south-east, between 200 – 300 metres above sea level, and forms an outlet of a tributary valley with an exceptional microclimate. The Dürnsteiner Kellerberg is blessed with early morning sunshine, with much of the site profiting from much-needed shade from the early afternoon rays during the summer months. The latter has a huge benefit on drawing out the ripening of the grapes. The Kellerberg is made up of Gföhler gneiss, a metamorphic bedrock formed from a granite-like parent rock (plutonite).

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 handpicked into small boxes across multiple dates at the end of October. Upon arrival at the winery, they were destemmed, crushed and sorted by hand before undergoing 9 to 12 hours of skin contact. Fermentation took place in a mix of stainless steel tanks and wooden casks. The wine then spent roughly 9 months on the fine lees before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

This Grüner Veltliner displays distinctive aromas of mandarin zest, yellow tropical fruit, complemented by hints of orange blossom and a mineral edge. The palate is layered and complex with vibrant citrus fruit aromatics and elegant texture.