



‘I TRY TO GIVE EACH
VINEYARD ITS OWN
VOICE. THE SWITCH TO
ORGANIC WAS A
LOGICAL STEP FOR ME.’

GEORG PRIELER

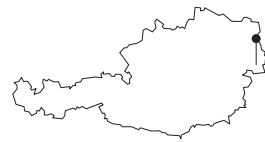
Preface: The name of the municipality with 1,400 inhabitants often leaves visitors to the Prieler winery looking in vain for a mountain range that doesn't actually exist in the region. Nevertheless, the winery is associated with the Leithaberg region from a wine-growing perspective. As soon as you arrive, you feel like part of the family. Engelbert (Bertl) Prieler (born 1948), who never misses the opportunity to help out in the vineyards, his wife Irmgard, who he married in 1972 (known in-house as “the watchful eye in the vineyard”), Georg Prieler, who has been the boss since 2011, with his wife Katharina (a paediatrician and the organiser of events such as the vintage presentation), and his sister Michaela (Michi), a kindergarten teacher and “Prieler’s best confectioner”, all combine to form a harmonious family.

Every now and then they are joined by Georg’s sister Silvia, or more precisely, Dr. Silvia Prieler. She has a doctorate in microbi-

ology and is involved in many exciting scientific projects at the university in Vienna. Around 20 years ago, she temporarily took over responsibility for her parents’ business when her father was incapacitated due to an industrial accident. She still enjoys helping with the grape harvest, but had to give up her former membership in the association “Elf Frauen und ihre Weine” (Eleven women and their wines) after changing professions. Let’s not forget our four-legged friend who looks on curiously during a tasting: a Bas-set Fauve de Bretagne.

It all started here on a farm with a little wine-growing, which was then sold in barrels. The recently married Bertl took over the business with his wife Irmgard in 1972, switched to self-marketing and made a significant breakthrough just over ten years later. He was initially a rather unpopular winemaker because he reduced yields significantly, which at the time was largely frowned

Photo: Georg Prieler in a relaxed mood



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2019 Blaufränkisch
Ried Marienthal Leithaberg DAC

2019 Blaufränkisch
Ried Goldberg Leithaberg DAC

2020 Pinot Blanc
Ried Haidatz Leithaberg DAC

Founded: 1972 | Owner: Georg Prieler | Winemaker: Georg Prieler | Vineyard area: 24 hectares | Key grape varieties: Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Blaufränkisch, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot | Organic certified

upon by his colleagues. He fended off their criticism with his typical hearty laugh. He also relied increasingly on barriques, the small oak barrels that were in vogue at the time. It wasn't long before he got the hang of working with wood - and began to attract the attention of connoisseurs. Much of his inspiration came from his travels abroad, the value of which he later passed on to his son. He often referred to winemaking as a "hobby that became a profession". He had one goal in mind: "We wanted to compete with world-class wines."

There is little doubt he succeeded in this, even after handing over to his son (born 1984), who was able to travel internationally after a thorough education. He went to Argentina, New Zealand (with the Austrian Rudi Bauer, the boss of Quartz Reef, a top company), California, even China ("there I got to know the tea culture, which is somewhat comparable to wine"). International experience has probably contributed somewhat to the fact that exports are a significant part of sales (two-thirds share, 19 countries). A number of factors contribute to the quality. They have access to 70 to 90-year-old vines that no longer bear high yields, but instead provide perfect grapes. This is supported by organic cultivation, which began in 2006, and a more general policy of strict growth control of the vines. Another important factor is the focus on two main varieties, Blaufränkisch and Pinot Blanc (together accounting for 80% of the vineyard area). When the harvest reaches the cellar, they work out which container is ideal for which wine: Should it be a small or large wooden barrel, steel or perhaps even vinification in an amphora?

Producing consistently excellent results can occasionally lead to special awards. The winery was inducted into the Austrian wine magazine Vinaria's Hall of Fame in 2020, becoming one of only 29 wineries. The Prieler collection offers one highlight after the other.

It starts with the "Gemischter Satz" field blend (Muskateller, Sauvignon Blanc, Grüner Veltliner and Welschriesling), which dances playfully on the tongue. The "Sinner" Chardonnay, which has been matured in stainless steel and spent a long time on its fine lees, is a creamy, mineral white addition. Georg Prieler describes it as a tribute to Burgenland, or rather to the Rust hills, where the soil is rich in lime. "You have to interpret this subsoil correctly as a winemaker; it challenges you and calls on your wealth of experience." Conclusion: Mission accomplished!

Next, the all-important white Burgundy. The Pinot Blanc village wine produces a gentle impression and fine aroma on the tongue. The Ried Leithaberg is produced from old vines and matured in large wooden barrels and presents itself as an elegant and smooth wine. The stand-outs are the two white single-vineyard wines from the Haidatz and Steinweingarten vineyards, both of which are complex, vigorous, vibrant on the tongue and with plenty of depth. These wines are also allowed to mature a little before they are put on sale, which keeps them at their best for years to come!

In addition to Blaufränkisch are the excellent, balanced red wines such as Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon (which Bertl Prieler drew particular attention to in the 1990s) and St. Laurent. The stars, however, are the single-vineyard Blaufränkisch. These include the Pratschweingarten (distinctive, intense aroma, lots of punch), the Goldberg fermented with whole grapes, which for some already resembles a legend and, as a youngster, presents itself as an incredibly dense, mineral and sophisticated wine. Finally, for the last ten years or so, there has been the Marienthal from a famous plot of land in Oggau. The Blaufränkische that grows here is off-putting when young but hints at huge potential once its tannins begin to ripen. However, if you want to enjoy it properly, you should take your time. The first 2011 Marienthal should now be ready...



It's best to write PRIELER in capitals. This way, it draws attention like the house wines.