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**AUSTRIAN WINE** 

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**MEDITERRANEAN  
CUISINE**



# TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

## **STEPHAN VADNJAL**

DOLCE VITA | KLAGENFURT

Austrian wine is always a safe choice when it comes to food and wine pairing, and Italian cuisine is no exception. Fresh Styrian wines make the perfect pairing partner during the summer months, although Sauvignon Blanc should not be too intense, green or loud. A Grüner Veltliner is a delightful match for fish served in a reduction sauce while spicy fish dishes go excellently with Frühroter Veltliner (Malvasier).

## **GEORG RAHOFER**

RAHOFER | STEYR

Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris are ideal companions for fish and seafood with fresh and ripe Styrian versions seeming to be predestined for this. I tend to recommend lighter versions to go with antipasti. If red wine is preferred, intensive blends are a good match for Mediterranean dishes as well as Merlot from Austria, provided the wine is not too fruity.

## **LEFTERIS DERMITZAKIS**

ELLAS & ORPHEUS | WIEN

Light, fruity and easy drinking wines are always top of my list of recommendations for classic Greek cuisine. Grüner Veltliner can be served instead of a Retsina and milder Veltliner wines go well with seasoned fish or lamb because they are great thirst quenchers. Riesling on the other hand is a difficult grape variety whereas Blaufränkisch is ideal, especially with moussaka.

The AWMB would like to thank **Angelika Deutsch** for her professional contribution to the tastings and for her editorial support.

# MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE AND AUSTRIAN WINE

**Mediterranean cuisine enjoys** great popularity in Austria and is not limited to pizza and pasta. The secret lies in the simple and rather purist composition of the dishes. Spanish tapas are currently experiencing a revival and gazpacho has found its way onto the Austrian culinary scene after becoming popular during the summer. Greek cuisine is a permanent favourite although not necessarily served with Greek wine.

**Wine plays a fundamental** role in Mediterranean cuisine as an accompaniment to meals. Light and fresh wines with fine acidity are typically chosen to be paired with food and these are qualities which can easily be fulfilled by Austrian wines.

**As a rule: white** wines are the best option. Starters require light and fresh white wines with delicate fruit while complex pasta dishes can handle slightly riper white wines, provided they are not too dominated by alcohol and there are no botrytis notes. Grüner Veltliner is a universal food companion and pairs well with almost anything, from antipasti to meat. Burgundian varieties come in a close second which is unsurprising as they find their equivalents in Italian wines. Too much acidity does not harmonise well just as too much minerality or spiciness is particularly counterproductive when it comes to pairing with garlic or spicy dishes.

**Styrian wine,** in particular Sauvignon Blanc, is the ideal companion for an array of Mediterranean dishes. The wine may be medium-bodied and unoaked and certainly does not have to be a single vineyard wine; it should however have ripe fruit in the foreground, few green notes and no excessively loud aromas.

**Mediterranean cuisine demands** elegance of the wines that accompany it, and this goes for red wines too. Fine fruit, not too high concentration and above all moderate and discreet barrel maturation are usually a safe bet. St. Laurent has proved to be particularly suitable as a result of its herbal notes and earthy tones which tend to harmonise with a lot of dishes.



As the dishes are predominantly taken from Italian cuisine, here are a few tips for Spanish and Greek cuisine:

## SPANISH CUISINE

### GAZPACHO



This cold vegetable soup is one of the classics. Medium-bodied Grüner Veltliner pairs well as it can hold its own against the garlic. Ripe Sauvignon Blanc is a convincing choice. Or the Spanish version: an oxidised, sherry-like white wine.

### PAELLA

This dish containing rice, vegetables, chicken, mussels and seafood complimented by the aroma of saffron has its own unique and distinctive taste. The best recommendations are Chardonnay or Pinot Blanc, for example from Leithaberg, or even classic, medium-bodied Blaufränkisch.

### COCIDO

This traditional dish of boiled meat with potatoes and vegetables is excellent with Pinot Noir or a very light-bodied Blaufränkisch or Zweigelt.

### CALLOS

St. Laurent goes wonderfully with this hearty stew made of beef tripe, calf's foot, chickpeas and chorizo.

### SERRANO HAM AND IBERIAN HAM

A classic match would be a fine, dry sparkling wine; alternatively a dry Welschriesling or a spicy, classic Grüner Veltliner.

### SEAFOOD

Fish, mussels and shellfish are best served with light, fresh white wines such as Welschriesling, Riesling and Veltliner, which may show a slight hint of saltiness.

### TORTILLA

A simple dish that shines in combination with Neuburger, Pinot Gris or Pinot Blanc.

Thanks to Adriana Gonzales Vicente from Lichtenberger-Gonzales Winery for the tips.

# GREEK CUISINE

Greek cuisine relies on clear and precise aromas. Fish is prepared with olive oil and lemon and only a touch of garlic is added to lamb. Tzatziki is one dish that challenges and is therefore well matched with a powerful Grüner Veltliner to complement the high fat yoghurt. White wine tends to be easier to pair with Greek food than red wine, with light and delicately fruity wines proving to be the best option.

## LAMB

Powerful white wines, simple, basic and dry reds with delicate fruit.

## MOUSSAKA

Blaufränkisch blessed with a harmonic tannin structure.

## GYROS AND SOUVLAKI

Powerful Grüner Veltliner, ripe Pinot Blanc, light and dry Zweigelt or Blaufränkisch.



# ANTIPASTI

## BEEF CARPACCIO

Carpaccio is an extremely popular starter with a long history. The original recipe, created by Giuseppe Cipriani in Harry's bar, calls for the beef to be bright red, raw and thinly sliced. Nowadays it is usually served with an olive oil emulsion, parmesan and rocket salad. This elegant dish goes well with wines with fine tones.



### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Elegant and medium-bodied Grüner Veltliner; a classic one from a ripe vintage
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc, not dominated by oak
- ▶ Pinot Gris
- ▶ Rosé from Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch or Pinot Noir, sparkling versions also recommended
- ▶ Classic St. Laurent with lots of spice
- ▶ Classic Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt, subtle fruit, tart and spicy



## FISH CARPACCIO

Fish versions of carpaccio made with raw sea bass, scallops or cooked octopus are very popular. Served with olive oil and lemon, these make for wonderfully delicate starters. Not too grassy Sauvignon Blanc is perfect with sea bass although a fine Riesling harmonises well too. Octopus and scallops are best served with full-bodied wines: Pinot Blanc from Styria would be a good choice, perhaps aged in large oak casks, elegant Chardonnay (in Styria the name Morillon is traditionally used as a synonym) or powerful, spicy and smooth Grüner Veltliner would also go well.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Full-bodied Grüner Veltliner, Roter Veltliner
- ▶ Wiener Gemischter Satz
- ▶ Ripe Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc
- ▶ Chardonnay/Morillon

## VITELLO TONNATO

Creamy tuna flavoured sauce, tender meat, piquant capers – this combination of ingredients can be matched wonderfully with powerful white wines with a touch of spice. Powerful Grüner Veltliner complements vitello tonnato perfectly: peppery spiciness for the capers and ripe fruit for the creaminess of the sauce. An alternative option would be a ripe Riesling with relatively subtle fruit to counter the spiciness of the capers.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner is a perfect choice
- ▶ Powerful Riesling without botrytis notes
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Rotgipfler or Zierfandler
- ▶ Light Zweigelt, not fruit dominated

## PROSCIUTTO & MELON

An absolute hit in summer. The melon needs to be ripe in order to harmonise with the fruity aromas of the wine. Classic Grüner Veltliner works splendidly as it brings out the saltiness of the prosciutto. A ripe Riesling is another variety that can work as the fruit harmonises with the salt while the exotic aromas complement the melon.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic or full-bodied Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Roter Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Riesling
- ▶ Powerful Rotgipfler or Zierfandler

## CAPRESE SALAD / BURRATA

Tomato and mozzarella is an ever-present all-rounder in Italian cuisine. Sauvignon Blanc helps to reinforce the flavours and complements the basil, however this only works if the aromas in the Sauvignon Blanc are not too green. Grüner Veltliner should be predominantly spicy. A light buttery Pinot Blanc is a good match for the mozzarella. Burrata, a creamy Italian cheese with a runny centre, is the queen of the pasta filata cheese varieties. If served with olive oil, a powerful Grüner Veltliner is the best match, although a classic Grüner Veltliner does the trick too. Paired with a ripe Sauvignon, the combination offers a tantalising taste experience. Choose classic Zweigelt if serving with grilled radicchio.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Wiener Gemischter Satz
- ▶ Powerful Sauvignon Blanc, not too grassy
- ▶ Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, rich in extracts
- ▶ Classic, fruity Zweigelt





## FISH ANTIPASTI

Octopus salad, prawns, lots of garlic and herbs, lashings of oil: not easy to match with a wine, a light white wine works best. A classic Grüner Veltliner livens it all up, fine Welschriesling or Riesling harmonise well, as does a subtle Sauvignon Blanc.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Welschriesling
- ▶ Wiener Gemischter Satz
- ▶ Classic Riesling
- ▶ Classic Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Rosé
- ▶ St. Laurent, vegetal and spicy

## VEGETABLE ANTIPASTI

Courgette, aubergine, bell peppers, mushrooms and artichokes: the vegetables are often grilled prior to being pickled, smoky aromas meet vegetal aromas and lots of oil. Riesling is a good choice, but ripe and not too powerful Veltliner and Pinot Blanc are even more impressive. Fresh, crisp and dry white wines, such as a classic Sauvignon Blanc from Styria, are a refreshing alternative.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Wiener Gemischter Satz
- ▶ Ripe Riesling
- ▶ Classic Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris
- ▶ Rosé



# PRIMI PIATTI

The choice of wine to go with the first dish depends entirely on the type of pasta and the sauce. White wines are ideal for tomato sauces with garlic or lots of spice, while Burgundian grape varieties work wonders with creamy sauces. Light wines such as classic Grüner Veltliner, Welschriesling or Wiener Gemischter Satz are excellent when paired with simple vegetable pasta dishes. Risotto calls for a Burgundian wine or a Rotgipfler.

## SPAGHETTI WITH CLAMS / FRUTTI DI MARE - SEAFOOD

Mild and neutral white wines that are not too spicy are particularly good when combined with garlic and parsley. Also Rosé wines are possible! Or an additional option: full-bodied Welschriesling, particularly from the southern Weinviertel or Burgenland. Seafood loves Riesling, Pinot Blanc or classic Rotgipfler.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic Grüner Veltliner, not too spicy
- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Welschriesling
- ▶ Elegant Riesling
- ▶ Rotgipfler, classic Zierfandler or Neuburger





## PENNE ALL' ARRABBIATA

The spiciness of the sauce has a big influence on the wine choice. Be it white or red, too much peppery spiciness or tannins are counterproductive. Robust wines are ideal: ripe Veltliner, dark Zweigelt from a ripe vintage or a St. Laurent with earthy tones.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Dry or off-dry Traminer
- ▶ Zweigelt
- ▶ St. Laurent

## SPAGHETTI BOLOGNESE / LASAGNE

A classic! Red wine is always an excellent choice for spaghetti. Zweigelt and Blaufränkisch are ideal, although it should not be too heavy and tannic. On the other hand a little robustness and a touch of acidity are often beneficial. Wines with a similar style to Chianti are proven choices: spicy Zweigelt, St. Laurent or perhaps a blend with wonderful minerality. The cheese and béchamel sauce in lasagne opens up the option of classic to medium-bodied Veltliner.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic or medium-bodied Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Neuburger
- ▶ Classic, fruity Zweigelt
- ▶ St. Laurent
- ▶ Elegant, medium-bodied Blaufränkisch



## LINGUINE AL PESTO

This Ligurian speciality is very popular in Austria. Cheese, herbs and garlic demand a certain amount of creaminess and smoothness from a wine. Matured wines make excellent companions whereas wines with sharp acidity do not. Ripe Rotgipfler, powerful Veltliner or Chardonnay are recommended, spicy notes are not a problem.

### Pairs nicely with:

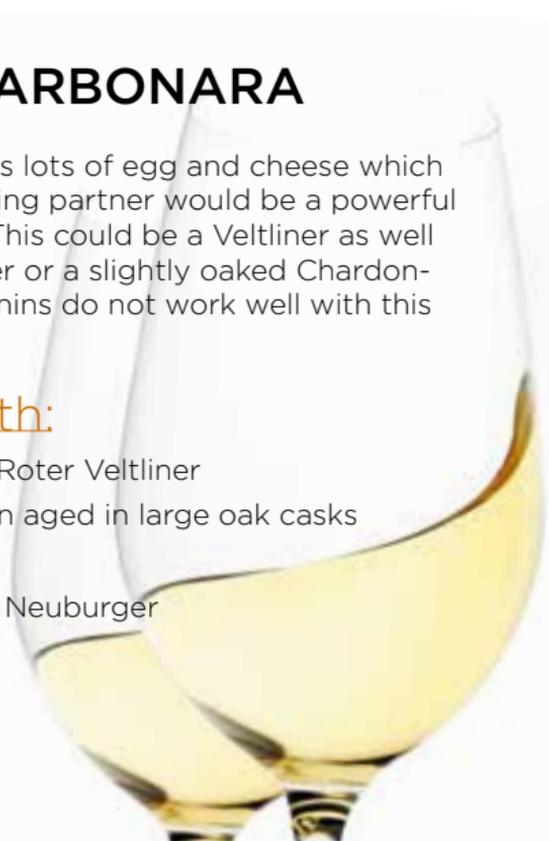
- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner or Roter Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris
- ▶ Powerful Rotgipfler
- ▶ Powerful Chardonnay/Morillon

## SPAGHETTI CARBONARA

This popular dish contains lots of egg and cheese which means that the ideal pairing partner would be a powerful and buttery white wine. This could be a Veltliner as well as a Rotgipfler, Neuburger or a slightly oaked Chardonnay. Vegetal notes or tannins do not work well with this dish.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful Grüner or Roter Veltliner
- ▶ Chardonnay/Morillon aged in large oak casks
- ▶ Pinot Gris
- ▶ Powerful Rotgipfler, Neuburger
- ▶ Dry Traminer



## GNOCCHI WITH TOMATOES

The acidity of the tomatoes combined with the sharpness of the garlic calls for a Riesling - sublime with tomatoes. Fruit and acidity! Generally speaking, ripe white wines are better here: a Sauvignon Blanc matured in large oak casks or a Rotgipfler with exotic notes to buffer the sharpness of the garlic.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Full-bodied Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Ripe Riesling
- ▶ Ripe Sauvignon Blanc matured in large oak casks
- ▶ Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris
- ▶ Rotgipfler, Zierfandler

## RAVIOLI WITH RICOTTA FILLING

This filled pasta dish is a speciality from the northern regions of Italy. Ripe Pinot Blanc, Zierfandler or earthy St. Laurent make impeccable partners for creamy, heavy sauces. Aromatic varieties, particularly Sauvignon Blanc, also work well.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Wiener Gemischter Satz
- ▶ Sauvignon Blanc, classic or matured in large oak casks
- ▶ Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris
- ▶ Zierfandler



# PAELLA

This complex dish containing rice, vegetables, chicken, mussels and seafood with the additional aroma of saffron has its own unique and distinct taste. Powerful Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay, Styrian Morillon or Leithaberg white - all complement the flavours in this dish. Elegant, not too concentrated Blaufränkisch is the ideal alternative for red wine lovers.

## Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful mineral Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris
- ▶ Powerful Chardonnay/Morillon
- ▶ Neuburger
- ▶ Elegant Blaufränkisch

# MUSHROOM RISOTTO

Mushrooms are one of the most difficult foods to match with wine. Hard vintages should be avoided while warm vintages which produced ripe wines are recommendable. In this case, Riesling and Sauvignon are very good choices. A very convincing match: Rotgipfler with slight mineral notes that harmonise well with mushrooms and garlic. An elegant Pinot-like Zweigelt would pair well too.



## Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Medium-bodied Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Ripe Riesling
- ▶ Ripe and powerful Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Rotgipfler, Zierfandler, Neuburger
- ▶ Dry Traminer
- ▶ Elegant Zweigelt
- ▶ Pinot Noir



# PIZZA

Pizza is rarely paired with wine but there are pairing options that make for an enjoyable match. Fresh whites, Rosé and young fruity red wines are good options. Vegetarian or seafood pizza goes best with young and fresh white wines with moderate acidity and aromas. Unoaked light to medium-bodied Zweigelt or Blaufränkisch are safe options. The simpler the pizza topping, the more subtle the wine needs to be to avoid overpowering the aromas in the food. Four cheese pizza is the exception; here full-bodied or slightly oak-aged wines are recommendable.

## Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Welschriesling
- ▶ Rosé with a fruity character
- ▶ Classic, fruity Zweigelt or Blaufränkisch



# FISH DISHES



## PESCE AL FORNO - BAKED FISH

Pesce al Forno is a very simple baked fish dish which is usually served only with vegetables. Gilthead sea bream and sea bass are popular options. This dish likes dry white wines with light to moderate acidity and body. Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc tend to work well while a ripe Styrian wine is an absolutely perfect match.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Riesling
- ▶ Ripe Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Morillon/Chardonnay
- ▶ Ripe Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris
- ▶ Light Zweigelt with high acidity

## GRILLED SEAFOOD

Scampi, prawns and calamari are an essential part of Mediterranean cuisine. Ripe and powerful white wines are ideal: smooth Pinot Blanc with a hint of residual sugar or Sauvignon Blanc with soft oak. Rotgipfler is the perfect pairing partner with calamari. It is astonishing how well a ripe Riesling goes with the sweet aromas in the seafood.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful Riesling, without botrytis notes
- ▶ Ripe Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Ripe Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris
- ▶ Morillon/Chardonnay
- ▶ Rotgipfler, Zierfandler, Neuburger

# MEAT DISHES

## SALTIMBOCCA

Aromatic and light with herbal notes of sage. The prosciutto enhances the saltiness and richness of this dish. Light and elegant white wines are a good choice, however slightly fruity red wines or elegantly spicy blends work wonderfully too.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Classic Grüner Veltliner
- ▶ Powerful Riesling, without botrytis
- ▶ Elegant Pinot Blanc or Chardonnay
- ▶ Zweigelt, Pinot Noir, light blends

## OSSOBUCCO

Ossobuco is a classic Italian meat dish of braised veal shank. Gremolata, a chopped herb condiment typically made of parsley, lemon zest and garlic, gives the dish the final touch and tastes delicious combined with the bone marrow. Red wines with soft tannins are a real treat with this dish: Pinot Noir, St. Laurent, Zweigelt or a blend of indigenous grape varieties such as Pannobile.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Zierfandler, Chardonnay
- ▶ Zweigelt
- ▶ St. Laurent, Pinot Noir
- ▶ Blends made from indigenous varieties





## BISTECCA - GRILLED STEAK

Tagliata (sliced beef fillet), Scaloppine (veal cutlet) and Bistecca (steak) – Italian meat dishes are simple and usually grilled or quickly pan-fried. Red wine or white wine? A question that is not so easy to answer as both are possible depending on the type of wine. White wines should be full-bodied and ripe. Recommended reds include smooth Zweigelt, earthy round St. Laurent, fruity Blaufränkisch or a powerful and spicy blend.

### Pairs nicely with:

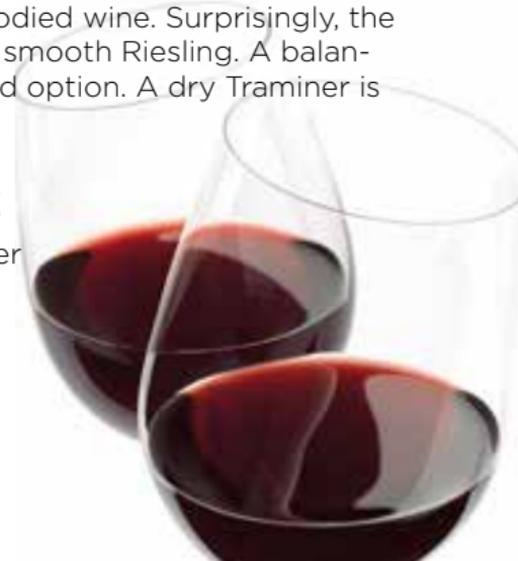
- ▶ Ripe Riesling
- ▶ Powerful Sauvignon Blanc
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris
- ▶ Rotgipfler, Zierfandler, Neuburger
- ▶ Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch
- ▶ St. Laurent, Pinot Noir
- ▶ Powerful and spicy red blends

## FEGATO ALLA VENEZIANA - VENETIAN-STYLE LIVER

Calf's liver with onions and creamy polenta needs to be paired with a powerful full-bodied wine. Surprisingly, the flavours harmonise well with smooth Riesling. A balanced St. Laurent is the best red option. A dry Traminer is another good choice.

### Pairs nicely with:

- ▶ Powerful Grüner Veltliner or Riesling
- ▶ Powerful Pinot Blanc
- ▶ Dry Traminer
- ▶ St. Laurent/Pinot Noir



# TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

## **MICHAEL KAHOVEC**

FABIOS | VIENNA

Sardinian octopus and potato salad harmonises with dry, crisp and slightly spicy Grüner Veltliner. Generally speaking, light and fresh white wines such as Sauvignon from Styria pair brilliantly with antipasti from any region. I recommend Morillon with slightly woody notes with salami and prosciutto. Red wines should not be too concentrated. Dry Blaufränkisch with fruit and depth is the ideal choice for bistecca, pheasant or wild boar.

## **CORNELIA POLETTO**

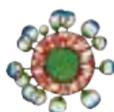
POLETTO | HAMBURG

My cooking style is very versatile - just like Austrian wines, which have gained finesse in recent years. While cooking, I like to adapt the food to fit the wine it will be paired with. For example, I make my carbonara with Tyrolean bacon instead of pancetta if it is going to be served with an Austrian wine.

## **SIGRID BRANTL**

WINE MERCHANT | MUNICH

Sauvignon Blanc is an excellent match for Mediterranean cuisine. Depending on personal preference, it could be a classic version or even one of higher quality. Styrian Pinot Gris or Morillon harmonise well too, but Grüner Veltliner is unbeatable on every level: it never fails to impress. Zweigelt and Pinot Noir are equally as recommendable, as are blends with Zweigelt and Blaufränkisch.



# AUSTRIAN WINE

## **Austrian Wine Marketing Board**

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