

**BURGENLAND**  
**MITTELBURGENLAND**
**WENINGER**  
**HORITSCHON**


**OVERVIEW** | Franz Weninger is considered one of the pioneers of quality wine growing in Austria. Back in the eighties, long before the wine scandal and the ensuing revolution of the industry, Weninger had determined certain standards for his estate in Horitschon in central Burgenland, Austria, among them: reduction of yield, strict selection at the vineyard, and slow aging in wooden barrels. At the time, that was unusual even in Blaufränkisch country in and around Horitschon. Only a year after he had taken over the family business Franz Weninger was already making a name for himself. His Blaufränkisch Kabinett 1983 fascinated the yet small body of wine experts and won international prizes. By 1984 he was already experimenting with barrique.

**VINEYARD AREA:** 23 hectares

**ANNUAL PRODUCTION:** 10,000 cases

**TOP SITES:** Hochäcker, Dürrau

**SOIL TYPES:** loam and clay

**GRAPE VARIETIES:** blaufränkisch, merlot, zweigelt, cabernet sauvignon, st. laurent, blauerburgunder.

“Even to this day I’m still proud of that wine,” says Weninger, “I put an incredible amount of time and energy into grape selection and vinification. In addition, the weather conditions were perfect that year.” In the years to follow Franz Weninger would become a shining star among the Austrian red wine producers, and his wines would earn him an excellent reputation at a time when Austria still had the image of being a purely white wine country. In the red wine test conducted by the journal Falstaff, Weninger wines have been voted Falstaff winner four times already. But the highest honor Weninger has received to date came when he was named “Winemaker of the year” in 1995. The site Kalkofenboden is very rich in lime, warm with southern exposure. The loose limestone soil can be easily penetrated by the roots of the grape vines (to a depth of 5 meters). It is the ideal terroir for Pinot Noir.

**VINEYARD/CELLAR PRACTICES** | Franz Weninger is considered by many to be a perfectionist when it comes to vinification: he personally supervises the aging process of his wines and has made a name for himself as a barrique specialist. Nevertheless, Weninger is convinced that real quality isn’t made in the cellar, but comes from the vine itself. That is why he has also planted high vine density vineyards (6,000 vines per hectare) with young vines that have been grafted to slow-growing, early-ripening lower trunks. Weninger’s way of working is based on the principle of exerting as little influence on the growth of the plants as possible so that the vines will once again find their natural balance. Converting to a bio-dynamic production method was seen as a logical step toward coming closer to nature and improving quality.

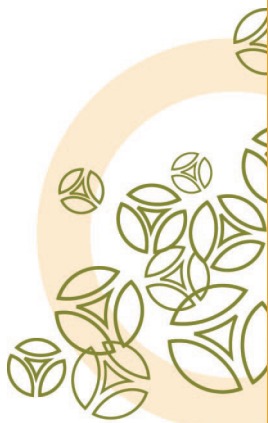
The conversion to bio-dynamic vinification in 2006, under the direction of the experienced agricultural economist Dr. Andrew Lorand, had been prepared for long time. The vineyards have been worked biological since 2004, compost is deployed and for years mineral fertilisers have not been used. Today Franz Weninger owns 23 hectares of vineyards in and around Horitschon, most of them have been planted with Blaufränkisch, Merlot, Zweigelt, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot Noir. Some of the Blaufränkisch vines from the Hockäcker and Dürrau sites are up to 80 years old, the average age of the Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon vines is 20 years. The Kirchholz site is one of the oldest sites in Horitschon, but in 2000 it was integrated into the Hochäcker site by request of the local vintner association. As with the Hochäcker site the soil here is rich in loam and clay. Some parcels, however, are mixed with abundant gravel. To emphasize this rocky soil the grapes from these parcels were vinified and aged separately for the first time in 2003. Franz Weninger produces around 6,000 bottles of this wine annually.

**WINES** | **Zweigelt** - Characteristic of the younger type of this variety. Fruity, harmonious, velvety, with cherry notes in the nose.

**Blaufränkisch** - A classic central Burgenland wine, aged in large oak barrels, ruby red, intensive flavor, lively on the palate with a long finish.

**Blaufränkisch Hochäcker** - This wine is an example of what the predominant grape variety in central Burgenland is capable of bringing forth: very old vines, rigorous selection, and aging in oak barrels (at least one year) produce an elegant, complex wine with a long finish.

**Blaufränkisch Dürrau** - Franz Weninger vinified his Blaufränkisch grapes from the Dürrau site as a single-site wine for the first time in 1999. The wine represents the rough-and-ready Blaufränkisch grape variety, robust, rich in extracts, superb tannins, and a strong smoky, woody flavor. Exceptionally dark, ruby-pomegranate color, intensive blackberry aromas, the juicy fruitiness of black cherries give this dense wine, which is very typical for this region, its distinctive quality.


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