

MG vom SOL

MICHAEL GINDL



PRESS DOSSIER

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AUTHENTIC

GENUINE

MG: Michael Gindl's initials

SOL: the name of an ancient vineyard in Michael's home village Hohenruppersdorf.

SOL: it can also be taken as a synonym for the sun.

Perhaps it reminds you of the word "soul", and this is appropriate, because Gindl's wines have a lot of "soul". They are wines of extraordinary mineral character, minimally processed and unfiltered – just like Michael Gindl himself. They are wines for individualists – made by an individualist. Authentic wines with "soul", reflecting Michael Gindl's personality.

Just "mg vom SOL".

Homeland

Hohenruppersdorf, about 30 km northeast of Vienna, is embedded in gently rolling hills and forests at an elevation of 240m above sea level.

The first vineyard ever documented in the 14th century bore the name "Sol". The inhabitants of Hohenruppersdorf have always been freedom loving and only accepted God and the emperor above them. Growing vines has always been very important for them. With 220 hectares (530 acres) under vines, Hohenruppersdorf is the biggest wine-growing municipality in southern Weinviertel.

Like the residents of Hohenruppersdorf, Michael Gindl's wines also enjoy the freedom to develop at their own pace and in their own style. The buzzard (lat. "Buteo") on the labels symbolizes this. Michael Gindl says, "Buzzards populate my vineyards during harvest time – to me they are like sentinels of the vineyards and they embody power, wildness and freedom – attributes that suitably describe my wines."



Soils and climate

The soils are mainly comprised of loam and loess. The climate is continental with warm summers and cold winters. -25°C is not an exception. In recent years the low amount of precipitation has become a challenge to all winegrowers. Michael Gindl states, "When I was a child there was always snow and a tobogganing chute behind our house. Today's children don't have that anymore because we have scarcely any snow and overall very little rainfall. Our climate could better be compared with that of the Burgenland region than with the rest of the Weinviertel. It is more southerly."

Personal background of a free spirit

When Michael Gindl, born 1983, finished the agricultural school in 2002 it was already clear to him that he wanted to run the farm that his family has owned since 1807. This farm has always practiced mixed agriculture with crops, livestock, forestry and wine. After the early death of his grandfather, Michael's mother managed the farm because his father worked as food inspector. Michael already took over the responsibility for vinification during his school years.

Would he have liked to do an internship abroad as was the norm with many of his schoolmates? "New Zealand or South Africa would have been interesting because our focus is on white wines. But when school ended the desire wasn't really urgent and I focused on my own wines."

To this end, he leased out all the crop fields when he took over in 2005. Yet how did he transform a (by his own admission) "conventional producer of extremely reductive wines" to a progressive farm that employs sustainable and biodynamic methods?

"I recall Christmas 2004 extremely well: we wanted to drink a 2003 Welschriesling – and the wine was over the hill. It was oxidized. I thought it unbelievable that a wine couldn't even keep for one year. I wondered about the wines of my grandfather from 1979 or 1983, which are still fresh and fun to drink although they are simple wines, filled in 2-litre bottles. My grandfather worked much more simply. He didn't intervene with the wines very much. He was much more patient and gave them time. And his wines were much more exciting than my own. It dawned on me that the common doctrine may not be the one and only."

Michael began to give his wines more time, to filter and bottle them later. "As my parents used to bottle very late, it was no problem for our customers; they were used to it." The wines fermented spontaneously, stayed longer on the lees, and soon, were not filtered any more. The new labels were a vital component in communicating the new (or old?) style of the wines. "I had to show those interested that my wines are different from the majority. I feel lucky to have friends who encouraged me on my path."

Michael simultaneously began his orientation towards biodynamic methods and increased efforts to make the farm as autarchic as possible. "In 2010 I took back all the leased fields. This fall I will even expand in leasing another 25 hectares thus doubling our acreage. At present the amount of grain is too small for effective commercial exploitation. So this is economization because I don't have to work on it myself all the time. A tractor driver can do the main work. And I can produce more specialties, for example einkorn wheat, which will be basis for a beer."

It is different with the area under vines. "Currently I have 10 hectares vineyards which can only be expanded very carefully to a maximum of 12 hectares. I have the potential for 2 more hectares in good sites. We planted one hectare this spring, but another hectare has been pulled out." Increasingly more animals also inhabit the Gindl farm. Highland cattle have been bred since 2012 and soon horses will follow to work in the vineyards. "My goal is to be able to butcher on my own farm, so I also have pigs to ensure good utilization. And my Breton dwarf sheep will help me by grazing in the vineyards!" Consequently Michael Gindl joined the DEMETER association of biodynamic farming.



In the vineyards

The only single-vineyard wine in Michael Gindl's portfolio is named SOL: a Grüner Veltliner from 45-year-old vines growing in the oldest vineyard ever documented in Hohenruppersdorf. "Single-vineyard wines from various sites aren't really our specialty. Our focus is on the planting density and the actual cultivation of the vineyards", Michael explains. While 3000 vines per hectare are average in the Weinviertel region, he plants 7000 vines per hectare and even 9000–10000 in premium sites. "I am convinced that the competition between the vines makes them stronger in the long term. I can't expect high yields, but I can depend on healthy plants!"

"I want to further enhance my vineyards. Since we work biodynamically, they are vital and robust, but the yields are very low. The reason is they have yielded too much for a long time. Old vines are a good marketing term, but they don't help if they do not give reasonable harvest quantities. Their advantage is to be more robust, less sensitive to different weather conditions, but they don't deliver more terroir. Of course a certain vine maturity is important; a Pinot Noir allows good quality only when at least 10 years old. Despite this, old vines per se do not necessarily yield better wines."

"Every 4–5 years I plant new cover between the vines. Despite this, I am not convinced that seeding really makes sense, because those plants that survive are those that already suit the place best. I will sow again in 2014, but with less clover and legumes and more blooming flowers. Due to biodynamic cultivation, there are more insects and more diversity in the vineyards - they are also more beautiful in appearance. In the newly planted vineyards we will design retreats for birds, insects, etc. This is not necessary for vineyards surrounded by hedgerows or near a forest. I have noticed that those vineyards are more robust and suffer less from pests because beneficial insects are present. So I want to have bushes and trees where they are yet absent. It used to be traditional to have cherry, nut and peach trees among the vines in old vineyards. I don't have to use each single square foot for vines. I prefer to plant them denser to create more competition between them."



In the cellar

To preserve the individuality and genuineness obtained in the vineyards, the grapes are pressed very gently, rarely racked and fermented spontaneously without any use of selected yeast or temperature control. Michael Gindl expounds, "I really try to do as little as possible, in fact nothing! The wines remain on the lees very long and get a small dose of sulphur dioxide only shortly before bottling. My aim is to use more wooden barrels and less steel tanks in the future." It is interesting to know that the barrels in his cellar are made from acacia and oak from his own forests. His own agriculture and forestry allow him to closely approximate the biodynamic ideal of a holistic farm.



The wines

Since the buzzard (academic name: Buteo) began to adorn the labels of Michael Gindl's wines, they have come to be perceived as unique as they actually are. The labels of FLORA and RED BESSI also express these wines' character.

FLORA

When the grapes for this blend are picked, the ground cover in the vineyards is still in bloom. The name "Flora" thus expresses not only the fresh and aromatic style of the wine itself, but also the situation in the vineyards from which it originates.

Varieties: a blend of Riesling, Sämling 88 and Gelber Muskateller (Muscat blanc à petits grains)

Soil: Gravel with loess topsoil

Method of cultivation: biodynamic

Harvest: hand picked in small crates between the end of September and the end of October

Vinification:

Maceration: Gelber Muskateller and Sämling 88 - 3 hours
Riesling - 18 hours

Slowly and gently pressed over 8 hours. Spontaneously fermented in steel tanks without temperature control. Aged for 6 months on the lees in steel tanks. No additives are used and only a minimum of fining and filtration is conducted. Time is the most important factor to give the wine its balance.

Wine description: Intense scent of pineapples and grapefruit with a touch of peppermint and other herbs. Very juicy, inviting, and multifaceted, yet still with very precise structure. Slightly grassy with delicate acidity on the long finish. A versatile and extremely refreshing wine.



little BUTEO

The “little Buteo” is a more approachable version of its bigger brother, the “Buteo”.

Variety: 100% Grüner Veltliner

Soil: Loess, sandstone and loam

Method of cultivation: biodynamic

Harvest: hand picked in small crates

Vinification:

50% of the grapes were whole cluster pressed. The other 50% macerated on the skins for 4–8 hours. Very slowly and gently pressed over 8 hours. Spontaneously fermented in stainless steel tanks with a maximum temperature of 22°C. Aged on the lees without SO₂ in steel tanks for 6 months.

Wine description: Scent of Golden Delicious apple, lime, melon, and a touch of vanilla. Tightly woven and a steam-lined, clear-cut structure. Its mineral character gives freshness and vitality and sweeps over the palate.



BUTEO

Variety: 100% Grüner Veltliner

Soil: Loess, sandstone and loam

Method of cultivation: biodynamic

Harvest: hand picked in small crates

Vinification:

Maceration on the skins for 4–8 hours. Very slowly and gently pressed over 8 hours. Spontaneously fermented without temperature control and aged for 6 months without SO₂ on the lees in 1500-litre oak casks made from own wood. No additives are used and no fining or filtration is conducted. Aged on the lees until bottling.

Wine description: Attractive aroma of peach and grape. Expansive and precise structure supported by mineral saltiness, still restrained and elegant. Remarkably good balance between fruit and spice aromas; long-lingering aftertaste.



BUTEO 12

The name refers to the 12 months ageing on the lees.

Variety: 100% Grüner Veltliner

Soil: Loam and loess.

Method of cultivation: Biodynamic

Harvest: hand-picked in small boxes

Vinification

Macerated on the mash for 10 hours; gentle and slow pressing over 8 hours. Spontaneously fermented in wooden barrels and matured on the lees without SO₂ for 12 months in 700-litre acacia barrels made from the estate forest. No additives are used - time is the most important factor to give the wine its balance.

Acacia blossoms and still a touch of lees in the nose. Spicy aromas of tobacco and sandalwood, full-bodied and playful. Long, dry finish. Built to last.



SOL

The first vineyard ever documented in Hohenruppersdorf in the 14th century bore the name "Sol". The inhabitants of Hohenruppersdorf have always been freedom loving and only accepted God and the emperor above them. The SOL also enjoys complete freedom: this wine is allowed to develop in its own way and in its own pace. It shows individual character and cannot be categorized.

Variety: Pinot blanc, Grüner Veltliner

Soil: Loam

Method of cultivation: Biodynamic; Grapes selected from various vineyards of vines over 45 years old.

Harvest: hand picked in boxes.

Vinification

All grapes destemmed and squashed. 50% of the grapes macerated for 12 hours, were very gently pressed for 8 hours and, after a little racking, fermented spontaneously. The other 50% fermented with the mash and were gently pressed after 4 months. The whole lot then matured on the lees without SO₂ for 18 months in 500-litre oak barrels made from estate wood. Bottled unfiltered.

Citrus, lime-tree blossom and peanut flavours. Exciting and animating, with enormously mineral complexity and lively acidity. Dry and long lasting finish, tightly packed, concentrated and structured.



RED BESSI

Is named after the first highland cow on the farm.

Variety: 80% Zweigelt 2011
20% Cabernet Sauvignon 2012

Soil: Loam, sandstone and loess

Method of cultivation: Biodynamic

Harvest: hand picked in boxes.



Vinification:

Whole bunches are fermented and stay on the mash for additional 6 months. After pressing the Zweigelt aged for 24 months in new oak casks, the Cabernet for 12 months. Then the wines were blended and sulphurised only just before bottling.

Densely woven cherry fruit with black berries, Cocoa and Vanilla. Lively with traces of graphite. Long lingering and animating this wine needs some years to reach its perfect maturity.



Michael Gindl unfiltered

"I don't have special culinary preferences. I like our home cooking best, and the meat of my own animals, because I know exactly how they were raised."

Whoever visits me at my farm has the chance to taste a few experimental wines that have never been marketed, for example a Riesling fermented on the skins - an orange Riesling. In the future I would like to offer other products from my farm, a kind of farm market. At the moment I am installing a tasting room to welcome customers. Maybe we will establish a kind of "heuriger" – a small, manageable, seasonal wine tavern with the products of the Gindl farm. That would be fun for me!"

"It is important allow nature its cycles. It is essential to trust and accept what nature offers and not always try to force things."

"I prefer letting my wines speak for me..."



Ratings

Gault&Millau

17,0 points: SOL 2011
16,5 points: Grüner Veltliner Buteo 2013
16,5 points: Cuvée „Red Bessi“
16,0 points: Flora 2013
15,5 points: Grüner Veltliner Little Buteo 2013

Facts & Figures

Vineyards: 10 hectares (25 acres)

Wines:

81% white

19% red

Grape varieties:

White wine

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|---|-------|
| Grüner Veltliner | 51% |
| Welschriesling | 10,3% |
| Riesling | 7,4% |
| Sämling 88 (Scheurebe) | 6,7% |
| Rivaner (Müller Thurgau) | 2% |
| Weissburgunder (Pinot blanc) | 2% |
| Gelber Muskateller (Muscat blanc à petits grains) | 1,6% |

Red wine

| | |
|--------------------|-------|
| Zweigelt | 11,7% |
| Pinot Noir | 3,5% |
| Rösler | 2,9% |
| Cabernet Sauvignon | 0,9% |

Production: 15,000 bottles per year

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