

Owner: Count Maximilian Hardegg

Winemaker and Production Manager: Inga Funke

Cellar Master: Alexander Strohschneider

Hectares/acres: 41/ 101

Wine region: Weinviertel, Lower Austria (1 hour north of Vienna)

Philosophy: The grapes are estate grown, and as of vintage 2006, the winemaking is following bio dynamic rules and methods. (However, it takes several years of practicing these methods before certification appears on the wine label.) The goal is to create wines produced by completely natural means, reflecting origin, terroir and a unique character. Therefore, no cultured yeast, enzymes or any technical methods of concentration are used. The perfect balance of elegance, finesse and “drinkability” make the wines stand out. Also in 2006, the former wine maker- ever-innovative Peter Veyder-Malberg broke with Austria’s traditional single vineyard classification, choosing to adopt the French chateau system. Graf Hardegg further stands out by producing the only Viognier and the only Port in Austria.

Vineyards: The vineyards surround the castle estate within a radius of eight kilometers

Soil: Calcareous sedimentary rock containing approximately 20% clay

Climate: Two climatic zones: *Continental* climate, which brings a long and cool fall season from the north, and *Pannonian* climate, which brings hot and dry summers and strong winds from the east.

Yield per hectare: 2500 – 6500 liters

Annual sales: More than 200,000 bottles

Red wine portion: 35%

Exports: 35%

Export countries: USA, Germany, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Canada, Belgium, Scandanavia, Switzerland

Varieties:

Grüner Veltliner	45%	Pinot Noir	10%
Riesling	12%	Merlot	8%
Weissburgunder	7%	Zweigelt	7%
Viognier	4%	Cabernet Sauvignon	3%
Chardonnay	3%	Syrah	1%

The History of Schloss (Chateau) Hardegg

The castle and estate belonging to the Hardegg family are located 75 kilometres north of Vienna, along the border of the Czech Republic. Seefeld Castle, which was built at the beginning of the 18th Century on the foundations of a medieval fortress, dominates the landscape here. This baroque masterpiece was designed by the architect Johann Jakob Castelli, whose intention was to express the euphoria and celebration of the baroque period as well as the importance in the region of the Counts of Hardegg. The present Count, Maximilian Hardegg, continues the family tradition by living in and supporting the castle to this day. The oldest document about the family, dated 1188, describes the fortress in Hardegg, 10 km northeast of the town of Retz, and states Luitold, Count Hardegg, as the owner.

The Winery

Pictures from the 16th century show that wine was produced at Seefeld as far back as the Middle Ages. The main cellar was built in 1640 and is still in use. In 1991, Maximilian Hardegg took over the estate and cellars; two years later, he hired Peter Veyder-Malberg to run the vineyards. The success story of the Hardegg wines had begun.

When Peter Veyder-Malberg joined Count Hardegg Vineyards, he gradually began reorganizing its wine production. Until that time, the estate, with 41 hectares of vineyards, was primarily quantity-oriented. But Veyder-Malberg immediately stepped up the pace for quality vinification. Yields per hectare were lowered and harvesting machines were sold.

In 1995, Count Hardegg Vineyards introduced a grape new to Austria: the white Viognier. Imported from the Cote du Rhone in France, this variety was not - and still is not - an officially acknowledged variety in Austria. Nevertheless, with its tendency to flourish in cooler climates, Viognier showed that it can excel in the Hardegg vineyards.

In addition to redeveloping the vineyards, money was put also into cellar technology. Yet, all of this still would not satisfy the committed quality duo of Hardegg and Veyder-Malberg. In 2000, the construction of a new cellar facility began, and was completed in the following year. The new building centers around grape processing, which takes place on four levels. Grapes, juice and must no longer need to be pumped, and vinification techniques, such as whole-bunch pressing, destemming, maceration/extraction, can be applied according to each vintage.

In 2006 the dynamic duo switched the entire wine production to bio-dynamic methods and rules. With the end of 2007 Peter Veyder-Malberg left the winery to follow his dream to open his own estate.

Inga Funke, Peter's former assistant for two years, took over his responsibilities in January 2008. Inga was born in 1979 in Filderstadt, Germany and has been committed to the craft of wine making since she was 18 years old. She studied wine growing and oenology in Geisenheim with internships in Germany, (Schloss Reinhartshausen- Rheingau, Burgunderhof -Lake Constance) USA, Italy (Manincor/Alto Adige, Pierpaola Pecorari, Friuli) and New Zealand (Isabel Estate-Malborough).