

## TOP 100 WINERIES OF 2016 EUROPE AND SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

**93 PTS** | ANITA & HANS NITTHAUS

### 2013 Burgenland Leithaberg

A lush blaufränkisch from the high, limestone-laced slopes of the Leithaberg Mountains, this is indigo in hue and flavor. Hans Nitthaus vinifies it without any added yeasts or enzymes, fermenting it in large Pannonian oak casks. The result feels almost electric in its intensity, the stony, gravelly structure completely saturated with purple fruit flavor. It retains its energy and freshness for days, suggesting this will age well over the next decade.

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### 2013 Burgenland Pannobile

Hans Nitthaus created the Pannobile category in 1990, wanting to create a “noble” wine from the then little-known Pannonian vineyards and grape varieties. His 2013, a blend of blaufränkisch and zweigelt, comes from the estate’s top vineyards (all farmed organically) and ages in large casks. It is unexpectedly pretty for such a warm vintage, tart acidity cinching the plum fruit tight, creating a lean, long silhouette. Cedar-like spice and pine notes add a brisk, cool feel, even while the fruit deepens from plum to cocoa tones with air. Best to let it relax in the cellar for another six to ten years, and drink the Heideboden (recommended below) in the meantime.

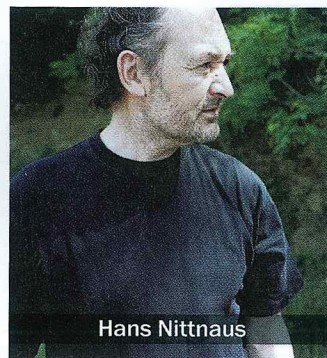
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### 2014 Burgenland Heideboden Pinot Blanc

Grown on the flat, sandy gravel soils around Lake Neusiedl and fermented spontaneously in 300-liter barrels, this is a rich, smoky mouthful of wine. Notes of orange and cinnamon warm the quince-like flavors, a marzipan density filling in the wine’s broad body. Relief comes in the form of salinity and bitter lemon notes, both working with the acidity to bring the wine to a clean close. Decant it for shellfish, and be generous with the brown butter.

AUSTRIA BURGENLAND

## Anita & Hans Nitthaus



**Founded:** 1684

**Owner/winemaker/viticulturist:**

Hans Nitthaus

**Acres owned:** 86.5

**Annual production:** 18,330 cases

**Estate grown:** 60%

**Importer:** Monika Caha Selections/

Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY

**Website:** nitthaus.at

Nitthaus has long been a leader in promoting local varieties, his recent releases revealing blaufränkisch’s cool-climate elegant side.

**Proving Pannonia:** When Hans Nitthaus took this winery over from his parents in 1986, Bordeaux varieties were all the rage. In an effort to prove that the region’s local vines were worth a closer look, he developed Pannobile, blending the ancient Roman name for the region with “nobility.” His first release, in 1990, inspired a nationwide movement; today, the name connotes a wine made 100 percent from blaufränkisch, zweigelt and/or st. laurent. Nitthaus’s 2013 is a selection of blaufränkisch and zweigelt from the best of his biodynamically farmed vineyards, fermented without any added yeasts or enzymes and aged in large casks. It’s both elegant and robust, tart acidity cinching the plummy fruit tight, giving the wine a cool, brisk feel even as it carries a wealth of cocoa-dark tannins.

**Mountain Fruit:** In 2004, Nitthaus started exploring the Leitha Mountains, looking for a cooler climate for blaufränkisch. His 2013 Kalk und Schiefer is a blaufränkisch blended from parcels grown on limestone (kalk) and others grown on slate (schiefer), the main two soil types in these mountains. The wine feels so breezy and juicy it virtually emanates joy, with a palate-whetting peppery, cedary spice to its purple fruit. His 2013 Leithaberg takes that purple juiciness to a deeper, darker place where the slate soils seem to reverberate in the wine’s gravelly structure. And yet it shares that same mountain freshness.



**Sand & Gravel:** Nitthaus’s Heideboden wines are named for the sandy gravelly flatlands around Lake Neusiedl where they grow. The red, a blend of zweigelt, blaufränkisch and merlot, tastes like an Austrian bistro pour—plump and spicy, with bright acidity and gravelly tannins ready to tangle with a skirt steak. The white version is something else entirely: Made from pinot blanc fermented spontaneously in 300-liter barrels, the 2014 is a rich, smoky mouthful of wine, sumptuous in its cashmere texture and quince-like fruit, elegant in its saline, mineral line. It’s ready for a multi-tiered spread of raw seafood or lobster dipped in drawn butter. —T.Q.T.

## TOP-SCORING WINES

**93** '13 Burgenland Leithaberg \$45 (4/16)

**92** '13 Burgenland Pannobile Red \$45 (4/16)

**92** '14 Burgenland Heideboden Pinot Blanc \$20 (4/16)



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