

Koehler-Ruprecht

Profile

Koehler-Ruprecht has existed since the 1700's, but Bernd Phillip's hard work over the last 30 years has solidified the winery's world class reputation. Bernd's biggest inspiration was his grandfather, and the wines reflect an attitude of winemaking more akin to the 1900's than the 2000's. In the vineyard, no irrigation, fertilizers or herbicides are ever used, and systemic treatments against pests or fungal illness are kept to a minimum, only in the rare cases when necessary. In the cellar, long spontaneous fermentations occur in large, old German oak barrels with extended lees contact. Nothing is ever added or subtracted to the wine, and sulfur is only added moderately after alcoholic fermentation and before bottling.

Today, Bernd has moved on to his winemaking projects all over the world (Germany, Portugal, South Africa, consulting in China...), and no longer has any role at Koehler-Ruprecht is now limited to 60 days of consulting throughout the year. Since 2008, viticulture/cellar duties have been passed on to Dominik Sona. Dominik is young but already a seasoned veteran: prior to landing at Koehler-Ruprecht, he's worked at Neiss, Kuhn, Van Volxem, Flowers, Littorai and as estate manager for J.L. Wolf. Already a fan of the winery before getting hired, he has vowed not to change a thing in the winemaking process.

The estate consists of 10.5 hectares of vines, principally in Riesling (50%) but also in Pinot Noir (20%), Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer and Scheurebe on three separate terroirs: Saumagen, Steinacker and Annaberg.

Saumagen, which translates to *pig's stomach*, is named after the shape of the vineyard and also happens to be the region's most famous local dish. Established as a vineyard in 1810, this area used to be a limestone quarry in Roman times. The soils here are heavy in chalky marl and full of tiny individual limestones that reflect heat onto the grapes. Because of a government expansion in the 80's, 46 h are designated as Saumagen- including a conversion of north-facing orchards into vineyard sites- but Koehler-Ruprecht's 4 h are on the original South-East facing slope. A small part of the Saumagen is designated as *Terra Rossa*, with the limestone taking a red hue due to a heavy presence of iron oxide.

Steinacker is wine-growing region characterized by chalk and sandstone. The Rieslings and Scheurebe grown here tend have residual sweetness. Finally, at 120 years old, Annaberg is the youngest vineyard site and characterized by a high proportion of sandstone. The western part of the region features a chalk substrate where the Chardonnay grows. All grapes are hand harvested, with the team doing up to five passes each vintage to pick at optimal maturity.