

Radoar

Visits

This visit at Radoar took place in April, 2012.



Words by Jules Dressner, photos by Lauren Feldman, Shawn Mead and Ian Becker.

In the mountain commune of [Feldthurns](#), Norbert Blasbichler runs the Radoar farm.



While our visit obviously centered around visiting the vines and tasting in the cellar, it's important to note that wine isn't what keeps the farm running: Norbert makes a living principally off growing [Golden Delicious](#) apples, which represent the majority of his production. He also raises cows, grows many other fruits, walnuts, cereals and of course grapes. There have been vines on the property for 200 years, but Norbert's passion for wine inspired him to take things further by independently bottling and producing terroir and varietal specific cuvées.

The farm was started in 1300, and Norbert is the 15th generation of his family to work this land. *Radoar* comes from a local dialect, and means "big round field" (which explains the [logo](#)). Norbert took over in 1997, and immediately converted the entire farm to organic agriculture (certified by [Bioland](#)).

After a quick hello, we set off to the vines.



That's Norbert in the center, next to Kevin and Shawn.

The main parcel is about 1.5 km from the farm, and 900m in elevation!





On this parcel, Norbert grows young [Kerner](#) vines (1 to 25 years old), 45 year old Pinot Noir and 35 year old [Zweigelt](#).



Zweigelt is the most widely planted red grape in Austria, but very rare in Italy; Norbert actually owns the biggest plot in the entire country. It's actually a funny story: it was planted by Norbert's father by accident! He'd ordered [Portugeiser](#) but the nursery sent him the wrong clone. By the time he'd realized the mistake, it was too late...



In total, Norbert owns 2.5 hectares of vines, 80% in white and 20% in red.

We then drove back to the farm to taste some wines. One of Norbert's cats was just hanging out in the loose fissures of the old farm house.



The cellar is right by the cow's stable.



It was tasting time!



Norbert made his first wine in 1999. For the whites, everything is direct pressed then fermented in

stainless steel. For the the *Etza* cuvée, he does two passes, more or less a week apart. We got to taste the 2011 results from both: the later pass is, unsurprisingly, richer and fatter with less acidity, so the blend creates a nice balance. Norbert also makes a sweeter Kerner with intentional residual sugar called *Radoy*; The 2010 I tasted at Villa Favorita had 35 grams of R.S and was at about 7% alcohol. The reds are fermented in stainless steel then aged 22 months in barrel.

At some point during the tasting, someone asked Norbert if his kids had any interest in taking over the farm. He said that at the moment, the answer is a definite no!

"But it's ok! They are young, and they need to find their own path in life. It wasn't obvious for me at first either, but I truly found my passion here. And you never know what will happen. If you had told me 15 years ago that a group of Americans from New York and San Francisco would come all the way up here to taste my wines, I wouldn't have believed you!"

Norbert also makes an amazing cider, peach and pear schnaps, grappa, apple and walnut spirits... He basically makes booze with everything he grows! Our group ended up buying a ton of it to drink on the trip and/or bring back home. Before leaving, we got to check out the beautiful, old distiller.

