

David Adamick - Editorial Sample:

Markus Altenburger Copy Edit:

If there's one winemaker best representing the evolution of Newcomer Wines, it is undoubtedly Markus Altenburger. Based in the village of Jois, Burgenland, Markus has been focussing on the most expressive varietals in this unique terroir, having taken over the family winery in 2006. Since then, his approach to vineyard management and vinification has undergone a complete about-face, where a devotion to certified, organic farming practice has now poised him for biodynamic certification in the coming year.

And Blaufrankisch, surely Austria's most potent red terroir grape, stands at the centre of his work.

Markus, his wife Bernadette and cellar master Kathrin, together manage thirteen hectares of vines dotted about 'Gritschenberg' and 'Jungenberg', two of Leithaberg's most prized single-vineyards. Gritschenberg, whose geological core is formed at the further reaches of the Leitha mountain range (just west of Lake Neusiedl) is one composed primarily of limestone. By contrast, Jungenberg lies predominantly on schist, imparting a greater verticality and directness in the expression of its fruit.

Beyond Blaufrankisch is old-vine Chardonnay, Gruner Veltliner (both grown on limestone) and Neuburger (schist and limestone), all representing other incrementally important varietals, and all released as single-vineyard, low-intervention wines.

Markus's wines are, to date, some of the most serious examples of Blaufrankisch we've encountered. Whether it's of his estate blend ('Vom Kalk') or any single-vineyard limited-release, the remarkable clarity with which Altenburger expresses and distinguishes local terroir shows him as one of Austria's most accomplished growers.

Original Copy:

If there is one winemaker that represents the evolution of Newcomer Wines better than anyone else, then without a question it is Markus Altenburger. In 2006 Markus took over the family winery in Jois, and to this day solely focuses on the varieties that best express this unique terroir. His approach in the vineyards and cellar has shown a 180-degree change over the last 15 years and today all of his vineyards are certified organic, now gearing towards biodynamic certification in the coming year. Blaufränkisch, undoubtedly Austria's highest quality red terroir grape stands at the centre of Markus Altenburger's work. Together with his wife Bernadette and his cellar master Kathrin, Markus tends 13 hectares of vines scattered mainly on two of the Leithaberg appellation's premier single-vineyards, Gritschenberg and Jungenberg. Gritschenberg, in its geological core formed by the outskirts of the Alpine mountain range, shows a high density of limestone, whereas Jungenberg, a mere few hundred metres apart, contains a pure schist composition giving the wines a more vertical and direct expression of fruit. Beyond Blaufränkisch, old-vine Chardonnay (grown on limestone), Neuburger (on schist and limestone) as well as Grüner Veltliner (on limestone) represent other incrementally important varieties, which Markus vinifies and releases as a single vineyard wine with little to no intervention. Markus' wines are some of the most serious examples of Blaufränkisch we have encountered to date - what is even more impressive is his skill to show a clear imprint of his local terroir from his estate blend 'Vom Kalk' all the way to his limited release single-vineyard wines making him one of the most complete growers within the Austrian wine scene.