

# MERIAN *live!*

## Discover Germany's Wine Regions



**worth seeing** > 40 Landmarks of Wine Culture  
**innovative** > Generation Riesling  
**informative** > large Glossary of German wines



**with an overview map of  
Germany's wine-growing regions**

## Discover Germany's Wine Regions

**Claudia Weber** was born in Heidelberg in 1964 and grew up in the wine-growing region of Baden. She studied art history, architectural history and archaeology. Today, she lives on the German Wine Route.

① The 40 Landmarks of German Wine Culture are marked with a number inside a circle.



Prices for a three-course meal (beverages not incl.):

€€€€ 60 € and up  
€€€ 35 € and up  
€€ 25 € and up  
€ 25 € up to

► p. 2: Vogelsburg Monastery and its vineyard are nestled in the midst of the Franken wine-growing region.



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**Welcome** to Germany's Wine Country. The sloping and terraced vineyards of Germany's wine regions are as varied as the wines they produce.

The production of quality wines takes place in 13 different regions of Germany. With ca. 26,500 ha of vineyards, Rheinhessen is the largest wine-growing area, followed by the Pfalz with 23,500 ha and Baden with nearly 16,000 ha. Out of a total of about 102,000 ha of vines, some 65,500 ha are used for growing white wine varieties; red wine grapes occupy around 36,500 ha. Among the white grape varieties, Riesling dominates with 22 percent of the total vineyard area. Thirteen percent is devoted to Müller-Thurgau, also known as Rivaner; Silvaner occupies another five percent. Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) is the most widely-

grown red grape variety at 11 %, followed by Dornfelder with 8 % percent and Portugieser with 4 %.

Each year, approximately 48,000 wineries produce nine to ten million hectoliters of wine; around 11,000 of them market their own wines. About one-fifth of the wine produced is exported, primarily to the USA, Great Britain and the Netherlands. Two-thirds of Germany's vineyards are located in the state of Rheinland-Pfalz alone, including six of the 13 wine regions: Ahr, Mittelrhein, Mosel, Nahe, Pfalz and Rheinhessen. Germany's largest wine-growing communities – Landau and Neustadt on the German Wine

◀ The view from Meersburg (▶ p. 24) extends as far as the Alps.

Route – are also located in the Pfalz.

## The microclimate makes the difference

The majority of Germany's vineyards are located in the area of the 50th parallel or further south. The fact that quality and superior quality grape varieties are able to thrive so far north at all can be attributed to their protected locations, which use rivers and soils to store heat, thereby creating an ideal microclimate for wine cultivation. Most of Germany's prime locations are used for growing Riesling. This demanding, late-ripening grape variety, which produces fruity, acidic wines, represents German wine culture like no other fruit.

## Roman legacy

Grapevines probably arrived in the Rhine and Mosel regions with the Roman legionnaires. Whereas Emperor Domitian forbade the cultivation of grapes outside the Roman mainland in 92 AD, in the 3rd century, Emperor Probus permitted the provinces to own grapevines and produce wine as well. A Roman wine pressing house was unearthed in Piesport, on the Mosel: Here, as many as 1700 years ago, up to 130 workers produced around 60,000 liters of wine per year. In the Palatinate village of Ungstein (near Bad Dürkheim), archaeologists discovered a multi-story mansion with thermal baths and stables, as well as a wine pressing facility, which still contained grape knives and hoes and even grape

seeds. An examination of the specimens determined that the Romans who lived at the foot of the Palatinate Forest had cultivated early forms of Riesling, Traminer and Pinot grapes. In the Middle Ages, monasteries were primarily responsible for maintaining the wine-growing tradition. In 2005, the oldest grape plants ever found on German soil were discovered on the grounds of the Disibodenberg Abbey, where Hildegard of Bingen lived and worked in the 12th century – five gnarled vines of the Orleans variety, which were between 500 and 900 years old. During the Renaissance and Baroque periods, secular princes also exercised powerful influence over viticulture. The Great Cask at Heidelberg Castle still bears witness to this fact today: Built for the Palatine Elector Charles Theodore, the "Heidelberg Tun" has a capacity of 219,000 liters. On the Lössnitz slopes near Dresden, the Saxon Elector Augustus the Strong held rollicking celebrations at the hunting estate of Hoflössnitz; the wine was supplied directly by the adjacent winery.

## 40 Landmarks of German Wine Culture

In 2010, the German Wine Institute began honoring outstanding places of interest in all of the German wine regions, sites which not only clearly represent the history and tradition of viticulture but which also testify to the achievements of the wine industry and to wine as a cultural asset. In this book, we will describe in detail the 40 Landmarks of Wine Culture, which were selected by an independent jury from a pool of over 100 candidates.



## MERIAN Tips

Experience more with **MERIAN**. Embark on these wine tours and discover Germany's wine regions as only natives know them.

- 1** **The Red Wine Hiking Trail**  
This picturesque trail leads through the vineyards and winemaking communities of the Ahr valley (► p. 20).
- 2** **The “Rebenbummler” Museum Train**  
This historic steam locomotive puffs along through the vineyards in Baden's Kaiserstuhl district (► p. 31).
- 3** **On the Main River through Franken**  
Traveling by raft or canoe, you can view the vineyard slopes along the Main from an unusual perspective (► p. 45).
- 4** **Bergsträsser Weinlagenweg**  
This hiking trail between Alsbach and Heppenheim is at its most beautiful when the almond trees are in bloom (► p. 52).
- 5** **“Castle of the Year”**  
With 365 windows, 52 doors and twelve towers, Arenfels Castle on the Rheinsteig hiking trail is distinguished by its parallels to the calendar year (► p. 64).
- 6** **Trier**  
Ancient buildings still shape the face of Germany's oldest city (► p. 75).

**7** **Vinotherapy**

In the wellness oases of the Nahe region, grape extracts and warm spring water are used to combat the effects of aging (► p. 86).

**8** **Slevogt's country idyll**

Impressionist painter Max Slevogt transformed the old Neukastel estate near Leinsweiler in the southern Pfalz into his summer home (► p. 97).

**9** **Eltville am Rhein**

The oldest city in the Rheingau invites visitors to stroll along its riverside promenades (► p. 109).

**10** **Trullo – Trulli**

The vineyard huts in Flonheim and the neighboring village of Uffhofen were probably modeled after those found in Apulia (► p. 115).

**11** **The Goseck Circle**

This sun observatory on the Saale is several thousand years older than Stonehenge (► p. 127).

**12** **The cradle of Sachsen**

In 1710, the Saxon elector Augustus the Strong established the world famous porcelain factory in Meissen (► p. 135).

**13** **The Stuttgart Wine Village**

Visitors can sample over 500 different wines at one of Germany's largest wine festivals (► p. 147).

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# Traveling Green

People who follow an environmentally aware lifestyle at home will probably want to do the same on vacation. With the tips we offer you in this “Traveling Green” chapter, we hope to help you put some of your “green” ideals into practice at your travel destination and support other people who are committed to interacting responsibly with the environment.

## Organic wines are on the rise

About 5 % of the vineyards in Germany’s growing regions are cultivated by certified organic producers according to ecological guidelines. These vintners’ goal is to create a balanced ecosystem in the vineyards with minimal use of synthetic substances. This process begins with the soil, where growers employ nutrient sources such as humus and compost instead of chemical fertilizers. Since monoculture is detrimental to the soil in the long run, organic vintners foster green vegetation between the vine rows. Here, grasses and clover, as well as sunflowers, vetches, mallow and lupines provide a habitat for beneficial insects that destroy the eggs of the dreaded grape berry moth and other pests. Weeds, which rob the cultivated plants of water, light and nutrients, are removed mechanically rather than with chemical herbicides. In order to combat over fertilization of the soil – which can lead to elevated nitrate levels in the ground water – vintners avoid the use of pesticides as much as possible. Instead, they focus on strengthening the vines and combating parasites by natural means.

## TIPS FOR CONSUMERS

### What does organic wine taste like?

“As far as flavor is concerned, there is no difference between organic and conventionally-grown wines,” say experts at the German Wine Institute in Mainz, “because in the cellars, organic vintners employ the same methods that are used in every other winery.” Organic wine is neither drier nor sweeter than wine produced using conventional methods. The difference lies in the cultivation of the vineyards, the fertilization of the soil and the combating of pests. Whether wines are organic or not, environmentally-conscious practices are standard procedure in the German wine industry. In terms of pest control and fertilization, even conventional vintners adhere to the principle of “as much as necessary and as little as possible.” The range of grape varieties is also comparable, although organic growers favor hardy grape varieties, such as Regent, which are less susceptible to fungal diseases.

### How to recognize organic wine

Organically grown wines are certified by independent control boards, which check for compliance with EU Organic Farming Regulations and verify the growers’ organic farming practices. Consumers can identify these wines by the government control number on the bottle’s label – e.g., DE-ÖKO-022. Many organic vintners also have their wines tested by organic farming associations, whose cultivation and production guidelines are even stricter than the EU regulations. These associations include Demeter, Naturland and Bioland as well as Ecovin, Germany’s largest organic wine growers’ association. Founded in 1985, the association

now has around 200 members, who cultivate almost half of all the organic vineyards in Germany. For an overview of farming associations, organic farming control boards and certified producers: visit [www.oekolandbau.de](http://www.oekolandbau.de).

## ORGANIC WINERIES

### Natural products from the Mosel

In the summer of 2007, Paul Hoffmann of Weingut Ernst Hoffmann converted his estate to organic farming methods. His organic wines include dry whites such as Riesling Classic or Riesling Spätlese, but also off-dry and fruity-sweet whites, as well as Dornfelder. In addition to the estate’s own wines, the vinotheque also carries other organic products, such as grape seed oil, cheese, sausages and honey.

Weingut Ernst Hoffmann • Moselweinstr. 14, Minheim • Tel. 06507-99 20 90 • [www.weinguthoffmann.de](http://www.weinguthoffmann.de)

### Organic viticulture in Württemberg

The Strombergkellerei in Bönningheim produces Lemberger with Trollinger, Regent dry and off-dry rosé wines – all grown organically. Here, in selected vineyards, grapes are cultivated using traditional methods and processed into sophisticated organic wines.

Strombergkellerei e. G. • Cleebronner Str. 70, Bönningheim • Tel. 07143-887 70 • [www.strombergkellerei.de](http://www.strombergkellerei.de)

### Organic wines in the Rheingau

Since 2005, Dagmar and Rainer Haas of the Jakob Christ Winery in Rüdesheim have been committed to the cultivation of organic wine grapes. The wine bar’s specialty menu includes small meals and snacks, as well as organic wines. The cozily furnished press house restaurant oper-

ates under the “Slow Food” principle. This initiative, which originated in Italy, is based around regional foods and beverages, traditional recipes and the use of locally-produced plant and animal products.

Weingut Jakob Christ • Grabenstr. 17, Rüdesheim am Rhein, • Tel. 06722-25 72 • [www.weingut-jakob-christ.de](http://www.weingut-jakob-christ.de)

### Sustainability on the Nahe

As early as 1989, oenologist Reinhold Grossmann converted his family’s third-generation winery to organic farming methods. He and his wife, agricultural engineer Sigrid Grossmann, consider the joy of living and working in harmony with nature their highest priority. Their organic products include white and red wines, sparkling wines and distillates, as well as vinegar and oil.

Sigrid & Reinhold Grossmann • Ökologisches Weingut • Im Setzling 8, Windesheim • Tel. 06707-583 • [www.bioweinegrossmann.de](http://www.bioweinegrossmann.de)

### Solar energy in Baden

Hofgut Sonnenschein in the southern Baden town of Fischingen is located in the border triangle between Germany, France and Switzerland. Between the Black Forest and Alsace, the vineyards owned by Markus Bürgin are bathed in sunshine. His motto: “Using the power of the sun and the diversity of life to ensure harmonious coexistence.” He sees organic farming as an opportunity to provide the next generations with the legacy of a stable ecosystem and a healthy balance between human beings and nature. Visitors can enjoy his organic wines – as well as organically grown apples, pears, cherries, plums, peaches and nectarines – all with a good conscience.

Markus Bürgin • Dorfstr. 33, Fischingen • Tel. 07628-98 79 • [www.hofgut-sonnenschein.de](http://www.hofgut-sonnenschein.de)

### Certified Saxon wine

Hoflössnitz in Radebeul, the first certified organic winery in Sachsen, uses no synthetic fertilizers in its vineyards, relying instead on organic substances and rock flour, and strictly adhering to the guidelines for controlled organic farming. In April, the winter green cover crop in between the vine rows is tilled into the soil and used as a base fertilizer. Elemental sulfur, copper salts, silicic acid, baking powder and herb extracts such as fennel oil or horsetail extract are used for pest control. These materials coat the leaves with a protective film, which protects them from powdery and downy mildew or fungal spores.

Weingut & Weinstube Hoflössnitz • Knohlweg 37, Radebeul • Tel. 0351-839 83 33 • [www.hofloessnitz.de](http://www.hofloessnitz.de) (► p. 133)

### FAMILY TRAVEL TIP

#### Biosphere Reserve Adventure Park

The Pfälzerwald-Nordvogesen Biosphere Reserve lies directly west of the vineyards of the Palatinate hill country. Its gorgeous hiking paths and castles make this a recreational destination for all ages. Nordic walkers and mountain bikers can also find a great variety of routes here. In Fischbach bei Dahn, the Biosphärenhaus (Biosphere House) presents information about nature, its various habitats and concepts for sustainable energy in a fascinating manner. The nature adventure center includes an interactive trail with information that are accessible for strollers and seniors. Along with the water



Nicole Roth, a vintner from the Hoflössnitz winery (► p. 133) in Radebeul checks the bottling equipment of the first certified organic winery in Sachsen.

adventure trail, the treetop trail is another highlight: Between 18 and 35 m above the forest floor, two paths – one easy and one more challenging – wind through the branches and reveal secrets about the natural world. You can choose a leisurely descent via ramp or speed down the 40-m-long slide. Biosphärenhaus Pfälzerwald/Nordvogesen • Am Königsbruch 1, Fischbach/Dahn • Tel. 06393-921 00 • [www.biosphaerenhaus.de](http://www.biosphaerenhaus.de) • April, May & Oct: open daily 9:30 am-5:30 pm; June-Sept: daily 9:30 am-6:30 pm; Nov.: Mon-Fri 9:30 am-4 pm; Early to mid-Dec.: Mon-Fri 9:30 am-3:30 pm • Entrance fee 8 €

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### Neckarsulm Organic Wine Festival

Since 2008, Württemberg vintners com-

mitted to organic wine-growing practices have presented their native Swabian products at the Organic Wine Festival in Neckarsulm. In addition to organically-produced wines, visitors will find an organic market full of culinary delights and a program of musical performances and informative lectures. For information about the program and participating wineries: Wino-Biolandbau • Im Hasenlauf 1, Brackenheim, • Tel. 07135-93 76 70 • [www.wino-biolandbau.de](http://www.wino-biolandbau.de) • Wine tasting €10

### SERVICE

#### INFORMATION

ECOVIN Bundesverband  
Ökologischer Weinbau e. V. •  
Wormser Str. 162, Oppenheim •  
Tel. 06133-16 40 • [www.ecovin.de](http://www.ecovin.de)



Vine rows shape the landscape at the foot of the southern Black Forest: here, in Ballrechten-Dottingen.



## On the Road in Germany's Wine Regions

Each of Germany's wine-growing regions has its own special characteristics. They can be steep slopes at river bends, rolling hills or terraced vineyards.



**The Ahr** Rugged cliffs and wild, romantic, sloping banks accompany the Ahr River on its way through Nordrhein-Westfalen and Rheinland-Pfalz, from the Eifel region to the Mittelrhein. Top quality wines are grown in the terraced vineyards.

◀ The Red Wine Hiking Trail leads through Mayschoss (▶ p. 15) and other wine-growing towns in the Ahr valley.

The Ahr River has its source at the western edge of the Ahr Hills, near Blankenheim in the Eifel Mountains. On the way to its mouth into the Rhine, between Remagen-Kripp and Sinzig, it passes through such tradition-rich wine communities as Altnahr, Mayschoss, Rech, Dernau, Walporzheim, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler and Heimersheim. Over the course of millions of years, the river carved a nearly vertical slice through the Rhenish Slate Mountains. Particularly in the Middle Ahr region, the valley is narrow and the banks are steep. This is where the wine region begins, with sun-washed terraced vineyards on the southern slopes. Near Rech, the valley widens before reaching the “Bunte Kuh” overhang, which marks the passage to the Lower Ahr. The fascinating river landscape, with its southern-facing vineyard slopes and wooded northern banks is repeatedly interrupted by bizarre rock formations. Rare animal species, such as kingfishers and wildcats make their homes here; and from a botanical standpoint, the Ahr valley is the most species-rich region in the Rhenish Slate Mountain Range.

## Small but sunny

With about 550 ha (1235 acres) of vineyards, this small wine region includes the Walporzheim/Ahrtal district with its collective vineyard site, Klosterberg. Sheltered from the rain, the southern slopes warm up quickly in the sun. The soil stores the heat and passes it on to the vines at night.

## The red king

The microclimate and the soil provide perfect conditions for red grape cultivation. Occupying 85% of the vineyards, the proportion of reds grown here is higher than anywhere else in Germany. Among the more than twenty red grape varieties, Spätburgunder (pinot noir) accounts for more than 60% of the cultivated area. In the Ahr region, the “king of the red grapes” is characterized by an aroma of herbs and dark berries, with the addition of an elegant mineral note. Portugieser, Frühburgunder (Pinot Noir précoce or Pinot Madeleine) and Dornfelder grapes are also grown here.

In this red wine paradise, white varieties play only a secondary role. Nevertheless, the region also produces high-quality white wines; among the 45 white grape varieties approved for cultivation, Riesling and Rivaner are worthy of mention.

The first grapevines were brought to this remote side valley of the Rhine by the Romans, around 2000 years ago. Later, monasteries continued the tradition of wine cultivation. However, Spätburgunder did not reach the Ahr region until after the Thirty Years’ War.

**Mayschoss: Birthplace of**  
 ① **the wine growers’ cooperatives** ▶ **Fold-out map, C 13**

Beneath the imposing stone ruins of the Saffenburg lies the wine-growing community of Mayschoss. On December 20, 1868, the world’s first wine growers’ cooperative was founded here. Crop failures, damage due to the vine louse phylloxera, and political crises had led to dire straits in the wine-growing industry, to say



nothing of the wine trade. In this situation, the members of the cooperative promised to help each other help themselves. The 18 founding members soon had a great deal of company: By 1881, the cooperative included 141 wine growers. The success of the Mayschoss vintners created nothing less than a boom. At the end of the 19th century, about 20 additional wine growers' cooperatives existed in the Ahr region, representing their members' mutual interests. Today, 90% of the Ahr's vintners belong to cooperatives.

### Successful fusion

In 1982, the wine growers' cooperatives of Mayschoss and Altenahr merged to form the "Mayschoss-Altenahr Wine Growers' Cooperative." Today, the group has 320 members who cultivate vineyards covering over 120 ha. (296 acres). Sixty percent of these are devoted to Spätburgunder; Riesling accounts for 20%. With an annual production of over 1 million liters, the cooperative ranks among Germany's medium-large operations. In 2000, the celebrated Gault Millau wine guide named it the "discovery of the year."

The huge, vaulted cellars of the Mayschoss Wine Growers' Cooperative are well worth a visit – preferably combined with a wine tasting. The adjacent Viticulture Museum, with its small exhibition of historic wine-growing equipment, offers visitors a look at the daily work of the Ahr's vintners and the history of this tradition-rich growing region. A hike through the vineyards lets you experience the glorious landscape that surrounds Mayschoss. The ruins of the Saffenburg fortress provide a

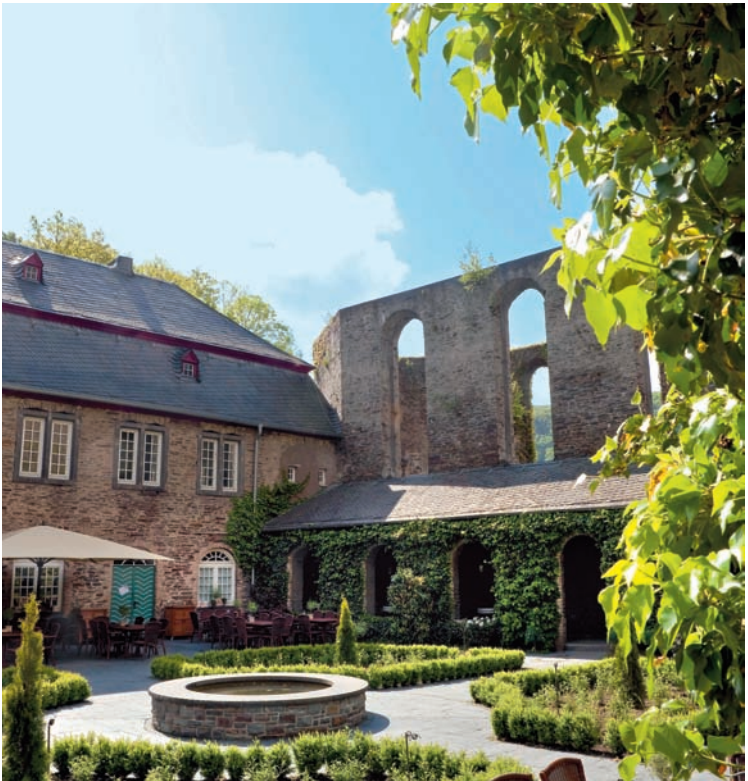
wonderful view into the valley. The oldest castle on the Ahr dates back to the 11th century. In 1704, it was destroyed by French troops in the War of the Spanish Succession. A one-time resident of the castle, Countess Katharina von der Mark, who died in 1646, is commemorated in a black marble tomb at the parish church of St. Nicholas in Mayschoss.

Winzergenossenschaft Mayschoss-Altenahr • Ahrrotweinstr. 42, Mayschoss • Tel. 02643-936 00 • [www.winzergenossenschaft-mayschoss.de](http://www.winzergenossenschaft-mayschoss.de) • Wine tasting with cellar tour, museum and four wine samples € 6,50 • May-Oct: open daily 9 am-6:30 pm; Nov-April: Mon-Fri 8 am-6 pm, Sat, Sun & holidays 10 am-6pm • Reservations required for wine tasting

### ② Marienthal Monastery: wine tasting in a vaulted cellar

► Fold-out map, C 13

The community of Marienthal (pop. 100) is located on the Middle Ahr between the wine villages of Walporzheim and Dernau. Grapevines are nestled along the steep slopes to the north of the river. The ruins of the oldest monastery in the Ahr Valley dominate the view of the village. The Marienthal Monastery was founded under the patronage of the Dukes of Saffenburg. In 1135, an Augustinian convent was established here on the slopes above the Ahr: Forty nuns lived here and farmed the surrounding parcels of land, which included vineyards. The convent was plundered twice during the Thirty Years' War – by Swedish troops in 1632 and French soldiers in 1646. In 1792, the nuns left the convent, and



As it winds through the Ahr Valley, the Red Wine Hiking Trail passes by the picturesque ruins that house Weingut Kloster Marienthal and serve as a setting for events.

its furnishings were transferred to the surrounding churches. Some pieces can be seen in the parish church of St. Nicholas in Mayschoss; the altar is now located in the church at Arenberg in the Eifel region. In the course of secularization, the Marienthal Monastery complex was sold, and it changed hands several times. In 1925, the Prussian State Wine Domains moved in. Since 2004, the complex and its vineyards have been the property of Weingut Kloster Marienthal. Of the monastery build-

ings, the imposing church walls make up most of what remains today. The ivy-covered ruins form an atmospheric architectural framework for special events. The wine cellar, with its massive barrel vaults, also dates from the 12th century. Wine tastings are held here at which, in addition to the estate's own wines such as Cuvée Blanc, Cuvée Rouge, Spätburgunder Weissherbst (rosé), and Spätburgunder Klostersgarten, guests can sample wines from the Mayschoss-Altenahr Wine Growers'



On the hiking trails along the steep slopes of the Ahr valley, spectacular views appear at every curve. Sunny spots are a great place for a break or a snack.

Cooperative, the Dagernova Wine Manufactory, the Meyer-Näkel Winery and other partner wineries. Weingut Kloster Marienthal also hosts barrel tastings, wine-related theme evenings, as well as hiking and bicycling tours through its vineyards. Those who like to hike can travel part of the Red Wine Hiking Trail: it leads past the Marienthal Monastery; some of it is even laid out as an educational wine path. One popular destination is the “Bunte Kuh,” a rock formation located between Marienthal and Walporzheim, which offers a fabulous view of the Ahr valley.

– Weingut Kloster Marienthal • Klosterstr. 3–5, Marienthal • Tel. 02641-980 60 • [www.weingut-kloster-marienthal.de](http://www.weingut-kloster-marienthal.de) • Open daily 10 am–6:30 pm

– Winzergenossenschaft Mayschoss-

Altenahr • Ahrrotweinstr. 42, Mayschoss • Tel. 02643-936 00 • [www.winzergenossenschaft-mayschoss.de](http://www.winzergenossenschaft-mayschoss.de)  
– Dagernova Weinmanufaktur • Ahrweg 7, Dernau • Tel. 02643-12 66 • [www.dagernova.de](http://www.dagernova.de) • Mon-Fri 8 am–12 noon and 1–6 pm, Sat & Sun 9 am–12 noon and 1–6 pm

– Weingut Meyer-Näkel/Ahr • Friedenstr. 15, Dernau • Tel. 02643-16 28 • [www.meyer-naekel.de](http://www.meyer-naekel.de) • Mon-Fri 9 am–noon and 2–5 pm, Sat 11 am–4 pm

## Nearby destinations

### SIGHTS

#### The “Bunte Kuh”

Close by Walporzheim, the “Bunte Kuh” (“colorful cow”) towers over the Ahr valley. This curious name refers to an outcropping which juts out high above the river. Since it does not resemble a cow, there are a wide variety of legends surrounding the name of

the rock. One possible explanation refers back to the time of the War of the Spanish Succession in the early 18th century: The French troops in the Ahr valley were said to have described the local wine as “*bon de gout*” (“good-tasting”), which the Ahr’s vintners understood as “Bunte Kuh”. Located above the rock is the wine tavern “Zur bunten Kuh”, whose garden terrace offers a unique view.

Weinhaus “Zur bunten Kuh” • Marienthaler Str. 60, Walporzheim/Ahr • Tel. 02641-346 06 • [www.weinhaus-bunte-kuh.de](http://www.weinhaus-bunte-kuh.de) • Warm meals served all

#### DID YOU KNOW ...

... that the “Bunte Kuh” marks the narrowest point in the Ahr valley? It opens into the wider valley bottom of the Lower Ahr.

day Tues-Sun

#### Dernau

The landmark of the largest wine-growing village on the Ahr is the Krausberg. From here, on a clear day, one can see as far as the Cologne Cathedral. When a white flag waves at the top of the observation tower, the hiking lodge on the Krausberg is open for service. Dernau is also home to the largest wine growers’ cooperative in the region, the Dagernova Weinmanufaktur.

[www.krausberg-dernau.de](http://www.krausberg-dernau.de)

#### Bad Neuenahr Golf Club

With its 18-hole championship course, this uniquely situated golf club, on the heights to the northeast of Bad Neuenahr, is among the top golf courses in the Cologne-Bonn area and is listed among the “Leading Golf

Courses of Germany.” Non-golfers will also receive a warm welcome at the renowned *Köhlerhof* restaurant located on the club grounds.

– Golf- und Landclub Bad Neuenahr • Großer Weg 100, Bad Neuenahr-Lohrsdorf • Tel. 02641-95 09 50 • [www.glc-badneuenahr.de](http://www.glc-badneuenahr.de)

– Restaurant Köhlerhof • open daily 9 am-midnight • Tel. 02641-66 93 • [www.koehlerhof.de](http://www.koehlerhof.de)

#### Rech

With its stone arches straddling the Ahr, the Nepomuk Bridge is the fascinating landmark of this old wine-growing village in the Saffenburg Ländchen region. Built in 1723, it was the only Ahr bridge to survive the great flood of 1910 – perhaps because it was protected by its patron saint. Rech lies on the middle reaches of the Ahr, very close to the delightful section where the river makes its narrowest loops.

[www.rech-weindorf.de](http://www.rech-weindorf.de)

#### WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

##### Ahr Valley Bike Trail

From the Rhine near Sinzig to the Ahr’s source in the Eifel village of Blankenheim – on the Ahr Valley Bike Trail, you ride “against the current” through the beautiful river landscape. Terraced vineyards and rugged rock faces are interspersed with sections of forest and romantic castle ruins. In the wine-growing villages, there are places to stop for refreshment that will suit every taste. With its minimal inclines, the bike trail is ideal for families and seniors.

#### FOOD AND DRINK

##### Brogssitters Sanct Peter

Since 1246, this historic inn in Wal-

## MERIAN-Tip

1

**THE RED WINE HIKING TRAIL**

The picturesque Red Wine Hiking Trail is a must-see in the Ahr valley. Over a distance of 35 km (22 miles), it connects the wine-growing villages in the Ahr valley from Bad Bodendorf to Altenahr. [www.ahrwein.de](http://www.ahrwein.de)

Walporzheim has been welcoming guests to its gourmet Restaurant *Brositter*, the *Weinkirche* restaurant and the *Kaminstube* (fireplace lounge). Guests can enjoy creative gourmet cuisine, regional specialties and sophisticated, high-quality wines in the tasteful atmosphere of these 13th-century buildings steeped in tradition. From 1246 to 1805, the property, with its inn and winery, belonged to the chapter of Cologne Cathedral, whose canons valued the excellent Ahr wine so highly that they dubbed it the “pearl of the cathedral treasury.”

Walporzheimer Str. 134, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler/Walporzheim • Tel. 02641-977 50 • [www.sanct-peter.de](http://www.sanct-peter.de) • open from 6 pm, Weinkirche and Kaminstube from 11 am • €€€€€

**FESTIVALS AND EVENTS****Ahr Wine Market**

On Pentecost weekend (late May-early June), visitors have the unique opportunity to sample wines from throughout the Ahr valley. At the Wine Market in Ahrweiler's historic Old Town, vintners and growers' cooperatives present their wines and sparkling wines and brandies. The highlight of the market is the crown-

ing of the new Ahr Valley Wine Queen on the Saturday before Pentecost.

Pentecost weekend (2012: May 26-28) • [www.ahrta.de/weinfeste.php](http://www.ahrta.de/weinfeste.php)

**Historic Wine Festival and Vintners' Parade, Heimersheim**

In Heimersheim, the Middle Ages come to life again every year in August. Knights, noblewomen, monks and witches parade through the streets; minstrels, drummers, lute players and bear trainers provide entertainment and live music. Bow makers, potters and cheese makers present their handiwork, and mouse roulette is a lively diversion. And of course, there is no shortage of delicious grape products from the Ahr region.

Third weekend in August • [www.historisches-weinfest-heimersheim.de](http://www.historisches-weinfest-heimersheim.de)

**Art & Wine, Bachem**

In September, Bachem is transformed into a giant open-air studio, where painters, sculptors, woodcarvers and other artists allow visitors to look over their shoulders while they work. On Sunday evening, the “Parade of 10,000 Lights” lends the wine-growing village a magical glow.

Second-to-last weekend in September • [www.weindorf-bachem.de](http://www.weindorf-bachem.de)

**SERVICE****INFORMATION**

Ahrwein e. V./Ahrtal-Tourismus • Hauptstr. 80, Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler • Tel. 02641-917 10 • [www.ahrwein.de](http://www.ahrwein.de), [www.ahrta.de](http://www.ahrta.de)

Riesling, pinot noir & Co.: [www.germany.travel](http://www.germany.travel)

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**Baden** In the warmest part of Germany, nestled between sheltering mountain ranges, lies the wine-growing region of Baden. The sunny vineyard slopes provide ideal conditions for growing high quality wines.

◀ The pilgrimage church of Birnau towers above the abbey's own vineyards on the banks of Überlingen Lake.

Like a long, narrow ribbon, the wine-growing region of Baden stretches for 400 km (249 miles) along the Rhine. It extends from the Bodensee (Lake Constance) in the south up to Tauberfranken, which forms the northwest border of the region, somewhat removed from the Rhine. The Vosges mountains, Black Forest, Palatinate Forest and Odenwald hills surround the region, where – thanks to its sheltered location and abundant sunshine – the weather conditions are almost Mediterranean.

## Baden: “Pinot Country”

The third-largest wine-growing region in Germany, with ca. 16,000 ha (39,537 acres) of vineyards, is subdivided into nine districts. From the south are the Bodensee (Lake Constance), Markgräflerland and Tuniberg – through Breisgau near Freiburg, to the Kaiserstuhl, the warmest region in Germany. To the north, it stretches across the Ortenau, the Kraichgau and the Badische Bergstrasse up to Tauberfranken. Sufficient summer precipitation, protection from cold winds, and strong sunshine provide optimal conditions. Baden is the only German wine-growing region to be classified in EU wine-growing zone B – the same zone as Champagne, Alsace and Savoie. For vintners, this means that the minimum starting must weights of their grapes are higher than in other regions.

Baden is Pinot country: Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris) and Weissburgunder

(Pinot Blanc) account for more than half of the varieties cultivated here. This region is considered one of the world's most important sources of Spätburgunder. Nevertheless, the grape varieties that grow in Baden are as diverse as the region itself. In addition to Pinots, there are Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Silvaner, Muskateller (Muscat), Traminer and the regional specialty, Gutedel (Chasselas). This diversity is made possible thanks to the wide range of landscapes and soils. The gentle elevations in the Kraichgau stand in contrast to the heights of the Kaiserstuhl area and the southern flair of the Bodensee region. The different grape varieties thrive on the heat-retaining moraine deposits of the lake, shell-limestone and keuper in the Kraichgau and on the Tauber River, and loess and loam in the Kaiserstuhl, Tuniberg and Markgräflerland districts.

## From Kraichgau to the Kaiserstuhl

Wine cultivation in Baden dates back to the Romans. They began cultivating grapes to the west of the Rhine over 2000 years ago. Beginning in Alsace, cultivation spread to what is now the wine-growing region of Baden. The first grapes were planted as early as the 1st century CE. Wine cultivation was first documented in the 8th century. The cultivation of quality wines was not promoted until around 1700. Today, Baden is famous throughout the world for its high-quality wines. Over 100 wine festivals, numerous educational and hiking trails and of course, the many wine taverns bear witness to this long tradition.





Meersburg Castle was home to the poet Annette von Droste-Hülshoff.

### ③ The “Holy Ghost Torkel” in Meersburg ▶ Fold-out map, G 22

The rooms of the former Holy Ghost Hospital in Meersburg now house the small wine museum, also known as the “Heilig-Geist-Torkel” (“Holy Ghost Torkel”). The name is borrowed from that of the *torkel*, an old wine press. The word “torkel” stems from the Latin root “torquere,” meaning to crank or turn. The massive, wooden Holy Ghost Torkel dates back to 1607, and is thought to be the oldest functioning wine press in the Lake Constance region. It was used for pressing wine here until 1922.

In 1961, the Viticulture Museum moved into the rooms of the former hospital, which is only a short distance away from the picturesque banks of the Bodensee. In former times, the ground floor of this 17th-

century building contained the wine-pressing hall, while the upper floor housed the hospital’s so-called “prebendary quarters.”

### Viticulture exhibition

In the 1950s, Willy Stingl, the cellar master of the Meersburg State Winery at that time, began collecting the objects on display in the museum today. In addition to the torkel, another highlight is the imposing “Türkenfass.” This richly ornamented wine cask has a capacity of 50,000 liters. The exhibit also includes traditional cooper’s tools, beautifully carved wine barrels and a grape transporter.

Weinbaumuseum • Vorburggasse 11, Meersburg • Tel. 07532-44 04 00 • [www.meersburg.de](http://www.meersburg.de) • April-Oct: open Tues, Fri & Sun 2-6 pm • Entrance fee € 2

### ④ Reichenau – where wine is made on the water

▶ Fold-out map, G 22

In 724, Reichenau did not look as picturesque. A primeval forest covered the island when the itinerant monk St. Pirmin arrived there and founded a Benedictine monastery. As early as 818, Abbot Hatto I planted the first grapevines; they flourished so well that 100 years later, vineyard workers had to be imported onto the island to help with the cultivation.

However, it was not only wine that brought fame to this tiny island, which is only 4 km (2.5 miles) long and 1.5 km (0.9 miles) wide. In the Middle Ages, with its numerous churches and abbey complexes, Reichenau Island developed into an important spiritual and cultural center of the Holy Roman Empire. A large

number of its churches and murals are still well preserved today and are open to visitors. In 2000, Reichenau was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### The island with the best climate

For centuries, viticulture formed the economic basis for the island’s residents. The mild Bodensee climate, with its minor temperature fluctuations, provides the ideal conditions. Only later was vegetable cultivation added as an additional branch of economic activity. Nevertheless, even the favorable climate could not protect Reichenau’s inhabitants from setbacks. In the 19th century, they were plagued by crop failures, vineyard pests and an overall decline in prices. In response, Reichenau parish priest Meinrad Meier founded the Reichenau Wine Growers’ Cooperative together with 62 other vintners. Today, Baden’s smallest independent wine-growing cooperative cultivates approximately 18 ha (44 acres) of vineyards; 100 years ago, this number was 140 ha (345 acres). In the past, churches and vineyards dominated Reichenau’s landscape; today, they are joined by greenhouses and lettuce fields.

– Tourist Information • Pirminstr. 145, Reichenau • Tel. 07534–920 70 • [www.reichenau.de](http://www.reichenau.de)

– Winzerverein Insel Reichenau e. G. • Münsterpl. 4, Reichenau • Tel. 07534–293 • [www.winzerverein-reichenau.de](http://www.winzerverein-reichenau.de)

### 5 The Great Cask at Heidelberg Castle

► Fold-out map, F 17

The wine cask of Count Palatine Johann Kasimir was intended to be

larger than any other barrel on earth. After the death of his brother, Elector Palatine Ludwig VI, Johann Kasimir took over regency of the *Kurpfalz* (Electoral Palatinate) in 1583, as guardian of his nephew Friedrich. In 1591, after many years of labor, Landau cooper Michael Werner completed the enormous cask – a gigantic container capable of holding 127,000 liters of wine. An extra room had to be built in the Heidelberg Castle just to accommodate it: The vat was housed directly adjacent to the royal hall. This was especially practical for large celebrations, since refills were readily available when the wine in the glasses ran out.

“This work is by God worth seeing, when the appropriate opportunity arises. I do not believe there is another such vessel enriched by the great gift of the vine within the reaches of the globe.” So reads the oldest preserved description of the Great Cask, composed by the theologian and pastor Anton Praetorius in 1595. Today, we can only guess at the intended purpose of this oversized cask; it is possible that the tithe wine of the Kurpfalz was stored here.

### Colossal dimensions

Between 1618 and 1648, the Johann Kasimir Cask was destroyed in the Thirty Years’ War, and the wood was set afire. In 1664, Elector Karl Ludwig ordered the construction of an even larger barrel. This 195,000-liter cask even had a dance floor built on the top. It survived the destruction of the castle in 1688–89 and 1693, but attempts at repairing it proved unsuccessful.

Thus, in 1728, the third cask was constructed. With a capacity of 202,000 liters, it was even larger than



The Great Cask at Heidelberg Castle has a capacity of 219,000 liters. The initials refer to Elector Palatine Karl Theodor, who ordered its construction.

its predecessor – but unfortunately, it leaked. Its contractor, Elector Karl Philipp, brought a 100 kg (220 lb), heavily drinking dwarf back with him from a trip to Tyrol, and appointed the man his court jester and guardian of the barrel. When asked whether he could drink the contents of the cask all by himself, the dwarf reportedly answered “*perché no?*” (“why not?”) – and was henceforth called Perkeo. Perkeo was given the huge key to the wine cellar and entertained both the court and the city of Heidelberg with his antics. According to legend, Perkeo died after a doctor forbade him to continue drinking exclusively wine and ordered him to drink water. Perkeo drank water, and died one day later. Today, his statue stands next to the Great Cask, now the fourth of its kind.

### Leaky, but impressive

The Karl Theodor Cask was completed in 1751 through the complete rebuilding of the Karl Philipp Cask, as well as partial new construction. Its volume was 221,726 liters, but it unfortunately proved to be as leaky as the previous barrel, and was therefore filled only three times in its existence. Today, the Great Cask’s capacity has shrunk by over 27,000 liters due to the drying out of the wood. Nevertheless, the Karl Theodor Cask in the castle’s vaulted cellar is a magnet for tourists just like its predecessors; every year it attracts nearly one million visitors.

Also well worth seeing are the castle ruins themselves with their various wings, and the breathtaking view of Heidelberg and the Neckar valley from the castle terrace. In addition to the permanent exhibition, “The

Palatinate on the Rhine,” which is devoted to the history of the *Kurpfalz*, the castle garden and the German Apothecary Museum – one of Germany’s most frequently visited museums – make for a rewarding visit. The castle is easily accessible via funicular railway. Those who are good at walking can take the steep but picturesque paved mountain path from the valley station in the Old Town: You can reach the castle on foot in just a few minutes. At the castle itself, events are held throughout the year – from tours with guides dressed in historical costumes, to concerts, to the illumination of the castle in the summer months.

Heidelberg Schloss • Service-Center • Tel. 06221-53 84 31 • www.schloss-heidelberg.de • Castle garden and Great Cask open daily 8 am - 5:30 pm • Entrance fee € 5 (includes funicular, castle garden, Great Cask and German Apothecary Museum)

## ⑥ Winklerberg Volcanic Rock Garden, Ihringen

► Fold-out map, D 21

In the middle of the Kaiserstuhl district, not far from Freiburg, is a truly exotic site: wild cacti with sweet-and-sour fruits grow between the steep vineyard slopes of Ihringen’s Winklerberg; countless orchids grow here (a total of 33 species exist in the Kaiserstuhl); and rare western green lizards sun themselves on the dry stone walls. Flitting in between are red-winged grasshoppers, an insect species that is also very rare in Germany. The mild climate and volcanic soils, the products of a 15-million-year-old extinct volcano, provide an optimal habitat for these unusual animals and plants.

## The noble Kaiserstuhl wines

Flourishing here too, of course, are those products that made this warmest region in Germany famous: the premium Kaiserstuhl wines. The first written record of the Kaiserstuhl’s wine-growing community of Ihringen, dating from 962, documents wine cultivation which had probably already existed here for much longer. Outstanding Burgundy varieties grow on the steep, terraced slopes. The vintner Georg Ernst Lythin first laid the groundwork for cultivating this noble wine in 1813. He planted Pinot, Traminer and Muskateller grapes, which flourished beautifully on the volcanic stones, and developed their unique, volcanic mineral note.

Today, around 600 ha (1482 acres) of vineyards are cultivated in Ihringen. The most famous location is Winklerberg, which takes its name from the crooked, labyrinthine (*verwinkelt*) layout of the vineyards. Much of the

### DID YOU KNOW ...

... that the Baroque poet Johann Jakob von Grimmelshausen, author of the novel *The Adventurous Simplicissimus*, was a patron of viticulture? On behalf of Hans Reinhard von Schauenburg, he ordered the planting of the Oberkirch vineyards.

work on Winklerberg is still done by hand, since the steep slopes are virtually unreachable with machines.

Visitors who wish to explore the Winklerberg on their own can follow the trail marked “Vulkanfelsgarten-Pfad” (“Volcanic Rock Garden Trail”), which begins at an informa-

tion board at the intersection of Winklerberg/Achkarren. Ascending the path, you are treated to a magnif-



The medieval Türmersturm in Tauberbischofsheim dates back to 1280.

icent view extending as far as the Vosges Mountains, the Black Forest and the Jura Mountains in Switzerland. Plan around 1 ½ hours to travel the 2.4 km (1.5 miles) trail on foot. Tourist-Info • Bachenstr. 38, Ihringen am Kaiserstuhl • Tel. 0 76 68/93 43 • [www.ihringen.de](http://www.ihringen.de), [www.kaiserstuhl.eu](http://www.kaiserstuhl.eu)

## Nearby destinations

### SIGHTS

#### The mysterious Mummelsee

Just a few kilometers from the community of Sasbachwalden, in a dark mountain lake, the Mummelsee ghost carries out its mischief. At night, the *Mümmlein* (water spirits) rise to the surface and dance. Only one of the *Mümmlein* ever incurred

the rage of her king: she fell in love with a local farmer's son and was condemned to die. Today, well-known artists display their work outdoors on the Artists' Path that surrounds the legend-steeped Mummelsee. The circular walking trails that lead past the lake are also recommended.

Mummelsee Erlebniswelt, Berghotel Mummelsee • Schwarzwaldhochstr. 11, Seebach/Mummelsee • Tel. 07842-992 86 • [www.mummelsee.de](http://www.mummelsee.de)

#### Müllheim in the Markgräflerland

Southern European flair greets visitors to the town of Müllheim. In the summer months, this town in the southern Black Forest hosts numerous open-air events, from concerts to street performers to wine festivals. One of the annual highlights is the wine market held in April – the oldest of its kind in Baden. If you want to, you can even help out Müllheim's vintners in September and October. In the nearby village of Zunzingen is Germany's only wine label museum, with around 1200 items on display.

– Tourist Information • Wilhelmstr. 14, Müllheim • Tel. 07631-80 15 00 • [www.muellheim.de](http://www.muellheim.de)

– Wine Label Museum at Weingut Dr. Schneider • Rosenbergstr. 10, Müllheim-Zunzingen • Tel. 07631-29 15 • [www.weingut-dr-schneider.de](http://www.weingut-dr-schneider.de) • Mon-Sat 2-6 pm

#### Tauberbischofsheim

In the midst of the lovely Tauber valley, in the northernmost section of the Baden wine-growing region, lies the wine-growing town of Tauberbischofsheim. The historic Old Town, housing buildings from the Renaissance, Baroque and neo-

Gothic periods, is particularly worth a visit, and a variety of guided tours are available. Both children and adults can scale the city's landmark, the 28 m-high *Türmersturm* tower. Tourist Information • Marktpl. 8, Tauberbischofsheim • Tel. 09341-803 13 • [www.tauberbischofsheim.de](http://www.tauberbischofsheim.de)

### Vogtsburg in Kaiserstuhl

In the small town of Vogtsburg in Kaiserstuhl, all activity really does revolve around wine: six wine growers' cooperatives, around 1000 vintners and an annual production of almost 11 million liters of wine make Vogtsburg the largest viticultural community in Baden-Württemberg. In addition to the many tours and visits that are available, you can also enjoy the Viticulture Museum in the suburb of Achkarren, and the Corkscrew Museum in Burkheim, where over 800 corkscrews are on display.

– Tourist Information • Bahnhofstr. 20, Vogtsburg-Oberrotweil • Tel. 07662-940 11 • [www.vogtsburg-im-kaiserstuhl.de](http://www.vogtsburg-im-kaiserstuhl.de)

– Kaiserstühler Weinbaumuseum (Viticulture Museum) • Schlossbergstr., Vogtsburg-Achkarren • From Palm Sunday to All Saints' Day, open Tues-Fri 2-5 pm, Sat & Sun 11 am-5 pm • Entrance fee € 2

– Korkenziehermuseum (Corkscrew Museum) • Mittelstadt 18, Vogtsburg-Burkheim • Tel. 0173-700 12 42 • [www.korkenzieher.de](http://www.korkenzieher.de) • March-Dec, Wed-Sun 11 am-6 pm

### Wine tasting

Anyone who spends time in Kaiserstuhl should definitely attend a wine tasting – for example, at the Ihringen Wine Growers' Cooperative. Here

you can also take tours of the vineyards by tractor or guided vineyard walking tours (reservations required).

Kaiserstühler Winzergenossenschaft Ihringen • Winzerstr. 6, Ihringen • Tel. 07668-903 60 • [www.winzer-genossenschaft-ihringen.de](http://www.winzer-genossenschaft-ihringen.de)

### MUSEUMS

#### Freilichtmuseum Vogtsbauernhof (Open Air Farm Museum)

What were life and work like for everyday people in the Black Forest centuries ago? At Baden-Württemberg's largest open-air museum, located in the Ortenau district, the past comes alive. Visitors can see farms, mills and saws, farmers' gardens and stables. An especially pleasant way to arrive is via the Black Forest Railway to Hausach. From there you can complete the trip by bus or on foot; the walk to the museum takes a little over half an hour.

Schwarzwälder Freilichtmuseum Vogtsbauernhof • Gutach • Tel. 07831-

A vintner examines a white wine with an experienced, critical eye.



935 60 • [www.vogtsbauernhof.org](http://www.vogtsbauernhof.org) •  
April-Oct, open daily 9 am-6 pm; in  
August until 7 pm • Entrance fee € 7

### **Pfahlbaumuseum Unteruhldingen**

The Lake Dwelling Museum, which opened in 1922, transports visitors back to the Stone and Bronze Ages. On a trip back in time, the museum demonstrates how, 6000 years ago, people literally settled *on* the Bodensee. The lake dwellings have been reconstructed as faithfully as possible and give a vivid impression of the lives of their inhabitants. The museum's exhibition rooms contain spectacular original artifacts accompanied by changing special exhibitions. Pfahlbaumuseum Unteruhldingen • Strandpromenade 6, Uhldingen-Mühlhofen • Tel. 07556-92 89 00 • [www.pfahlbauten.de](http://www.pfahlbauten.de) • April-Sept,

open 9 am-7 pm; for other opening times, call or see museum website • Entrance fee € 7,50

### **Rothenburg ob der Tauber**

Rothenburg ob der Tauber is home to two unusual museums. A favorite among visitors from both Germany and abroad is the Christmas Museum in the town center. Here, sparkling tree ornaments, bearded Santa Clauses, nutcrackers and gigantic Christmas pyramids are on display all year round. Just one block away, the focus is on less charming themes: the Medieval Crime Museum, the most important museum of legal history in Germany, is devoted to the laws and punishments of the past 1000 years.

– Deutsches Weihnachtsmuseum • Herrngasse 1, Rothenburg ob der Tau-

The legend-shrouded Mummelsee lies at the foot of the Hornisgrinde, the highest mountain in the northern Black Forest (► p. 28).



ber • [www.weihnachtsmuseum.de](http://www.weihnachtsmuseum.de) • April to mid-Dec, open daily 10 am-5 pm; mid-Jan to March, Sat & Sun 11 am-4 pm • Entrance fee € 4  
 – Kriminalmuseum • Burggasse 3–5, Rothenburg ob der Tauber • Tel. 09861-53 59 • [www.kriminalmuseum.rothenburg.de](http://www.kriminalmuseum.rothenburg.de) • Nov, Jan, Feb, open daily 2-4 pm; March, Dec, daily 1-4 pm; April daily 11 am-5 pm; May-Oct daily 10 am-6 pm • Entrance fee € 4

## WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

### Baden Wine Route

The Baden Wine Route begins on the Lichtentaler Allee in Baden-Baden and continues over 160 km (100 miles) to Weil am Rhein, just before the Swiss border. The scenic route leads through many important wine-growing communities in Ortenau, Breisgau, Kaiserstuhl, Tuniberg and Markgräferland. Along the way, in addition to vineyards, educational wine paths and countless wine taverns, visitors can also discover plenty of monasteries, castles and old timber-frame buildings. You can explore the Baden Wine Route on foot, by bicycle, and of course by car.

– Schwarzwald Tourismus • Ludwigstr. 23, Freiburg • Tel. 0761-896 46 93 • [www.schwarzwald-tourismus.info](http://www.schwarzwald-tourismus.info)  
 – OFL Medien • Meisternstr. 20, Bad Wildbad • Tel. 07081-72 05 • [www.deutsche-weinstrassen.de](http://www.deutsche-weinstrassen.de)

### Markgräfler Wiiwegli

Weil am Rhein marks the beginning of the *Wiiwegli*, a 77 km-long (48 miles) hiking trail through the Markgräferland at the edge of the southern Black Forest. Over the course of four day trips, you can explore this wonderfully warm wine-growing region

## MERIAN-Tip

2

### THE “REBENBUMMLER” MUSEUM TRAIN

Puffing comfortably along, the “Rebenbummler” (“Grapevine wanderer”), with its historic steam locomotive, makes its way through the vineyards of the Kaiserstuhl. The summits of Belchen, Schauinsland and the Breisach Münsterberg lie in the distance; after traveling 16 miles, you can explore the Old Town of Breisach. “Wine Tastings on the Rails” are also available from May to October. Kaiserstühler Verkehrsbüro • Adelshof 20, Edingen • Tel. 07642-689 90 • [www.rebenbummler.de](http://www.rebenbummler.de)

on foot. The trail leads along the vineyards through Efringen-Kirchen, Bad Bellingen, Müllheim and Sulzburg, all the way to Freiburg. Signs bearing a red diamond with a cluster of grapes point the way. The trail is at its most beautiful in the spring, when the fruit trees are in bloom, or in the fall at harvest time. Then there is always the opportunity to stop at a winery, seasonal wine tavern or vinotheque for rest and refreshment.

Schwarzwald Tourismus • Schwenninger Str. 3, Villingen-Schwenningen • Tel. 07721-84 64 15 • [www.wiiwegli.de](http://www.wiiwegli.de), [www.wein-schwarzwald.info](http://www.wein-schwarzwald.info)

### Letzenberg Wine Trail

In the northwestern Kraichgau stands the Letzenberg, which provides a magnificent panoramic view of the Odenwald to the north, the Black Forest to the south, the Palati-





The wine queen and her princesses greet visitors at the Wine and Harvest Festival in Sasbachwalden on the western slopes of the Black Forest.

nate Forest to the west and the Kraichgau hill country to the east. The hill where the Peasants' Revolt began at the prince-bishopric of Speyer in 1525 is now the site of a 7 km (4.3 miles)-long, wine-themed hiking trail.

Along the way, signs provide information on various subjects – from an ABC of wine, to the history of the wine-growing community of Malsch. The local wine estates welcome visitors to wine tastings; the award-winning Hummel estate – a producer of both wine and *Sekt* (sparkling wine) – also offers wine and cheese seminars and guided tours of its vineyards.

– Community of Malsch • Kirchberg 10, Malsch • Tel. 07253-925 20 • [www.malsch-weinort.de](http://www.malsch-weinort.de)

– Wein- & Sektgut Hummel • Oberer Mühlweg 5, Malsch • Tel. 07253-

271 48 • [www.weingut-hummel.de](http://www.weingut-hummel.de),  
[www.leben-im-kraichgau.de](http://www.leben-im-kraichgau.de)

## FOOD AND DRINK

### Zirbelstube

Fine Swiss pinewood (*Zirbelholz*) decorates the walls and ceilings of this gourmet restaurant in Freiburg. Here, award-winning chef Alfred Klink continually surprises his guests with ingenious creations from his kitchen. Since 2001, he has ranked among the top 13 chefs in Germany. In the Hotel Colombi • Rotteckring 16, Freiburg • Tel. 0761-210 60 • [www.colombi.de](http://www.colombi.de) • €€€€€

### Zehners Stube

This historic town hall, dating from 1575, now contains a gourmet restaurant whose chef, Friedrich Zehner, is known as the “King of Sauces.” The classically elegant restaurant with its

groin-vault ceilings serves high-quality Baden wines along with the chef's culinary creations.

Weinstr. 39, Pfaffenweiler • Tel.

07664-62 25 • [www.zehnersstube.de](http://www.zehnersstube.de)

• €€€€€

### Jägersteig Restaurant and Hotel

Located beneath the romantic Windeck Castle ruins, the Jägersteig restaurant in Bühl offers excellent regional cuisine and an enchanting view across the Rhine valley as far as the Vosges Mountains.

Kappelwindeckerstr. 95, Bühl-Kap-

pelwindeck • Tel. 07223-985 90 •

[www.jaegersteig.de](http://www.jaegersteig.de) • €€

### “Hikers’ restaurant”: Zur Lilie

This inn is located directly in the Lilienthal, a recreational area that is home to many exotic plants. The “Lilie” (“Lily”) offers home-style cuisine from the Baden region and features an adventure playground for its younger guests.

Am Lilienhof, Ihringen • Tel. 07668-78

08 • [www.lilie-ihringen.de](http://www.lilie-ihringen.de) • €

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Winzertage Medieval Wine Festival, Steinbach

Against a picturesque backdrop of timber-frame buildings, the medieval *Winzertage* wine festival takes place each year at the beginning of June in the Steinbach suburb of Baden-Baden. Jousting tournaments, theater performances and authors' readings are held here in the *Städl* (Old Town) surrounding the 750-year-old city wall. The athletic highlight of the 3-day festival is the *Marktscheshenrennen* (pushcart race) around the church. If you want to know what this is all about, it is best to ask the lo-

cal! Along with the region's culinary specialties, a wide variety of Baden wines are available here.

Early June

– Ortsverwaltung Rebland • Steinbacher Str. 55, Baden-Baden • Tel.

07223-93 12 63 • [www.baden-baden.de](http://www.baden-baden.de)

– Baden-Baden Kur & Tourismus •

Solmstr. 1, Baden-Baden • Tel.

07221-27 52 00

### Freiburg Wine Festival

For one week at the beginning of July, everything in Freiburg revolves around its wine festival. With the breathtaking Freiburg Minster as its backdrop, wine-growing cooperatives and wine estates from throughout the region present their wares on the Münsterplatz (Minster Square).

Early July • Freiburg Wirtschaft Touris-

tik und Messe • Rathausgasse 33,

Freiburg • Tel. 0761-38 81 01 •

[www.freiburger-weinfest.de](http://www.freiburger-weinfest.de)

## SERVICE

### INFORMATION

– Badischer Wein GmbH • Basler

Landstrasse 28 b, Freiburg • Tel 0761-89 78 47 84 • [www.badischerwein.de](http://www.badischerwein.de)

– Badischer Weinbauverband e. V. •

Freiburg, Merzhauser Str. 115, Freiburg • Tel. 0761-45 91 00 •

[www.badischer-weinbauverband.de](http://www.badischer-weinbauverband.de)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Travelers to the Baden wine region who wish to visit one of the area's many wine festivals can consult the German Wine Institute's easy-to-read calendar on the Internet. [www.deutscheweine.de/Wein-Tourismus/Veranstaltungstipps](http://www.deutscheweine.de/Wein-Tourismus/Veranstaltungstipps)



## In Focus

**Wine and Water** This liquid treasure is between eight and twelve thousand years old: the mineral springs in Selters an der Lahn.

Just as a good wine reflects the terroir typical of its origin, every mineral water has its own unique taste as well. The most influential factor is the stones with which it has come into contact over the course of thousands of years.

### Liquid treasure

As early as the Middle Ages, the sparkling spring water from Selters an der Lahn was a highly prized beverage. The refreshing mineral water quickly became well known even beyond the borders of the Lahn valley, and was drunk at the noblest tables. Bottled in heavy clay jugs, this delicious water from Hessen's mineral springs was ex-

ported throughout the world. From St. Petersburg to New York and from London to Florence, Selters soon became known as the epitome of highest-quality mineral water. Even today, in many countries, the name is a synonym for sparkling, carbonated mineral water. In the USA it is called "*seltzer*", in Portugal "*Água de seltz*", in Russia "*Selterskaja woda*", and in Turkey "*Seltz suyu*".

At the beginning of the 19th century, the famous springs dried up. However, thanks to the citizens of Selters, drilling was initiated at the end of the 19th century. There was great jubilation when, in 1896, a tremendous fountain of crystal-clear water shot up

◀ Sparkling or still mineral water is always an ideal accompaniment to wine.

from a depth of 300 m (984 ft) beneath the Laneburg castle. The first mineral springs operation was named in honor of Germany's last empress, "Selters-Sprudel Augusta-Victoria"; today, the water is known by the name "Selters Mineralquelle Augusta-Victoria."

Whether fizzy, lightly sparkling or still – the right water is available for everyone. The different variations in carbonation and mineral content are suitable for different dishes and wines, since the perfect mineral water can enhance the flavor of a meal still further.

## Crystal-clear water from 300 m (984 ft) below the earth

A fizzy mineral water with a lively, refreshing flavor, for example, is an ideal accompaniment for sweet dishes and half-dry to semi-sweet, fruity wines. The balanced mineral composition, including calcium, magnesium, hydrogen carbonate and other important ingredients gives the body the materials it needs for a well-balanced water supply.

Mineral water with reduced carbonation combines well with full-bodied, dry white wines with pronounced acidity – for example, Riesling or Weissburgunder. However, it is also a good match for light red wines or as an accompaniment to poultry or seafood. Thanks to its ideal mineral composition, this is also excellent water for supporting athletic activity and a healthy diet.

Still, non-carbonated mineral water gently rounds off the strong flavors of spicy dishes. It is a good companion to

luxurious red wines – particularly to barrique-fermented premium wines with strong aromas and high tannin content. Due to its low-sodium mineral content, it is also ideal for preparing infant formulas.

## The right mineral balance

"Man shall not live by bread alone," the Bible says – and without water, wine only tastes half as good. Those who wish to truly enjoy wine should drink double the amount of water along with it – ideally at a temperature between 8 and 14 °C (46 to 57 °F). The role of mineral water as an accompaniment to wine has been studied at one of the world's leading colleges of oenology and beverage technology. The Geisenheim Faculty at the Rhein-Main University of Applied Sciences evaluated 16 premium mineral waters in an eight-month-long study with over 100 participants, including students of the subject, doctoral candidates, oenologists, sommeliers and home economists from 14 different wine-growing countries throughout the world.

On the one hand, the scientific tests of different waters in combination with various wines examined the beverages' neutralizing effects; on the other, it focused on the supplemental and complementary effects of different waters when consumed together with wine. Engineering professor Dr. Mark Stobl concluded from the study that Selters water "is influenced by wine, and thereby enhances the taste experience rather than dampening or diminishing it".

Selters Mineralquelle Augusta Victoria • Seltersweg 1, Löhnberg-Selters • Tel. 06471-60 90 • [www.selters.de](http://www.selters.de)



**Franken** Gently rolling hills and steep cliffs line the banks of the Main River and its tributaries. This is the home of Franconian wines, which are celebrated both in Germany and throughout the world.

◀ Just one of the many beautifully situated wine-growing villages on the Main River, Stammheim

The Franken wine-growing region lies between the Rhön Mountains and the Tauber valley, the Spessart and the Steigerwald mountain ranges. Most of the vineyards line both sides of the Main River. Vineyards stretch across nearly 100 km (62 miles) within Franken's cuesta landscape, from Schweinfurt in the east to Aschaffenburg in the west. One highly recognizable feature of Franconian wines is the *Bocksbeutel*, a short-necked, round bottle. The oldest known ancestor of this characteristic bottle can be seen in the Mainfränkisches Museum in Würzburg: a Celtic clay vessel dating from around 1400 BC, which was discovered in Wenigumstadt, near Aschaffenburg. Today, the *Bocksbeutel* is a symbol for superior quality wines.

## “Mainfranken is wine Franken”

The wine-growing region is subdivided into three districts: the “Main Triangle” between Schweinfurt, Marktbreit and Gemünden; the “Main Square” between Lohr, Wertheim, Miltenberg and Aschaffenburg; and the Steigerwald district in the area around Iphofen and Castell. The vineyards are distributed across approximately 6000 ha (14,826 acres); some 20% are terraced or steep slopes. Among the grape varieties, whites predominate: ca. 80%. The most widely grown grape is Müller-Thurgau, followed by Silvaner, the flagship wine of Franconian viticulture. Other locally significant

varieties are Bacchus, Scheurebe and Riesling. The leading red varieties are Domina and Spätburgunder.

## The home of the *Bocksbeutel*

In general, Franken's climate is continental, marked by cold winters and hot summers; however, in the sheltered valleys of the Main and its tributaries and on the slopes of the Steigerwald, the microclimate is Mediterranean in nature – with perfect conditions for viticulture. The region's soils are as varied as its landscapes: keuper predominates in the Steigerwald, shell-limestone in the Main Triangle and new red sandstone in the Main Square. The Main river loop near Volkach is dominated by clayish marl/keuper and drifting sands, while grapevines in the Aschaffenburg area flourish on crystalline primary rock. The soils are rich in nutrients and produce wines with an earthy, mineral character. In the words of Kurt Tucholsky: “Franconian wine is as profound and pure as the chime of a bell.”

According to a deed of gift from Charlemagne, viticulture in Franken dates back at least as far as 777 AD. The oldest vineyard site with its own official name is considered to be the *Würzburger Stein*. Even Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in his time, was enchanted by the wines that grow in the steep site north of Würzburg. “Send me a few more *Würzburger*, because no other wine tastes good to me, and I am peevish when my accustomed favorite drink has run out,” he wrote to his wife Christine in 1806. Today, the *Würzburger Stein* is Germany's largest individual vineyard site.

## ⑦ Staatlicher Hofkeller Würzburg

► Fold-out map, H/J 15

When people talk about the Würzburg Residence, they usually mention the splendid palace complex with its famous staircase and gigantic ceiling fresco. They rarely think of the foundation of this important structure and its spacious cellars. But in fact, the Residence's underworld is no less important – not only for architecture enthusiasts but for wine connoisseurs as well. Since the 13th century, the prince-

bishops of Würzburg had lived in the Marienberg Fortress high above the left bank of the Main, across from the old city center. However, during the age of Absolutism, many rulers throughout Europe wished to express their claims to power through the architectural layout of their residences. Following the example of Louis XIV, who moved his residence from his Paris city palace to Versailles, the Palatine Prince Electors left their stately castle in Heidelberg and moved to their new residence in

In the vaulted cellars below the Würzburg Residence, elegant dinners are served between the liquid treasures of the Staatlicher Hofkeller.



Mannheim, while in Sachsen, Augustus the Strong pressed ahead with the building of the Zwinger in Dresden.

### The work of Balthasar Neumann

The new Prince-Bishop's Residence on the east side of Würzburg's city center was also built during this period. Prince-Bishop Johann Philipp Franz von Schönborn commissioned Balthasar Neumann to draw up the building plans. The latter was a relatively unknown master builder at the time, but he was on the path to a great career. For the palace's interior decoration, the prince-bishop called upon artists from all over Europe, the most prominent being Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, who created the world's largest continuous ceiling fresco above the grand staircase, as well as the frescoes and stuccowork in the imperial hall and the court chapel.

Due to the international composition of its building committee, its ambitious nature and the originality of the complex, the Würzburg Residence was declared a World Heritage Site in 1981 and named the most unusual and harmonious of all Baroque palaces. Balthasar Neumann also designed the foundation of the residence, with its vaulted cellars and supporting walls up to 6.5 m (21 ft) thick.

The wine cellar dates back to a deed of gift from the Würzburg bishop Embricho, dated 1128. It existed as the "Court Cellar of the Prince-Bishop" from the end of the 12th century until the building's secularization in the early 19th century. Following the Congress of Vienna, the entire vineyard property of the prince-bishopric fell into the hands of the King-

dom of Bavaria, and after 1814 it was known as the "Bavarian Royal Court Cellar." When Ludwig III, the last Bavarian king, abdicated in November 1918, the court cellar became the Bavarian state wine estate, the *Staatlicher Hofkeller Würzburg*.

### DID YOU KNOW ...

... that in Franken, Federweisser is known as "Bremser"? Following the grape harvest, the must, which has just begun to ferment, is a popular beverage in *Häckerwirtschaften*, as the small seasonal wine bars are called here.

Today, the Würzburg Hofkeller represents the oldest winery to continuously remain in the possession of its state's sovereign. Its eventful history is reflected in the vineyards, which are scattered throughout the entire growing region. With 120 ha (296 acres) of vineyards and an annual production of around 900,000 bottles, it ranks among Germany's largest estates. The Rosenbachpalais directly adjacent to the Residence houses the estate's administrative offices.

The Residence's vast cellar facilities are also open to visitors. At the entrance, guests are immediately greeted by the historic *Kellerrecht*, a rhyming list of house rules which translates as: "It is forbidden to squabble, curse or utter obscenities, or to fling grand words around; scratching, writing on the walls, knocking on the barrels with one's hands or any impertinence or unruliness are not allowed here!"

After this etiquette has been established, the underworld of the Residence opens up into a space measur-





The cultural festival at the Juliusspital Wine Estate in Würzburg (► p. 42) is a time for celebration, music and Franconian wine; its slogan is “Living like God in Franconia.”

ing 4557 square (14,951 sq ft) meters, with temperatures between 15 and 18 °C (59-64 °F). The wooden cask storeroom offers space for about 600,000 liters of wine.

The heart of the historic vault is the Stückfass cellar, which contains 100 small “Stück” barrels. A “Stück” is an old Franconian unit of measurement equal to about 1200 liters. The adjoining oval “rondel cellar,” with its massive central round piers is considered a masterpiece of building engineering by Balthasar Neumann. It once supported the enormous weight of the prince-bishop’s theater, where the portrait gallery is located today. From the rondel cellar, visitors can proceed to the chamber cellar, where only the prince-bishop’s finest wines were stored. In the civil servants’ wine cellar, the liquid wages of the court were kept in three gigantic casks. Distinguished red wines are aged in the south wing of the cellar

beneath the chapel, while the adjacent ice cellar – designed by Balthasar Neumann as the Residence “refrigerator” – is now used for aging high-quality red wines in barriques.

An underground tunnel connects the northern and southern sections of the Residence wine cellar. Along the approximately 60-m-(197-ft)-long corridor hang illustrations depicting the most important stations in the more than 875 years of the court cellar’s history – from its beginnings in the 12th century until the present day.

Rosenbachpalais • Residenzpl. 3,  
Würzburg • Tel. 0931-305 09 23 •  
[www.hofkeller.de](http://www.hofkeller.de)

### ⑧ **Bürgerspital zum Heiligen Geist** ► Fold-out map, H/J 15

A glockenspiel chimes in Würzburg every day at 11:00, 1:00, 3:00 and 5:00. In the timber-framed gables of the house on the corner of Theater-

strasse and Semmelstrasse, 13 bells play the “Kilianslied,” while above them, figures of pilgrims move past paintings of the Franconian apostle, St. Kilian, and his comrades, St. Colman and St. Totnan. A white dove then flaps its wings three times and, accompanied by the song “Die Würzburger Glöckli” (“The Bells of Würzburg”), figures from a vintners’ parade then encircle the three saints. Finally, a cellar master raises a toast to passersby from a small window. The glockenspiel dates from 1956 and is part of a building complex steeped in history: the Bürgerspital zum Heiligen Geist.

The complex, which includes an inn and a hospital chapel as well as the hospital building, originated with a donation made in the early 14th century. Around 1316, Johann von Steren, a wealthy Würzburg patrician, founded this “New Hospital” for the poor and needy outside of the city gates. The city’s rapidly growing population and the accompanying social welfare issues prompted many well-to-do citizens to support the church in its charitable work.

### A spirit of charity

Income from interest and property revenues supported the upkeep of the New Hospital. Soon, however, the founding family’s financial means were no longer sufficient, and other charitably-minded donors stepped in. With the expansion of the donor community, the name was changed to “New Hospital of the Citizens of Würzburg.” In the 16th century, the foundation acquired the name that it still bears today. According to Würzburg’s list of assets from 1583, some property outside of

Würzburg also belonged to the Bürgerspital. In addition to the extensive real estate, the income from 58 ha (143 acres) of farmland and 10 ha (24 acres) of vineyards contributed to the maintenance of the hospital.

The first vineyards were planted in 1334, and laid the groundwork for the foundation’s own winery. Initially, the wine was used only to cover the hospital’s own needs. A record from 1598 states that each hospital resident was granted a daily ration equal to 1.2 liters of wine – provided they were well behaved. Those who were unruly were punished by the addition of water to their wine; in the case of severe misdemeanors, the wine ration was withdrawn completely.

In 1726, the Würzburg city council attempted to combat the adulteration of wine by declaring that the *Bocksbeutel* certified pure, genuine wine, and the first bottles – sealed with the city’s coat of arms – were stored in the cellars of the Bürgerspi-

*Bocksbeutels* at the Bürgerspital zum Heiligen Geist (► p. 40).



tal. Visitors can still view some of these historic bottles today during tours of the vaulted cellars.

### Extreme slopes

Today, the Bürgerspital owns around 110 ha (271 acres) of vineyards, most of them on hillsides and steep slopes with gradients of up to 60 %. Primarily Riesling, Silvaner, Müller-Thurgau, Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder and Spätburgunder grapes are grown here. With vineyards in prestigious locations in Würzburg, the Main Triangle and the Steigerwald, the Bürgerspital is one of Franconia's leading wine estates. The Bürgerspital's "great wines" originate in the prime Würzburg vineyards Stein, Stein-Harfe, Abtsleite, the Frickenhäuser Kapellenberg and the Randersackerer Pfülben.

Cellar tours take visitors from the estate grounds into the press hall and then to the wine cellar, tasting included. Here you can see one of the largest and most beautiful wooden cask cellars in Germany, containing approximately 200 oak casks, some richly decorated. The cellar also contains a true rarity: a bottle of *Steinwein* from 1540, the vintage of the millennium, which is the oldest still drinkable wine in the world.

As a part of the foundation, the winery supports the charitable work of the Bürgerspital with every bottle of wine sold. The hospital's original purpose – helping people in need of care – is still in effect today. Thus, the foundation is now devoted to geriatric rehabilitation, providing special care to over 750 older patients in retirement homes and care facilities. The hospital itself houses a rehabilitation and physiotherapy clinic,

which cares for around 500 patients per year. As in the past, the foundation's assets are managed by the estate administration.

The building complex also includes the Bürgerspital Wine Tavern, which, in addition to the estate's own wines, serves classic Franconian dishes such as *Blaue Zipfel* (Franconian bratwurst) or *Züngle* (tongue) in a sweet-and-sour marinade.

Stiftung Bürgerspital zum Heiligen Geist • Theaterstr. 19, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-350 30

– Wine estate: Tel. 0931-350 34 41 • [www.buergerspital.de](http://www.buergerspital.de) • Open Mon-Fri 8 am-5 pm; tours Sat 2 pm, April-Oct • Entrance fee € 6

– Bürgerspital-Weinstuben: Tel. 0931-35 28 80 • [www.buerger-spital-weinstuben.com](http://www.buerger-spital-weinstuben.com)

### 9 Würzburg Juliusspital

► Fold-out map, H/J 15

The cornerstone for Würzburg's Juliusspital was laid on March 12, 1576. The hospital took its name from its patron, Prince-Bishop Julius Echter von Mespelbrunn. Raised in the moated castle of Mespelbrunn in a side valley of the Main, this ambitious young man became Prince-Bishop of Würzburg at the age of 28 – thereby also becoming a duke of Franken. He is considered an important proponent of the Counter-Reformation, and financed the renewed founding of universities.

At the very beginning of his tenure, he purchased lands outside of the city gates, including a Jewish cemetery, which he had leveled. On this site, he built a hospital for the poor and sick, where orphans and traveling pilgrims were also provided with food and a place to sleep. In order to finance the

hospital, he established a foundation to which he added his extensive property, including vineyards in prime locations.

Over the course of its 400-year existence, the foundation's wine estate grew steadily. Vineyards in a variety of locations were purchased and added to the property, while unprofitable sites or those with poor climactic conditions were sold. Today, with 172 ha (425 acres) of vineyards, the hospital owns the second-largest wine estate in Germany, and also possesses the best sites in every section of

Franken. Depending on the location, the appropriate grape varieties are cultivated – including Silvaner, Riesling and Rieslaner; Weissburgunder and Grauburgunder, Müller-Thurgau, Bacchus and Scheurebe; Spätburgunder, Domina and Schwarzeriesling (Pinot meunier); as well as indigenous varieties, such as Traminer and Muskateller.

The wines reflect the microclimate and soil conditions of the various vineyard sites. Well-structured, stimulating wines with great aging potential flourish in the deep, finely

The Baroque fountain designed by Jakob von Auvera adds an exuberant touch to the gardens of the Juliusspital (► p. 42).





Castell's Baroque palace lies at the foot of the Schlossberg, where Germany's first Silvaner grapes were planted in 1659.

granulated gypsum keuper soils around Iphofen and Rödelsee. In the Würzburg, Randersacker, Thüngersheim, Volkach and Escherndorf areas, shell-limestone soils produce elegant, delicately fruity wines with mineral components. The shallow soils near Bürgstadt on the Lower Main give rise to elegant red wines with a pleasant tannic structure.

The heart of the Juliusspital Wine Estate is its historic, 250-m-(820-ft)-long wooden cask cellar, which is more than 300 years old. Here, wines are aged in 220 large and small oak barrels. Beside them, other wines are fermented in stainless steel casks. During cellar tours, guides provide knowledgeable and entertaining information about the vineyards of the foundation, the various grape varieties and the flavor nuances of the wines – three of which the guests are allowed to sample. In this worthwhile tour, you can also learn a great

number of interesting facts about the foundation's historic building, the prince's palace, the green spaces of the former botanical garden, the *Vierrohrenbrunnen* (four-piped fountain) and the "Old Anatomy Building", where important doctors and scientists have worked.

Another very interesting sight is the carved image of a *Bocksbeutel*, part of a stone relief certificate, which commemorates the founding of the Juliusspital. This is also the oldest known image of a bottle resembling a *Bocksbeutel* in the modern era.

Weingut Juliusspital • Klinikstr. 1,  
Würzburg • Tel. 0931-393 14 00 •  
[www.juliusspital.de](http://www.juliusspital.de) • Guided tours:  
April-Nov, Fri & Sat 5 pm • Entrance  
fee € 10

## 10 Castell and Silvaner

► Fold-out map, J/K 16

At the western edge of the Steigerwald lies the birthplace of Silvaner wine in Germany. It was cultivated on German soil for the first time in Castell, over 350 years ago. This Upper Franconian wine-growing village, which today has a population of about 500, was the capital of the free imperial County of Castell until 1806. The houses are nestled on the Schlossberg hillside, between vineyards, meadows, forests and fields.

All that now remains of the ancestral seat of the Franconian Castell dynasty on the Schlossberg is an octagonal staircase tower. Since 1691, the family has resided in the Baroque palace at the foot of the Schlossberg. Here, Count Ferdinand zu Castell-Castell manages the family-owned wine estate, the *Fürstlich Castell'sches Domänenamt*. On April 6, 1659, his ancestor, Wolfgang Dietrich zu Castell ordered the planting of 25 "Österreicher Fechser" on the Reitsteig site at the foot of the Schlossberg. "Fechser" is an old term for a plant cutting; and up until the 19th century, "Österreicher" ("Austrian") was the common name for the Silvaner grape variety. These grapes – apparently introduced from Austria – were hardy, and flourished during the cold period known to climatologists as the "Little Ice Age." Since bud burst is late, this variety is less susceptible to spring frosts. Thus, the importance of Silvaner in Franken increased steadily. In the 19th century, the variety was as common as "salt in our food" – in the words of pioneering vintner Johann Philipp Bronner. Even today, Silvaner dominates the

majority of the vineyards of the Fürstlich Castell'sches Domänenamt with almost 40%. The vineyards of the 70 ha (172 acres) estate are located directly adjacent to the main residence of this old family, which dates back to 1057.

### The home of Silvaner

The oldest documented mention of a vineyard on the Schlossberg dates back to 1266. On its southern and western slopes – whose gradients range between 40 and 70% – the grapevines grow on gypsum keuper soils embedded with alabaster. The Silvaner vines grow on the steeply falling protrusion on the western-facing side of the mountain, where the late afternoon sun provides them with warmth and the west wind with good air circulation. Beginning on this terroir, Silvaner continued on its

#### MERIAN-Tip

3

#### ON THE MAIN RIVER THROUGH FRANKEN

Traveling by water is also a wonderful way to explore the Franken wine region – for example, by raft or canoe. A trip along the gently flowing Main leads through romantic river landscapes, past vineyards and idyllic villages, and also gives you the opportunity to observe the water birds and picnic on the gravelly banks. One of the most picturesque sections of the route is the Main river loop near Volkach.

Tourist Information • Rathaus,  
Volkach • Tel. 09381-401 12 •  
[www.volkach.de](http://www.volkach.de)

path to success throughout Franken and into other German wine regions. A good way to explore the home of Silvaner wine is with a walk through the vineyards or a hike on the slopes of the Steigerwald, with its small valleys and picturesque wine-growing villages. For example, well-constructed paths let you scale the Schlossberg, from which you can enjoy a breathtaking view of the Steigerwald foothills. Along the paths through the vineyards, signs not only inform visitors about how Silvaner came to Franconia, but also what is special about the slightly gritty gypsum keuper soil and how, 125 million years ago, the Panthalassic Ocean laid the groundwork for viticulture on the Steigerwald. All the walking and hiking trails begin at the *Fürstlich Castell'sches Domänenamt* wine estate, which also offers guided tours of the vineyards and wine cellars.

Fürstlich Castell'sches Domänenamt • Schlosspl. 5, Castell • Tel. 09325-601 60 • [www.castell.de](http://www.castell.de) • Open Mon-Fri 8 am-6 pm, Sat 10 am-4 pm  
Schlossberg trail: 2.3 km (1.4 miles)

## Nearby destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Miltenberg

Between the Spessart and the Odenwald, on the “western knee” of the Main Square, lies the historic Old Town of Miltenberg. The “Pearl of the Main” is remarkable for its beautifully restored timber-frame houses – particularly around the marketplace with its Market Fountain at the center. Interesting sights include the *Weinhaus am Alten Markt* (wine tavern on the old marketplace), the old *Amtskellerei* (wine cellar), the

*Schnatterlochturm* (a tower of the old city wall) and the Renaissance gateway arch leading to the castle of Miltenburg. The *Haus zum Riesen*, a tradition-rich inn with a magnificent timberframe façade, has served guests ranging from Martin Luther and Empress Maria Theresia to film actor Heinz Rühmann and even Elvis Presley. Of the medieval city walls, only the Mainz Gate and the Würzburg Gate remain.

Tourist Information at the Rathaus (City Hall) • Engelpl. 69, Miltenberg • Tel. 09371-40 41 19 • [www.miltenberg.info](http://www.miltenberg.info)

#### Modern architecture

Alongside the historic structures, there is also contemporary architecture to be found everywhere in Franken. Many vintners bridge the gap between the past and the present and showcase their wines in a modern setting. At the Hirn Winery in Untereisenheim, architect Heinz M. Springmann took inspiration from Friedensreich Hundertwasser. The award-winning architecture of Ludwig Knoll's estate Weingut am Stein creates a cool and elegant ambiance. The architectural concept of the Sommerach cooperative symbolizes the vintners' philosophy, connecting tradition with innovation in this “Kingdom of Wine.”

– Weingut Hirn • Dübacher Str. 8, Untereisenheim • Tel. 09386-388 • [www.weingut-hirn.de](http://www.weingut-hirn.de)

– Weingut am Stein • Mittlerer Steinbergweg 5, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-258 08 • [www.weingut-am-stein.de](http://www.weingut-am-stein.de)

– Winzerkeller Sommerach • Zum Katzenkopf 1, Sommerach am Main • Tel. 09381-806 10 • [www.winzerkeller-sommerach.de](http://www.winzerkeller-sommerach.de)



It doesn't always have to be baroque style: the atmosphere at the Sommerach am Main wine bar (► p. 46) is set by clear lines and local building materials.

### Veitshöchheim

Just a few kilometers to the northwest of Würzburg stands the palace of Veitshöchheim, which was built as a summer residence for the prince-bishops beginning in the 17th century. The Baroque master builder Balthasar Neumann completed the construction in the mid-18th century. Especially worth a visit is the castle park, one of the few rococo gardens still remaining in Germany. Its formal, ornamental borders and hedges give the impression that the gardeners have just laid down their compasses and rulers. Arbors, pavilions and fountains all await visitors' discovery.

Schloss und Hofgarten Veitshöchheim • Echterstr. 10, Veitshöchheim • Tel. 0931-915 82 • [www.schloesser.bayern.de](http://www.schloesser.bayern.de) • April-Oct, open Tues-Sun 9 am-6 pm • Entrance fee € 4

### Würzburg

In addition to the Residence and its court gardens, Würzburg is home to many other not-to-be-missed structures. These include the Old Main Bridge, which was the city's only river bridge up until 1886; the Old Crane, which measures the water level of the Main; the *Falkenhaus* on the marketplace with its rococo gables and stuccowork façade; as well as the historic private homes and restaurants between the marketplace and the Main, which you can pass by during a stroll through the narrow streets of the Old Town. From the riverbank, a staircase with 256 steps leads up to the *Käppele* ("little chapel"), a late Baroque pilgrimage church, which was completed in 1750, according to plans drafted by Balthasar Neumann. The majestic Marienberg Fortress stands enthroned above the city. From its



beautifully planted Princes' Garden, you can enjoy a view of the city and the river.

Tourist Information • Falkenhaus am Markt 9, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-37 23 35 • [www.wuerzburg.de](http://www.wuerzburg.de)

## MUSEUMS

### Mainfränkisches Museum Würzburg

Würzburg's famous landmark, the Marienberg Fortress, is now a museum of international standing. In 45 exhibition rooms, the Baroque armory and the *Echter Bastion* house a collection devoted to the artistic and cultural history of the central Main region, from the Stone Age up until the 19th century. Highlights include works by Tilman Riemenschneider, Lucas Cranach the Elder and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, as well as building plans by Balthasar Neumann. On a tour through the exhibit, visitors encounter a completely preserved, 16th-century wine tavern, sumptuously decorated with foliage painting in the Renaissance style. You can also learn the story behind the Würzburg "Lügensteine" ("fake stones").

Marienberg Fortress • Oberer Burgweg, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-20 59 40 • [www.mainfraenkisches-museum.de](http://www.mainfraenkisches-museum.de) • April-Oct, Tues-Sun 10 am-5 pm; Nov-March, Tues-Sun 10 am-4 pm • Entrance fee € 4

### Schloss Johannisburg, Aschaffenburg

The former second residence of the archbishops of Mainz serves today as a branch museum of the Bavarian State Painting Collections. The painting gallery, which contains works by Lucas Cranach the Elder, is considered to be the most important

collection of Cranach's work in Europe. Also worth seeing is the world's largest collection of architectural models made of cork, which reproduces the most famous buildings of ancient Rome in minute detail.

Schlosspl. 4, Aschaffenburg • Tel. 06021-38 65 70 • [www.aschaffenburg.de](http://www.aschaffenburg.de) • April-Sept, Tues-Sun 9 am-6 pm; Oct-March, Tues-Sun 10 am-4 pm • Entrance fee € 5

## WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

### The Franconian Red Wine Hiking Trail

The Franconian Red Wine Hiking Trail extends for approximately 70 km (43 miles) through the Main valley, from Grosswallstadt to Brügstadt. It passes through picturesque half-timbered villages and is bordered by the wine region's vineyard slopes. Along the way, you can learn plenty of interesting facts about wine cultivation.

Mainland Miltenberg-Churfranken e. V. • Engelpl. 69, Miltenberg • Tel. 09371-40 41 59 • [www.fraenkischer-rotweinwanderweg.de](http://www.fraenkischer-rotweinwanderweg.de)

### The Middle Franconian Bocksbeutel Route

In the heart of Franken, this nearly 50 km-long (31 miles) circular route includes the impressive low mountain landscapes of the Steigerwald and Frankenhöhe nature preserves. Between Scheinfeld and Bad Windsheim, Tauberscheckenbach and Dietersheim, the towns and communities, wine-growers' cooperatives, vintners and innkeepers all work to ensure that visitors can experience nature in its intact form, gather interesting information about history and culture.

Tourist Information • Hauptstr. 1,

Scheinfeld • Tel. 09162-124 24 •  
www.bocksbeutelstrasse.de

## FOOD AND DRINK

### Schwab's Landgasthof

Goose and duck directly from the farm, fresh porcini mushrooms from the Spessart mountains, as well as native local fish all go into the pans and onto the table here at Schwab's Landgasthof in Schwarzach am Main. Of course, the Franconian culinary specialties are also accompanied by a good selection of Franconian wines.

Bamberger Str. 4, Schwarzach am Main • Tel. 09324-1251 • www.landgasthof-schwab.de • €€

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Wine festivals

The locals celebrate wine festivals from March to November. Almost every wine-growing community has a scheduled weekend on the calendar. When the time comes, the vintners serve their wines on romantic old streets, on cozy town squares and in festival tents. You can order a calendar of events from Frankenwein-Frankenland (the regional wine promotion board) for a small fee; an overview is also available on the Internet.

March-November • Gebietsweinwerbung Frankenwein-Frankenland • Hertzstr. 12, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-39 01 10 • www.frankenwein-aktuell.de, www.fraenkischer-weinfestkalender.de

### Würzburg Baroque Festival at the Residence

In the spring, the Würzburg residence becomes an authentic period setting for the Baroque Festival. The

Franconian Wine Growers' Association invites guests to enjoy music and wine in the Garden Hall and the White Hall. Renowned musicians perform masterworks of the Baroque period.

Spring • Würzburg Baroque Festival at the Residence • Residenzpl. 2, Würzburg • Event organizer: Fränkischer Weinbauverband • Hertzstr. 12, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-390 11 11 • www.frankenwein-aktuell.de



The Würzburg Baroque Festival is celebrated in authentic period style.

## SERVICE

### INFORMATION

– Frankenwein-Frankenland GmbH • Hertzstr. 12, Würzburg • Tel. 0931-39 01 10 • www.frankenweinaktuell.de  
– Tourismusverband Franken • Wilhelminenstr. 6, Nuremberg • Tel. 0911-94 15 10 • www.frankenweinland.de



**Hessische Bergstrasse** Germany's smallest wine-growing region extends to the east of the Upper Rhine, on the slopes of the Odenwald. Spring always comes very early here.

◀ From the vineyards on the Bergstrasse, you can gaze far across the Rhine plain.

The Hessische Bergstrasse begins to the south of Darmstadt and continues southward through Seeheim, Alsbach, Zwingenberg, Auerbach, Bensheim and Heppenheim to Hessen's state border. The nearly 440 ha (1087 acres) of cultivated vineyards in Germany's smallest wine-growing region are divided between two geographically separate areas: Alsbach, Zwingenberg, Bensheim and Heppenheim make up the "Starkenburger" sector; the second district is the "Odenwälder Weininsel" ("Odenwald Wine Island"), which includes Gross-Umstadt and Rossdorf.

### Almost like Italy

The Hessische Bergstrasse owes its mild climate primarily to the hills of the Odenwald Forest, which protect the region from the harsh north and east winds. In addition, the prevailing west winds bring in warm air from the Rhine, Main and Neckar rivers. "This is where Germany starts to become Italy," declared Emperor Joseph II, when he traveled along the Bergstrasse in April 1766. In fact, spring reaches this region earlier than any other place in Germany – at the same time that it begins in Italy's Po valley. Figs, almonds, magnolias and grapes all flourish in the sheltered areas of this region.

A vast range of soil types can be found in the vineyards of the Hessische Bergstrasse. In Zwingenberg, Auerbach and Bensheim, weathered granite soils predominate, while loess and yellow sandstone are characteristic in Heppenheim. Crystalline slate, warm sand and loess

soils as well as quartz porphyry and basalt make the white wines of the Hessische Bergstrasse quite filigree and delicately fruity; the red wines grown here are fruity and full-bodied.

Among the grape varieties, Riesling is known as the "king of the Bergstrasse." It accounts for almost half of the grapes cultivated here and grows especially well, thanks to the long vegetation period in the region. The other half of the vineyard area is devoted to a number of varieties – from Müller-Thurgau to Gewürztraminer to the rare Gelber Orleans. In recent years, an increasing number of red varieties, such as Spätburgunder, Frühburgunder and St. Laurent, has been planted here.

### Picturesque wine-growing villages

The first grapes were brought to the Bergstrasse region by the Romans around 2000 years ago. The Franks subsequently expanded viticulture to the fertile slopes of the Odenwald. The earliest documentation of wine-growing on the Bergstrasse appears in the Lorsch Codex (> p. 55): this 12th-century collection of records lists all the possessions of the Lorsch Abbey, including numerous vineyards on the Bergstrasse.

Wine-growing villages and towns line the Hessische Bergstrasse like pearls on a string. All along the way, visitors can find lovingly restored old town centers with picturesque squares and refurbished façades, old churches and noble medieval houses. Special highlights include the historic Scheuergasse and the remains of the old city walls in Zwingenberg. With the issue of its town charter in

1274, this is the oldest city in the Hessian part of the Bergstrasse. Gorgeous timber-frame houses surround the marketplaces of Heppenheim and Gross-Umstadt. The Carolingian King's Hall at the Lorsch Abbey, constructed around 800, is one of the oldest completely preserved architectural monuments in Germany and has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1991. In Bensheim-Auerbach, the "Fürstenlager" – the summer residence of the landgraves and grand dukes of Hessen-Darmstadt – has been preserved. In the midst of over 40 ha (99 acres) of park space planted

in the style of a British garden, you can also find exotic plants and the oldest sequoia tree on German soil. Bensheim itself is also a sight to see, with a number of mansions designed by the important Art Nouveau master builder Georg Metzendorf, who worked in the architectural studio of his brother, Heinrich Metzendorf, in Heppenheim around the turn of the 20th century.

With its terraced slopes of vineyards and vintners' huts, romantic castles and idyllic timber-frame villages, the Hessische Bergstrasse is an inviting destination for wine lovers. From the walking trails on the slopes of the Odenwald, visitors have a wonderful view of the Rhine valley and the hills of the Palatinate Forest to the west.

### MERIAN-Tip

4

#### BERGSTRÄSSER WEINLAGENWEG

The best time to enjoy the beautiful landscape of the Hessische Bergstrasse is in the spring, when the peach, cherry and almond trees are in bloom. The 22 km-long (13.5 miles) *Bergsträsser Weinlagenweg* (Bergstrasse Vineyard Trail) begins in Alsbach and leads through the vineyards above Zwingenberg, Auerbach, Bensheim and Heppenheim. The trail is extremely well marked and allows hikers to enter at almost any point along the B3 federal highway. The Weinlagenweg is also suitable for inexperienced hikers, families and senior citizens. Hikers are greeted with a surprise on the 1st of May: at eight different tasting stands along the Weinlagenweg, young vintners invite visitors to sample the wines from their respective vineyards.

#### 11 Wine and Stone

► Fold-out map, F 16

Heppenheim is not only the oldest wine-growing community on the Hessische Bergstrasse, it is also the largest. A full 230 (568) of the region's approx. 440 ha (1087 acres) of vineyards are located in Heppenheim and its suburbs. It is also the home of the region's largest wine producer – the *Bergsträsser Winzer e.G.* wine growers' cooperative, which was founded in 1904. Its membership includes around 500 wine-growing families. Since 2007, wine and art have enjoyed a special relationship in Heppenheim: the Wine and Stone Adventure Trail uses works of art to depict the cultural history of wine and provides visitors with information about the fundamentals of viticulture. The nearly 7-km-(4.3 miles)-long path contains about 70 information stations devoted to wine



Odenwald sandstone inspired sculptor Alfred Wolf to create his work “*Dank den Reben*” on Heppenheim’s Wine and Stone Trail.

cultivation. The trail begins and ends at the *Winzerbrunnen* (vintners’ fountain) on Le-Chesnay-Platz. From here, the circular trail – which was constructed as a joint project of the Geopark Bergstrasse-Odenwald and the Bergsträsser Vintners’ Co-operative – leads through the Steinkopf, Centgericht and Stemmler vineyards.

### Learning along the way

Information boards provide interesting facts about grape varieties, geology, climate and history. If you want to learn more about how viticulture came to the Bergstrasse, a year in the life of a vintner, the phylloxera vine louse, or the vintners’ huts, for example, or wonder how soil conditions affect wine quality, or what volcanic ash has to do with it – you can find in-depth answers to all of these questions here.

The highlights of the adventure trail are the artwork and sculptures, which deal with viticulture and the region. For example, the “Centurio” stele commemorates the Romans, who planted the first grapes on the sunny slopes between the Odenwald and the Upper Rhine Valley about 2000 years ago in order to keep their troops in good spirits. In the work “*Aus die Laus*” (“Out with the louse!”), a gigantic phylloxera bug symbolizes the vintners’ struggles against this pest which, particularly in the 19th century, had a devastating effect on all of Europe’s wine-growing regions. Surface and space permeate one another in “*Dank den Reben*” (“Thanks to the Grapevines”): here, sculptor Alfred Wolf emphasizes the often arduous work of vintners on the vineyard slopes. “*Strata Montana*” is the name of a monumental panoramic image of



The gatehouse of the Lorsch Abbey, a rare specimen of Carolingian architecture, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

the Bergstrasse, which the Heppenheim-based artist Josef Schmitt created out of local red sandstone. These and many other works of art accompany visitors along the adventure trail through the vineyards.

Especially for children, the Bergsträsser Winzer e.G. has prepared a quiz to go along with the adventure trail. Every young visitor who completes the questionnaire and returns it at the end of the trail will be rewarded with a surprise. The paved trail is also easy to travel with a

stroller. Plan on about two to three hours to complete the circular route. All along the way, you can find benches where you can take a rest and enjoy a beautiful view – for example, of the Starkenburg fortress to the south.

– Bergsträsser Winzer e. G. • Darmstädterstr. 56, Heppenheim • Tel. 06252-799 40 • [www.bergstraesserwinzer.de](http://www.bergstraesserwinzer.de), [www.weinundstein.net](http://www.weinundstein.net)  
 – Geo-Naturpark Bergstrasse-Odenwald e. V. • Nibelungenstr. 41, Lorsch • Tel. 0 62 51/70 79 90 • [www.geo-naturpark.de](http://www.geo-naturpark.de)

## 12 Lorsch Abbey and the history of viticulture

► Fold-out map, F 16

Almost no other place on the Hessische Bergstrasse can provide us with as much insight into the history of viticulture as the Lorsch Abbey. Here, in the 12th century, the Lorsch Codex was assembled – an extensive collection of deeds and records which documented the possessions of the Benedictine monastery.

### Pilgrims and believers

Founded in 764, the Abbey obtained the relics of St. Nazarius. The remains of this martyr – who died in Rome in 304 during the persecution of Christians under Emperor Diocletian – drew countless pilgrims to Lorsch, who in turn brought an economic boom to the region. At the same time, they also motivated many of the faithful to make donations to the monastery. For example, document 33 of the Lorsch Codex, which documents that Count Palatine Ansfrid donated land to the monastery in 866, states: “If we give a part of our fortunes to the shrines of the saints, this will undoubtedly serve us in eternity, as we firmly believe.” His donation also included “vineyards that yielded four *Fuder* (ca. 1000-liter barrels) of wine,” whose “lifelong usufruct” Ansfrid guaranteed in the same document. “In the year 888 after our Lord’s incarnation,” a man named Arnulf presented the Lorsch Abbey with property located between Edigheim and Oppau “including farms, ridges, buildings, serfs, cultivated and fallow lands, fields, meadows, pastures, ponds and brooks, mills, fishponds, vineyards, paths and footbridges and roads

leading in and out” (document 48 of the Lorsch Codex). Shortly after its founding, even Charlemagne donated holdings to the Lorsch Abbey – including, in 773, the village of Heppenheim “with everything that lawfully belongs to this village, namely lands, houses, farm buildings, farmers, serfs, vineyards, forests, fields, meadows, pastures, still and flowing waters...with all its border fences and boundary stones” (document 6 of the Lorsch Codex).

### The Lorsch Codex

Thus, the Lorsch Abbey not only became one of the largest property holders in the region: the Lorsch Codex also documents the important role that viticulture played in agriculture. Over 1000 documents list vineyards that were transferred to the Benedictine abbey during the Middle Ages. Today, the Codex is housed in the Würzburg city archive. What remains of the Lorsch Abbey – in particular, its magnificent King’s Hall – has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1991.

In the northern section of the abbey grounds, an herb garden was planted in 2000 on top of the old monks’ cemetery. In a form of creative monument preservation, it protects what lies hidden below the earth. At the same time, the herb garden puts the area to effective use. Today, it contains raised garden plots whose walls are constructed from the stones of ruined monastery buildings. Within sight of the former abbey church, you can discover chives, horseradish, lovage, savory, thyme, sage, lavender and many other culinary and medicinal herbs. “Harmless” plants grow around the edges of the beds, so that



the garden is safe to visit with small children. The semi-toxic medicinal plants, on the other hand, grow out of the reach of little arms, in the center of the raised plots. The unique atmosphere of this garden, with its flowering medicinal plants and fragrant herbs, is a treat for the eyes and the nose.

Directly across from the King's Hall, visitors to the Lorsch Museum Center can gain insight into the history of the region. The Center contains three separate museums devoted to different cultural and historical themes: the Monastic History Department of the Hessian State Castle and Garden Administration; the Cultural Anthropology Department of the Hessian State Museum in Darmstadt; and the collections of the Town of Lorsch, including the Tobacco Museum.

Museumszentrum Lorsch • Nibelungenstr. 35, Lorsch • Tel. 06251-10 38 20 • [www.kloster-lorsch.de](http://www.kloster-lorsch.de) •

Tours of the King's Hall: March-Oct, Tues-Sun; Nov-Feb, Sat & Sun 11 am, 12, 1, 2, 3 & 4 pm; tour lasts 30-45 min • Entrance fee € 4

## Nearby destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Grube Messel

The first German natural monument to be inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site lies between Darmstadt and Umstadt: the *Grube Messel* (Messel Pit). In the course of oil shale mining which took place beginning in the 1870s, petrified animals and plants were unearthed here, which lived more than 47 million years ago. The fossils include mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and insects. In 2009, paleontologists uncovered "Ida," the

world's oldest completely preserved fossil of a primate. This sensational find from the Messel Pit represents the missing evolutionary link between apes and human beings.

The fossil findings are preserved and displayed in the Senckenberg Museum in Frankfurt. The information center at the Messel Pit helps visitors comprehend scarcely-imaginable connections: At the time of its formation, the Pit was a volcanic crater lake located at the place where Italy lies today. As a result of continental drift, it reached its current location over the course of millions of years.

Rossdorfer Str. 108, Messel •

Tel. 06159-71 75 35 • [www.grube-messel.de](http://www.grube-messel.de) • Info station open daily 11 am-4 pm

### FOOD AND DRINK

#### Goldener Engel

In the heart of Heppenheim, directly adjacent to the historic town hall, this restaurant serves local specialties from the kitchen and the cellar. From the beer garden, visitors have a wonderful view of the refurbished timber-frame houses that line the market square.

Heppenheim, Grosser Markt 2 •

Grosser Markt 2, Heppenheim •

[www.goldener-engel-heppenheim.de](http://www.goldener-engel-heppenheim.de)

• €€

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### Bergstrasse Wine Market, Heppenheim and Vintners' Festival, Bensheim

Two major wine festivals with extensive programs of events are the Bergstrasse Wine Market, which takes place in Heppenheim in the early summer, and the Bergstrasse Vintners' Festival, celebrated in



Magnificent timber-frame houses surround the Heppenheim marketplace. Most outstanding is the City Hall, with its imposing tower.

Bensheim at the beginning of September. The Bergstrasse's regional wine queen is crowned each year, alternately at one of the two festivals.

Early summer and early September •  
 Verein Bergsträsser Weinmarkt •  
 Tel. 062 52-13 11 31 • [www.heppenheim.de](http://www.heppenheim.de)

### Themed wine tastings

The vintners of the Hessische Bergstrasse hold wine tastings throughout the year. Upon request, almost every vintner will organize a guided vineyard walk – including wine tasting and snacks, if desired. Culinary wine tastings are generally offered in connection with the *Bergsträsser Weinfrühling* or *Weinherbst* (spring and fall festivals); musical and literary wine tastings are available all year round. A complete schedule can be found in the event

calendar which is issued each year in conjunction with the *Bergsträsser Weinfrühling*, or on the Internet. Informational brochures are also available upon request (see below).

– Dates: For calendar of events, visit [www.bergstraesser-wein.de](http://www.bergstraesser-wein.de)

– Informational brochures available from the Weinbauverband Hessische Bergstrasse e.V. (► Information, p. 57)

### SERVICE

#### INFORMATION

Weinbauverband Hessische Bergstrasse e.V. • Kettelerstr. 29, Heppenheim • Tel. 06252-756 54 • [www.bergstraesser-wein.de](http://www.bergstraesser-wein.de)



## In Focus

**Generation Riesling** Young and innovative representing fruity, delicate and refreshing wines: the Generation Riesling.

“Riesling rocks,” “Born to make wine,” “Fresh, wild and surprising,” “Young, spontaneous and lively,” “Good, better, Riesling” – these are just a few of the slogans used by the representatives of Generation Riesling. The “young individualists” of the German wine scene have made it their goal to present Riesling and other outstanding German wine varieties at events in Germany and throughout the world. The German Wine Institute (DWI) in Mainz initiated the organization in 2006 with a kick-off event in London. Its aim was to provide the young generation of vintners with a national and international platform, independent of existing groups. The members of

Generation Riesling are all 35 years old or younger, excellently trained and internationally oriented. They represent the young generation of leaders in the German wine industry, be they vintners in family-owned estates, managing directors in wine growers’ cooperatives or cellar masters in wineries.

### The “new kids” on the German wine scene

The group’s many and varied activities include presentations at international wine trade fairs, such as “ProWein” in Düsseldorf or the London Wine Fair. The young vintners have also introduced their wines to students at the

◀ Innovative and highly motivated: Say hello to Generation Riesling.

renowned universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Back home in Germany, wine tastings have been held in beach clubs and Riesling Lounges in Cologne and Hamburg. At the international trade fair “Forum Vini” in Munich in November 2010, 20 young vintners from the Generation Riesling presented this multifaceted leading grape variety for the first time at a shared exhibition booth with the German Wine Institute. All the members of the initiative are eager to make appearances together as ambassadors for modern, dynamic, high-quality wine production in Germany – without feeling the need to renounce their individuality in the process.

The grape variety which gave the initiative its name is especially popular at present. With its racy acidity, intense bouquet, and at times, mineral notes, Riesling is considered the “king of the white wines.” It is full of character without seeming heavy; it embodies all the special characteristics of its terroir like almost no other grape variety.

## Riesling rules

Riesling grapes place high demands on vineyard sites, and although they ripen very late they are less susceptible to frost than varieties that ripen earlier.

Rieslings grown in cool climates yield the most impressive wines. This is an important factor that contributes to the unique, inimitable character of German Riesling wines.

This explains why this lively wine with its pronounced acidity was chosen to lend its name to Generation Riesling.

However, despite the name, the initiative also includes vintners who specialize in Silvaner, Lemberger, Pinots and other grape varieties.

## People and wines with character

This open-minded and steadily-growing group met for the first time in the summer of 2009 at a workshop in Mainz, inspiring the entire wine industry with the energy of 80 young vintners. In addition to new ideas and marketing concepts for the future, the workshop gave rise to the website [www.generation-riesling.de](http://www.generation-riesling.de). Today, around 160 members have placed their profiles, wines and news on this online portal. Altogether, however, more than 300 representatives from every wine-growing region are registered with Generation Riesling – and the interest in participating continues to grow. The concept formulated by the German Wine Institute – through which Generation Riesling will spark a movement that involves as many people as possible – seems to be working. Generation Riesling is helping to present the rest of the world with a young and modern image of German wines.

The young vintners of Generation Riesling are also convinced that their initiative will be a success. And let’s be honest: What can go wrong when your mottos include “Wine builds bridges,” and “Wine drinkers are nice people?”

Deutsches Weininstitut • Gutenbergpl. 3-5, Mainz • Tel. 06131-28 29 29 • [www.deutscheweine.de](http://www.deutscheweine.de), [www.generation-riesling.de](http://www.generation-riesling.de)



**The Mittelrhein** Romantic castles above rugged rock faces and steep vineyard slopes characterize the riverbank regions of the Mittelrhein. Here, wine growers almost need crampons to work the vineyards.

◀ The Marksburg is the only intact hill-top castle in the Mittelrhein region.

The Mittelrhein wine-growing region covers a section along the Rhine River which extends for about 120 km (75 miles) between Bingen and Bonn. The river winds its way through the landscape, past vine-covered slopes, castles, fortresses and the legend-shrouded Loreley Rock. It is flanked by the low mountain ranges of the Eifel and Westerwald to the north and the Hunsrück and Taunus to the south. The mostly steep, terraced vineyards often hang like swallows' nests on the valley walls. Its rocky soil is protected from the wind and heats up quickly in the sunshine.

## From Bingen to Bonn

The Upper Middle Rhine Valley region between Bingen and Koblenz was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002. Particularly on the west side of the Rhine, it is planted with grapevines. On the Lower Middle Rhine between Koblenz and the Siebengebirge, most of the vineyards lie to the east of the Rhine. In terms of wine geography, the region consists of two districts: The villages in the Rhineland-Palatinate are part of the Loreley district – east of the Rhine from Kaub to Unkel and west of the river from Bingen to Koblenz – while the Siebengebirge district encompasses the North Rhine-Westphalian wine-growing communities of Königswinter, Oberdollendorf and Rhöndorf. The influx of mild air from the south creates an ideal climate for grape cultivation. Riesling grapevines, in particular, benefit from the moderate winters with infrequent frosts, the early start of spring and a long-last-

ing vegetation period which extends into the late autumn. Moderately hot summers with sufficient precipitation produce excellent vintages, which include sweet *Auslese* wines from selected, very ripe bunches.

## Rheinischer Riesling

Slate is the characteristic soil found between Bingen and Koblenz. Hunsrück slate, dark slate, loam, or loess-loam with slate debris provide minerals and acidity – ideal for the Riesling grapes which produce wine “typical of the Rhineland”: with mineral notes, fine aroma and racy acidity. North of Koblenz, volcanic stones such as pumice, tuff and loess lend a robust quality to the wines.

Classic grape varieties play a leading role on the approximately 460 hectares of vineyards here in Germany's second-smallest wine region. Accounting for over 70 % of the cultivated lands, Riesling is clearly dominant here. The wealth of nuances in the aromas of this late-ripening varietal are unparalleled and made Rhine wines world famous. Nowadays, many wineries further ferment a portion of their Riesling harvest to produce varietal sparkling wine or *Winzersekt*. Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris) are also planted here. Of the red varieties grown in the region, Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and Dornfelder predominate.

## 13 Bopparder Hamm: the wine loop on the Rhine

► Fold-out map, D 14

Close to Boppard lies not only the largest loop of the Rhine River, but also the largest contiguous vineyard area in the Mittelrhein: the Bop-

parder Hamm. Whether the name stems from the Latin word for “hook” or “crook” (*hamus*) or from



Bacharach’s landmark, the Wernerkapelle (► p. 63), was never completed.

the Rhineland term for a riverbank (*Hamm*) is uncertain. Nevertheless, the name “Bopparder Hamm” refers both to the river loop and to the vineyard sites on the steep left banks of the Rhine.

### Aromas of apple and mint

The vineyard slopes cover an area of 75 ha (185 acres) which extends for about 5 km (3.1-miles). The south-facing slopes have an ideal angle of inclination toward the sun; the surface of the Rhine serves as a heat reservoir; and the slate soil is especially well suited for producing excellent Riesling wines with fine mineral notes and aromas of apple, mint and various spices. Located in the

large collective site Gedeonseck, the Bopparder Hamm includes the vineyards Engelstein, Ohlenberg, Feuerlay, Mandelstein, Weingrube, Fässerlay and Elfenlay. Even today, the steep sites require a great deal of manual labor from the 16 full-time vintners who cultivate the vineyards of the Bopparder Hamm. They produce approximately 600,000 liters of wine per year – almost exclusively Riesling. With its characteristic minerality and racy acidity, it is by far the most commonly cultivated grape variety in the Mittelrhein.

### Strolling through the vineyards

A walk through the vineyards of the Rhine loop is an especially good way to experience the area’s impressive cultural landscape. Every year, on the last Sunday in April, Boppard’s wine estates organize a hike through the vineyards of the Bopparder Hamm, during which participants can sample wines from the sites that they visit. Young chefs from the region make the program complete with their culinary delicacies. A free shuttle bus is available from the Boppard railway station; busses leave every 15 minutes between 10 am and 7 pm. If you prefer to arrive by car, parking is available on the B9 federal highway and in the *Peternacher Tal*, the side valley on the northern outskirts of town.

For those who are not afraid of heights, the Mittelrhein *Klettersteig* (climbing path) offers an athletic challenge. Constructed in cooperation with the German Alpine Club, it leads climbers up the steep rock faces above Boppard by means of eleven climbing passages with ten ladders, 130 iron footholds and around 180

m (558 ft) of wire rope. Solid hiking shoes are required for this challenging tour; children and inexperienced climbers must be accompanied by a professional guide. The climb takes two to three hours, during which participants have a spectacular view of the Bopparder Hamm below.

– Climbing equipment rental at the Aral service station • Koblenzer Strasse, Boppard • Tel. 06742-24 47 • Rental fee € 5

– Additional information: Tourist-Info Boppard • Marktplatz (Altes Rathaus) • Tel. 06742-38 88 • [www.boppard.de](http://www.boppard.de), [www.mittelrhein-weinfuehrer.de/Boppard.html](http://www.mittelrhein-weinfuehrer.de/Boppard.html), [www.klettersteig.de](http://www.klettersteig.de)

#### 14 **Bacharach: the center of Rhine Romanticism**

► **Fold-out map, D 14/15**

Bacharach is located on the western banks of the Middle Rhine, 15 km (9.3 miles) to the northwest of Bingen. During the Middle Ages, the city was an important stockyard and transshipment point for transport on the Rhine. Since the Binger Riff – a rocky ridge at the bottleneck of the Rhine leading into the Rhenish Slate Mountains – made freight transport on the river impossible except at flood stage, barges had to be unloaded at this point. Their cargo, which included many barrels of wine from the southern wine-growing regions, were then transported overland or on small boats with minimal draft. It was only at Bacharach that transport on large trading vessels could be continued. In addition to wines from the Mittelrhein, wines from the Rheingau and Rheinhessen, Pfalz, Baden and Alsace were also loaded onto ships here and marketed from that point on under the

name “Bacharacher.” In this way, the name became a synonym for wine throughout the world.

Beginning in the 17th century, the Binger Riff was blasted open, making the Middle Rhine steadily more navigable. With the creation of the *Binger Loch* (Bingen hole), as the passage was known from then on, Bacharach lost its importance as a reloading point for wine. Signs of the city’s former prosperity are still evident in the Old Town, with its historic marketplace and surrounding timber-frame houses – not least the cozy, inviting wine restaurant *Altes Haus* (Old House) dating from 1368. The city’s medieval fortifications with their imposing gates – as well as Stahleck Castle, which stands high above the Rhine – contribute to the picturesque landscape which strongly influenced Rhine romanticism.

#### **The Loreley Rock**

The author Clemens Brentano, one of the most important representatives of German romanticism, began his famous poem about the Loreley with the words “Near Bacharach on the Rhine...” Writers, painters and musicians – among them Lord Byron, Heinrich Heine, Victor Hugo and William Turner – all praised the beauty of the Mittelrhein landscape. Today, tourists and wine lovers from all over the world come to Bacharach and enjoy the outstanding wines from the local vineyards Hahn, Posten, Wolfshöhle, Mathias Weingarten, Kloster Fürstental and the island site Heylesen Werth.

– Rhein-Nahe Touristik • Oberstr. 45, Bacharach • Tel. 06743-91 93 03 •

[www.rhein-nahe-touristik.de](http://www.rhein-nahe-touristik.de)

– For further information, see:



## MERIAN-Tip

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**THE "CASTLE OF A YEAR"**

With 365 windows, 52 doors and twelve towers, Arenfels Castle, located amid the vineyards above Bad Hönningen, is often called the "Castle of a Year" due to its numerical parallels to the calendar year. Originally built in the 13th century, the complex acquired its current appearance in the mid-19th century, when Ernst Friedrich Zwirner, master builder of the Cologne Cathedral, renovated the castle in neo-Gothic style. Tours of the castle interior, including the knights' hall and castle chapel, are available by advance reservation. In good weather, you can enjoy coffee and cake in the garden café, with a magnificent view which extends as far as the Lower Middle Rhine valley. If you wish, you can combine your visit with a hike along a section of the Rheinsteig. This hiking route, which follows the Middle Rhine on its eastern side from Bonn to Wiesbaden, leads directly past Arenfels Castle. Tourist Information • Neustr. 2a, Bad Hönningen • Tel. 02635-22 73 • [www.bad-hoenningen.de](http://www.bad-hoenningen.de)

[www.mittelrhein-wein.com](http://www.mittelrhein-wein.com),  
[www.welterbe-mittelrheintal.de](http://www.welterbe-mittelrheintal.de),  
[www.regionalgeschichte.net](http://www.regionalgeschichte.net),  
[www.rheinreise.de](http://www.rheinreise.de)

**Nearby destinations****SIGHTS****Koblenz**

The largest city in the Mittelrhein region is located at the confluence of the Mosel and Rhine Rivers. With its

many cultural landmarks, it is the northern gateway to the UNESCO World Heritage site Upper Middle Rhine Valley. With castles and palaces, old patrician houses, romantic old streets, squares and parks, there are a vast number of interesting sites to visit here. From the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, visitors have an excellent view of Koblenz and the mouth of the Mosel at the *Deutsches Eck* (German corner). Koblenz owes its reputation as a wine city to the approximately half a million grapevines which grow on the slopes of the Rhine and Mosel. At Koblenz's *Weindorf* (wine village) you can even find a vineyard right in the center of the city: the Schnorbach Brückstück.

– Tourist Information: Main Railway Station • Bahnhofpl. 17, Koblenz • Tel. 0261-313 04

– Tourist Information: Rathaus (City Hall) • Jesuitenpl. 2, Koblenz • Tel. 0261-13 09 20 • [www.koblenz-touristik.de](http://www.koblenz-touristik.de)

**The Loreley**

On the right side of the Rhine, near St. Goarshausen, stands the legendary Loreley. According to folklore, a siren once sat on this rock, whose beauty proved to be fatal for many boatmen on the Rhine. When the Loreley sang and combed her long golden hair, many mariners became so distracted that they sailed off course and smashed their boats against the rock. Extremely narrow, very deep and filled with strong currents, the Loreley passage was, in fact, very dangerous in the past. Thanks to blasting in the 1930s, the legendary rock is no longer as terrifying as it once was, but its allure remains. The visitors' center on the Loreley plateau

has interesting, informative presentations on not only the mythology, but also the natural and cultural landscape of the Upper Middle Rhine.

– Loreley Visitors' Center • Auf der Loreley, St. Goarshausen • Tel. 06771-59 90 93 • March-Oct, open daily 10 am-5 pm

– Touristikgemeinschaft Loreley-Burgenstr. • Bahnhofstr. 8, St. Goarshausen • Tel. 06771-91 00 • [www.loreley-touristik.de](http://www.loreley-touristik.de)

### Oberwesel

With its almost completely intact city fortification, the wine-growing town of Oberwesel is a magnet for tourists in the Mittelrhein. Visitors can walk along the top of portions of the town walls, and their 16 preserved towers are an impressive example of medieval fortress architecture. Even the imposing western tower of St. Martin's church was once part of the de-

fensive structure. The marketplace is lined with colorfully restored timber-frame houses, where wine taverns and restaurants serve regional specialties. A tour on top of the city wall is rewarding not least for the wonderful views it offers of the Rhine and its sloping, vine-covered banks.

Tourist Information • Rathausstr. 3, Oberwesel • Tel. 06744-71 06 24 • [www.oberwesel.de](http://www.oberwesel.de)

### MUSEUM

#### Arp-Museum, Remagen

The meticulously restored Rolands-eck railway station near Remagen opened its doors in 2004 in its new function. It has become a venue for cultural exchange which hosts concerts, conventions and changing exhibitions. From the neo-classical station, a tunnel leads to the new structure designed by New York star architect Richard Meier. Here, on the

From May to September, fireworks along the Middle Rhine between Bingen and Bonn bathe the river in flames (► p. 66).



Rhine heights above the Rolandseck Station, the Arp Museum displays works by the artist Hans Arp and his wife, Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

Landesstiftung Arp Museum Bahnhof Rolandseck • Hans-Arp-Allee 1, Remagen • Tel. 02228-94 25 63 • www.arpmuseum.org • Open Tues-Sun 11 am-6 pm • Entrance fee € 8

### WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

#### The Rheinsteig and the Rhine Castle Trail

The Rheinsteig, on the east side of the Rhine, promises “hiking at a high level”; on the western side, the *Rheinburgenweg* (Rhine Castle Trail) leads hikers through the breathtaking landscape of the Mittelrhein with its numerous lookout points, palaces and castles.

Romantischer Rhein Tourismus • St. Goarshausen, Loreley-Besucherzentrum • Tel. 0 67 71/95 93 80 • www.rheinsteig.de, www.rheinburgenweg.com

### FOOD AND DRINK

#### Burghotel Auf Schönburg

High above Oberwesel, with a spectacular view of the Rhine Valley, stands the 1000-year-old Schönburg castle with its romantic Burghotel. The sophisticated restaurant serves gourmet menus along with typical regional wines.

Oberwesel • Tel. 06744-939 30 • www.burghotel-schoenburg.de • Open Tues-Sun noon-2 pm and 6:30-9 pm • €€€

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### Rhine in Flames

The huge fireworks display, *Rhein in Flammen* (Rhine in Flames), is undoubtedly one of the highlights

among the events held in the Mittelrhein. It takes place every year in several stages: between Linz and Bonn on the first Saturday in May; between Trechtingshausen, Bingen and Rudesheim on the first Saturday in July; between Spay, Braubach and Koblenz on the second Saturday in August; in Oberwesel on the second Saturday in September; and between St. Goar and St. Goarshausen on the third Saturday in September. In all, it's an impressive display of the approximately 120-km (75-miles) long stretch of the Rhine between Bingen and Bonn, the romantic Middle Rhine Valley, with its castles and fortresses. Each fireworks show lasts one hour and may be viewed from onboard a ship or from the riverbank. The auxiliary program on the Rhine promenades begins in the afternoon.

– Rheinland-Pfalz Tourismus • Koblenz, Löhrrstr. 103-105 • Tel. 0261-91 52 00  
– Romantic Rhine Tourism • Loreley Besucherzentrum, St. Goarshausen • Tel. 06771-95 93 80 • www.rhein-in-flammen.com

#### Wine festivals

Countless festivals are celebrated in the Mittelrhein region throughout the year. Always on hand is the local wine. The best-known events include the Wine Market in Oberwesel and the Mittelrhein Wine Forum. For a current schedule, see the event calendar at [www.welterbemittelrheintal.de](http://www.welterbemittelrheintal.de).

### SERVICE

#### INFORMATION

Mittelrhein-Wein e. V. • Am Hafen 2, St. Goar • Tel. 06741-77 12 • [www.mittelrhein-wein.com](http://www.mittelrhein-wein.com)

Riesling, pinot noir & Co.: [www.germany.travel](http://www.germany.travel)

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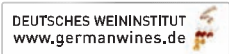
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**The Mosel** Twisting and turning, the scenic Mosel River winds its way through Germany's oldest wine-growing region. The steep, often terraced vineyards call for sure-footed vintners who are not afraid of heights.

◀ The steep vineyard slopes overlooking Bremm (▶ p. 74) offer a splendid view of the Mosel river loop.

Viticulture was practiced on the Mosel as early as 2000 years ago. In the sheltered areas of the Rhenish Slate Mountains, both Celts and Romans found suitable conditions for the cultivation of grapevines. Numerous archeological discoveries bear witness to the important role that wine played for the Roman settlers and soldiers: They include several pressing facilities and reliefs like that of the Neumagen Wine Ship – a rowing vessel loaded with large wine casks. It once decorated the grave of a wine merchant and marked Neumagen-Dhron, the village where it was found, as the oldest wine-growing community in Germany.

## The Mosel, Saar and Ruwer valleys

The region which was known until August 2007 as “Mosel-Saar-Ruwer” extends between the Hunsrück and Eifel mountains, along the Mosel from Perl to Koblenz; on the Saar from Serrig to its mouth at the Mosel near Konz; and on the Ruwer from Riveris until it flows into the Mosel near Trier-Ruwer. Of the 9000 ha (22,239 acres) of cultivated vineyards, around 720 ha (1779 acres) are located along the Saar and around 190 on the Ruwer. The entire growing region is subdivided into six districts: “Moseltor” in the Saarland; “Obermosel” between Palzem and Igel; “Saar” from Serrig to Konz; “Ruwertal” from Waldrach to Trier-Ruwer; “Bernkastel” between Trier and Briedel; and “Burg Cochem” from Zell to Koblenz.

The region’s sheltered sites are among the warmest climate zones in Germany. The sun’s rays strike almost perpendicularly to the steep cliffs. Millions of years ago, the seabed of the Panthalassic Ocean lay where the grapevines grow today – as evidenced by the shell-limestone which predominates on the Upper Mosel, along with dolomite, keuper and marl. On the steep slopes of the Saar, Ruwer and Middle Mosel, the soil consists mainly of Devonian slate; on the Lower Mosel, it is primarily quartzitic and chalky sandstone combined with slate.

The slate soils provide ideal conditions for Riesling, which puts down deep roots and draws richly on the minerals in the barren subsoil. With 60 % of the vineyard area, it is the most frequently cultivated grape variety in the region. In addition, an old and now rare white variety is still grown on the Upper Mosel: Elbing. With its lively, pronounced acidity, it is well-suited for *Sekt* (sparkling wine) production. Other important white varieties include Müller-Thurgau, Kerner, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris). Among red varieties – which make up 10 % of the region’s wines – Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Dornfelder and Regent are the most commonly grown.

## 2000 years of wine-growing tradition

The Mosel, Saar and Ruwer rivers have cut deep into the Rhenish Slate Mountains. Nowhere else are the vineyard slopes as steep as those found here – particularly on the Lower Mosel in the Burg Cochem district. Here, terraced cultivation is often the



The Neumagen Wine Ship (shown here: a true-to-scale copy), was created around 220 CE for the gravesite of a Roman wine merchant.

only option, and why the area is known as the *Terrassenmosel*. For vintners, this means hard work, sometimes under very difficult conditions. Anyone who travels along one of the hiking trails or climbing paths on these steep slopes will get an idea of the dangers involved in working in the vineyards here. Nevertheless, these dramatic inclines provide a marvelous view of the impressive cultural landscape that the Mosel has created along its twisting and turning path.

### 15 The Roman wine presses of Piesport ▶ [Fold-out map, C 15](#)

The ancient press houses which have been preserved in this region provide proof that the Romans once trod upon Mosel grapes with their feet. In the process of vineyard consolidation on the Mosel loop near Piesport in 1985-86, workers uncovered the largest

Roman wine press north of the Alps. The 4th century structure, which is 44 m (144 ft) long and 20 m (66 ft) wide, is located at the foot of the famous steep site “Piesporter Goldtröpfchen.” In addition to cellar rooms, it includes a double press complex with two mash basins, two quarter-circular pressing basins and two must basins. Above the pressing basin, a spindle wine press with a suspended weight has been reconstructed, making the equipment fully functional even today. In one of the cellar rooms to the west of the pressing station, archeologists also uncovered a *funarium* – a smoking chamber in which wine could be prematurely aged. Due to the unusually large size of the complex, it is estimated that up to 130 workers once labored here, producing around 60,000 liters of wine. The vineyards associated with

the press house would have covered about 60 ha (148 acres). It is possible that the Piesport press was a government facility which produced wine for the prefecture in Trier, or even for the imperial court.

Piesport's large Roman press facility is put into operation every year during the Roman Wine Press Festival which takes place here at the beginning of October. For this occasion, workers – all dressed in traditional costumes – tread on the grapes in the large mash basin and use the spindle press to process them further. When the massive beam press, hung with a 50 kg (110 lb) stone, sinks into the mash-filled pressing basket, the grape juice flows out into collecting tanks and can be filled into amphorae.

### An abundance of artifacts

In 1992, a second Roman press was discovered in Piesport. It dates from the 2nd century, and at 6 x 15 m (20 x 40 ft), it is significantly smaller and has only four basins. In Erden, Brauneberg and Maring-Novian, ancient pressing facilities have also been preserved for posterity. The Erden press was constructed in the 3rd century and rebuilt several times up until the 7th century. Today, its seven rooms are used to host wine tastings, courses in Roman cooking and other events.

The Roman press structures found along the Mosel testify to a long tradition of grape processing. It is thought that even the Celts already cultivated grapes in the sheltered valley areas between the Hunsrück and the Eifel. The Romans certainly produced wine here on a large scale. This makes the Mosel region the oldest wine-growing area in Germany.

Tourist Information • Heinrich-Schmitt-Pl. 1, Piesport • Tel. 06507-2027 • [www.piesport.de](http://www.piesport.de)

### 16 Wine Estate of the Vereinigten Hospitien, Trier

► Fold-out map, B 15

Germany's oldest wine cellar is located underneath the St. Irminen Retirement and Nursing Home in the park of the *Vereinigten Hospitien* (united hospices and geriatric care centers) in Trier. On the site where a magnificent Baroque building stands today, Emperor Constantine ordered the building of two gigantic warehouses – or *horrea* – in 330 CE. These were used to store the wine which was delivered from the Roman wine estates along the Mosel. Each of the hall-like buildings was 70 m (230 ft) long and 20 m (66 ft) wide. Their 8 meter-high walls, constructed of limestone ashlars interspersed with bricks, have been preserved; they are interspersed with monumental arcatures with small, narrow windows.

### Wine tasting in Germany's oldest wine cellar

The cultural debris of the centuries has sunk what was once the ground floor of the *horreum* down to cellar level. The original Roman brick floor is still visible in the entrance area. Today, guests can take part in wine tastings held in the oldest section of the wine cellar. The Roman Hall on the level above was once also part of the Roman warehouses. With their restored Roman exposed masonry, the beautiful rooms provide a stylish setting for concerts, events and training sessions at the Vereinigten Hospitien.



The Vereinigten Hospitien Foundation was formed in 1804 under a decree from Napoleon, who ordered the establishment of a hospital with 100 beds for wounded soldiers and 50 beds for needy patients from the city of Trier. To this end, those hospitals which had previously been run by religious orders were merged together and housed in the former Benedictine abbey of St. Irminen. The abbey had been built in the Middle Ages, over the ruins of the Roman warehouses. The facilities which were united at St. Irminen included the St. Jacob's Hospital, the St. Elisabeth Hospital of St. Maximin's Abbey, the St. Nicholas Hospital of St. Matthias's Abbey, the St. Nicholas Hospital at the monastery of St. Simeon, two orphanages, a prison workhouse and two lepers' houses or infirmaries.

### Organic farming

The Vereinigten Hospitien's assets stem from the pensions, rights, commodities and property of the different care facilities. This includes the wine estate of the Vereinigten Hospitien, with its vineyards on the Mosel and the Saar. Ninety percent of the 25 ha (62 acres) of vineyard lands are devoted to Riesling; the remaining 10 % are planted with Grauburgunder, Weissburgunder and Spätburgunder. The vineyards are cultivated in keeping with organic farming guidelines. These include natural green cover between the vine rows, which is fertilized only with straw and manure when necessary. In the fall, the grapes are harvested by hand and sorted according to ripeness. However, all of this labor-intensive, selective processing is rewarded in the form of highest quality wines.

Weingut der Vereinigten Hospitien •  
Krahnenufer 19, Trier • Tel. 0651-945  
12 10 • www.weingut.  
vereinigtehospitien.de

### 17 Vineyard sundials on the Mosel ▶ Fold-out map, C 15

Time does not stand still on the steep southern slopes of the Mosel. The sundials (*Sonnenuhren*) that can be found here in the midst of the vineyards make sure of that. In Wehlen, to the north of the Mosel river loop from Bernkastel-Kues, an entire village is devoted to sundials. It all started with one sundial in the vineyards: In 1842, Jodocus Prüm, the son of a wealthy wine-growing family from Wehlen, had an enormous sundial built on the steep "Lammerterlay" vineyard slope. In the middle of a slate cliff, the large black numerals on a whitewashed wall were intended to keep the vintners working on the slopes informed of the time, from 8 am to 6 pm in the evening.

### Famous through time

The Wehlen sundial was soon so well-known that the name of the *Lammerterlay* site was changed to *Wehlener Sonnenuhr* (Wehlen Sundial). Today, sundials can be found scattered throughout the entire wine-growing community – over 50 in all. These include horizontal sundials on wine presses and casks, vertical sundials on building façades and equatorial sundials, whose spherically domed structure is mounted on a plinth.

In the neighboring village of Zeltlingen, slightly downstream, another sundial projects from the steep southwestern slope high above the banks of the Mosel. Its Arabic nu-

merals on a white background let people read the time from 7 am to 6 pm when the sun shines brightly. It is thought to be the largest sundial in any German vineyard, and serves as a proud landmark of the Mosel wine-growing community of Zeltingen.

Just a few kilometers upstream, yet another sundial can be found amid the vineyards across from Brauneberg – this time with Roman numerals on a white background. It is located on a southern slope and gives the vineyard site its name: Juffer Sonnenuhr. In August 1998, a temperature of 41.2 °C (106.2 °F) was measured on this blue-gray Devonian slate slope with its exceptional microclimate – one of the highest daytime temperatures ever recorded in Germany. One unusual feature of the Brauneberg sundial is the fact that it can be adjusted from daylight to standard time.

### Hundreds of sundials

The sundial in the vineyards of Pommern an der Mosel is one of the oldest examples. Nearly 400 years ago, the abbot of the Himmerod Cistercian Abbey in the Eifel Mountains ordered the construction of a sundial in the monastery-owned vineyards near Pommern. It has stood on the steep slope, high above the banks of the Mosel, since 1620. The rectangular face, topped with a flat, curving Renaissance gable, tells the time in Roman numerals from 8 am to 5 pm – provided, that is, that the sun is shining. Still more sundials can be found in Neumagen and Maring: In total, there are several hundred in the Mosel region.

The vineyard sundials not only tell the time; they also mark the prime



The sundial on the Mosel river loop near Ürzig is visible from far away.

locations where the sunbathed vines produce top-quality wines. Thus, the location names – “Wehlener Sonnenuhr,” “Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr,” or “Zeltinger Sonnenuhr” – can also be relied on to identify first-class Rieslings of national and international standing.

Touristik Wehlen, Wein und Wiesen e. V. • Uferallee 15, Bernkastel-Wehlen • Tel. 06531-91 58 50 • [www.wehlen.de](http://www.wehlen.de)

### 18 Traben-Trarbach

► Fold-out map, C 15

Trarbach lies on the right bank of the Mosel, in the foothills of the Hunsrück Mountains. On the opposite shore, Traben stretches over the peninsula of the Mosel loop. In 1904, the two communities merged to form the twin town of Traben-Trar-

bach, connected by the river bridge, which was built at the end of the 19th century by the Berlin architect Bruno Möhring. This iron structure was the first roadway over the Mosel between Bernkastel and Koblenz; however, it was destroyed in 1945, in the final days of World War II. Today, the gateway on the Trarbach side is all that remains of the old bridge. Flanked by two towers, the gate stands as a landmark of Traben-Trarbach. Its neo-Gothic stylistic elements make it an interesting example of architectural Historicism.

Around 1900, this small double town on the Mosel was one of the largest reloading points in the European wine trade, second only to Bordeaux. From here, wine was exported throughout the world. The flourishing wine trade – especially the great demand for Riesling wines – led to the founding of numerous businesses around this time. In the second half of the 19th century, Traben-Trarbach was home to over 100 firms that earned their money in the wine trade. In order to create sufficient storage space, cellars were built underneath large areas of the town center. On a tour through the over 100 m-long (328 ft) tunnels and sometimes multistoried vaults, visitors may easily encounter a cellar directly on the banks of the Mosel; one might emerge from the underground labyrinth into the garden of a vintner's estate.

The luxurious mansions, winery buildings and hotels that were built on both sides of the Mosel around the turn of the 20th century bear witness to the prosperity of the vintners and wine merchants. On a stroll through Traben-Trarbach, visitors

encounter magnificent examples of upper middle class residential life at every turn. In 1904, the wine merchant and winery owner Adolph Huesgen commissioned the building of an elegant Art Nouveau mansion near the Traben railway station, based on plans by the Berlin architect Bruno Möhring. At the western end of Traben's riverbank promenade stands another upper-class residence designed by Möhring: Villa Breucker, which was built in 1905 for the wine merchant Gustav Breucker.

### In the shape of a *Sekt* bottle

One of the town's most famous buildings is the Hotel Bellevue in Traben. This structure, built by Bruno Möhring in 1903, is remarkable for its turret, built in the shape of a *Sekt* (sparkling wine) bottle. Under its former name, "Hotel Clauss-Feist," the house was once the scene of sumptuous Belle Époque celebrations. A large portion of its Art Nouveau décor has been preserved; on the building's façade, markers commemorate the years of catastrophic floods.

Tourist-Info • Traben-Trarbach, Am Bahnhof 5 • Tel. 0 65 41/8 39 80 • [www.traben-trarbach.de](http://www.traben-trarbach.de)

### 19 The Bremmer Calmont

► Fold-out map, C 14

Located on the Lower Mosel is one of the steepest (if not the steepest) single vineyard sites of Europe: the Calmont, between Bremm and Ediger-Eller. The steep slope, which measures up to 370 m (1214 ft) high with gradients of around 65°, provides ideal conditions for the Riesling grapes that grow here. The sun's rays strike almost perpendicularly to the soil, which consists of weathered

slate, quartzite and greywacke. It stores the heat for long periods and nourishes the vine roots with minerals. This unique terroir makes the Bremmer Calmont one of the prime sites on the Terrassenmosel.

For vintners, cultivating these vineyards means extremely hard labor. Despite the installation of a mono-rack railway in the 1990s – which has brought a small degree of technological advancement to these rugged precipices – harvest workers must transport the majority of the grapes down the steep cliff to the harvest wagon on foot. In recent years, in particular, the portion of productive vineyards has steadily declined. Out of a total of 22 ha (54 acres), only about 14 are now being cultivated.

The name “Calmont” probably derives from the Roman term *calidus mons*, meaning “warm mountain.” Its long tradition of viticulture is even documented in writing: “All around

## MERIAN-Tip

6

### TRIER

Numerous ancient buildings shape the face of Trier, once the residential city of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great. They include the Imperial Baths, the Basilica of Constantine, the *Porta Nigra* and the Amphitheater. In 1986, UNESCO added these structures, as well as the Cathedral and the Liebfrauenkirche (Church of Our Lady), to its list of World Heritage Sites.

Tourist Information • An der Porta Nigra, Trier • Tel. 0651-97 80 80 • [www.trier.de](http://www.trier.de)

you can see the heights clothed in verdant vines, [...] the grapevine...in densely planted rows in the slate soil. [...] Where leafy vineyards soar to the bare mountaintops, and a lush,

Hikers who make the climb to the ruins of the Grevenburg will be rewarded with a glorious view of Traben-Trarbach (► p. 73) and the Mosel river loop.





Looking like something out of a fairy tale, Eltz Castle (► p. 76), one of the most romantic and best-preserved castles in Germany, stands on a rock.

shady green covers the dry boulders: Here the vintner gathers the crop of colored grapes; he hangs on the cliff, plucking the fruit..." This is how Venantius Fortunatus, the last poet of Late Antiquity, described the Calmont vineyards in 558, as he traveled along the Mosel.

Since 2002, a *Klettersteig* (climbing path) leads between Bremm and Eller, over cliffs and stony, slate slopes and through vineyards. Sure-footed visitors who are not afraid of heights will be rewarded with a

breathtaking view of the Mosel river loop and across from it, the ruins of Stuben Abbey on the Mosel peninsula near Bremm.

Tourist-Info • Bremm an der Mosel,  
Moselstr. 27 • Tel. 0 26 75/3 70 •  
[www.bremm-mosel.de](http://www.bremm-mosel.de),  
[www.bremmer-calmont.de](http://www.bremmer-calmont.de)

## Nearby Destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Eltz Castle

Like a castle out of a storybook, Burg Eltz stands in a picturesque location

in the valley of the Elzbach River, a western tributary of the Mosel. Under the ownership of the Eltz family for 800 years, today it is open to visitors. A tour lets guests vividly imagine how the knights and ladies once lived here.

Gräflich Eltz'sche Kastellanei, Burg Eltz • Münstermaifeld • Tel. 02672-95 05 00 • [www.burg-eltz.de](http://www.burg-eltz.de) • April-Oct, open daily 9:30 am-5:30 pm • Entrance fee € 8

### Bicycle tours

Along the Mosel, Saar and Ruwer, you can find the right terrain for every cyclist. The riverside paths, which follow along the riverbanks with virtually no inclines, are ideal for families and seniors. More athletic bikers can choose one of the trekking or mountain bike trails in the steep vineyard sites or through the forests. The Mosel Bicycle Trail leads from Metz, in the Lorraine region, to the Deutsches Eck in Koblenz.

The Saar Bicycle Trail begins at the French border near Saargemünd and continues downriver to Konz. The Ruwer-Hochwald Bicycle Trail runs from Hermeskeil to the Ruwer's mouth at Trier.

– Mosellandtouristik • Kordelweg 1, Bernkastel-Kues • Tel. 06531-973 30 • [www.mosellandtouristik.de](http://www.mosellandtouristik.de)

– Tourismus Zentrale Saarland • Franz-Josef-Röder-Str. 17, Saarbrücken • Tel. 0681-92 72 00 • [www.tourismus.saarland.de](http://www.tourismus.saarland.de)

– ADFC Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club • Grünenstr. 120, Bremen • Tel. 0421-34 62 90 • [www.adfc.de](http://www.adfc.de)

## MUSEUMS

### The Rhineland State Museum, the Mosel Wine Museum and the German Museum of Precious Stones

Among the most important regional museums are the Rhineland State Museum in Trier, which houses the original Neumagen Wine Ship, the Mosel Wine Museum in Bernkastel-Kues, and the German Museum of Precious Stones in Idar-Oberstein.

– Rheinisches Landesmuseum • Weimarer Allee 1, Trier • Tel. 0651-977 40 • [www.landmuseum-trier.de](http://www.landmuseum-trier.de)

Open Tues-Sun 10 am-5 pm • Entrance fee € 6

– Moselweinemuseum • Cusanusstr.2, Bernkastel-Kues • Tel. 06531-4141 • [www.moselweinemuseum.de](http://www.moselweinemuseum.de)

– Deutsches Edelsteinmuseum • Hauptstr. 118, Idar-Oberstein • Tel. 06781-90 09 80 • [www.edelsteinmuseum.de](http://www.edelsteinmuseum.de) • Entrance fee € 5

## WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

### Steep Vineyard Hiking Trail, Winingen

The *Winner Steillagenwanderweg* (Steep Vineyard Slope Hiking Trail) lets visitors explore the Terrassenmosel's spectacular landscape. The easily accessible path leads through the vineyard sites of Domgarten, Brückstück and Röttgen. In May, the Steep Vineyard Wine Festival is held here.

Touristik Winingen e. V. • Winingen, August-Horch-Str. 3 • Tel. 0 26 06/18 58 • [www.winingen.de](http://www.winingen.de)

## FOOD AND DRINK

### Becker's

Even gourmets rave about the award-winning culinary creations of Chef Wolfgang Becker of Becker's Restau-

rant in Trier. The wine list includes noble drops from his own estate as well as wines from the top vintners of the Mosel, Saar and Ruwer.

Becker's Hotel Restaurant Weingut •  
Olewiger Str. 181, Trier • Tel. 0651-  
93 80 80 • [www.beckers-trier.de](http://www.beckers-trier.de) •  
€€€€

### DID YOU KNOW...

... that Trier is the oldest city in Germany? It was founded around 18-17 BC under Emperor Augustus and given the name "Augusta Treverorum."

### Wein & Tafelhaus

Directly on the banks of the Mosel in Trittenheim, star chef Alexander Oos welcomes guests to his gourmet restaurant, *Wein & Tafelhaus*. Along with the cuisine you can enjoy top-quality wines from the region and from the terrace.

Wein & Tafelhaus • Moselpromenade  
4, Trittenheim • Tel. 06507-70 28-03 •  
[www.wein-tafelhaus.de](http://www.wein-tafelhaus.de) • €€€€

### Culinarium

Chef de cuisine at *Culinarium* in Nitel is Walter Curman, husband of the former German Wine Queen, Carina Dostert-Curman. His specialties include down-to-earth regional dishes and also more unusual ones – such as rack of suckling pig with sweet and sour lentils, inspired by a Roman recipe. Excellent accompaniments are Elbling, Rivaner or Pinot wines from the shell-limestone soils of the upper Mosel.

Culinarium • Weinstr. 5, Nitel • Tel.  
06584-914 50 • [www.weingutdostert.de](http://www.weingutdostert.de) • €€€

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Mosel Music Festival

From Pentecost (late May-early June) until early October, the Mosel Music Festival brings jazz, opera and classical concerts to historic locations in the wine-growing region.

Pentecost (2012: May 26-28) to early October • Mosel Musikfestival Veranstaltungsgesellschaft • Am Kurpark, Bernkastel-Kues • Tel. 06531-50 00 95 • [www.moselmusikfestival.de](http://www.moselmusikfestival.de)

### Middle Mosel Wine Festival

Bernkastel-Kues is the setting for the largest wine festival in the Mosel growing region. In early September, visitors from all over the world pour into this picturesque, timber-framed town to take part in the celebrations, which include a vintners' parade and a large fireworks display. Vintners from the Middle Mosel proffer their wares at the many wine stands.

1st weekend in September • Tourist Information • Gestade 6, Bernkastel-Kues • Tel. 06531-50 01 90 • [www.bernkastel.de](http://www.bernkastel.de)

### Roman Wine Press Festival, Piesport

Once a year, the Roman wine press facility comes back to life. Participants demonstrate how the ancient Romans processed grapes here – as well as how they celebrated.

October • Tourist Information • Heinrich-Schmitt-Pl. 1, Piesport • Tel. 06507-2027 • [www.piesport.de](http://www.piesport.de)

## SERVICE

### INFORMATION

Mosel-Wein e. V. • Gartenfeldstr. 12a, Trier • Tel. 0551-71 02 80 • [www.weinland-mosel.de](http://www.weinland-mosel.de)

Riesling, pinot noir & Co.: [www.germany.travel](http://www.germany.travel)

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**The Nahe** The wine-growing region of Nahe boasts Germany's largest yet most spacially-compact soil bio - diversity. Here the winegrowers cultivate their vineyards, from the gentle banks of the Nahe and their tributaries to the steepest locations around Niedernhausen.

◀ The Nahe and its tributary side valleys are characterized by a mild climate with plenty of sun and little rain.

From Martinstein near Kirn to where the Nahe empties into the Rhine near Bingen, vineyards line the path of the river and its tributaries – Ellerbach, Guldenbach, Gräfenbach, the Glan and the Alsenz. To the northwest of Bad Kreuznach, vineyard extend up to the foot of the Hunsrück Mountains. The growing region is divided into three sections. The wide valley landscape of the Upper Nahe stretches from Martinstein to Schlossböckelheim. Imposing cliffs flank the shores of the Middle Nahe, which cuts deep into the volcanic rock between Schlossböckelheim and Bad Kreuznach. The Lower Nahe, which extends from Bad Kreuznach to the river's mouth, also includes bizarre rock formations such as those in the Trollbach Valley, which often jut out unexpectedly amidst the vineyards.

## A wide variety

The wine-growing region includes the Nahe Valley district, the six collective sites of Pfarrgarten, Schlosskapelle, Rosengarten, Kronenberg, Burgweg and Paradiesgarten, as well as 310 individual sites. Over a total of 4000 ha (9884 acres), grapevines flourish on gentle rolling hills and terraces; about one quarter of the vineyards are found on steep slopes. White wine varieties make up 75 % of the grapes grown here. Of these, Riesling predominates, followed by Rivaner, Silvaner, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris). The other 25 % of the cultivated area is devoted

to red varieties – particularly Dornfelder and Portugieser.

The Nahe and its side valleys are characterized by a remarkably mild climate with abundant sunshine and little rain. On the Upper Nahe, cool air from the Soonwald, Hunsrück and Northern Pfalz ranges ensures that the grapes ripen later; this is particularly beneficial to the aroma and acid structure of Riesling grapes. The steep cliffs of the Middle Nahe store the sun's heat, producing soil temperatures of 60 °C (140 °F) and above in the summer. This provides a welcome environment for numerous heat-loving plant species which are otherwise found only in the Mediterranean region or on the steppes of Eastern Europe and Asia. Spätburgunder and other red wine varieties grow especially well on the Lower Nahe.

## A tasting bar

No other German wine-growing region contains so much geological diversity in such a small area. The soils here range from volcanic stones such as rhyolite, melaphyre and porphyry; to weathered soils of sandstone, loam and loess; to quartzite, clay and slate. Two hundred fifty million years ago, the intersection of the Saar-Nahe hill country, the Rhenish Slate Mountains and the Mainz Basin was the site of intense volcanic activity. Today, the diverse *terroirs* are reflected in the multifaceted Nahe wines, lending the region the name “tasting bar.”

## 20 Disibodenberg Monastery ruins ▶ Fold-out map, D 15/16

In the summer of 2005, Baroness Luise von Racknitz-Adams made a discovery, which drew the attention

of vintners and wine connoisseurs: in a difficult-to-reach spot on a terraced vineyard on her wine estate on the Middle Nahe – the Disibodenberger Hof in Odernheim am Glan – she uncovered five old, gnarled grapevines. She had learned something about grape varieties during her studies at the renowned oenological school in Geisenheim in the Rheingau; nevertheless, she was unfamiliar with this vine with bristly leaves.

### The mysterious grapevine

Von Racknitz-Adams first turned to various experts for advice, but no one could help. Three years later, she met the biologist and grapevine specialist Andreas Jung of Lustadt in the southern Pfalz. Jung observes the populations of old grape varieties all over Germany for the Federal Agency for Agriculture and Nutri-

tion (BLE). In the course of his work, he had already encountered several varieties which had previously been considered extinct – among them, *Süssschwarz*, *Fütterer* and *Adelfränkisch*. He had rediscovered 90 historic grapevine species in the Rhineland-Palatinate alone, including a *Weisse Vogeltraube* in Mandel, near Bad Kreuznach.

After making extensive ampelographic comparisons, Jung came to the conclusion that the grapes from the Von Racknitz estate in Disibodenberg are the Orleans varietal. Typical characteristics of this strain are their noticeably rough, bristly upper leaf surfaces and large, thick-skinned berries. Among others, these grapes are also known under the names White or Yellow Orleans, *Harthengst* or *Hartheinisch*.

This historically significant grape variety ripens only under extremely

At Disibodenberg (► p. 81), once home to Hildegard von Bingen, gnarled grapevines were discovered in the summer of 2005 which are between 500 and 900 years old.



warm conditions. During the Medieval Warm Period, from the 10th to the 12th centuries, it was widespread, producing fiery, spicy white wines which were highly valued – not least for their stability and long shelf life. However, during the Little Ice Age of the 16th century, Orleans grapes disappeared almost entirely. They are now found only in very few areas with extremely mild local climates – for example, in the area around Heidelberg, on the German Wine Route near Deidesheim, or in Breisgau. The five vines from the Disibodenberger Hof date from the period between 1108 and 1559, when the Benedictine Disibodenberg Abbey maintained extensive vineyards. They are therefore between 500 and 900 years old, making them the oldest grapevines ever found on German soil.

### The abbey and its healer

Among those who lived and worked at Disibodenberg Abbey was Hildegard von Bingen, the great mystic of the Middle Ages. In 1112, she entered the newly founded women's hermitage at the Disibodenberg Monastery, located at the Glan River's mouth into the Nahe. In 1136, she became abbess of the hermitage; she recorded her visions in Latin beginning in 1141. In addition, Hildegard produced many of her writings on ethics, the world, human beings, illnesses and medicinal herbs at Disibodenberg. More than 30 recipes using wine as a basis are testimony to the enormous healing power that she attributed to the juice of the grape: "Wine from the grape, when it is pure, makes the blood of the drinker good and healthy." Around 1150,



The altar at the Rochuskapelle depicts Hildegard's entry into the convent.

Hildegard left Disibodenberg in the idyllic Middle Nahe valley and moved, together with her Benedictine nuns, to the Rupertsberg Convent at the mouth of the Nahe, near Bingen. Approximately 100 years later, Cistercian monks moved into the Disibodenberg Abbey and remained there until its secularization in the mid-16th century. The last monks left Disibodenberg in 1559. The abbey complex fell into ruins, and pieces of the buildings were used to build homes in the neighboring villages of Odernheim and Staudernheim. Even the piers of the Staudernheim Bridge were rebuilt using stones from the abbey.

### Orleans cultivation

Since 1753, the abbey ruins and the surrounding lands, including the vineyards, have been owned by the von Racknitz family. In 2003, Luise von Racknitz-Adams and her husband, Matthias Adams took over management of the winery on the

former estate of the Disibodenberg Abbey from her parents. Now she is attempting to propagate the old Orleans grapevines below the old abbey walls and develop a small model site planted with Orleans, a variety with pronounced acidity. She hopes to succeed – particularly if, in the course of climate change, these latitudes become too warm for cultivating Riesling.

The picturesque abbey ruins are open to visitors. A meditation path around the site leads walkers through twelve stations which invite them to pause and reflect on psalms and passages from the writings of St. Hildegard.

– Wine estate: Luise von Racknitz-Adams & Matthias Adams • Disibodenberger Hof, Odernheim am Glan • Tel. 06755-285 • [www.von-racknitz.com](http://www.von-racknitz.com)

– Abbey ruins: Scivias Stiftung • Disibodenberger Hof, Odernheim am Glan • Tel. 06755-969 91 88 • [www.disibodenberg.de](http://www.disibodenberg.de) • Museum open Tues-Fri 9 am-6 pm, Sat & Sun 11 am-5 pm • Entrance fee € 3 • Abbey ruins are accessible at all times.

## 21 The Schlossböckelheimer Kupfergrube

► Fold-out map, D/E 15

Precious metal was once mined from this soil; now noble Riesling grows here on the Middle Nahe, where the Hunsrück and the Pfalz hill country meet. In the early 20th century, the border between the kingdoms of Prussia and Bavaria ran along the Nahe. In 1901, the state-owned wine estate – the Weinbaudomäne Niederhausen-Schlossböckelheim – was founded on the Prussian side. Since copper ore had previously been

At the Bad Sobernheim Open-Air Museum (► p. 85), the press house from Bruttig stands next to whitewashed timber-frame houses from Enkirch and Zell-Merl.



mined at this location, the site came to be known as the *Kupfergrube* (copper mine). The southern slope at the foot of a rock face has a microclimate that seems to have been custom made for cultivating wine. The slate content in the mineral-rich, almost loam-free, weathered volcanic soil produces wines with exceptional aromas.

Before the first grapevines could be planted on this steep, rugged site, rocks had to be blasted and hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of soil had to be moved by hand. Once the old rubble had been leveled and terraced, the first Riesling vines were planted in 1903. The first outstanding vintage was produced eight years later; and the legendary 1921 vintage yielded a Riesling *Trockenbeerenauslese* (produced from individually selected, dried-up berries) with an incredible must weight of 308° Oechsle. After the Second World War, the domain came into the possession of the state of the Rhineland-Palatinate. Work at the state's model wine estate focused on quality control and innovation. In addition to testing fertilizers and pesticides, researchers conducted the first experiments with cold fermentation here in Niederhausen. The highly-prized Riesling clone DN 500, which is still famous today for its high must weight and abundant yields, was also bred here.

### In harmony with nature

Since 2010, the State Domain has been under private ownership. Under the name “Gut Hermannsberg,” owners Dr. Christine Dinse and Jens Reidel cultivate around 30 ha (74 acres) of vineyards in the communities of Schlossböckelheim, Niederhausen, Traisen and Altenbamburg.

Working under extreme conditions on the steep slopes – some with gradients of over 50% – they have made it their goal to produce wines in harmony with nature. The vineyards are planted almost exclusively with Riesling grapes, which are aged into prime quality Riesling wines in the cellars of the historical buildings.

Gut Hermannsberg • Niederhausen an der Nahe • Tel. 06758-925 00 • [www.gut-hermannsberg.de](http://www.gut-hermannsberg.de) • Wine tastings available by appointment

### 22 Bad Sobernheim Open-Air Museum

► Fold-out map, D 15

The Rhineland-Palatinate Open-Air Museum in the Nachtigallental near Bad Sobernheim shows visitors how vintners and farmers lived over the last 500 years. About 40 historic buildings from the Mosel-Eifel, Pfalz-Rheinhessen, Mittelrhein-Westerwald and Hunsrück-Nahe regions were dismantled at their original locations and authentically rebuilt on the museum grounds. Thanks to the careful attention to detail, guests here can form an excellent picture of how people lived in days gone by.

A 2 km-long (1.2 miles) circular path leads past reconstructed farm fields, meadows, pastures, kitchen gardens and herb gardens, modeled after historic examples. On the museum's 35-ha grounds (86.5 acres), you can go on a journey back in time, visiting farm houses, wine estates and press houses, a mill and a village blacksmith shop, a hairdresser's, small grocery store, butcher's shop and bakery, cobbler's and printer's shops; a bowling alley and a dance hall, a schoolhouse, a chapel and a city hall. Even monuments and wayside crosses are

included here. Free range chickens, geese and ducks, pasture pigs, goats and sheep make the picture complete. The oldest building, a timber-frame house from Merl an der Mosel, dates back to 1328. A stately building with richly decorated cross-timbering – originally from Enkirch an der Mosel – now houses the “House of Rhineland-Palatinate Wine Culture,” which features exhibits devoted to viticulture. The daily life of vintners comes alive not only through the residential



### MERIAN-Tip

7

#### VINOTHERAPY

Wellness on the Nahe seems to exist only in superlatives. Bad Sobernheim is home to Germany's only Felke healing spa facility. Bad Kreuznach is thought to be the oldest radon saltwater spa in the world and is home to the largest open-air inhalation facility in Europe, extending for 1.4 km (0.8 miles) through the *Salinental* to Bad Münster am Stein. Wellness oases on the Nahe also offer vinotherapy, a process in which warm spring water combined with grape extracts are used to smooth the skin and prevent premature aging.

and farming buildings, but also through the museum's own vineyard, which includes an historic vintner's hut. In the vineyard the museum demonstrates methods of training that are typical in the region – from single-stake to wire trellis training as well as bush vines and single or multiple bows. The Rheingrafenberg Wine Growers' Cooperative from nearby Meddersheim cultivates Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Elbling, Silvaner, Rüländer, Gewürztraminer and Portugieser grapes here.

Rheinland-Pfälzisches Freilichtmuseum Bad Sobernheim an der Nahe • Nachtigallental, Bad Sobernheim • Tel. 06751-3840 • [www.freilichtmuseum-rlp.de](http://www.freilichtmuseum-rlp.de) • April-Oct, open Tues-Sun 9 am-6 pm • Entrance fee € 4,50 (During the winter months, you may visit the site free of charge; however, the buildings are closed.)

## Nearby destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Bad Kreuznach

The unique landmark of this spa town is its late medieval bridge houses. They were built more than 500 years ago atop the columns of the old Nahe bridge. The intersection of the Ellerbach and the Nahe was once the site of the Tanners' Quarter, which was also called “Little Venice” because of its small, picturesque houses.

Tourist Information • Kurhausstr. 22-24, Bad Kreuznach • Tel. 0671-836 00 50 • [www.bad-kreuznach-tourist.de](http://www.bad-kreuznach-tourist.de)

#### Rotenfels

Between Ebernburg and Norheim, a spectacular rock cliff towers above the northern banks of the Nahe: the Rotenfels. At 1200 m (3937 ft) long

and 200 m (656 ft) high, it is said to be the largest cliff face north of the Alps. Birds' nesting places and rare plants are hidden in the crevices of the reddish rhyolite stone.

## MUSEUM

### Bangert Manor, Bad Kreuznach

In a beautiful park at the foot of the Kauzenburg lies Bangert Manor, home to the Museums of the City of Bad Kreuznach. Of particular interest is the Roman Hall, with its outstandingly preserved floor mosaics: the 58 sq m (190 sq ft) Gladiators' Mosaic and the 68 sq m (223 sq ft) Oceanus Mosaic. **Museen im Rittergut Bangert, Roman Hall • Hüffelsheimerstr. 11, Bad Kreuznach • Tel. 0671-298 58 20 • www.stadt-bad-kreuznach.de • March-Jan, open Tues-Sun 10 am-5 pm • Entrance fee € 3,50**

## WALKING AND HIKING TRAIL

Beginning in Bingen, the Rhine-Nahe Hiking Trail leads upriver along the Nahe for almost 100 km (62 miles) to Kirn. Along the way, it passes through meadows and vineyards, forests and castles, high cliffs and deep valleys. An especially beautiful landscape can be found on the 17-km (10.5-miles) stretch between Bad Münster am Stein-Eberburg and Schlossböckelheim. Cyclists can explore the Nahe region on a well-marked bike trail.

## FOOD AND DRINK

### Johann Lafer's Stromburg

This medieval castle is the home of television chef Johann Lafer. In his gourmet restaurant, *Val d'Or*, meals are accompanied by the finest Nahe wines. Cooking classes are also available for amateur chefs.

Johann Lafer's Stromburg • Schlossberg 1, Stromburg • Tel. 06724-931 00 • www.stromburg.com • €€€€

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Wine Festivals

Wine celebrations can be found on the calendar throughout the year in the Nahe region. In June, the *Weinfest im Grünen* (Wine Festival in the Countryside) in Guldental focuses on wine, jazz and classic cars; the Vine Blossom Festival in Monzingen's historic town center takes place at the same time. In July, a hot air balloon festival is held on the Nahe meadows in Norheim: Its highlight is the night glow. In August, there's "open house" at wine estates in Bad Münster am Stein-Eberburg; Bad Kreuznach hosts a huge folk festival and Sommerloch's wine festival beckons at the end of the month. In September, Bingen's Wine Growers' Festival features a vintners' parade at the mouth of the Nahe, and the Wine Hiking Trail Festival is held between Bad Sobernheim and Martinstein. **Weinland Nahe e. V. • Burgenlandstr. 7, Bad Kreuznach • Tel. 0671-83 40 50 • www.weinland-nahe.de**

## DID YOU KNOW...

... that in the Nahe region, a 0.2-liter glass of wine is called a "Remischen?" The name refers both to the small, stemless glass and to its contents.

## SERVICE

### INFORMATION

Weinland Nahe e. V. • Burgenlandstr. 7, Bad Kreuznach • Tel. 0671-83 40 50 • www.weinland-nahe.de





**Pfalz** On the western edge of the Rhine Valley, the grapevines are nestled on the slopes of the Palatinate Forest. Not only do almonds and figs flourish in this mild climate, but also Mediterranean grape varieties such as Merlot.

◀ Neustadt an der Weinstrasse is one of Germany's largest wine-growing communities.

The Pfalz wine region borders on Rheinhessen to the north and extends to the south as far as Alsace. Its vineyards carpet the gently rolling hills between the Upper Rhine plain and the Haardt – the steeply sloping eastern edge of the Palatinate Forest. For about 85 km (53 miles), the German Wine Route travels through the country's second-largest wine-growing region, which contains ca. 23,500 ha (58,070 acres) of vineyards. This wine tourism route was officially opened in October 1935 and is considered the oldest wine route in the world. It begins at the French border with the *Deutsches Weintor* (German Wine Gate) in Schweigen and ends at the *Haus der Deutschen Weinstrasse* (gatelike building that houses a restaurant) in Bockenheim, near Worms. On its path through the Anterior Pfalz, it passes through most of the 144 wine-growing communities.

## Riesling and Dornfelder

Hard frosts are rare here; at the same time, the sun shines abundantly. The slopes of the Palatinate Forest keep cold air and excessive precipitation from reaching the vineyards of the Pfalz hill country. In this mild, almost Mediterranean climate, almonds, figs, lemons, olives and sweet chestnuts grow alongside the grapevines. The two wine-growing districts – the “Mittelhaardt-Deutsche Weinstrasse” in the north and the “Südliche Weinstrasse” in the south are approximately equal in size; however, their soil compositions are quite different. Both regions have shell-limestone,

graphite, porphyry and outcroppings of shale; however, clay, sand, loam and marl predominate in the northern district. Here, the mineral-rich, red sandstone soils produce lively wines; the heat-retaining volcanic soils give rise to fiery Rieslings, the loose sandstone soils, light and elegant wines, while limestone soils produce full-bodied, aromatic wines. In contrast, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris) grow especially well on the deep, nutrient-rich loam and loess soils in the southern district.

## Along the Wine Route

Quite a number of grape varieties can be cultivated in the various soil types of the region: 45 white and 22 red varieties have been approved for growing here. Riesling dominates the field with over 5000 ha (12,355 acres); in second place is Dornfelder. This ratio also reflects the balance of white and red grape species: About 40 % of the Pfalz's vineyards are planted with red varieties. In addition to Dornfelder, Portugieser, Spätburgunder and Regent are the most common. These numbers make the Pfalz Germany's largest red wine growing region. Among white wines, Müller-Thurgau is one of the most popularly-consumed wines, followed by Kerner, Grauburgunder, Silvaner and Weissburgunder. Regional specialties include Gewürztraminer, Scheurebe and Morio-Muskat – but also Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Tempranillo, St. Laurent and Syrah. Since Pfalz vintners are very flexible about responding to trends and market tendencies, the ratio of different wine varieties that are grown here varies.

Nevertheless, the undisputed leader is and remains Riesling, which accounts for over 20 % of the region's cultivated vineyards.

### 23 The Roman wine estate in Ungstein ▶ Fold-out map, , E 16

Viticulture on the sunny slopes of the Pfalz hill country began as far back as Roman times. Clear evidence of this is a Roman wine press facility, which was discovered in the Weilberg vineyard site near the community of Ungstein, close to Bad Dürkheim. Almost 2000 years ago, the fruits of the grape harvest were delivered here and poured into the two outer basins. Workers then trod on the grapes with their feet until the must flowed into a third, lower-placed collecting basin from which it could then be ladled into barrels. Researchers have even been able to determine which grape varieties the Romans planted: The seeds

found in the press come from wild grapes, as well as from early forms of Riesling, Traminer and Pinot. It is estimated that around 200,000 liters of wine were produced in the pressing facility each year – the yield of 30 to 40 ha (74 to 99 acres) of vineyards.

### Ancient tools

Additional artifacts – including grape knives and hoes – are indicative of the work that was done on the estate to which the wine press belonged. It was apparently an enormous site, whose oldest structures date back to around 20-30 AD. Up until the 4th century, it was rebuilt and expanded several times. The multistory mansion was accompanied by numerous outbuildings, including stables and a bath complex with a steam bath. The entire complex was destroyed during an attack by Germanic tribes in the mid-4th

At the foot of the Palatinate Forest, the remains of a Roman wine estate, including a pressing facility, have been preserved in the vineyards of Ungstein (▶ p. 90).



century. As early as 1894, two Roman stone sarcophagi were discovered to the west of the archeological site. The grave goods included a wine bottle and a wine glass. These discoveries from the 4th century are further indication of the high value which the Romans attached to wine.

Over the centuries, the *Villa Rustica* disappeared under masses of soil. Nevertheless, its existence was preserved in the name of the field: In 1309, the site was called “zu wile” – a derivation of “villa”; the name later evolved into “Weilberg,” the name that the vineyard still bears today. In the past 30 years, the Weilberg wine press facility has been restored and now, after 2000 years, it is once again fully functional. During the Wine Festival at the Roman Press, it comes to life again each year at the end of June. For the rest of the year, the open-air museum – with its concrete basins and information boards containing text and illustrations – provides visitors with excellent insight into the viticulture tradition of Roman times.

### Stations of the hiking trail

The Weilberg Roman wine estate is part of a circular hiking path which connects ancient historic sites in the immediate region. Further stations include the Roman *burgus* (remains of a fortress watchtower) in Ungstein, the *Villa Rustica* in Wachenheim, the *Kriemhildenstuhl* Roman quarry and the Haus Catoir Museum of Local History in Bad Dürkheim. The latter also contains artifacts of Roman wine culture from Weilberg.

Tourist-Information • Kurbrunnenstr. 14, Bad Dürkheim • Tel. 06322-9 56 62 50 • [www.bad-duerkheim.de](http://www.bad-duerkheim.de)

## 24 Rhodt unter Rietburg

► Fold-out map, E 17

Rhodt is one of the loveliest wine-growing villages in the Pfalz. It lies directly below the Rietburg castle and belonged to many different sovereigns in the course of its eventful history. Rhodt acquired the epithet “unter Rietburg” during the reign of the Württemberg rulers, who already possessed three other villages with the same name. Wine – primarily Traminer – was already being cultivated in Rhodt at that time.

However, the area’s vintners did not begin to prosper until 1603, when the village came under the ownership of the Margraves of Baden. The success of the wine trade is still evident today in the proud wine estates with their imposing arched gateways. The wealthier vintners had the borders of their gates decorated with Renaissance ornamentation, scrollwork and interlacing. Many of the entranceways display the year in which they were built and the initials of the builder. In the well-preserved town center, nearly 80 % of the buildings are registered historic sites.

Also dating most likely from the 17th century is the vineyard *Rosengarten* on the eastern edge of the village. Here, on a space of about 1 ha (2-3 acres), stand 400 gnarled old grapevines – mostly Traminer, but also some Silvaner grapes. They have been producing up to 500 liters of wine annually for the last 400 years. The juice of these grapes from the historically important site is fermented at the Arthur Oberhofer winery in Edesheim, producing a Gewürztraminer wine whose rose aroma does justice to the name *Rhodter Rosengarten* (Rhodt rose garden).



The Pfalz's mild climate is home to warmth-loving sweet chestnut trees, like those that lend their shade to the Theresienstrasse in Rhodt (► p. 91).

### The beautiful Theresienstrasse

Rhodt was under French rule from 1798 until 1816; it was subsequently allocated to the Kingdom of Bavaria. One of the most beautiful stretches in the village, the Theresienstrasse, hearkens back to this period. It was named in honor of the Bavarian Queen Therese, for whom Munich's *Theresienwiese* is also named. In the 1840s, Therese's husband, King Ludwig I of Bavaria built his summer residence – the Villa Ludwigshöhe – on the eastern edge of the Palatinate For-

est between Edenkoben and Rhodt. However, by the time the neoclassical palace was completed, Ludwig was no longer king; he had abdicated due to his affair with the dancer Lola Montez. During her stays in Rhodt, while her husband attended Catholic mass in Edenkoben, Therese drove to the Evangelical Lutheran church of St. George in the village. Today, visitors can still view her armchair in the church's royal loge.

From Rhodt, the picturesque Theresienstrasse, whose upper section is

divided by chestnut trees, leads into a lovely hiking trail which takes you to Villa Ludwigshöhe. There, visitors can not only hear historical information; you also have the opportunity to visit the Slevogt Gallery.

– Fremdenverkehrsverein, Durlacher Hof • Weinstr. 44, Rhodt unter Rietburg • Tel. 0 63 23/98 00 79 • www.rhodt.de

– Weingut Arthur Oberhofer • Am Linsenberg 1, Edesheim 1 • Tel. 0 63 23/9 44 90 • www.rhodt-suew.de

### 25 Deidesheim: big politics in a small wine village

► Fold-out map, E 17

The first quality wine to be produced in the Pfalz came from this small town on the eastern edge of the Haardt. This is thanks, first of all, to the area's ideal landscape and climatic conditions, with little precipitation and many hours of sunshine. In addition to grapevines, almonds, bitter oranges, sweet chestnuts and figs also flourish here. Secondly, certain persons have lived and worked in this wine-growing community – where the tradition of wine cultivation reaches back approximately 2000 years – whose pioneering achievements made a significant contribution to the viticulture industry, not only in the Pfalz but throughout Germany. For example, in 1802, the Deidesheim-based vintner Andreas Jordan was the first wine grower in the Pfalz to name his wines according to grape variety and vineyard site, thus establishing the production of “quality wines” in the region.

#### The “Deidesheimer Circle”

The mid-19th century saw the establishment of the “Deidesheimer Cir-

cle,” a loose organization of influential citizens and wine estate owners, whose members were also politically active. Three of them – Ludwig Andreas Jordan, Franz Armand Buhl and Andreas Deinhard – even advanced as far as the *Reichstag* (Imperial Diet). Buhl participated in Bismarck's social legislation as well as in wine legislation; in 1873, he campaigned against the importation of foreign grapevines – an important step in the fight against phylloxera. All three politicians were descended from the wine-growing dynasty that included the Jordan, Buhl and Bassermann families.

Three wine estates which are still important to this day can be traced back to this dynasty: Geheimer Rat Dr. von Bassermann-Jordan, Reichsrat von Buhl and Weingut Dr. Deinhard (since 2009, renamed Weingut von Winning). Today, there are still almost 90 full-time wine estates located in Deidesheim.

#### Prized by Goethe

The reputation of Deidesheim's wines has a long tradition. In 1820, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe ordered wine of the highly-praised 1811 vintage from Weingut Jordan. Riesling from the Reichsrat von Buhl estate was served at the dedication of the Suez Canal in 1869. In the late 1880s, when Chancellor Otto von Bismarck visited Franz Armand Buhl – who was Vice President of the *Reichstag* at that time – in Deidesheim, he not only enjoyed Deidesheim Riesling, but also praised the wine from the neighboring vineyard “Forster Ungeheuer” with these words: “This *Ungeheuer* (lit. “monster”) tastes monstrously good.”

Another innovation introduced by Deidesheim vintners was the selection of grapes during the harvest itself. In the mid-19th century, wine growers began sorting the grapes into separate harvest tubs directly in the vineyards. In addition, they consolidated vineyards so as to cultivate the grapes more efficiently. In 1909, Deidesheim mayor and vintner Dr. Lud-

### DID YOU KNOW...

... that Pfalz residents drink wine from a “Dubbeglas?” The name is derived from the *Tupfen* (“dots” – called “*Dubbe*” in the Pfalz dialect) which decorate this half-liter tumbler.

wig Bassermann-Jordan took part in formulating the first German wine law, and in 1910, he was a founding member of the *Verband Deutscher Naturweinversteigerer* (estates that

sold their unchaptalized wines at auction), the forerunner of the VDP – *Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter* (Association of German Quality and Prädikat Wine Estates).

Visitors who come to Deidesheim to taste the wines will discover many things to see when they walk through the village’s quaint streets and alleyways. In the town center, the historic Town Hall, with its outdoor staircase, is an impressive sight. Every year on the Tuesday after Pentecost, a spectacle takes place here which is famous even beyond the region: the billy goat auction. In a tradition that dates back around 500 years, a delegation of citizens from the neighboring village of Lambrecht marches in formal procession through the Palatinate Forest and presents the citizens of Deidesheim with a male goat as a payment for grazing rights. Since the 1930s, the most recently married couple from

The Kanne is the oldest tavern in the Pfalz. Landlords and innkeepers have been documented here uninterrupted from 1374 until the present day.



Lambrecht has led the festively adorned animal to be auctioned off. Deidesheim once had similar agreements with other neighboring villages, including Neustadt an der Weinstrasse, Haardt and Gim-meldingen. These towns, however, were able to settle their debts with a one-time payment in 1755.

### A tavern with tradition

Across from the Town Hall, the *Gasthaus zur Kanne* invites visitors. It was built in the 12th century as an inn of the Eusserthal Cistercian Abbey near Annweiler am Trifels. The current structure was rebuilt in 1689 after it was partially destroyed in the Palatinate War of Succession. Just a few steps away is the *Deidesheimer Spital* (care center), whose late Gothic chapel dates back to 1494. The other buildings in the complex were redecorated in the Baroque style in the 18th century under the Prince-Bishops of Speyer, Damian Hugo Philipp von Schönborn and Franz Christoph von Hutten.

The Museum of Viticulture, located in the historic Town Hall, is dedicated to the cultural history of wine and the tradition of viticulture in Deidesheim. It is partially financed by the “celebrities’ vineyard” in the “Deidesheimer Paradiesgarten” site. In 1983, Richard von Weizsäcker, who later became Germany’s Federal President, was the first VIP to lease a vine here. Other prominent leaseholders include Helmut Kohl, Mikhail Gorbachev, Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Bernhard Vogel.

– Museum für Weinkultur • Am Marktpl., Deidesheim • March-Dec, open Wed-Sun 3-6 pm • Free admissi-

on • For further information contact Tourist Information • Bahnhofstr. 5 • Tel. 06326-967 70 • www.deidesheim.de

– Wine estates: Geheimer Rat Dr. von Bassmann-Jordan • Kirchgasse 10 • Tel. 06326-60 06 • www.bassermann-jordan.de; Reichsrat von Buhl • Weinstr. 16 • Tel. 06326-965 00 • www.reichsrat-von-buhl.de; Weingut von Winning (formerly, Dr. Deinhard) • Weinstr. 10 • Tel. 06326-221 • www.dr-deinhard.de

– Gasthaus zur Kanne • Weinstr. 31 • Tel. 06326-966 00 • www.gasthaus-zurkanne.de

### The Wine Museum in Speyer ▶ Fold-out map, F17

For many years, the old Roman city of Speyer was an important trading center for Pfalz wines. There were even vineyards located inside the city limits. Proof that even the Romans cultivated wine grapes here can be found in the form of a valuable artifact which is displayed in the Museum of Palatinate History, diagonally opposite the cathedral: a wine bottle in which Roman wine is still preserved. The oldest preserved liquid wine in the world was bottled around 300 CE and laid in a tomb for the deceased person’s journey into the hereafter. The grave was discovered in 1867, in a vineyard near Speyer. Excavation revealed two Roman stone sarcophagi dating from around 325. They contained numerous burial offerings, including wine bottles, but only one of these still contained wine.

### Wine under lock and key

The cylindrical, yellowish glass bottle, whose neck is decorated with two





The ornately painted heraldic hall of the Speyer Wine Museum (► p. 95) contains a bottle of Roman wine which was filled over 1700 years ago.

dolphin-shaped handles, is now on display in the Wine Museum, a section of the Museum of Palatinate History. The bottle contains a clear liquid residue, topped by a solid resin mixture which fills the vessel about two-thirds full. Chemical testing has shown that the liquid portion is, in fact, wine; the resinous section was once olive oil. In order to create an airtight seal, the ancient Romans poured oil into the wine bottle – a common conservation technique at that time, and one which actually lasted for 1700 years.

With its widely varied exhibits, Speyer's Wine Museum provides insight into the approximately 2000-year-old cultural history of wine growing. At the time of its opening in 1910, it was the first special exhibition of this kind worldwide which was open to the public. Among the many fascinating items on display are a gigantic

beam press dating from 1727, imposing 5000-liter wine casks, and historic wine bottles from the Royal Bavarian Court Wine Cellar. The latter originated in Würzburg and contain Franconian wine that is up to 460 years old: Leistenwein from 1540, Steinwein from 1631, Leistenwein from 1728, and Steinberger from 1822. The shapes of the bottles indicate that the three oldest wines were not bottled until around 1800.

### Wine culture in painting

A “neck violin” from Hassloch demonstrates the way that thieves were punished when they were caught stealing grapes: The yoke was hung around the delinquent's neck before he was chased through the village.

The Pfalz wine-growing culture of past centuries comes alive in paintings. An image dating from around 1750 shows what business was like at

the Speyer harbor at that time: In the shadow of the cathedral, we see the stockyard on the Rhine with its warehouse and treadwheel crane. From here, Pfälzer wine was shipped to the Lower Rhine, the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Great Britain. A Dutch flat-bottom boat laden with wine casks is just leaving the pier and making its way downstream on the Rhine. Historisches Museum der Pfalz • Domplatz, Speyer • Tel. 06232-62 02 22 • [www.museum.speyer.de](http://www.museum.speyer.de) • Open Tues-Sun 10 am-6 pm • Entrance fee € 8

## Nearby Destinations

### SIGHTS

#### The Herrenhof in Mussbach

The oldest wine estate in the Pfalz originated as a manor farm of the *Johanniter* (Knights of St. John of Jerusalem) dating from around 1300. The “Staatsweingut mit Johannitergut” complex includes a late Baroque manor house, a medieval tithe barn and a Renaissance-style storks’ tower. Located inside the circular wall is the estate’s own vineyard site, *Johannitergarten*.

Staatsweingut mit Johannitergut • Breitenweg 71, Neustadt-Mussbach • Tel. 06321-6710 • [www.dlr.rlp.de](http://www.dlr.rlp.de)

#### Limburg Abbey ruins

The imposing red sandstone walls of the former Benedictine abbey of Limburg jut out from the green of the Palatinate Forest near Bad Dürkheim.

– Limburg Abbey ruins • April-Oct, open daily 9 am-8 pm; Nov-Mar, daily 9 am-5 pm • Free admission

– For further information see Tourist Information • Kurbrunnenstr. 14, Bad Dürkheim • Tel. 06322-93 51 40 • [www.bad-duerkheim.com](http://www.bad-duerkheim.com)

## MERIAN Tip

8

#### SLEVOGT’S COUNTRY IDYLL

In the early 20th century, the painter Max Slevogt transformed the old Neukastel estate near Leinsweiler into his summer residence. The library and music room contain monumental ceiling and wall paintings by this important German impressionist. From the restaurant’s large terrace, guests have a breathtaking view across the Rhine Valley and the Haardt. Tel. 06345-3685 • [www.slevogt-hof-neukastel.de](http://www.slevogt-hof-neukastel.de) • March-Nov, open Fri-Wed; guided tours only, 11:15 am, 1:30 pm; Sat, Sun tours also at 4 pm • Entrance fee € 5

#### Speyer

The Imperial Cathedral, which dominates the cityscape of Speyer, is the largest sacred Romanesque structure in the world. Emperor Conrad II, a member of the Salian dynasty, laid the cornerstone here 1000 years ago. Today, Conrad is buried in the crypt beneath the eastern choir along with other members of the aristocracy. The western façade of the cathedral marks the beginning of the Maximilianstrasse, a pleasant promenade lined with cafés and shops, which leads to the *Altpörtel* (Old Gate). Visitors can climb up this massive tower gate; they are rewarded with a wonderful view of the city.

Tourist Information • Maximilianstr. 13, Speyer • Tel. 06232-14 23 92 • [www.speyer.de](http://www.speyer.de)

#### St. Martin

From the wall in front of the parish

church, a statue of St. Martin watches over the wine-growing village that bears his name. The majority of St. Martin's medieval town center is a registered historic site.

Tourist Information • Kellereistr. 1,  
Maikammer-St. Martin • Tel. 06323-  
5300 • www.maikammer.de,  
www.sankt-martin-pfalz.de

### A wine estate with a view

Encircled by almond trees, the Müller-Catoir Wine Estate lies above Neustadt on the Wine Route, in the village of Haardt. Under family ownership since 1744, today it is run by the ninth generation. The 20 ha (49 acres) of vineyards are planted primarily with Riesling, but also contain Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder as well as rare varieties like Scheurebe and Muskateller.

Weingut Müller-Catoir • Mandelring  
25, Neustadt-Haardt • Tel. 06321-  
2815 • www.mueller-catoir.de

## MUSEUM

### Wilhelm Hack Museum

Catalan artist Joan Miró designed the colorful ceramic façade of this museum in Ludwigshafen. Inside, it contains a collection of modern art, from the beginnings of the abstract movement to the present day. Alongside masterpieces by Robert Delaunay, Wassily Kandinsky, František Kupka and August Macke, there are also works by the Russian avant-gardists and the De-Stijl group.

Wilhelm Hack Museum • Berliner Str.  
23, Ludwigshafen • Tel. 0621-504 30  
45 • www.wilhelmhack.museum •  
Open Tues, Wed & Fri 11 am-6 pm,  
Thurs 11 am-8 pm, Sat & Sun 10 am-6  
pm • Entrance fee € 7, Saturdays free

## WALKING AND HIKING

Whether you prefer hiking, walking or bicycling, the Pfalz is a paradise for active people of all ages. In the Rhine plain, you can take a leisurely bike tour along the Salian Bicycle Trail; the "Pälzer Keschdeweg" (chestnut path) connects the hilly vineyard countryside with the Palatinate Forest. The Palatinate Forest contains well-marked walking and mountain biking trails with various levels of difficulty.

Pfalz-Touristik • Martin-Luther-Str. 69,  
Neustadt • Tel. 06321-391 60 •  
www.pfalz-touristik.de

## FOOD AND DRINK

### Freundstück

The gourmet magazine "Der Feinschmecker" named the restaurant at the Ketschauer Hof in Deidesheim as one of the ten most beautiful restaurants in Germany. The menu includes top quality wines from renowned Pfalz wine estates.

Ketschauer Hof • Ketschauerhofstr. 1,  
Deidesheim • Tel. 06326-700 00 •  
www.ketschauer-hof.  
com • €€€€€

### Hotel Restaurant Krone

Gourmets make pilgrimages from far and wide to the tiny village of Hayna (pop. 800), just to enjoy the culinary delights prepared by chef Karl-Emil Kuntz. His restaurant is one of the leading addresses in the Pfalz.  
Hotel Restaurant Krone • Hauptstr.  
62-64, Herxheim-Hayna • Tel. 07276-  
5080 • www.hotelkrone.de • €€€€€

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Deidesheim Wine Fair

In 2009, Deidesheim was honored as the first "Città Slow" in the Rhine-



The Müller-Catoir Wine Estate in Haardt (► p. 98) looks back on almost 270 years of viticulture tradition. The building complex is a registered historic site.

land-Palatinate due to its tourism industry concept, which values quality over quantity. Soon afterward, it was also recognized for holding one of the region's best wine festivals.

Mid-late August

### Dürkheim Sausage Market

Every year, the world's largest wine festival attracts immense numbers of people to the tranquil spa town of Bad Dürkheim. The festival was held for the first time in 1417. The centerpiece of the celebration is the "Schubkärchler" – small tents in which regional wines and *Sekt* (sparkling wine) are served. 2nd and 3rd weekends in September

### Palatia Classic

The Pfalz's international classical music festival is devoted to selected works of the Baroque, Viennese Classical and Romantic periods. Also on

the program are sacred music and Chopin- and Schumann-themed piano concerts.

A complete list of events can be found at [www.pfalz.de/de/weinfeste-und-events](http://www.pfalz.de/de/weinfeste-und-events), [www.palatiaclassic.de](http://www.palatiaclassic.de) or through Pfalzwein e.V. (► see below).

### Palatia Jazz

The wine and culinary-themed Pfalz jazz festival attracts international artists to the region, who thrill the public with concerts in the region's most beautiful castles, palaces and parks. The accompanying culinary program features regional restaurateurs and vintners.

[www.palataijazz.de](http://www.palataijazz.de)

### SERVICE

#### INFORMATION

Pfalzwein e. V. • Martin-Luther-Str. 69, Neustadt, • Tel. 06321-91 23 28 • [www.pfalz.de](http://www.pfalz.de)



**Rheingau** The vineyards of the Rheingau extend from Wicker on the Lower Main to Lorchhausen in the Rhenish Slate Mountains. Here, on the sunny side of the Rhine, is the home of the Spätlese – the late harvest.

◀ Some of Germany's best vineyard sites can be found on the Rüdeshheimer Berg, near Ehrenfels Castle.

Over 1000 years ago, grapevines were already being cultivated on a stretch of land just a few kilometers wide, between the sheltering ridge of the Taunus Mountains and the heat-retaining Rhine. Emperor Charlemagne himself is said to have given the order to plant a vineyard near Schloss Johannisberg. Whether or not this legend is true, the fact remains that this unusual geographical location has produced top quality wines of worldwide renown. Riesling from the Rheingau was a particularly popular drink in the English court, where "The Hock" – a nickname for wine from Hochheim – became a synonym for German wine.

### Sunny southern slopes in the Rheingau hills

The landscape of the Rheingau is multifaceted. Along the Rhine, we find picturesque wine-growing villages and gently sloping vineyards. Above these is the beginning of the thickly wooded southern slopes of the Rheingau Hill Country, the western foothills of the Taunus Mountains. Finally, between Rüdeshheim and Lorch, we can already sense the presence of the romantic Mittelrhein river region.

Since the Rhine flows through this growing region from east to west, most of the vineyards face toward the south. The heat- and moisture-retaining soils, combined with the mild climate, provide ideal conditions for vine cultivation. Soil types range from slate in the areas around Rüdeshheim, Lorch and Assmanns-

hausen; to sandy loam and loess in the lower sections of the middle and eastern Rheingau; to Taunus quartzite in the higher altitudes.

### Rheingauer Riesling with mineral notes

In terms of wine geography, the region contains only one district: Johannisberg. The approximately 3100 ha (7660 acres) of vineyards are devoted primarily to Riesling. Its demanding, late-ripening grapes flourish very well in the Rheingau, and develop characteristic mineral notes. The second most important product for Rheingau vintners is Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir). Like Riesling, it is one of the "classic" wine varieties, and was traditionally grown mainly in Assmannshausen. Today, Spätburgunder can be found throughout the Rheingau region. A curious incident that took place in 1775 also made the Rheingau responsible for the discovery of the *Spätlese* (late harvest). From its birthplace at Schloss Johannisberg, its fame spread throughout the world (▶ p. 104, Schloss Johannisberg and the discovery of *Spätlese*).

Visitors who want to get to know this wine-growing region from its best side are encouraged to follow the Rheingau Riesling Route. It leads from Flörsheim-Wicker, through Hochheim, Mainz-Kostheim, Wiesbaden – including Schierstein and Frauenstein – through Walluf, Martinthal, Rauenthal, Kiedrich, Eltville, Erbach, Eberbach Abbey, Hattenheim, Hallgarten, Oestrich, Mittelheim, Winkel, Johannisberg, Geisenheim, Rüdeshheim, Assmannshausen and Lorch, all the way to Lorchhausen on the border between the states of Hesse and the Rhineland-Palatinate.

## 27 Kloster Eberbach

► Fold-out map, E 15

The walls of the former Cistercian Abbey of Eberbach, located near Eltville in the Rheingau, reflect the atmosphere of medieval monastic life so effectively that they are frequently used as a location for historical films. In the mid-1980s, the abbey provided the setting for the film “The Name of the Rose”: In the role of the Franciscan friar William of Baskerville, Sean Connery wound his way through the dimly lit passageways, attempting to explain a series of murders. Director Jean-Jacques Annaud had visited around 300 monasteries before choosing Eberbach Abbey as the ideal setting for his film of the bestselling novel. A decisive factor in his choice was the extraordinarily well-preserved structure of the complex. Thus, the *dormitorium* – the monks’ sleeping quarters – became the scriptorium, through which they could access the mysterious library. The filmed dispute between the emperors’ envoys and the representatives of the Pope took place in the Eberbach chapter house; in the basilica, choral music was heard again after a pause of nearly 200 years. Almost 30 years later, the basilica and chapter house were used once again, as the film set for Margarethe von Trotta’s “Vision – From the Life of Hildegard von Bingen,” with Barbara Sukowa in the title role.

### By permission of the archbishop

The abbey complex itself was founded in the early 12th century. Following stays by Augustinian canons and Benedictine monks, twelve Cistercian

monks moved into the abbey in 1136, along with their abbot, Ruthard. Adalbert I of Saarbrücken, the Archbishop of Mainz, had given them permission to establish a branch of their home monastery of Cîteaux, in Burgundy, here in the Rheingau.

According to legend, Bernhard of Clairvaux, one of the leading abbots of the Cistercian order, paid a visit to the idyllic valley at the intersection of the Kisselbach and the Rhine one year previously, together with the Archbishop of Mainz. At that time, they observed a wild boar (*Eber*) jumping over the brook (*Bach*). Whether this is actually the inspiration for the name “Eberbach Abbey” is not known. Nevertheless, Bernhard of Clairvaux, a descendent of Burgundian aristocracy, was one of the most influential preachers of his time and contributed significantly to the spread of his order throughout Europe.

### Many stylistic influences

The Burgundian Cistercian monks moved into the existing buildings of Eberbach Abbey and began constructing a new basilica. It was formally dedicated by Archbishop Conrad of Mainz in 1186. Also present at the ceremony was the Bishop of Münster, Hermann II of Katzenelnbogen, who, with his relatives, made the abbey their family monastery. Beginning in the early 14th century, Eberbach Abbey also served as the burial vault for the Counts of Katzenelnbogen; their crypt is located under the southern transept of the basilica.

The Cistercian abbey near Eltville developed rapidly; the original twelve monks soon became 100. At the highpoint of the monastery’s ex-



Over 800 years ago, Burgundian Cistercian monks brought Burgundian grapes vines to the Rheingau.

istence, it housed an additional 200 lay brothers as well. Over time, therefore, it evolved into a complex monastery structure containing elements of the Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque styles. Cistercian architecture is typified by the conscious renouncement of any elaborate decoration on or inside its buildings: This included the straight closing wall of the choir as opposed to a semi-circular apse, and a modest ridge turret rather than an imposing tower. Life inside the abbey was simple and strict, emphasizing communal choral prayer and personal meditation. In addition, the monks devoted much of their time to work in the fields and meadows. The abbey maintained orchards, herb and vegetable gardens, fields and vineyards. The first monks had brought Burgundian grape vines with them from their home country; these flourished beautifully in the

mild climate of the Rheingau, and soon became the most important factor in the monastery's economic welfare. The wines which were produced from the imported grapes became the first major export product of Rheingau viticulture – thanks not least to the waiver of customs fees which the monks enjoyed. Somewhat later came the addition of Riesling grapes, which dominate the growing region today.

### The modern world moves in

In 1803, the abbey was dissolved, and the last monks left the monastery. In 1998, the site was turned over to a foundation dedicated to the preservation of this architectural and cultural monument through appropriate and careful usage. In the summer of 2008, one of the most modern wine production facilities in Europe – the Steinbergkeller – was dedicated not far



from the abbey complex. Despite all the upheavals, viticulture has endured. Today, the Hessische Staatsweingüter Kloster Eberbach manage six state wine domains in the Rheingau and the Hessische Bergstrasse. With a total of 200 ha (494 acres) of vineyards, they are one of Germany's largest viticultural operations. Highest-quality Spätburgunder is still grown on 32 ha (79 acres) of the State Wine Domains' Rheingau vineyards. During a *Burgunderprobe* (Spätburgunder tasting), a thematic tour through Eberbach Abbey, visitors not only learn about the history of the monastery and its viticultural tradition, they also have the chance to sample excellent Spätburgunder wines. Following a walk through the abbey complex, visitors are treated to three noble, characteristic vintages in the historic Kabinett Cellar: a Spätburgunder Blanc de Noir, a Spätburgunder and a Frühburgunder (Pinot Noir Précoce).

– Stiftung Kloster Eberbach • Eltville am Rhein • Tel. 06723-917 81 15 • [www.kloster-eberbach.de](http://www.kloster-eberbach.de) • April-Oct, open daily 10 am-6 pm; Nov-March, 11 am-5 pm • Entrance fee € 5,50  
 – Hessische Staatsweingüter GmbH, Kloster Eberbach • Eltville am Rhein • Tel. 06723-604 60 • [www.kloster-eberbach.de](http://www.kloster-eberbach.de) • Open daily 10 am-6 pm • *Burgunderprobe*: 90 min. • Tour and tasting € 15

## **28** Schloss Johannisberg and the discovery of *Spätlese*

► Fold-out map, E 15

Schloss Johannisberg stands in the midst of a vineyard which bears the same name, on a quartzite hill in front of the Taunus ridge. The name harkens back to a Benedictine

monastery which was founded here in the early 12th century and dedicated to St. John the Baptist. In 1716, following an eventful history, the site came under the ownership of Prince-Abbot Konstantin von Buttlar of Fulda, who had a *Schloss* (palace) built there as his summer residence with a magnificent view of the Rhine Valley. The abbey chapel was renovated in the Baroque style.

The discovery of *Spätlese* wine took place during the era of the Fulda rulers. Fulda became a diocese in 1752. Without the official permission of the prince-bishops, vintners were not allowed to begin with the grape harvest. In the autumn of 1775, the monks at Johannisberg waited impatiently for the bishop's permission, since the grapes were already ripe. Unfortunately, the bishop's messenger, who delivered the authorization, arrived approximately two weeks late. The grapes on the vines had already begun to shrivel, and some were even partially rotted. In desperation, the estate's administrator allowed the grapes to be pressed nevertheless – and the cellar master soon made an amazing discovery. The seemingly spoiled crop produced a wine of the very highest quality. Ever since then, the Johannisberg grape harvest is postponed for as long as possible. Starting at Schloss Johannisberg, *Spätlese* (late harvest) wine made from berries affected with noble rot has since made a triumphant journey around the world.

## **Fürst von Metternich**

Following the realignment of Europe at the Congress of Vienna, Schloss Johannisberg and its wine domain



A quirk of fate led to the discovery of *Spätlese* in the vineyards of Schloss Johannisberg in the autumn of 1775.

came under the ownership of the Austrian foreign minister Clemens Fürst (Prince) von Metternich in 1816. The statesman from Koblenz was awarded the estate with the stipulation that one-tenth of the wine produced there would be delivered to the Austrian imperial household. To this day, ten percent of the wine is still granted to the Habsburg-Lothringen family. Metternich's descendents lived at Schloss Johannisberg until 2006. Today, visitors can take a guided tour that includes a wine tasting in the estate's historical cellar.

### Riesling with an elegant note

For about 300 years, Riesling has dominated production at Johannisberg, and surrounded the castle with its vines. The vineyard lies precisely on the 50th parallel, whose course is identified by a stele in the midst of the grapevines. The geological compo-

nents of the Taunus quartzite, with its layers of loess and loam, give the domain's wines their elegant mineral notes, whose rich finesse interplays with the wines' pronounced acidity. The Johannisberg Rieslings combine fine, elegant nuances with aromas ranging from herbal, to citrus, to sweet yellow fruits. In the vinothèque at Johannisberg Castle, two wineries – Domäne Schloss Johannisberg and Weingut G.H. von Mumm – invite visitors to sample their wares.

The former abbey church, which serves as a house of worship for the Johannisberg community, was destroyed during the Second World War and rebuilt in the austere Romanesque style of the 12th century. Added to the three-aisled basilica were a crossing tower, a baptismal chapel on the northern side aisle, and apses on the transept façades. Of the church's original furnishings, only a

lectern and a few sculptures have been preserved. Today, the basilica – like the Fürst von Metternich Hall in the castle – also serves as an attractive architectural setting for concerts at the Rheingau Music Festival.

Fürst von Metternich Winneburg'sche Domäne Schloss Johannisberg GbR • Schloss Johannisberg • Geisenheim-Johannisberg • Tel. 06722-700 90 • www.schloss-johannisberg.de • Open Mon-Fri 10 am-1 pm and 2-6 pm;



It took hard work to set the treadwheels of the Oestrich Crane in motion.

March, April & Okt, open Sat & Sun 11 am-6 pm; May-Sept, Sat & Sun 11 am-7 pm; Nov-Feb, Sat & Sun 11 am-5 pm

## 29 Oestrich-Winkel

► Fold-out map, E 15

An historic wine-loading crane serves as the landmark of the Rheingau wine-growing community of Oestrich – which, together with Winkel,

Mittelheim and Hallgarten, forms the largest wine-growing town in Hesse. Over 1000 ha (2471 acres) of cultivated vineyards surround these four historic viticulture communities located between Rüdesheim and Eltville. The Oestrich Wine-loading Crane, which defines the landscape of the village, is symbol of the importance of the wine trade in this area which is visible from far and wide. In the entire Rheingau region, only four cities had the privilege of operating loading cranes.

The crane was constructed in the mid-18th century on a quay wall on the bank of the Rhine. It was considered to be safer and easier to maintain than the more commonly-used floating cranes, which were constantly exposed to the swells of the river. The cube-shaped crane structure stands on a sandstone base whose foundation is over 1.5 m (4.9 ft) deep. It was built using timber-frame construction and covered over with boards. The 9-m-long (30 ft) boom extends out of the building's slate-covered roof. During guided tours, visitors not only learn interesting facts about treadwheel crane technology; they are also told how many laborers had to put their shoulders to the wheel in order to lift the loads of up to 2.5 metric tons (2.8 tons). The Oestrich Crane was in operation from 1745 until 1926; it was used primarily for loading wine barrels and logs.

## A 2000-year-old grape knife

In the neighboring village of Winkel, a Roman grape knife was uncovered during the course of excavations. From this, we know that viticulture was already practiced here around 2000 years ago. The village's name, "Winkel," may be a derivation of the

Latin term *vini cella* (wine cellar). The village was first mentioned in writing in 850, in connection with Rabanus Maurus. The influential Carolingian scholar, who served as Archbishop of Mainz beginning in 847, is said to have died in Winkel in 856; he was buried at St. Alban's Monastery near Mainz.

One of the oldest stone houses on German soil can also be found in Winkel: the *Graues Haus* (Grey House) in the Graugasse, not far from the Rhine. This enchanting, ivy-covered sandstone structure was the ancestral home of the Rheingau's aristocratic Greiffenclau family. They later moved to Schloss Vollrads, which lies to the north of Winkel, surrounded by vineyards. Other interesting sites include the Brentano House in Winkel, where Goethe once stayed as a guest, as well as the Romanesque St. Aegidius Basilica in Mittelheim. With its foundation dating back to the 10th century, it is considered to be the old-

#### DID YOU KNOW ...

... that Riesling from the Rheingau was once considered excellent medicine in Britain? A popular expression was "Good Hock keeps off the doc" – in reference to the wine from Hochheim.

est church in the Rheingau.

Hallgarten, a village encircled by vineyards, lies on the heights at the foot of the Taunus Mountains. From here, you can reach the *Rheinhöhenweg* Trail on the right side of the Rhine, which extends from Wiesbaden to Bonn-Beuel. Those who make the climb up the *Hallgarter Zange*, a 580 m-(1900 ft)-high off-

shoot of the Taunus, will be rewarded with one of the most beautiful views across the Rheingau.

Tourist Information • An der Basilika 11a, Oestrich-Winkel • Tel. 06723-194 33 • [www.oestrich-winkel.de](http://www.oestrich-winkel.de)

## Nearby Destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Flörsheim-Wicker

Wicker, a district of Flörsheim am Main, is also known as the eastern "Gateway to the Rheingau." Viticulture has been documented here for well over 1000 years. During a stroll along the Wicker Wine Trail, visitors can learn interesting facts about the wine-growing industry and the way in which it influenced the historic and cultural development of Wicker and Flörsheim.

Magistrat der Stadt Flörsheim am Main • Bahnhofstr. 12, Flörsheim am Main • Tel. 06145-95 51 10 • [www.floersheim.de](http://www.floersheim.de)

#### Wiesbaden

With its mineral and thermal springs, Hesse's state capital is one of the oldest spa communities in Europe. Some of the springs are open to the public – such as the *Kochbrunnen*, with its thermal water temperature of 66 °C (151 °F). The thermal baths and swimming pools offer a wonderful opportunity for relaxation. A 4-ha (10-acres) vineyard of the Hesse State Wineries can be found on the 245 m-high (804 ft) Neroberg. The hill is also home to a small round temple which offers a marvelous view of the city below.

Tourist Information • Marktpl. 1, Wiesbaden • Tel. 0611-172 99 30 • [www.wiesbaden.de](http://www.wiesbaden.de)

## MUSEUMS

**Rheingau Wine Museum  
Brömserburg castle, Rüdesheim**

In this romantic timber-framed town, with its world-famous *Drosselgasse*, the Rheingau Wine Museum invites visitors to travel through time across 2000 years of wine-growing history.

Near the banks of the Rhine, the imposing walls of the medieval Brömserburg castle are home to around 2000 wine-related artifacts, dating from Antiquity to the present. Among the museum's greatest treasures are priceless drinking glasses from numerous European stylistic eras, including exquisite wine glasses dating from Roman times. From the castle keep, guests can enjoy a gorgeous view of Rüdesheim, the Rhine and the surrounding vineyards.

Rheinstr. 2, Rüdesheim am Rhein • Tel. 06722-23 48 • [www.rheingauer-weinmuseum.de](http://www.rheingauer-weinmuseum.de) • Mid-March-Oct, open daily 10 am-6 pm • Entrance fee € 5

## WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

The Rheingau Riesling Route explores the wine-growing region on the right side of the Rhine. In its course, it passes by countless interesting historical sights. In the wine-growing villages and towns along the route, seasonal wine bars, wineries and taverns offer lovely stops for refreshment. The route – identified by signs featuring a Rheingau Römer wine glass – includes only slight inclines and is suitable for children and seniors.

Gesellschaft für Rheingauer Weinkultur mbH • Kloster Eberbach/Pfortenhaus, Eltville • Tel. 06723-917 57 • [www.rheingauer-weinbauverband.de](http://www.rheingauer-weinbauverband.de)

## FOOD AND DRINK

**Hotel Krone Assmannshausen**

Poets, philosophers, politicians – and even Empress Elisabeth of Austria – have been guests at this hotel. This tradition-rich house, located directly on the Rhine, strives to continually offer its guests new creations from local ingredients in its award-winning Rhineland cuisine. The dishes are accompanied by an excellent assortment of noble wines.

Rheinuferstr. 10, Rüdesheim-Assmannshausen am Rhein • Tel. 06722-4030 • [www.hotel-krone.com](http://www.hotel-krone.com) • €€€€€

**Schloss Reinhartshausen  
Kempinski**

Today, Reinhartshausen Castle, built in 1801 and home to Princess Marieanne of Prussia from 1855 to 1883, is one of the Rheingau's leading addresses for sophisticated guests. Its three restaurants offer a widely varied menu – from regional-home style cooking, to upscale-elegant, to exclusive gourmet cuisine.

Hauptstr. 41, Eltville-Erbach • Tel. 06123-6760 • [www.schloss-hotel.de](http://www.schloss-hotel.de) • €€€€€

**Weinstube Im Messwingert**

This wine tavern is part of the Kessler wine estate, which has been located in Martinthal since 1739. The winery's own Riesling and Spätburgunder wines are accompanied by regional specialties such as "*Käse-Dunges*" (marinated soft cheese with dried tomatoes and herbs), Riesling crème or vintners' bratwurst with applesauce and fried potatoes.

Weingut Klaus-Peter Kessler • Heimatstr. 18, Martinthal im Rheingau • Tel. 06123-712 35 • [www.weingut-kessler.ak-netzwerk.de](http://www.weingut-kessler.ak-netzwerk.de) • €

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Eltville Sekt and Biedermeier Festival

Each year, surrounded by 1000 blooming roses, the Eltville wine and



#### MERIAN-Tip

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#### ELTVILLE AM RHEIN

In the oldest city in the Rheingau, the beautiful riverside promenade invites visitors to take a leisurely stroll; the winding lanes with their picturesque timber-frame houses encourage you to explore. The Prince-Elector's Castle dominates the cityscape. A memorial site is dedicated to Johannes Gutenberg, who was appointed a *Hofedelmann* (gentleman of the court) here by the Archbishop of Mainz in 1465.

Tourist Information and Cultural Center • Rheingauer Str. 28, Eltville am Rhein • Tel. 06123-909 80 • [www.eltville.de](http://www.eltville.de)

*Sekt* (sparkling wine) estates present the treasures of their cellars on the banks of the Rhine.

1st weekend in July • Tourist Information and Cultural Center • Rheingauer Str. 28, Eltville am Rhein • Tel. 06123-712 35 • [www.eltville.de](http://www.eltville.de)

### Rüdesheim Wine Festival

On the third weekend in August, vintners' wine stands crowd around the linden tree on the marketplace in Rüdesheim's Old Town. Here, you can sample young Rieslings, silky Spätburgunders and other delicacies from the local kitchens and cellars.

3rd weekend in August • Rüdesheim Tourist Center • Geisenheimer Str. 22, Rüdesheim am Rhein • Tel. 06722-90 61 50 • [www.ruedesheimer-weinfest.de](http://www.ruedesheimer-weinfest.de)

### Rheingau Musik Festival

With over 140 concerts held at more than 40 different locations, this is one of Germany's largest music festivals. World-class soloists and orchestras perform in the region's most beautiful venues – including Kloster Eberbach Abbey, Schloss Johannisberg, Schloss Reinhartshausen, St. Hildegard's Abbey in Eibingen, Biebrich Castle and Schloss Vollrads. In addition, the festival program includes jazz, cabaret and literary wine tastings.

Schedule of events: Rheingau Musik Festival Konzertgesellschaft mbH • Rheinallee 1, Oestrich-Winkel • [www.rheingau-musik-festival.de](http://www.rheingau-musik-festival.de)

## SERVICE

### INFORMATION

Gesellschaft für Rheingauer Weinkultur mbH • Kloster Eberbach/Pfortenhaus, Eltville • Tel. 06723-917 57 • [www.rheingauer-weinbauverband.de](http://www.rheingauer-weinbauverband.de)



**Rheinhessen** In the “Land of 1000 Hills” west of the Rhine, grapevines grow as far as the eye can see. Here, in Germany’s largest wine-growing region, vintners produce modern wines of the highest quality.

◀ Vine rows give structure to Rheinhessen's hill country and shape the look of the landscape: here, near Zornheim.

Within the curve of the Rhine between Mainz, Worms and Bingen lies a gentle hilly landscape where grapevines flourish especially well: the Rheinhessen growing region. Despite its name, the region is not part of the state of Hesse: it lies in the eastern section of the Rhineland-Palatinate, its border formed by the Rhine River. With 26,500 ha (65,500 acres) of vineyards, Rheinhessen is Germany's largest wine-growing region. The sheltering mountain ranges of the Hunsrück, Taunus, Odenwald and North Palatinate Hill Country make Rheinhessen one of the warmest as well as one of the driest areas in Germany. The soils in the three wine-growing districts of Bingen, Nierstein and Wonnegau range from loess and drifting sand to slate, volcanic rock, quartzite, porphyry and clay to *Rotliegend*. The latter refers to rock formations with a characteristic red color that date from the Permian Period (approximately 299 to 251 million years ago). *Rotliegend* is found primarily near Nierstein and in the western part of Rheinhessen. Thanks to these primeval sediments, the grapevines are well nourished; however, they must put out deep roots in order to absorb sufficient water.

### Traditional grape: Silvaner

Rheinhessen is famous for Riesling as well as the traditional variety, Silvaner. Cultivation of Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris) is also on the increase. The turn of the millennium saw a boom in red wine production, partic-

ularly Dornfelder, and the growing area devoted to red grape varieties doubled in the course of a decade. Today, Dornfelder, Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and Portugieser occupy around one-third of the region's vineyard area. For a long time, growers in Rheinhessen were more concerned with quantity than with quality; however, a new generation of young, highly qualified vintners has breathed new life into the industry. Today, many of the wine estates rank among the top international producers.

### Warm weather and little rain

Almost every village in Rheinhessen is associated with viticulture. As early as 2000 years ago, the Romans planted grapevines for their troops in *Mogontiacum* – modern-day Mainz. However, the fertile land was highly sought-after and was the cause of frequent disputes, between the Romans and the Germanic tribes and between the Germans and the French. It was only in 1816 that the region was consolidated under the name Rheinhessen. Still, one thing never changed: Throughout the centuries, viticulture and the wine trade were the main source of income for the area's population. Today, Rheinhessen is a modern, active region encompassing industry, trade, tourism and other service sectors.

Nevertheless, viticulture remains important here. Among all of Germany's wine-growing regions, Rheinhessen is still the largest exporter. Since 2008, Mainz and Rheinhessen have been members of the "Great Wine Capitals Network" – an international affiliation of exclusive wine-growing cities.



### 30 The *Liebfrauenstift-Kirchenstück* in Worms

► Fold-out map, E/F 16

In the late Middle Ages, pilgrims on their way to Santiago de Compostela who reached the *Liebfrauenstift* (Monastery of Our Lady) were rewarded with shelter, comfort, intercession, and sustenance in the form of noble wine. The monks cultivated grapes on about 9 ha (22 acres) of vineyards around the Gothic *Liebfrauenkirche* (Church of Our Lady), whose construction began after the monastery was founded in 1298. According to legend, the wine seemed to the pilgrims like “*die Milch unserer lieben Frau*” (“the milk of Our Lady”). Thus, the wine was christened and its

#### DID YOU KNOW...

... that Rheinhessen’s secret national dish is known as “WWW?” The abbreviation stands for “*Weck, Worscht un Woi*” (bread roll, sausage and wine): every visitor should try it!

reputation soon spread far beyond Worms. At first, the growing area for this famous Riesling was very small: Only wine grown around the church (“within the shadow of the tower”) could be called *Liebfraumilch*.

Demand increased, and this famous wine was soon imported to other countries. In 1808, Peter Joseph Valckenberg acquired the vineyards; today, his descendants still manage the oldest family-run export winery in Germany. Within just a few decades, *Liebfraumilch* exports increased many times over. Along with growth, however, came a decline in quality. Since the name was not a protected

brand, vintners from throughout the area produced wines under the name of *Liebfraumilch*. Up until the slump in exports after World War I, *Liebfraumilch* was exported more than any other wine in Germany. The British, in particular, were very fond of the mild beverage. This remained the case up until the 1990s, when even in Great Britain demand for this inexpensive, sweet white wine declined.

#### An individual name

In order to stand out from his imitators, in 1908, Valckenberg gave his wine the name *Liebfrauenstift-Kirchenstück*. Since 1997, the area directly surrounding the *Liebfrauenkirche* has been under the ownership of four vintners, who cultivate Riesling grapes on 17 ha (42 acres) within the site and produce top-quality wines. Today, *Liebfrauenstift-Kirchenstück* has once again become a wine for true connoisseurs and can be found on the wine lists of first-class restaurants. Of course, you can also sample the wine on-site – for example, during a visit to the *Liebfrauenkirche*, which still ranks among Germany’s most important pilgrimage churches.

– Katholische Pfarrkirche Liebfrauen • Liebfrauenring 21, Worms • Tel. 06241-442 67 •

[www.liebfrauen-worms.de](http://www.liebfrauen-worms.de)

– Weinhaus P. J. Valckenberg •

Weckerlingpl. 1, Worms • Tel. 06241-911 10 • [www.valckenberg.de](http://www.valckenberg.de)

– For further information, see: [www.worms.de](http://www.worms.de)

### 31 The Niersteiner Glöck

► Fold-out map, E/F 15

Between Mainz and Worms lies Germany’s oldest vineyard site: the *Nier-*



The Liebfrauenstift in Worms is the only monumental Gothic sacred structure that remains on the Rhine between Strasbourg and Cologne.

*steiner Glöck*. Riesling and Gewürztraminer are cultivated here on just 2.1 ha (5.2 acres) of the famous Red Slope, a steep site located above the left bank of the Rhine. A thick, natural stone wall surrounds the *Glöck*, whose vineyards encircle the Church of St. Kilian. The *Glöck* itself has been named a “Rheinhessen great growth” site by the Association of German Quality and Prädikats Wine Estates (VDP).

The first written mention of the Niersteiner *Glöck* dates from 742. Karlmann, a Frankish steward – and an uncle of Charlemagne – presented the Bishopric of Würzburg with the lands surrounding the church; it would later be dedicated to St. Kilian. In the centuries that followed, one-tenth of the wine produced from the vineyard was delivered to the Bishop of Würzburg.

### The flavor of the red soil

It’s the soil of the Red Slope that makes *Glöck* so valuable. The *Rotliegend* formed approximately 280 million years ago, when the climate in the area around Nierstein was still subtropical, dry and hot. The red color of the sand and clay stones, which gives the Red Slope its name, is due to iron compounds. Viticulture on *Rotliegend* is a worldwide anomaly. Thanks to the soil, the wine grapes that flourish on the Red Slope are delicately fruity and rich in minerals; the vines draw the mineral elements from the red earth and pass them on to the grapes. Their growth is fostered by optimum sun exposure and the proximity to the Rhine. Last but not least, the monks’ substantial knowledge of viticulture certainly played an important role. The wall, which they built long ago to protect their vineyards, also shelters the

vines from cold winds and enhances the Glöck's unique flair to this day. Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Oppenheim • Wormser Str. 162, Oppenheim • Tel. 06133-93 03 05 • [www.domaene-oppenheim.de](http://www.domaene-oppenheim.de) • Open Mon–Thurs 9 am–noon and 1–4 pm; Fri until 6 pm

### 32 Kupferberg Visitors' Center in Mainz

► Fold-out map, E 15

On a hill near Mainz, the Romans established a camp – or *castrum* – for two of their legions. Over the centuries, the Latin word evolved into the name “Kästrich”, which now identifies a section of the upper city of Mainz. Here, one can find wine, *Sekt* (sparkling wine) and beer cellars that are among the deepest in the world. Two thousand year-old artifacts, which were uncovered during work on the Kupferberg Cellars, bear witness to the area's Roman past and the Romans' affinity for wine.

In 1850, Christian Adalbert Kupferberg – then 26 years old – founded his “Sparkling Wine Manufactory” in Mainz. For his fermentation cellars, he used previously existing cellar facilities, which dated from the Middle Ages. Just two years later, he trademarked the name “Kupferberg Gold”. This *Sekt* became the flagship product of his sparkling wine cellars; today, it ranks among the oldest brand names in Germany. The manufactory's Bismarck Room, which today is used for weddings and other special events, was named in honor of a visit to the cellar by Otto Fürst von Bismarck, who later became Chancellor of the Empire.

In 1872, Christian Kupferberg converted his company into a partnership limited by shares. By 1888, the medieval cellar space had become too small for the expanding firm. Therefore, the founder's sons commissioned the building of a facility that

A natural stone wall surrounds the *Niersteiner Glöck*, whose vineyards encircle the Church of St. Kilian (► p. 113).



remains unique to this day: sixty additional cellars were constructed seven stories deep. The cellars house ornately decorated wooden casks containing wine, which will later be converted into *Sekt*. In addition to the barrels, visitors can see long rows of *Sekt* bottles, which are aging deep below the ground. During World War II, the cellar vaults were put to a very different use: In 1945, near the end of the war, thousands of people sought shelter here from bomb attacks.

From early on, the company employed unusual advertising strategies. In 1912, Kupferberg had the first moving, illuminated signs in Germany installed on the façade of a house on Berlin's Friedrichstrasse: On a space covering 60 sq m (646 sq ft), 2600 flickering light bulbs depicted the neck of a *Sekt* bottle, from which delicately sparkling liquid flowed into a glass. Today, many of the company's historic publicity campaigns – including posters, postcards and early commercial films – are documented at the Kupferberg Visitors' Center in Mainz.

### ***Sekt* at the World's Fair**

Company founder Christian Adalbert Kupferberg had already begun marketing his *Sekt* internationally, and in 1862, he presented it at the International Exhibition in London. His sons, Franz and Florian Kupferberg, continued the tradition and took part in the International Exhibition in Paris in 1900. The *Trauben-saal* (Hall of Grapes), where Germany's top quality wines and sparkling wines were presented inside the German pavilion during the World's Fair, can also be seen today at the Kupferberg Visitors' Center in

### **MERIAN Tip**

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#### **TRULLO – TRULLI**

In the vineyards of Flonheim in the Alzey-Worms district, you can see a type of structure, which is otherwise rare north of the Alps: a *Trullo* (plural: *Trulli*). These small, round vintners' huts (called "Wingerts-haisjer" in the Rheinhessen dialect), which taper to a point or dome shape at the top, were probably modeled after those found in Apulia. It is easy to walk from the marketplace to the Flonheim trullo. Another route leads to the trullo in the neighboring village of Uffhofen. The community of Flonheim also offers tours of the Trulli. Rathaus (City Hall), Flonheim • Tel. 06734-325 • [www.flonheim.de](http://www.flonheim.de)

Mainz. The hall, designed by Berlin architect Bruno Möhring in floral Art Nouveau and richly decorated with grape leaves, berries and vines, was reconstructed here after the World's Fair. By the mid-1960s, there was no longer sufficient space at the company's headquarters in Mainz, and the winery constructed new facilities in Mainz-Hechtsheim. At the traditional Kupferberg site in Mainz's Kästrich district, the Visitors' Center invites guests to explore the historic cellar facilities. At the Kupferberg Museum, you can find a wealth of information about *Sekt* production, as well as the world's largest collection of sparkling wine and champagne glasses – from crystal goblets and flutes dating from the Renaissance to highly original and ultra-modern designer pieces.



The *Traubensaal* from the Paris World's Fair in 1900 (► p. 115) is preserved today at the Kupferberg Visitors' Center in Mainz.

Kupferberg-Museum • Kupferbergterrasse 17–19, Mainz • Tel. 06131-9230 • [www.kupferbergterrasse.com](http://www.kupferbergterrasse.com)  
 • Guided tours from € 6; call for reservations; boutique open Sat 10 am–4 pm and following tours

## Nearby Destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Bingen

At the intersection of the Rheinhessen, Nahe, Rheingau and Mittelrhein wine-growing regions lies the city of Bingen, a community, which

likes to identify itself as the secret capital of German viticulture. Over seventy vintners and numerous citizens are dedicated to promoting Bingen wine. Bingen is home to a (almost official) wine senate, whose honorary senators include German celebrities such as Anne Will and Heino. Wine tasting is available in one of the many wine taverns, at wine-tasting events, festivals, or in the Binger Vinothek, a tasting center which is operated by several wine estates.

– Tourist Information • Rheinkai 21,  
Bingen • Tel. 06721-18 42 00 •  
www.bingen.de

– Vinothek • Hindenburanlage, Bin-  
gen • Tel. 06721-309 89 92 •  
www.vinothek-bingen.de

### Kuhkapellen

Rheinessen is home to about 300 *Kuhkapellen* (dubbed “cow chapels” by the locals). These are former stables which were built, not as traditional wooden structures, but modeled on monastic refectories with solid masonry and groin vaults. This approach was used in the 19th century to reduce the risk of fires on farms. Nowadays, as dairy farming is becoming less and less common, these attractive stables are being used as wine-tasting bars, restaurants, retail spaces or for classical music concerts.

– Interessengemeinschaft Rheinhesische Weingewölbe • Christine Moebus • Tel. 06703-665 • www.rhein-hessische-weingewoelbe.info

– Rheinessen Touristik • Wilhelm-Leuschner-Str. 44, Ingelheim am Rhein • Tel. 06132-441 70 • www.rheinessen.info

### Worms: City of the Nibelungen

Worms, one of the most important settings in the *Song of the Nibelungs*, is still linked to the medieval epic poem today through festivals and a museum. Visitors need plenty of time to see all of the interesting sights in Worms. The city contains the oldest Jewish cemetery in Europe, the former Jewish quarter with its synagogue and Rashi House, as well as the Jewish Museum. A visit to Worms should also include a trip to the Romanesque Cathedral, which was built in 1130.

Tourist Information • Neumarkt 14,  
Worms • Tel. 06241-250 45 •  
www.worms.de

### Oppenheim's Underworld

The town of Oppenheim houses a unique underground city: centuries-old cellars and connecting tunnels run underneath it. The cellar system was probably established in the 13th century. To date, however, only a small section has been excavated and researched, since a completely new town was built above the labyrinth following Oppenheim's destruction in 1689. Visitors can explore the mysterious underworld on special tours.

Tourist Information • Merianstr. 4,  
Oppenheim • Tel. 06133-49 09 14 •  
www.stadt-oppenheim.de • Guided  
tours Sat 12 noon and 1:30 pm, Sun  
and holidays 11:30 am, 1:30, 2:30 &  
3:45 pm • Entrance fee € 6

### MUSEUMS

#### Gutenberg Museum, Mainz

Visitors to Mainz must visit the birthplace of the art of book printing. The museum, located across from the cathedral, contains a permanent exhibit devoted to printing techniques, book art, the history of script and type, paper and other subjects, as well as an educational printing workshop and a museum café.

Gutenberg Museum • Liebfrauenpl. 5,  
Mainz • Tel. 06131-12 26 40 •  
www.gutenberg-museum.de • Open  
Tues–Sat 9 am–5 pm, Sun 11 am–3  
pm • Entrance fee € 5

#### Museum at the Imperial Palace, Ingelheim

The construction of Charlemagne's *Kaiserpfalz* (Imperial Palace) in the 8th century brought an important

status to the town of Ingelheim. Today, only certain sections of the palace are available for viewing; however, the museum contains artifacts, as well as a model of the original structures.

– Museum bei der Kaiserpfalz • François-Lachenal-Pl. 5, Ingelheim • Tel. 06132-71 47 01 • [www.museum-ingelheim.de](http://www.museum-ingelheim.de) • April–Oct, open Tues–Sun 10 am–5 pm; Nov–March, Tues–Sun 10 am–4 pm; closed Dec 23–Jan 5 • Free admission  
– For further information see: [www.kaiserpfalz-ingelheim.de](http://www.kaiserpfalz-ingelheim.de)

### WALKING AND HIKING

The town of Alzey combines hiking with a wine festival: each year at the beginning of September, the *Wingertshäuschen-Wanderung* leads participants past 20 vintners' huts – some of them historic sites. .

Altstadtverein Alzey • Alzey, Ernst-Ludwig-Str. 45 • Tel. 06731-99 28 18 • [www.altstadtverein-alzey.de](http://www.altstadtverein-alzey.de)

### FOOD AND DRINK

#### Restaurant Buchholz

Star chef Frank Buchholz offers regional cuisine with a Mediterranean flair. He uses only the best ingredients, growing as many ingredients as possible in the garden behind his restaurant in Mainz-Gonsenheim. Klosterstr. 27, Mainz • 06131-971 28 90 • [www.frank-buchholz.de](http://www.frank-buchholz.de) • €€€€€

#### Jordan's Untermühle

In the unusual atmosphere of a former mill on the Selz River, the Jordan family serves home-style meals with pizzazz. In addition, they offer an ample selection of regional wines, which visitors can also sample and purchase in the restaurant's own vinothèque.

Ausserhalb 1, Köngernheim • Tel. 06737-710 00 • [www.jordans-untermuehle.de](http://www.jordans-untermuehle.de) • €€

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### Women's Wine Night, Flörsheim-Dalsheim

The medieval residence tower on Plenzer Street turns into a women-only zone when the female vintners present their wines at the *Frauen-Wein-Nacht* (Women's Wine Night): Men are not allowed in. Female wine growers have been holding this special event every two years, usually in February or March, since 2006.

February/March (2013) • Frauen-Wein-Nacht • Wohnturm am Plenzer, Flörsheim-Dalsheim • Tel. 06243-75 12 • [www.frauen-wein-nacht.de](http://www.frauen-wein-nacht.de) • Entrance fee € 32, contact Petra Bähr

#### The Mainz Wine Salon

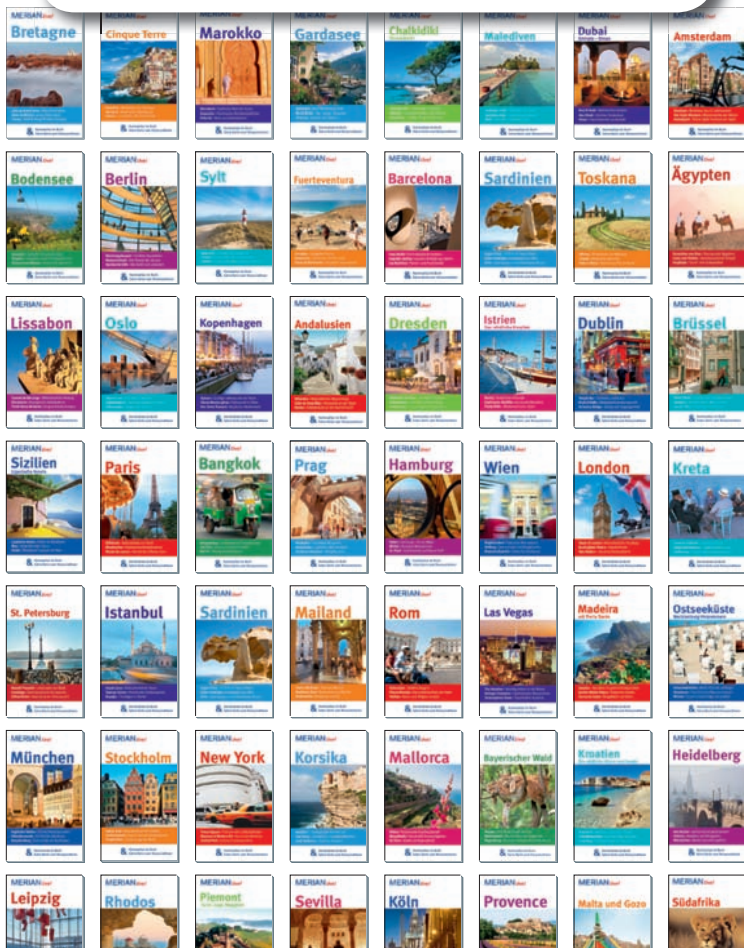
In the vaulted Brückenkopf Cellar at the Theodor Heuss Bridge, young vintners invite guests to sample their best wines in a casual atmosphere. Each event has a special theme; small meals and music are also on hand. The profits from these after-work parties (held from spring–December) are donated to social welfare projects. Spring–December, 1st Tuesday of each month • Landjugend Rheinhes-sen-Pfalz • Weberstr. 9, Mainz • [www.mainzer-weinsalon.de](http://www.mainzer-weinsalon.de)

### SERVICE

#### INFORMATION

– Rheinhessenwein • Otto-Lilienthal-Str. 4, Alzey • Tel. 06731-951 07 40 • [www.rheinhessenwein.de](http://www.rheinhessenwein.de)  
– Rheinhessen-Touristik GmbH • Wilhelm-Leuschner-Straße 44, Ingelheim • Tel. 06132-441 70 • [www.rheinhessen.info](http://www.rheinhessen.info)

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**Saale-Unstrut** Vine-clad terraces, dry stone walls, grassland orchards and flood plains are typical of the traditional cultural landscape in Germany's northernmost growing region for quality and Prädikat wines.

◀ Ninety vintners' huts are scattered across the Schweigenberg near Freyburg.

Steep vineyard slopes, picturesque vintners' huts, imposing castles, old timber-frame villages and history-steeped towns shape the region on the Saale and Unstrut Rivers, where vines have been grown for more than 1000 years. Slightly more than 700 ha (1800 acres) of vineyards in this northernmost quality wine-growing region extend across three German federal states: Saxony-Anhalt accounts for 84%, in the area around Freyburg and Naumburg; about 11% of the region's vines are located in Thuringia, near Bad Kösen; and less than 1% can be found in Brandenburg, in Werder an der Havel, not far from Berlin. Located at latitude 52°23' N, the "Werderaner Wachtelberg" is currently the northernmost single vineyard site in Europe approved for the production of quality wines from a specified region (QbA). Other vineyards exist further north – for example in Mecklenburg, Schleswig-Holstein, or even in Scandinavia – but these sites do not (yet) qualify for quality wine psr status.

## White varieties predominate

The Saale-Unstrut wine-growing region is divided into the districts of "Schloss Neuenburg", "Thüringen" and "Mansfelder Seen"; in addition, there are four collective sites not associated with districts, as well as 38 single sites. The region's well over forty grape varieties are primarily vinified dry. Among white varieties, Müller-Thurgau is the most common, followed by Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Silvaner, Riesling, Kerner and

Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris), as well as Traminer, Bacchus and Gutedel (Chasselas or Fendant). Red grape varieties account for one-fourth of the region's vineyard space area; these include Dornfelder, Portugieser, Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Blauer Zweigelt (Rotburger) and Regent. "Exotic" varieties such as Ortega, Elbling, Johanniter, Saphira, André, Acolon, Domina and Pinotin can also be found here. Small quantities of rare sweet wines like *Eiswein* and *Beerenauslese* are also produced.

In the flood plains, with their craggy water gaps, the soils consist of weathered shell-limestone soils, loess and loam, copper slate and new red sandstone. These elements lend the wines an elegant, fruity bouquet with mineral nuances. In terms of climate, the region, which lies in the rain shadow of the Harz Mountains and the Thuringian Forest, is one of the lowest-precipitation areas in Germany. The vineyards face mostly towards the south and are located in the sheltered river valleys, where heat islands with an especially mild microclimate are formed. The cold winters and late spring frosts result in a natural reduction in yield, to about 60 hectoliters per hectare (2400 liters per acre).

## Historic timber-frame architecture

In 1828, after a stay at Dornburg Castle on the Saale, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe wrote: "The view is magnificent and joyful; flowers bloom in the well-kept gardens, the vines are heavy with grapes, and beneath my window I can see a flourishing vineyard."

### 33 The Rotkäppchen Sparkling Wine Cellars

► Fold-out map, M 11

Once upon a time there were two brothers, Moritz and Julius Kloss. To-



The Rotkäppchen Sektkellerei (► p. 121) house Germany's largest cuvée barrel.

gether with their friend Carl Foerster, they founded a wine business in Freyburg on the Unstrut River on September 26, 1856, and gave it the name "Kloss & Foerster". So begins the fairytale success story of the Rotkäppchen *Sekt* (sparkling wine) Cellars. At the beginning, however, there was no mention of either *Sekt* or *Rotkäppchen* ("Little Red Riding Hood"). Nevertheless, the idea of establishing facilities "for the production of sparkling wines" in addition to the wine business came quickly enough. The first 6000 "bouteilles" were filled in a courtyard annex, and the *Sekt*

corks popped on June 17, 1858, in celebration of co-founder Julius Kloss's marriage to Emma Gabler.

The company was soon so successful that the volume of wine produced by Freyburg's vintners was no longer sufficient. In 1867, the firm purchased must and wine from Württemberg and Baden for the first time. Later, buyers from Kloss & Foerster also traveled to the Rhineland, and along the Mosel and the Main to purchase grapes, must and wine which would be processed into *Sekt* in Freyburg an der Unstrut. In 1870, the company celebrated a record production of 120,000 bottles of sparkling wine. Their labels bore melodious French names such as "Crémant Rosé", "Sillery Grand Mousseux", "Lemartin Frères" and "Monopol".

When Germany's trademark protection law took effect in May 1894, a dispute arose with the French champagne company, Walbaum-Heidsieck. This traditional Champagne house based in Reims had been producing champagne under the brand name "Monopol" since 1846 and owned previous rights to the name. Kloss & Foerster lost the suit and decided to name their *Sekt* after the red capsule that enclosed the bottle's cork. On July 15, 1895, the name "Rotkäppchen" became a registered trademark.

#### A brand's hallmark: the red capsule

This brand name remained constant throughout the company's eventful further history. It survived two world wars and in 1948, lent its name to the *Volkseigener Betrieb (VEB) Rotkäppchen Sektkellerei* (People-Owned Enterprise Rotkäppchen Sektkellerei).

lars) Freyburg/Unstrut. Technological progress and the establishment of a research and development center made Rotkäppchen a model company for the GDR. In the 1970s, the firm produced such daring creations as “Mocca-Perle” – a caffeinated sparkling wine, which is still on the market today – and “Sekt-Pils”, a co-production between Rotkäppchen and the VEB Brewery in Dessau produced at the Dessau Beverage *Kombinat* (industrial conglomerate).

After Germany’s reunification, the Rotkäppchen Sektkellerei was converted into a limited company (GmbH), and soon ranked among Germany’s largest *Sekt* producers once again. In 2002, the eastern German company attracted wide attention when it took over the famous sparkling wine brands “Mumm”, “Jules Mumm” and “MM Extra” from Canada’s Seagram beverage company – along with its Hessian production plants in Eltville am Rhein and Hochheim am Main. Since then, the company from Freyburg an der Unstrut has bought up more firms with memorable brand names, including the Privatsektkellerei Geldermann, as well as Eckes Edelkirsch, Chantré and Mariacron. Today, the company operates under the name “Rotkäppchen-Mumm Sektkellereien GmbH”.

On a tour through the cellars, visitors not only learn how the tingling bubbles get into the *Sekt* bottles – they also have a chance to sample the products. A tour of the impressive industrial monument is also highly recommended. The historic, Wilhelminian-style building welcomes visitors in a spacious atrium: its roof – interspersed with long panels

of glass – is a masterpiece of engineering. The room, which measures over 1000 sq m (10,760 sq ft), can be used as a festive setting for events for up to 750 people.

### A gigantic cuvée barrel

At the heart of the cellar facility lie the five levels of cellars themselves. They were first put into operation in 1887. Here, in a space measuring 13,000 sq m (140,000 sq ft), wines were stored in oak barrels until they were blended into cuvées, filled into bottles and riddled by hand. The pride of the cellars is Germany’s largest cuvée barrel, which is decorated with elaborate carvings. It was built in the company’s own cooperage, using the wood of twenty-five oak trees, and completed in 1896. With its gigantic volume of 120,000 liters, its height fills an entire three stories in the so-called *Domkeller* (cathedral cellar).

Rotkäppchen-Mumm Sektkellereien GmbH • Sektkellereistr. 5,

Residual yeast, or lees, settles in the necks of the *Sekt* bottles (► p. 121).





A restored 18th-century pavilion with original rococo furnishings is set among the vine-clad terraces of the Herzoglicher Weinberg in Freyburg.

Freyburg/Unstrut, • Tel. 034464-340  
 • [www.rotkaeppchen.de](http://www.rotkaeppchen.de) • Sekt tours  
 daily, 11 am & 2 pm; Sat & Sun also  
 12:30 and 3:30 pm; tour lasts 45 min •  
 Entrance fee € 5

### 34 Vintners' huts

► **Fold-out map, M 11**

The many vintners' huts on the vineyards and steep terraces of the broad river banks are typical features of the Saale-Unstrut region. There are probably several hundred of them in all; the oldest is nearly 500 years old. Many of them are simply small, functional huts in which the vintners once stored their equipment, ate their workday meals and took shelter from the wind and weather on cold days. However, some of them also served as charming weekend cottages – and some even as luxurious villas, where parties were held and wine was plentiful. In the 19th century, a few of the vintners' huts were

expanded into restaurants. In the area between Zscheiplitz, Saaleck, Goseck and Unstrutmündung alone, Saxony-Anhalt's register of monuments lists eleven historic vineyards, some of which contain several vintners' huts, as well as around thirty individual huts, of which some have corresponding vineyard sites. Almost no other German wine region is home to so many vintners' huts as can be found on the sloping banks of the Saale and Unstrut. Only Rheinhessen, with its *Wingertshäuschen* between Mainz, Alzey and Worms, has a comparable number. One reason may be that vineyard consolidation has never taken place here; this would have merged the small vineyard plots into larger sites and in the process, destroyed the old vine stocks, along with the huts and cottages.

Saxon rulers had promoted viticulture ever since the 16th century, and

over the years, they continually strove for greater efficiency. First and foremost, this meant terracing the vineyard slopes “in the Württemberg style”. To this day, terraced vineyards shape the landscape on the Saale and Unstrut Rivers, just as they do on the Elbe near Dresden, Radebeul and Meissen.

An especially large number of vintners' huts have been preserved on the Schweigenberg, near Freyburg an der Unstrut. As many as ninety of these little houses can be found in an area of 20 ha (49 acres) in this imposing, terraced vineyard – all of them most likely built in the 18th century. Today, around forty vintners still cultivate the small vineyard plots on up to ten terraced levels. If we add up the total lengths of dry stone walls and steps used to make the Schweigenberg agriculturally accessible, the result is about 10 km (6.2 miles) of stonework and several hundred feet of steps and stairways.

### Extraordinary buildings

The oldest architectural monument on the Saale and Unstrut Rivers is a small tower dating back to 1555: the so-called *Steinkauz* (little owl), located in the Steinmeister vineyard site near the Rossbach district of Naumburg. One of the most unusual vineyard “huts” is one which could be better classified as a villa: in 1722, Johann Christian Steinauer, court jeweler to Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels, had a prestigious residence built above his vineyard, “Im Blütengrund” near Grossjena. Another object of pure prestige was the ostentatious “hut” built in the *Schlifterweinberg* by the founders of the Rotkäppchen Sekt Cellars in Frey-

burg an der Unstrut. The polygon-shaped timber-framed pavilion in the *Herzoglicher Weinberg* (Ducal Vineyard) in Freyburg still contains its original 18th-century rococo furnishings. With its three-sided, angled façade, it still offers visitors a breathtaking panoramic view across the Unstrut valley. Last but not least, the “Little Tuscan Castle” on Freyburg's Schweigenberg also provides proof that the wealthy and propertied citizens of the region often used their vineyards as country retreats. Here, they enjoyed holding lively parties and making public displays of their wealth and status. The *Weinbauverband* (Wine Growers' Association) of Saale-Unstrut can provide detailed information about the exact locations and visiting hours of the huts, cottages and villas in the region's vineyards.

Weinbauverband Saale-Unstrut •  
Querfurter Str. 10, Freyburg •  
Tel. 034464-261 10 • www.  
naturlich-saale-unstrut.de

### 35 The “Stone Picture Book” near Naumburg

► Fold-out map, M 11

At the confluence of the Unstrut and Saale Rivers, just outside of Naumburg, the Markgrafenberg hill rises up near Grossjena. With its terraced vineyards, dry stone walls, vintners' huts and fruit orchards, this hill is a favorite destination in the Burgenlandkreis. Here, in 1705, the Naumburg jeweler Johann Christian Steinauer, purveyor to the court of Duke Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels, purchased a vineyard and had a stately villa built above it. In 1722, he commissioned a sculptor to carve a monumental cycle of reliefs into the cliffs

at the foot of the vineyard, which he then dedicated to the duke in honor of the tenth anniversary of his reign. The name of the sculptor is unknown today; however, his work has become famous well beyond Naumburg as the *Steinernes Bilderbuch* (Stone Picture Book). Over a space



The reliefs in Grossjena, near Naumburg, depict Jesus as a vintner.

of just under 200 m (650 ft), twelve life-size reliefs emerge from the colored sandstone. They depict scenes from the Old and New Testaments or are dedicated to the hunt, depicting the sovereign and identifying the benefactor by name.

On the third panel, we see a picture of Christian of Saxe-Weissenfels mounted proudly on horseback. The fifth panel depicts the biblical wedding at Cana: the carvings show the wedding guests shortly before Jesus transforms water into wine. In front

of the long banquet table are six large pitchers, into which a servant is pouring water. Johann Christian Steinauer is immortalized on the seventh panel: According to the inscription, he donated the relief cycle in Naumburg on March 17, 1722. The dedication reads, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to mankind.” The eighth panel shows Jesus, treading on grapes with his bare feet in a wine vat, while men and women vintners in contemporary dress bring in more grapes in wooden tubs. The next picture depicts Noah, as the first wine grower: He holds a grapevine in one hand and a vintner’s knife in the other. The tenth relief is dedicated to labor in the vineyards: Here, vintners with hooks over their shoulders come down from the terraced vineyard to collect their wages from the steward; the owner of the vineyard can be seen sitting in a chair on the left side of the picture.

### Im Blütengrund

The Stone Picture Book is located on private property and is not directly accessible to the public; however, you can get a good view from the Blütengrund section of Grossjena.

Following the road a little further, you reach the memorial site dedicated to the sculptor, painter and graphic artist Max Klinger, who has been called the “German Rodin”. He, too, had a cottage here in the vineyards – his “Etching Studio in the Blütengrund”. The walk is rewarding not least of all because of the wonderful, wide-ranging view of the Saale and the Unstrut.

Tourist Information • Markt 12, Naumburg • Tel. 03445-27 31 24 • [www.](http://www.)

naumburg.de • Open Mon-Fri 9 am–6 pm

## Nearby Destinations SIGHTS

### Naumburg

This cathedral city lies in the center of the wine region, where the Unstrut empties into the Saale. A first stop for tourists should be a visit to the beautiful Uta and the other patron statues in the Naumburg Cathedral. After that, it is hard to decide where to stop first in the Old Town: Visitors to the *Hohe Lilie* (Tall Lily) City Museum, with its beautiful Renaissance façade learn that its oldest section is a Romanesque *domus lapidae* (“stone house”). The Nietzsche House is dedicated to the life and work of the philosopher and poet Friedrich Nietzsche, who lived in Naumburg as a boy. Finally, from the *Wenzelsturm* (tower of St. Wenzel’s Church), visitors have an excellent view of the nearly 1000-year-old city and its well-preserved medieval city walls. Tourist Information • Markt 12, Naumburg • Tel. 03445-27 31 24 • www.naumburg.de • Open Mon-Fri 9 am–6 pm

### Schloss Neuenburg

High above Freyburg, the wine-growing town at the center of the Saale-Unstrut region, stands the monumental Neuenburg Castle complex. Once the largest castle of the landgraves of Thüringen, a section of the complex now houses the Saxony-Anhalt Wine Museum. The museum informs visitors about wine-growing culture in central Germany and also traces the role played by the juice of the grape throughout history, from Antiquity to the pres-

ent day, and its multiple uses in the kitchen, the church, and even in medicine.



### MERIAN-Tip



#### THE GOSECK CIRCLE

This sun observatory near Goseck, just a few miles to the northwest of Naumburg, is several thousand years older than Stonehenge. This circular structure of ditches was constructed around 4800 BC, and served as a ritual site during the Neolithic period. With its 75 m (246 ft) in diameter and 2 m (6.5 ft) high wooden palisades, it is the oldest sun observatory in Europe. The gates of the now-reconstructed circular palisade were directly aligned with the sun: On the day of the winter solstice, the sun rose inside the eastern gate and set in the western gate.

InfoPoint at Goseck Castle • Burgstr. 53, Goseck • Tel. 03443-20 05 61 • www.sonnenobservatorium-goseck.de



Stiftung Dome und Schlösser in Sachsen-Anhalt • Museum Schloss Neuenburg • Schloss 1, Freyburg • Tel. 034464-355 30 • [www.schloss-neuenburg.de](http://www.schloss-neuenburg.de) • April–Oct, open daily 10 am–6 pm; Nov–March, open Tues–Sun 10 am–5 pm • Entrance fee € 4

### Wine tasting

Over forty private wine estates, the Wine Growers' Association and the state-owned Landesweingut Kloster Pforta, as well as sparkling wine cellars steeped in tradition – all located along the Saale-Unstrut Wine Route between Memleben and Bad Sulza, on the wine routes on the White Elster and on the Mansfeld Lakes – invite visitors to sample their wines and sparkling wines.

Weinbauverband Saale-Unstrut • Querfurter Str. 10, Freyburg • Tel. 034464-261 10 • [www.natuerlich-saale-unstrut.de](http://www.natuerlich-saale-unstrut.de)

### The Werder Wachtelberg

Europe's northernmost vineyard approved for production of QbA wine lies in Werder an der Havel, 8 km (5 miles) to the west of Potsdam and about 40 km (25 miles) from Berlin. The "Wachtelberg" single vineyard site recalls the importance that viticulture once held for many towns and villages in the March (or Margraviate) of Brandenburg.

Weinbau Dr. Lindicke • Am Plessower Eck 2, Werder an der Havel • Tel. 03327-74 14 10 • [www.wachtelberg.de](http://www.wachtelberg.de) • Vineyard tours and wine tastings Mon–Fri by appointment

### MUSEUM

#### The Nebra Ark

In 1999, treasure hunters on an illegal excavation unearthed a priceless

object on the Mittelberg near Nebra: the Nebra Sky Disk. Today, it is on display in the State Museum of Prehistory in Halle. At the discovery site, the *Arche Nebra* (Nebra Ark) visitors' center educates guests about the significance of the approximately 3600-year-old bronze disk, which depicts a full moon, crescent moons and stars.

Arche Nebra • An der Steinklöbe 16, Nebra-Kleinwangen • Tel. 034461-255 20 • [www.himmelscheibe-erleben.de](http://www.himmelscheibe-erleben.de) • April–Oct, open daily 10 am–6 pm; Nov–March, open Tues–Fri 10 am–4 pm, Sat & Sun 10 am–5 pm • Entrance fee € 7.50

### WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

An interesting and varied bicycle tour through the beautiful landscape leads from Naumburg, along the Unstrut to Freyburg; you can then follow the well-marked Unstrut Bike Route to Burgscheidungen. The 57-km (35-mile) route takes about six hours to travel. There are plenty of opportunities to stop and rest along the way.

Tourist Information • Burgstr. 5, Merseburg • Tel. 03461-21 41 70 • [www.merseburg.de](http://www.merseburg.de) • Open Mon–Fri 9 am–6 pm, Sat 9 am–1 pm

### FOOD AND DRINK

#### Hotel Unstruttal

Centrally located on the marketplace in the wine-growing town of Freyburg, the Hotel Unstruttal welcomes visitors with seasonally changing culinary delights and selected wines from the Saale-Unstrut region.

Marktstr. 11, Freyburg • Tel. 034464-70 70 • [www.unstruttal.info](http://www.unstruttal.info) • Open daily 11 am–10 pm • €€€

### Parkhotel Güldene Berge

The Parkhotel in Weissenfels is housed in a stylish villa that was built around 1900. The restaurant, with its winter garden, offers the finest-quality international and regional cuisine.

Langendorfer Str. 94, Weissenfels • Tel. 03443-392 00 • [www.gueldeneberge.de](http://www.gueldeneberge.de) • Open daily 7 am–midnight • €€€€

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### Wine festivals

Countless wine festivals take place in the Saale-Unstrut region throughout the year – from the Naumburg Wine Festival in the last week in February to the Federweisser Festivals in October. Other highlights include the Vine Blossom Festivals in Grossjena and Zappendorf, the “wine and indulgence festival” in Memleben, the Vintners’ Festival on the Werder

Wachtelberg, the Summer Wine Festival in Steigra, the Wine Festivals in Laucha, Dorndorf, Jessen, Reinsdorf, Bad Sulza, Erfurt, Burgwerben, Nebra, Naumburg, Karsdorf, Halle, Jena and Leipzig; the Saale “wine mile,” the wine festival on the grounds of the Landesweingut Kloster Pforta in Bad Kösen, the Wine and Castle Festival at Balgstädt Castle, and the Vintners’ Festival in Hohnstedt. The regional wine queen of Saale-Unstrut is crowned at the Vintners’ Festival in Freyburg on the second weekend in September. For an overview of all wine festivals, see: [www.saale-unstrut-info.de](http://www.saale-unstrut-info.de)

### SERVICE

#### AUSKUNFT

Weinbauverband Saale-Unstrut • Querfurter Str. 10, Freyburg • Tel. 034464-261 10 • [www.natuerlich-saale-unstrut.de](http://www.natuerlich-saale-unstrut.de)

The Nebra Sky Disk depicts a full moon, crescent moons and stars. This sensational find, dating from the Bronze Age, was buried around 1600 BC.





**Sachsen** Terraced cultivation and dry stone walls with steep stairs shape the look of the vineyard slopes on the Elbe. Sachsen vintners produce an astonishing diversity of grape varieties on these small parcels of land.

◀ The Spitzhaus in Radebeul sits above the Elbe Valley vineyards.

The Elbe River winds its way through the terraced vineyards like a blue ribbon. Running alongside the river is the Sachsen Wine Route, extending for about 60 km (37 miles), from Pirna, through Dresden, Radebeul, Coswig and Meissen to the idyllic Elbe wine villages around Diesbar-Seußlitz. The town of Schlieben in southern Brandenburg, and Jessen in eastern Saxony-Anhalt, also belong to the wine-growing region of Sachsen.

The growing region is divided into two districts: “Meissen” encompasses the Elbe Valley, including the collective sites of “Spaargebirge” near Meissen and Proschwitz; “Schlossweinberg” near Seußlitz and Weinböhla; “Elbhänge” near Pillnitz, Merbitz and Pesterwitz; as well as “Lössnitz” near Radebeul. The “Elstertal” district does not include any collective sites. Covering approximately 470 ha (1160 acres), Sachsen is one of Germany’s smallest wine-growing regions; only 0.2% of all German wines originate from here. Nevertheless, the region produces a wide range of wines: currently, over forty different grape varieties are grown here, some 80% of them white. Müller-Thurgau, Riesling, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris) are the dominant varieties; Traminer is also well represented. The winter-hardy Goldriesling is a rarity in Germany.

This region is marked by the influence of the continental climate, with its warm summers and cold winters. Here, grapes flourish in mild daytime temperatures and cool nights.

During the growing season there is plenty of rain and sunshine – in other words, conditions are ideal. The ridges of the Ore Mountains, Saxon Switzerland and the Lusatian Highlands provide shelter for the wine-growing region; with an average temperature of 8.9 °C (48 °F), it is 1 to 2 °C (2 to 4 °F) warmer than the neighboring regions.

## Goldriesling

With a wide variety of geological formations, the soils of the Elbe Valley are very diverse. Granite, sandstone, spongolite, loess and river sands give the wines different characters from one vineyard to the next.

Bishop Bruno of Meissen probably brought viticulture to the Sachsen region in the late 11th century. Wine cultivation was first documented about 850 years ago. The area planted with vines reached its greatest extent in the 15th and 16th centuries, covering about 4000 ha (9880 acres). Terraced cultivation was introduced in the early 17th century under the Saxon Prince-Electors Christian II and Johann Georg I; since then, it has shaped the landscape of the wine-growing region on the Elbe and in its tributary valleys.

## 36 Schloss Wackerbarth: riddled, but not shaken

► Fold-out map, P 11

Wackerbarth Castle, in the Niederlössnitz district of Radebeul, is surrounded by vineyards. On the right bank of the Elbe, outside the gates of Dresden, Imperial Count Christoph August von Wackerbarth, Field Marshall General under the Saxon Prince-Elector August the Strong, had this baroque complex built as a



The Belvedere overlooks the vineyards above Schloss Wackerbarth (► p. 131).

retirement residence in around 1730; he named it *Wackerbarths Ruh* (Wackerbarth's Rest). He engaged the most important Saxon master builders of the period as his architects: Christoph Knöffel, the primary exponent of the Saxon rococo movement, and Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann, master builder of the Zwinger Palace in Dresden. Knöffel designed the castle, while Pöppelmann was responsible for the pavilion above the terraced vineyards – the “Belvedere”.

### An historic monument

Over the years, Wackerbarth Castle was auctioned off for the benefit of widows and orphans, used as a school for boys and as a military hospital, among other things. In 1952, under the GDR government, the complex was converted into a state-run agricultural facility; the *Volk-*

*seigenes Gut* (or VEG: People-Owned Property) was renamed as the VEG *Weinbau Radebeul* (VEG Radebeul Wine Estate). The castle was renovated with each change of function. Today, the castle is a listed historical monument. The original building structure has been restored or carefully reconstructed.

Today, the castle presents itself as a “discovery wine estate”. Elegant, assertive wines ripen on its *terroir* – which consists of weathered, heat-retaining syenite, granite and granite porphyry soils, interspersed with loess and loam. Since the grapes ripen slowly, the mineral elements are retained well, lending the wines their unique mineral character.

The varieties grown here include Riesling, Weissburgunder and Traminer, as well as Goldriesling, Kerner, Bacchus, Müller-Thurgau, Scheurebe, Grauburgunder, Dornfelder, Frühburgunder (Pinot Noir Précoce) and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir).

### Traditional production

At Wackerbarth Castle, *Sekt* is produced using the traditional method of bottle fermentation (*méthode champenoise*). As in traditional champagne production, the second fermentation takes place inside the bottle. The *Sekt* is then aged on its lees for several months – or up to several years – in a cool, dark cellar. The bottles are then placed on pupitres, or riddling racks, where they are carefully turned each day, gradually moving them from a horizontal to an upside-down position. This causes the lees to settle completely in the neck of the bottle. The bottlenecks are subsequently plunged into a refrigerated

brine, causing the yeast to freeze. The plug of ice containing the lees then pops out when the bottle is opened. After adjusting for the loss of pressure, the bottle can be resealed. This time-consuming process represents the most expensive method of sparkling wine production.

Visitors can view the baroque palace complex with its historic park and modern themed gardens on a tour of the castle and gardens; during the tour, you can taste two types of *wine* and one *Sekt*. The wine tour takes guests into the wine cellar, where you can learn about fermentation and barrique storage, as well as sample three different wines. The master taster also invites visitors on a walking tour through the Wackerbarth Castle vineyards. From the vantage point of the steep slopes, you can hear interesting facts about 850 years of viticultural history in Sachsen and learn how wines and sparkling wines are produced in Germany's north-easternmost wine-growing region. The two-and-a-half-hour tour is supplemented by samples of four different wines.

Other events at the castle include chamber music concerts, a vintners' brunch, and much more.

Sächsisches Staatsweingut GmbH  
Schloss Wackerbarth • Wackerbarth-  
str. 1, Radebeul • Sekt tours daily at 5  
pm, Sat & Sun also 1 pm & 3 pm • En-  
trance fee € 10 • Castle and garden  
tour Sun 4 pm • € 15 • Wine tours  
daily at 2 pm, Sat & Sun also 12 noon  
and 4 pm • € 10 • Vineyard walking  
tour € 25 • Times by appointment,  
also for all other events: Tel. 0351-  
895 50, or see [www.schloss-wackerbarth.de](http://www.schloss-wackerbarth.de)

## 37 Hoflössnitz and the Saxon club

► Fold-out map, P 11

Hoflössnitz, near Radebeul, is the only wine estate in the Sachsen region that operates according to certified organic guidelines. Using primarily traditional steep slope cultivation, the vintners work about 8.5 ha (21 acres) of vineyard land. The estate, located at the center of the Sachsen Wine Route, encompasses the Radebeul vineyard sites of “Goldener Wagen”, “Johannisberg” and “Steinrücken” in the Meissen district. First and foremost, the estate cultivates classical white grape varieties such as Riesling, Grauburgunder, Weissburgunder and Traminer; however, there are also a few new varietals such as Johanniter or Solaris. Spätburgunder and Regent are among the red varieties to be increasingly cultivated; they are also vinified with white varieties to produce *Rotling* (light red)

The “Saxon club” bottle shape was invented at Hoflössnitz in 1931.





The ballroom on the first floor of the country residence of Hoflössnitz (► p. 133) was painted in the 17th century under Prince Elector Johann Georg II of Saxony.

wines. This specialty from the Sachsen region is also known by the name *Schieler*, which is derived from the Saxon pronunciation of “Schüler” (“pupil”). According to legend, pupils at the *Fürstenschulen* (prince elector’s schools) drank the inexpensive *Schieler* as a table wine because they could not afford more expensive wines.

Viticulture has been practiced for over 600 years on the Lössnitz slopes, which are located 10 km (6.2 miles) to the north of Dresden. William the One-Eyed, Margrave of Meissen, purchased the site where the estate now stands in 1401. It remained under the ownership of the Wettin princes – who ruled Saxony until 1918 – for the next 500 years. They acquired additional vineyards in the area, expanded the size of their holdings, and made Hoflössnitz the center of their viticultural activities.

### Wine and hunting celebrations

The central point of the estate was the press house, whose oldest structural elements date back to the 16th century. The building housed the wine press, as well as the seat of the vineyard management. In 1650, Prince Elector Johann Georg I had a small castle built directly adjacent to the press house, and his successors expanded it further. Here, the Saxon court celebrated its annual wine harvest feast and other lively events. August the Strong often invited guests to hunting expeditions at Hoflössnitz as well.

Today, the Saxon Museum of Viticulture is housed in the ground floor of the little castle. The open-air section of the museum is dedicated to the oenologist Carl Pfeiffer, who rejuvenated viticulture in the Elbe Valley following the phylloxera disaster of the 19th century. Beginning in 1913, he

committed himself to improving the quality of Lössnitz wine, not least by preparing the soil with mineral fertilizer before systematically replanting the ravaged vineyard terraces. Pfeiffer became the director of the Institute for Viticultural Research and Education, which was established at Hoflössnitz in 1927. Under his aegis, a marketing strategy was developed which would make Elbe wines famous far beyond the region. It reached its apex in 1931 with the invention of the “Saxon club” – an elegant green glass wine bottle in the shape of a cudgel. Similar to the *Bocksbeutel*, which is closely associated with Franconian wine, the club-shaped bottle was intended to make wine from the Sachsen region easily recognizable. Unfortunately, the idea did not catch on well, since the bottles broke easily during shipment due to their minimal supporting surface. In the 1990s, a few Sachsen wineries returned to the idea of the characteristic Saxon club and used it for select wines and special bottlings.

### An estate for body and soul

Since 1998, the Hoflössnitz Wine Estate Museum Foundation has taken charge of the former estate’s cultural activities, while an operating company is responsible for wine cultivation according to strict ecological guidelines. The former *Kavalierhaus* (gentlemen’s residence) at Hoflössnitz now houses a small wine shop, where visitors can sample the estate’s entire product range – from wine to organic vinegar. The former vintner’s house has been converted into a restaurant, where guests are treated to traditional Saxon cuisine as well as Mediterranean specialties. Of

## MERIAN-Tip

12

### THE CRADLE OF SAXONY

Meissen, once the residence of Saxony’s ruling Witten dynasty, is located on the banks of the Elbe. Among the most important buildings in the Old Town is the Albrechtsburg, the former Prince Elector’s castle, where Augustus the Strong later established the world-famous Meissen Porcelain Manufactory. Next to the castle on the *Burgberg* (castle hill), the Gothic cathedral also towers above the city with its statues of the patrons, Emperor Otto I and his wife, Adelheid of Burgundy. Also worth a visit is the porcelain museum and visitors’ center, whose façade is decorated with 9-meter (30-ft) high porcelain panels.

– Albrechtsburg: Dompl. 1, Meissen • Tel. 03521-470 70 • [www.albrechtburg-meissen.de](http://www.albrechtburg-meissen.de) • Nov–Feb, open daily 10 am–5 pm; March–Oct, open daily 10 am–6 pm • Entrance fee € 8, Guided tour € 3

– Cathedral: Dompl. 7, Meissen • Tel. 03521-45 24 90 • [www.meiland.de/dom-zu-meissen](http://www.meiland.de/dom-zu-meissen) • Nov–March, open daily 10 am–4 pm; April–Oct, open daily 9 am–6 pm • Entrance fee € 2,50 • Guided tour € 1.50

– Staatliche Porzellan-Manufaktur Meissen • Museum of MEISSEN® Art • Talstr. 9, Meissen • Tel. 03521-46 82 33 • [www.meissen.com/de/museum/oeffnungszeiten](http://www.meissen.com/de/museum/oeffnungszeiten) • May–Oct, open daily 9 am–6 pm; Nov–April, 9 am–5 pm • Entrance fee € 8.50



course, the wine list also includes the estate's own certified organically grown specialties.

– Weingut & Weinstube Hoflössnitz • Knohllweg 37, Radebeul • Tel. 0351-839 83 33 • [www.hofloessnitz.de](http://www.hofloessnitz.de) • Restaurant: Tel. 0351-839 83 55 • [www.hofloessnitz-shop.de/restaurant](http://www.hofloessnitz-shop.de/restaurant) • Open Tues–Sat 11 am–10 pm, Sun 11 am–8 pm

– Stiftung Weingutmuseum Hoflößnitz • Knohllweg 37, Radebeul • Tel. 0351-839 83 41 • [www.weinmuseum.de](http://www.weinmuseum.de) • Nov–March, open Tues–Sun 12–3 pm; April–Oct, Tues–Sun 10 am–5 pm; guided tour 2 pm • Entrance fee € 3 • Tours € 5

## Nearby Destinations

### SIGHTS

#### Saxon steamboat tours

Nine historic paddle steamers, the oldest of which was built in 1879, are available for boat tours on the Elbe River. The world's oldest and largest fleet of paddle steamboats travels between Seusslitz, near Meissen, and Bad Schandau in Saxon Switzerland. 14 ports of call • Schedule and price information: Tel. 0351-86 60 90 or see [www.saechsische-dampfschiffahrt.de](http://www.saechsische-dampfschiffahrt.de)

#### Weinböhla

In the Elbe Valley basin, between Meissen and Coswig, lies the health resort Weinböhla, whose name also contains that of the grape beverage. In addition to visiting one of the many wine cellars, you can enjoy climbing the *Wartturm* (watchtower), the *König-Albert-Turm* (King Albert Tower) or the *Friedensturm* (Tower of Peace) for a wonderful view of the wine-growing village and the surrounding area. The Sachsen

Wine Route, which leads through the “Weinböhlaer Gellertberg” vineyard site, invites you to take a walk through the vineyard landscape between the Friedewald nature preserve and the Moritzburg pond area. Tourist Information • Kirchpl. 2, Weinböhla • Tel. 035243-560 00 • [www.weinboehla.de](http://www.weinboehla.de)

#### Wine city Dresden

The *Frauenkirche*, *Semperoper* and *Zwinger* Palace, the valuable art collections and the garden city of Heller-*au* have all made Dresden famous among art lovers throughout the world. However, the state capital of Saxony also has a great deal to offer for wine connoisseurs. The vineyards around Wachwitz and Loschwitz, the *Elbhangfest* (folk festival in the villages along the slopes of the Elbe), as well as the countless restaurants and wine cellars all tempt visitors to sample and savor the area's wines. A visit to Pillnitz Castle is also highly recommended. On the sunny slopes of the former prince electors' summer residence, grapes ripen to produce delicious Elbe Valley wine.

Tourist Information at the Kulturpalast • Schlossstrasse, Dresden • Tel. 0351-50 16 01 60 • [www.dresden.de](http://www.dresden.de)

### FOOD AND DRINK

#### Vincenz Richter

This romantic restaurant is located in Meissen's Old Town, in an historic timber-frame house built in 1523. The restaurant, which also has its own wine estate, has been under family ownership since 1873. Specialties of the house include “Vincenz's Musical Wine Tasting” and the “Meissen Menu”.

Romantikrestaurant Vincenz Richter •  
An der Frauenkirche 12, Meissen •  
Tel. 03521-45 32 85 • [www.vincenz-richter.de](http://www.vincenz-richter.de) • €€

### Seal of Quality

Sachsen is the only wine-growing region in Germany to award special recognition to restaurants and taverns with a special wine-drinking atmosphere.

Only those establishments that meet the strict criteria are given the coveted *Gütesiegel* (seal of quality). Currently, there are twenty restaurateurs who offer expert information about regional viticulture and sight-seeing along the Sachsen Wine Route.

Tourismusverband Sächsisches Elbland • Fabrikstr. 16, Meissen •  
Tel. 03521-763 50 • [www.elbland.de](http://www.elbland.de) (heading “Elbland genießen” ▶ “Gaumenschmaus”)

## FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

### Radebeul and Meissen Wine Festivals

The two largest wine festivals in the region both take place on the last weekend in September. In Radebeul, the wine festival is combined with the Saxon State Theaters' travelling theater festival.

In Meissen, visitors are invited to drink wine and celebrate on the marketplace and in the lanes of the romantic Old Town.

Last weekend in September • Weinbauverband Sachsen • Fabrikstr. 16, Meissen • Tel. 03521-76 35 30 • [www.weinbauverband-sachsen.de](http://www.weinbauverband-sachsen.de)

## SERVICE

### INFORMATION

Weinbauverband Sachsen •  
Fabrikstr. 16, Meissen • Tel. 03521-76 35 30 • [www.weinbauverband-sachsen.de](http://www.weinbauverband-sachsen.de)

The most beautiful dairy in the world: Pfunds Molkerei at Bautzner Strasse 79 in Dresden (▶ p. 136), also serves select Sachsen wines.





**Württemberg** Red wine grapes in particular flourish especially well on the steep slopes of the Neckar River and its tributaries. The leader among them is Trollinger, the “national drink” of the Württemberg region.

◀ Grapevines encircle the Württemberg hill, where the ancestral castle of the Württemberg rulers once stood.

The wine-growing region of Württemberg extends from the Swabian Alps in the south to the Tauber Valley near Bad Mergentheim. With 11,500 ha (28,400 acres) of vineyards, it is the fourth-largest wine-growing region in Germany. Far to the south, a few additional small growing areas near Kressbronn and Lindau are also included in it. In terms of wine geography, the Württemberg and Bavaria sections of Lake Constance are classified as part of the Württemberg region, which otherwise encompasses the districts of Kocher-Jagst-Tauber, Remstal-Stuttgart, Oberer Neckar and Württembergisch Unterland. Well protected by the Black Forest and the Swabian Alps, Württemberg is primarily home to red grape varieties. Vineyards can be found everywhere that water flows – in other words, on the Neckar and its tributaries, the Rems, Enz, Tauber, Kocher and Jagst Rivers. In these areas, the climate is generally neither too hot nor too cold; sufficient precipitation throughout the year provides ideal conditions for vine cultivation.

## Steep slopes on the Neckar

Extremely diverse soils ensure that Württemberg wines are also widely varied in character. Molasse sediments are typical for the soil in the area around Lake Constance. In the Rems Valley near Stuttgart, volcanic stone predominates. In many places in Württemberg, the region's volcanic past is recognizable from the conical shape of the hills. Character-

istic for the Württemberg region are, above all, the steep, rocky slopes interspersed with shell-limestone that are found along the Neckar. By contrast, keuper soils are very common on the Upper Neckar.

## Trollinger – the national drink

Especially typical for the Württemberg region is steep slope viticulture along the Neckar and its tributaries. Some of the sites are terraced; Here, the grapevines are tended by hand. Many vintners cultivate small plots of land and deliver their crop to one of the region's 55 wine growers' cooperatives. The landscape of their work – and probably a drop of the noble wine as well – even inspired the poet Friedrich Hölderlin in his time: “Blessed land! Not a hill of yours grows without a grapevine...”

Apart from the Ahr, Württemberg is the only German wine-growing region in which red varieties predominate. Almost three-quarters of all Württemberg wines are made from red grapes such as Trollinger, Lemberger, Schwarzriesling (Pinot Meunier), Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) or Dornfelder. The most important white grape variety is Riesling, which accounts for 18 percent of the total vineyard area. Varieties such as Kerner, Dornfelder and Acolon were bred at the State Educational and Research Institute for Viticulture and Pomology (LVWO) in Weinsberg.

Viticulture in Württemberg was first documented in 766; presumably, its origins date from Roman times. Grapes flourish in almost every section and on every soil in this region. It is therefore no surprise that the people of Württemberg were industrious

vintners early on. There were 45,000 ha (111,000 acres) of vineyards here before the region was ravaged by the Thirty Years' War, between 1618 and 1648. It took a very long time for the land, the people and viticulture to recover; yet, such a vast area devoted to vines was a thing of the past.

The consequences of a law dating from 1552 are evident to this day: At that time, the Württemberg government established the practice of *Realerbteilung* (partible inheritance). This meant that a family's inheritance was divided among all the children in equal portions. Thus, the parcels of land owned by individual vintners became smaller and smaller – causing the cooperatives to become progressively more powerful. It is this structure which characterizes Württemberg today: over 15,000 vintners deliver 85 percent of the grape harvest to local cooperatives.

With its historic décor, Germany's oldest *Sekt* manufactory is one of the interesting attractions in Esslingen's Old Town.

### 38 The Kessler Sekt Manufactory in Esslingen

► Fold-out map, G 19

Germany's oldest *Sekt* manufactory has its headquarters in the middle of Esslingen, in the historic heart of the city. In the vaulted cellars – up to 800 years old – underneath the former *Speyrer Pflughof* (a former tithe house), bottles of noble *Sekt* are aged, some of which are still riddled and disgorged by hand according to traditional methods.

#### From France to the world

The history of Germany's first *Sekt* cellars begins in France, at the renowned *Veuve Clicquot* Champagne house in Reims. The young Württemberg native Georg Christian von Kessler began working as an accountant at the firm in 1807, and his career progressed rapidly. Originally, *Barbe-Nicole* Clicquot, the widow of



the champagne tycoon, had promised that he was to take over as head of the company in 1824. However, everything turned out differently. Exactly what happened at that time in Reims, and why Georg Christian von Kessler – who had led the company very successfully – was prevented from assuming ownership, has never been fully explained. The records from this period are under lock and key at Veuve Clicquot to this day.

Georg Christian von Kessler returned to his homeland and founded his own company in Esslingen: G.C. Kessler & Compagnie, which was originally housed in the former press house of the *Kaisheimer Pflughof*, below Esslingen Castle. Using Frühburgunder (Pinot Noir Précoce), he produced his first 4000 bottles of sparkling wine according to the *méthode champenoise* and named it “sparkling wine from Württemberg”. In 1827, an article in the “Economic News and Proceedings” read as follows: “Last autumn in Esslingen, Mr. Kessler experimented with producing sparkling wine from the must of Clevner and Elbling grapes according to the *méthode champenoise*. To the extent that we have been able to evaluate them in the past half-year, both wines – particularly the Clevner – produced highly satisfactory results in terms of flavor, color and effervescence.” Kessler’s sparkling wine was an immediate success, both in his home region of Württemberg as well as overseas. In the first ten years alone, Kessler sold around half a million bottles of his *Sekt*.

In 1832, Kessler purchased his first vaulted cellar in the Speyrer Pflughof; today, it serves as the company’s headquarters and production site. The im-



The cleaning and bottling line at the Kessler Sekt Cellars (► p. 140).

posing timber-frame building was built in the early 13th century. Its cellars were used for storing tithe wine for approximately 600 years. Today, the Kessler company owns twelve vaulted cellars which are all connected to one another. Inside, the *Sekt* bottles are stored on riddling racks in the protection of darkness and at a temperature of 12°C (53.6°F).

In 1841, King Wilhelm I presented the successful entrepreneur – who also established a modern textile factory – with the Knight’s Cross of the Order of the Württemberg Crown, thus raising him to aristocratic status. Georg Christian von Kessler died in 1842. Prior to his death, he sold his portion of the company to the other shareholders.

### Awarded with silver

It was not until 1850 that Germany’s oldest well-known *Sekt* brand appeared on the market: “Kessler Cabinet” made its debut at the Leipzig Trade Fair. Seventeen years later, the



The walls of Hornberg Castle (► p. 142) rise up from the vineyards above the Neckar near Gundelsheim.

Kessler company was awarded the silver medal at the International Exhibition in Paris. Georg Christian von Kessler's successors skillfully expanded the foreign business – which its founder had so adeptly begun – even further, and made Kessler into a famous and successful international company. The sparkling droplets from Württemberg were drunk by kings and princes. In Germany as well, Kessler Sekt was served at many prestigious occasions – for example, at state receptions under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's government.

Nevertheless, in 2004, the traditional company, which had been so successful for so long, was forced to declare bankruptcy due to a massive drop in revenues. The reason for its poor sales was a changing marketplace and declining consumer consumption. Four months after the company declared insolvency, business adminis-

trator Christoph Baur took over management. Today, Kessler is once again recognized both domestically and internationally for its high-quality products.

Those who wish to see for themselves what makes traditional bottle fermentation so special can descend into the deep vaulted cellars of the Kessler Manufactory in Esslingen and view the production process. And of course, at the Kessler Karree wine bar, which opened in 2007, visitors have the opportunity to sample the sparkling wine.

Kessler Sekt • Kessler-Karree 18,  
Esslingen, • Tel. 0711-31 05 93 41 •  
[www.kessler-sekt.de](http://www.kessler-sekt.de) • Open Mon–Fri  
11 am–7 pm, Sat 10 am–4 pm

### 39 Hornberg Castle

► Fold-out map, G 17

*Burg Hornberg* (Hornberg Castle) – also known as Götzenburg – rises up

majestically atop a steep rock spur above the Neckar, near Neckarzimmern. The castle itself is thought to be the oldest and largest castle complex on the Neckar; it houses the oldest wine estate in Baden-Württemberg, and the second-oldest in the world.

The first written mention of the castle dates from 1184 – and viticulture is documented in the same place. The castle is certainly much older than this. Numerous artifacts found in the surrounding area testify to the presence of the Romans in the 4th century. It is likely that they were the first people to construct terraced vineyards here on the steep slopes using natural stone walls; they are still in use today.

Many of the castle's rulers cultivated vines. Without a doubt, the most famous of these was the knight Götz von Berlichingen, upon whose eventful biography Johann Wolfgang von Goethe based his drama, *Goetz von Berlichingen*. He purchased the castle – along with its fields, vineyards, meadows, forests, houses, farms, villages and citizens – in 1517. Götz von Berlichingen, who up until that time had fought as an Imperial Knight in countless feuds, military campaigns and uprisings, was fulfilling a childhood dream with the purchase of the castle. For the next 45 years, he successfully devoted himself to viticulture – if not without interruptions. Götz spent a full eleven years in knightly detention or imprisonment. Götz von Berlichingen zu Hornberg, as he came to call himself, sold his wines as far away as the Austrian Imperial Court in Vienna.

### Heat-retaining walls

In 1612, Reinhard von Gemmingen

bought the castle, which remains in his family's possession to this day. The current lord of the castle is Baron Dajo von Gemmingen-Hornberg, a certified viticultural engineer and oenologist, who continues to manage the traditional wine estate.

The landscape around Hornberg Castle is dominated by vineyards on steep slopes which have been terraced and secured with natural stone walls. Around 9 km (5.6 miles) of walls run through the 10 ha (25 acre) wine estate. They store the daytime sunshine and pass the heat on to the grapevines at night. The Neckar River at the foot of the vineyard slopes also contributes to the balanced mi-

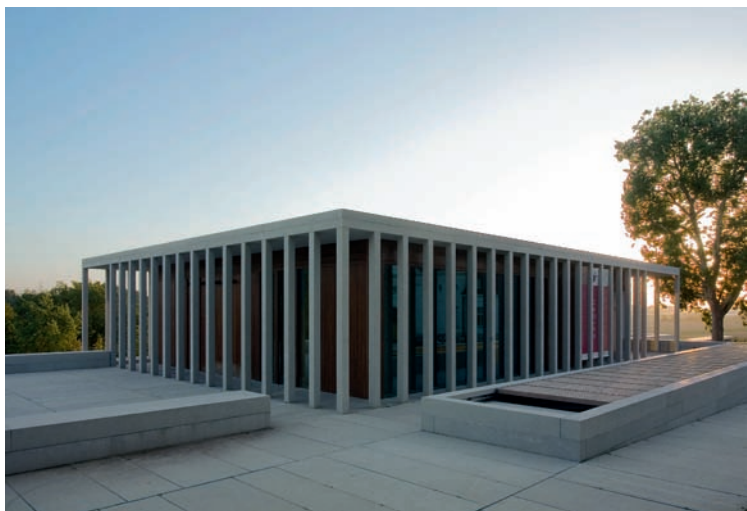
### DID YOU KNOW ...

... that *Schillerwein*, a Württemberg specialty, has nothing to do with Friedrich Schiller? Schillerwein is a *Rotling*, made from white and red grapes grown in the same vineyard. The name refers to the wine's *schillernd* (shimmering) color – which may have been pleasing to Friedrich Schiller as well.

croclimate. As in many other parts of Württemberg, the vineyards have to be cultivated manually and the grapes harvested by hand. The grapes are transported directly to the press house of the 400-year-old castle below Neckarzimmern for processing. In the approximately 40 meter (131 ft) long and 6 m (20 ft) high vaulted cellar, they are then vinified by the lord of the castle himself.

Many different grape varieties flourish on the steep, terraced slopes of Hornberg Castle. They range from Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc),





The Modern Literature Archive on Marbach's Schillerhöhe opened in 2006. This award-winning building combines classical forms with modern materials.

Riesling and Müller-Thurgau to Trollinger and Spätburgunder to ancient varieties such as Muskateller and Traminer. Hornberg Castle has only been classified as a Württemberg wine estate since the 1980s. Strictly speaking, it is located in the Baden region; however, the site is now listed as part of Württemberg.

There are various options available to tourists at the castle complex. The upper historic castle is open all year round; a tour lets visitors explore the historic vaulted cellar. In the Romanesque lower castle – the largest Hohenstaufen residence north of the Alps and the home of the castle lord – tours and wine tastings are available by appointment only.

Neckarzimmern, Burg Hornberg •  
Tel. 06261-5001 • [www.burg-hornberg.de](http://www.burg-hornberg.de) • Open all year round •  
Entrance fee €3

#### 40 Pfedelbach and the Prince's Barrel

► Fold-out map, H 17

Halfway between Heilbronn and Schwäbisch Hall, directly on the Roman *limes*, is the health resort Pfedelbach. Numerous walking and hiking paths lead through lovely meadows, green forests and past old sites that recall the long history of viticulture in the region. Eight wine presses once stood between Pfedelbach and the neighboring town of Öhringen. Today, pressing stones repeatedly mark the historic sites, and information boards along the "Wine Press Path" educational hiking trail explain their history.

#### The Hohenlohe Wine Cellar

Located directly on the Wine Press Path in Pfedelbach is the Viticulture Museum, which contains the show-piece of the town: the Prince's Barrel.

The third-largest wine cask in Germany is 4.5 m (15 ft) high by 4.5 m (15 ft) wide and has a capacity of 64,664 liters. Prince Joseph of Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Pfedelbach ordered its construction in 1752. Until 1828, it was used to store tithe wine for the princes. Today, the ornately decorated barrel in the *Lange Bau* (long building), which dates from 1604, is merely a display item. Nevertheless, the Hohenlohe Wine Cellar, which was established in 1950 in the cellar containing the Prince's Barrel, still gives its wines the name *Fürstentass-Weine* (Prince's Barrel wines). The building is an interesting sight in its own right: a timber-frame structure whose vaulted cellar is 70 m (230 ft) long and 12 m (39 ft) wide, with storage space for hundreds of thousands of liters of wine.

One of the last preserved aristocratic presses is in the Heuholz district of Pfedelbach. It was built in 1740 and was used as a communal press for the royal households of Hohenlohe-Waldenburg and Hohenlohe-Öhringen. It is remarkable for its self-supporting roof construction, which covers an area of 15 x 18 m (49 x 59 ft). The *Fürstlich-Hohenlohische Herrschaftskeller* was restored in 1990.

– Weinbaumuseum • Baierbacher Str. 12, Pfedelbach • May–Oct, open Sun & holidays 2–4 pm and by appointment • Free admission  
– Information at the Bürgermeisteramt Pfedelbach (Mayor's Office) • Tel. 07941-60 81 11 • www.hohenlohe.de

## Nearby Destinations

### SIGHTS

#### “experimenta” in Heilbronn

Württemberg's third-largest wine-growing community has another

side which has been less well known up until now: since the end of 2009, the “experimenta” learning and discovery center offers school children, in particular, the opportunity to discover, play and experiment with the natural sciences, technology, media, music and other subjects.

Kranenstr. 14, Heilbronn • Tel. 07131-88 79 59 50 • www.experimenta-heilbronn.de • Open Mon–Fri 9 am–6 pm, Sat & Sun 10 am–7 pm • Entrance fee € 9

#### Kaiserpfalz, Bad Wimpfen

Formerly, an imperial palace, this edifice in Bad Wimpfen is the state's most important architectural monument and the largest Hohenstaufen castle north of the Alps. Construction of the complex began in the 12th century: Here, the Hohenstaufen Emperor Frederick II subjugated his son, King Henry VII. In addition to the castle, there are many other interesting historical buildings in the area – particularly the town's well-preserved timber-frame buildings.

Tourist Information • Carl-Ulrich-Str. 1, Bad Wimpfen • Tel. 07963-972 00 • www.badwimpfen.de

#### Kloster Maulbronn

This former Cistercian Abbey, which dates back to 1147, is considered to be the most completely preserved medieval monastery complex in Europe. Every architectural period from the Romanesque to the late Gothic is represented here. In the Middle Ages, Maulbronn was an important political, economic and societal center. In 1993, UNESCO added the abbey to its list of World Heritage Sites.

Klosterhof 5, Maulbronn • Tel. 07043-

92 66 10 • [www.kloster-maulbronn.de](http://www.kloster-maulbronn.de) • March–Oct, open daily 9 am–5:30 pm • Entrance fee €6

### Marbach, Schiller's city

Anyone who visits Marbach cannot avoid crossing paths with its favorite son: the city is home to the Schiller National Museum, the German Literature Archive and the Modern Literature Museum. Also worth a visit is the historic Old Town, the entirety of which is protected as an historic monument. Thematic and city tours provide information in a compact format.

– Schiller-Nationalmuseum • Schillerhöhe 8–10, Marbach • Tel. 07144-8480 • [www.dla-marbach.de](http://www.dla-marbach.de) • Open Tues–Sun 10 am–6 pm • Entrance fee €9  
– For more information, see: [www.schillerstadt-marbach.de](http://www.schillerstadt-marbach.de)

## MUSEUM

### Faust-Museum

Georg Johann Faust is one of Württemberg's most famous sons, and at the same time, one of its most mysterious. His home town of Knittlingen has dedicated a museum to the alchemist, astrologer, fortune teller and physician in its old city hall.

Kirchpl. 2, Knittlingen • Tel. 07043-950 69 22 • [www.faustmuseum.de](http://www.faustmuseum.de) • Open Tues–Fri 9:30 am–12 noon and 1:30–5 pm; Sat, Sun & holidays 10 am–6 pm • Entrance fee €1.50 • Guided tours €3

## WALKING AND HIKING TRAILS

### Kocher-Jagst-Radweg

One of Germany's most popular bicycle trails leads along the banks of the Kocher and Jagst Rivers. For a remarkable 330 km (205 miles) with only moderate inclines, you can ex-

At the Stuttgart Wine Village (► MERIAN Tip, p. 147), wines from Baden and Württemberg as well as Swabian specialties are served all around the marketplace.



plore the northern section of the Württemberg wine region, traveling through beautiful landscapes off the main roads.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Kocher-Jagst-Radweg • Münzstr. 1, Schwäbisch Hall • Tel. 0791-755 74 44 • [www.kocher-jagst.de](http://www.kocher-jagst.de)

### Covered wagon rides

Of course, the best way to explore the area around Lauffen is on your own two feet. But if you prefer something more leisurely, you can ride in the “Katzenbeißer Carrus” covered wagon. During the trip, which lasts for several hours with a view of Württemberg’s largest steep vineyard slope, you can learn about Lauffen and the Neckar and enjoy snacks and wine samples.

Weingärtnerfamilie Buck • In den Herrenäckern 18, Lauffen am Neckar • Tel. 07133-5117 • [www.katzenbeisser-carrus.de](http://www.katzenbeisser-carrus.de)

### FOOD AND DRINK

#### Restaurant Rappenhof

Along with original Swabian specialties, you can savor a *Viertel* (quarter liter) of Trollinger. The Rappenhof has hearty meals as well as sophisticated gourmet dishes on its menu.

Rappenhofweg 1, Weinsberg • Tel. 07134-5190 • [www.rappenhof.de](http://www.rappenhof.de) • €€

### FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

#### Festival of 100 Wines

One hundred different wines on one long counter: On the second weekend in September, the four Grossheppach wine estates from Weinstadt im Remstal transform the marketplace into a culinary promenade.

Second weekend in September • Weinstadt-Grossheppach bei der

### MERIAN Tip

13

#### THE STUTTGART WINE VILLAGE

The Stuttgart Wine Village, one of Germany’s largest wine festivals, offers visitors a wonderful opportunity to taste their way through over 500 delicious wines from the Württemberg and Baden regions. The festival begins in the last week in August and continues for about ten days. Guests can then sample Swabian specialties from the kitchens and cellars beneath some 120 vine-clad trellises.

Pro Stuttgart Verkehrsverein • Lautenschlagerstr. 3, Stuttgart • Tel. 0711-29 50 10 • [www.stuttgarter-weindorf.de](http://www.stuttgarter-weindorf.de)

Häckermühle • Marktpl. 1, Weinstadt • Tel. 07151-6930 • [www.weinstadt.de](http://www.weinstadt.de), [www.weingut-imhof.de](http://www.weingut-imhof.de)

#### Fellbacher Herbst

Baden-Württemberg’s largest wine and harvest festival is simultaneously a long party strip with rides and fireworks.

Second weekend in October • Fellbach, Oberdorf, between the Schwabenlandhalle, Entenbrünnele and City Hall • [www.fellbach.de](http://www.fellbach.de)

### SERVICE

#### INFORMATION

– Werbegemeinschaft Württembergischer Weingärtnergenossenschaften e.G. • Raiffeisenstr. 6, Möglingen • Tel. 07141-24 460 • [www.wwg.de](http://www.wwg.de)  
– Weinbauverband Württemberg e.V. • Hirschbergstr. 2, Weinsberg • Tel. 07134-8091 • [www.wvwue.de](http://www.wvwue.de)



For wine growers, the grape harvest is one of the most crucial times of the year. These are the weeks that determine whether the year's hard work in the vineyard has paid off.



## Facts about Germany's wine-growing regions

The world of wine: useful background information on Germany's wine country and a glossary of the most important wine terms.



# At a glance

**Learn more** about Germany's wine-growing regions – information about the regions, the estates and cooperatives, and the growers and their wines.

## The wine regions at a glance

(1 ha = 2.47 acres)

<b>RHEINHESSEN</b>	26,400 ha
<b>PFALZ</b>	23,500 ha
<b>BADEN</b>	15,900 ha
<b>WÜRTEMBERG</b>	11,500 ha
<b>MOSEL</b>	9000 ha
<b>FRANKEN</b>	6100 ha
<b>NAHE</b>	4200 ha
<b>RHEINGAU</b>	3100 ha
<b>SAALE-UNSTRUT</b>	690 ha
<b>AHR</b>	560 ha
<b>SACHSEN</b>	462 ha
<b>MITTELRHEIN</b>	461 ha
<b>HESSISCHE BERGSTRASSE</b>	440 ha

Figures have been rounded.

Source: Federal Statistical Office (Destatis)

Germany's wine-growing regions number among the most northerly in the world. Some 102,000 ha (25,2047 acres) devoted to viticulture are divided among 13 wine-growing regions for the production of quality and Prädikat wines. Most are located in the southwest corner of the country, along the Rhine and its tributaries; two regions lie in the east, along the Elbe, Saale, and Unstrut rivers. The entire vineyard area also comprises 26 regions designated for the production of *Landwein* (comparable with French *Vins de Pays*).

## Grape varieties

An exceptional number of grape varieties thrive in Germany's wine-

◀ Rivers act as ideal heat reservoirs for vineyards.

growing regions thanks to their diverse soils and microclimates. Some 140 different grape varieties are officially permitted – from A, as in Acolon, to Z, as in Zweigelt. There are areas that are decidedly white wine regions, such as the Mosel, Saar, and Ruwer valleys, as well as regions where red varieties predominate, such as along the Ahr and in Würt-

### TOP TEN WHITE WINE VARIETIES

Riesling	22,400 ha
Müller-Thurgau	13,700 ha
Silvaner	5,200 ha
Grauburgunder	4,500 ha
Weissburgunder	3,730 ha
Kerner	3,710 ha
Bacchus	2,000 ha
Scheurebe	1,700 ha
Chardonnay	1,200 ha
Gutedel	1,100 ha

### TOP TEN RED WINE VARIETIES

Spätburgunder	11,800 ha
Dornfelder	8,100 ha
Portugieser	4,400 ha
Trollinger	2,500 ha
Schwarzriesling	2,400 ha
Regent	2,200 ha
Lemberger	1,700 ha
St. Laurent	670 ha
Acolon	480 ha
Merlot	450 ha

temberg. In all, though, some 64% of Germany's vineyard area is planted with white grape varieties.

### Ripeness – a quality factor

The quality category of a German

wine must be declared on the label. To the average consumer, the terminology can be bewildering. The ripeness of the grapes is one of the most important factors in determining quality. Immediately after picking, the must weight (sugar content) of the grapes is measured and expressed in degrees Oechsle (°Oe). The higher the must weight, the higher the potential quality of the finished wine. Every state in which grapes are grown defines minimum must weights for each quality category, depending on grape variety, climate, and soil conditions. Wines are officially examined to ensure that the minimums have been met. Here's an overview:

### QUALITÄTSWEIN

The majority of German wines belong to the category *Qualitätswein* bestimmter Anbaugebiete, or QbA, ("quality wine from one of the 13 growing regions"). As the name implies, the wines must be produced exclusively from grapes grown in one of the wine regions. Prior to sale, all QbA wines undergo sensory and analytical examinations at official quality control testing stations to ensure that quality standards have been met and that the wines are typical of their grape variety or region. Wines that pass the test receive an *amtliche Prüfnummer* ("quality control test number"), which, like the name of the region, must appear on the label.

### PRÄDIKATSWEIN

Quality wines bearing a *Prädikat* ("special attribute") are a German specialty. In terms of ripeness, harmony, and elegance, they are subject to the highest standards during quality control testing. The alcohol con-



tent of these wines may not be strengthened prior to fermentation by any method (concentration, enrichment/chaptalization). The six Prädikats, which indicate the grapes' ripeness at harvest and, in some cases, method of harvesting, include:

**Kabinett:** fine, light wines from ripe grapes. Depending on climatic zone, region, and grape variety, minimum must weights range from 67 to 82°Oe, being higher in more southerly regions, such as Baden.

**Spätlese** (late harvest): ripe and fuller-bodied wines from completely ripe grapes that are often picked later during the harvest. Minimum must weights: 76 - 90°Oe.

**Auslese** (selection): rich, noble wines from selected, very ripe bunches. Unripe berries are discarded. Minimum must weights: 83 - 100°Oe.

**Beerenauslese** (berry selection): lusciously sweet wines full of ripe fruitiness from individually selected, overripe and/or botrytised berries. Minimum must weights: 110 - 128°Oe. Wines of this Prädikat level (or higher) have extraordinary aging potential.

**Trockenbeerenauslese** (selection of dried berries): lusciously sweet, honey-like wines from individually selected, botrytised grapes, dried up almost to raisins. Minimum must weights: 150 - 154°Oe. Often, these wines are made from grapes that were intended for Eiswein, but failed to freeze.

**Eiswein** (ice wine): lusciously sweet wines from extremely concentrated grapes picked at -7°C (19.4°F) or lower, then transported and pressed while frozen. Minimum must weights are at least as high as for Beerenauslese. Aging potential can span decades.

## ADDITIONAL QUALITY DESIGNATIONS

In recent years, additional quality designations have evolved. Like the Prädikats, these new terms also appear on wine labels. "Classic" signals harmoniously dry wines of above-average quality that are made from grape varieties regarded as "traditional" in their region.

In the Rheingau only, top-quality dry wines can be labeled *Erstes Gewächs* (first growth). Low yields, grapes grown in top sites (or parcels thereof), and selective harvesting by hand ensure the exceptionally high quality of these wines. They cannot be sold prior to 1st September of the year after the harvest.

In all other growing regions, the ca. 200 members of the VDP (Association of German Prädikat Winegrowers) market their dry wines of comparably high quality as *Grosses Gewächs* (great growth), identified by the initials "GG" on wine labels.

## Designations of style

According to German wine law, there are four legally defined designations of style:

**Trocken** (dry): bone dry wines have 4 g/l residual sugar or less. Wines with up to 9 g/l may be labeled as *trocken*, but the amount of residual sugar is correlated with the amount of total acidity in the wine (g/l acidity + 2, up to a total of 9 g/l). The natural sugar in the grape juice is completely fermented into alcohol or only a small amount remains.

**Halbtrocken** (off-dry): off-dry wines have up to 12 g/l residual sugar. Wines with up to 18 g/l may be labeled as *halbtrocken*, provided the to-

tal acidity doesn't exceed 10 g/l (g/l acidity + 10, up to a total of 18 g/l).

**Lieblich** (mild): wines with more residual sugar than *halbtrocken* wines but not more than 45 g/l may be labeled as *lieblich*.

**Süss** (sweet): wines with more than 45 g/l residual sugar may be labeled as *süss*. The yeast was unable to convert all or nearly all of the natural sugar in the grape juice and fermentation simply stopped. By carefully monitoring fermentation, growers can determine the level of sweetness in the finished wine.

In addition to these legally defined designations, the term *feinherb* (dry-ish) has increasingly cropped up on labels in recent years. Although the residual sugar level is not prescribed, it denotes a wine with a bit more or less residual sugar than the parameters set for *halbtrocken*.

### DESIGNATIONS OF STYLE FOR SEKT (SPARKLING WINE)

Although some of the designations of style for sparkling and still wine are identical (*trocken*, *halbtrocken*, *mild*), the amounts of residual sugar the terms represent vary because carbon dioxide reduces the perception of sweetness. Here are the ranges prescribed by the wine law and their respective designations:

<b>naturherb (brut nature)</b>	0–3 g/l
<b>extra herb (extra brut)</b>	0–6 g/l
<b>herb (brut)</b>	0–12 g/l
<b>extra trocken (extra dry)</b>	12–17 g/l
<b>trocken (dry)</b>	17–32 g/l
<b>halbtrocken (medium dry)</b>	32–50 g/l
<b>mild</b>	more than 50 g/l

## The aroma wheels

When tasting wine, it's not always easy to express your impressions in words. The aroma wheels for white and red wines can help. Experts have compiled the components of smell and taste and divided them into seven broad categories. The descriptive terms enable you to convey your tasting impressions, and also heighten your perceptions and therefore, enhance the pleasure of tasting wine. Available from the German Wine Institute ([www.germanwines.de](http://www.germanwines.de)).

## Wine Culture Specialists

These are specially trained guides who are thoroughly familiar with a wine-growing region and its wines, geological and climatic features, history, and cultural traditions. They offer everything from wine and sparkling wine tastings to themed hikes to special tours with a focus on viticultural history, terroir, or culinary combinations (wine with cheese, chocolate, etc). The German Wine Institute's website provides an overview ([www.germanwines.de](http://www.germanwines.de)).

## Wine growers' Cooperatives

*Winzergenossenschaften* (wine growers' cooperatives) are an integral part of German viticulture. Their members cultivate about a third of Germany's vineyard area. These are growers who have joined forces to collectively make and market their wines. In recent years, they've heavily invested in quality management measures that have paid off with wine enthusiasts and critics far beyond the German borders.

## Wine glossary

- Abfüller/bottler** – a wine estate or cooperative that bottles and markets wine; the bottler is responsible for the wine's quality, even if someone else produced it
- Abgang/finish** – aftertaste of a wine
- Agraffe** – wire muzzle that keeps the cork of a sparkling wine in place
- Ampelografie/ampelography** – science of identifying and describing grape varieties
- Amtliche Prüfnummer/quality control test number** – number issued to quality wines that have passed quality control testing
- Anreichern/chaptalize** – to strengthen the alcohol content of a wine by adding sugar to grape must prior to fermentation
- Ausbau/"development"** – stages in a wine's development, such as vinification (transforming grapes into wine), or aging
- Barrique** – small oak cask (225 liters) for fermentation and/or aging
- Blanc de noirs** – white wine made from red grapes
- Blindverkostung/blind tasting** – a tasting to objectively assess a wine's style and quality, without knowing its identity
- Bukett/bouquet or nose** – the scent or perfume of a developing or maturing wine
- Chambrieren** – to warm a red wine to room temperature
- Classic** – denotes harmoniously dry wines of above-average quality made from a region's traditional grape varieties
- Degorgieren/disgorge** – to remove the yeast sediment from sparkling wine produced in the traditional champagne method
- Degustation/wine tasting** – an assessment of a wine in which impressions of its aromas and flavors are described according to specified criteria
- Dekantieren/decant** – to carefully pour a wine into a decanter to expose it to oxygen or separate it from sediment
- Düngen/fertilize** – to supply the soil with minerals and organic matter to compensate for nutrient depletions during the growing season
- DWI/Deutsches Weininstitut** – the German Wine Institute, Mainz, is the wine industry's organization responsible for promoting the quality and marketing of German wines ([www.germanwines.de](http://www.germanwines.de))
- Edelfäule/noble rot** – a fungus attack by *Botrytis cinerea*; in fully ripened grapes and during warm autumn weather, it perforates a berry's skin, enabling water to evaporate while concentrating the sugars and aroma compounds in the grape; in all, it leads to a considerable increase in quality
- Erste Lagen/top sites** – prime vineyards with optimal geological and climatic conditions that have been classified by the VDP
- Erstes Gewächs/first growth** – denotes top-quality, dry Rheingau Riesling and Spätburgunder wines from classified sites, i.e. the region's finest vineyards or parcels thereof
- Erzeuger/producer** – an individual grower or cooperative of growers that produces wine from grapes

- sourced from their own vineyards; if the wine is also bottled by the producer, it can be labeled *Erzeugerabfüllung*, or estate-bottled
- Etikett/label** – the wine law sets forth which data must (mandatory) or may (optional) appear on a wine label; German quality and Prädikat wine labels must name the region of origin, quality category, bottle content in liters, alcohol content in percent by volume, name of producer/bottler, and A.P. number as well as country of origin and “contains sulfites”; optional declarations: vintage, village, vineyard, grape variety, style, and residual sugar content.
- Extrakt/extract** – sum of nonvolatile solids of a wine, e.g., sugars, acids, minerals, etc.
- Federweisser** – unfiltered must containing CO<sub>2</sub> and yeast that is still in the process of fermenting; autumn specialty served with onion quiche or roasted chestnuts
- Feinherb/dryish** – denotes a wine with slightly more or less residual sugar than the parameters set for *halbtrocken*
- Flaschenreife/bottle aging** – the last stage of development in wine production; after bottling, wine is often aged several years, whereby the aromas and flavors change considerably
- Gärung/fermentation** – biochemical process during which must is transformed into wine; duration ranges from several days to several months
- Grosses Gewächs/great growth** – VDP quality designation comparable with Erstes Gewächs (► p. 152)
- Gutsabfüllung/estate-bottled** – a term used primarily by wine estates; comparable with *Erzeugerabfüllung*; however, the cellar master must have completed oenological training
- Hochgewächs** – above-average, 100% Riesling quality wines with starting must weights higher than prescribed by law; must achieve higher scores in quality control test
- Kellereiabfüllung/bottled by a commercial winery** – the winery bottles finished wine purchased from a third party and/or wine made from grapes grown by someone other than the bottler
- Lage/vineyard site** – the German area devoted to viticulture is divided into units, the boundaries of which are determined by climatic and geological factors; a distinction is made between an *Einzel-lage*, or individual vineyard site, and a *Grosslage*, or collective vineyard site. There are ca. 2600 individual and ca. 168 collective vineyard sites.
- Landwein** – denotes a wine with a protected geographical indication (PGI); a simple, everyday wine comparable with French Vin de Pays
- Maische/mash** – crushed grapes; they will be fermented after being pressed
- Oechsle** – a scale of sugar measurement based on the density of grape juice; named after Christian Ferdinand Oechsle (1771–1852); the pharmacist, goldsmith, and physicist invented the hydrometer (Oechsle scale)

**Ökologischer Weinbau/organic viticulture** –

practiced by growers who follow the strict guidelines set forth in EU regulations for ecological agriculture; chemical and synthetic pesticides and fertilizers are taboo

**Önologie/oenology** – science of wine

**Prädikatswein** – highest quality category for German wine (► p. 152)

**Qualitätsstufen/quality categories** – legally defined classification of wines with and wines without a protected indication of origin; the more narrowly defined an appellation of origin, the more stringent the qualifying criteria; the categories in Germany: Deutscher Wein (formerly, Tafelwein); Landwein; Qualitätswein; and Prädikatswein.

**Reblaus/vine louse** – specifically, phylloxera, the louse that was imported from North America in 1860; it destroys vines by feeding on their roots and leaves

**Rebsorte/grape variety** – grapevines belong to the Vitaceae family, genus *Vitis*; the some 140 grape varieties cultivated in Germany belong to the species *Vitis vinifera*

**Restzucker/residual sugar** – unfermented sugar in wine

**Rosé** – pale red wine made from red grapes; light color is due to little or no skin contact with the juice after crushing

**Rotling** – pale red wine made from a mixture of white and red grapes or their mash prior to fermentation

**Schorle/spritzer** – refreshing beverage made of wine and sparkling water

**Schwefeln/sulfurize** – addition of sulfur to help preserve wine

**Sensorische Prüfung/sensory examination** – assessing the color, bouquet, and taste of a wine using the eyes, nose, tongue, and palate

**Sommelier (Sommelière)/wine waiter or steward** – person responsible for selecting and/or serving wine in an upscale restaurant

**Steillage/sloping site** – a vineyard with a slope of 5 to 20%; the steeper the slope, the higher the exposure to the sun; slopes of 30% or more are considered steep; 60% of Germany's vineyards are on slopes or steep slopes

**Tannine/tannins** – tannins in wine derive from the stems, skins, and seeds of grapes; they decisively influence the taste and quality of a wine

**Terroir** – interplay of climate, soil, grape variety, and the skill of the winemaker that lend a wine its unmistakable character

**Trester/grape pomace** – stems, skins, and seeds left after grapes are pressed; also: brandy distilled from grape pomace (cf. grappa, marc)

**Verkostung/tasting** – a wine tasting

**Verschnitt/blend** – a cuvée of wines from different grape varieties, vintages, or casks

**Weissherbst** – rosé wine made from one grape variety and of least quality wine level quality; little or no skin contact with the juice after crushing (at least 95%), but final color of the wine is not prescribed

## TASTING TERMINOLOGY

abgerundet/ rounded	harmonious	lebendig/ lively	dry, with a harmonious acidity
Adstringenz/ astringency	drying, mouth-puckering effect of a wine high in tannins	mild	low in acidity or tannins
blumig/ flowery	fragrant, reminiscent of blossoms	mineralisch/ mineral	a tone imparted by grapes grown in slatey, chalky or volcanic soils; perceived as a certain saltiness on the tongue
brandig/ excessively alcoholic	unpleasantly spirituous in character; heavy; penetrating	prickelnd/ slightly effervescent	fresh and lively due to residual CO <sub>2</sub> in a wine
erdig/earthy	earthy smell and flavor derived from certain soils	reintönig/ clean, flawless	a harmonious, well-balanced wine
fruchtig/ fruity	aromas reminiscent of naturally ripe fruit	schwer/heavy	high in alcohol
herb/tannic	red wines with pronounced tannins	spritzig/ lively, refreshing	perceptible CO <sub>2</sub> lends a light natural sparkle
körperreich/ full-bodied	mouth-filling		



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Postfach 86 03 66

81630 München

[merian-live@travel-house-media.de](mailto:merian-live@travel-house-media.de)

[www.merian.de](http://www.merian.de)

**PROGRAM MANAGEMENT**

Dr. Stefan Riefß

**AUTHOR**

Claudia Weber (with additional texts by Martina Frietsch: Baden, Rheinhessen, Württemberg)

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

Verónica Reisenegger, Andreas Hugle

**EDITING**

Kerry Brady, Lois Hoyal

**PICTURE RESEARCH**

Charlotte May

**TYPESETTING**

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