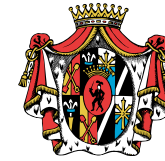


# SCHLOSS VOLLRADS



**SCHLOSS VOLLRADS  
GMBH & CO. BESITZ KG**

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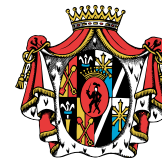
[www.schlossvollrads.com](http://www.schlossvollrads.com)



THE HISTORY OF SCHLOSS VOLLRADS.



# SCHLOSS VOLLRADS



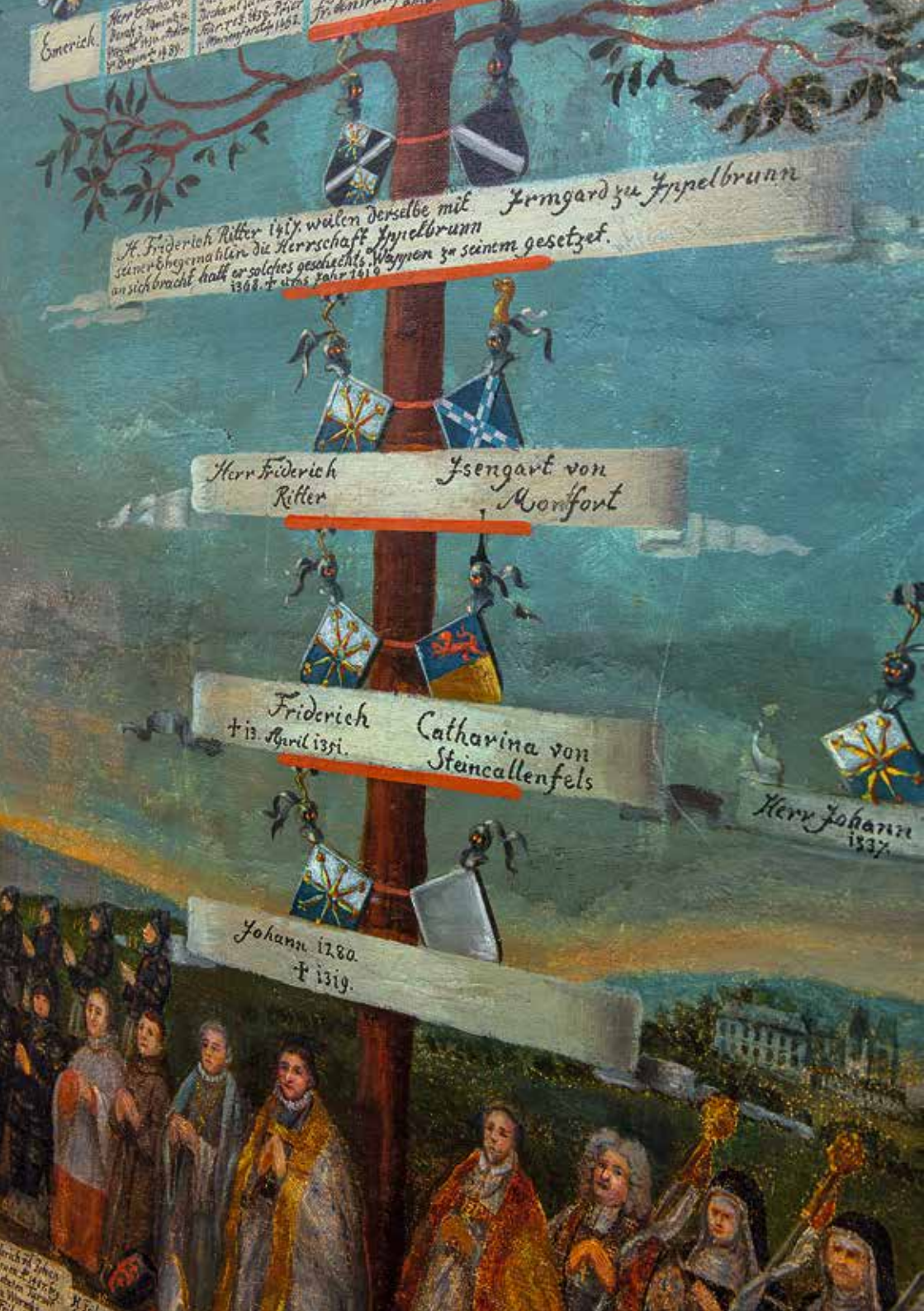
WELCOME TO THE CHRONICLE  
OF SCHLOSS VOLLRADS.

# SCHLOSS VOLLRADS



- 1 Schloss Vollrads Trademark with Crest
- 2 Manor House
- 3 Vineyard
- 4 Coach House & Vinothek
- 5 Residential Tower
- 6 Cabinet Cellar
- 7 Restaurant

*A. Wischer*



## Family Tree

The name Greiffenclau is first mentioned in an official document in the year 1097. As lords of Winkel, the Greiffenclaus were the dominant family in the Rheingau region.

The name Greiffenclau is derived from the crest: The Greiffenclaus themselves, their vassals as well as the soldiers and the knights fighting for them were recognizable by the claw of the griffin, which they wore on their helmets and shields.

This family tree shows 18 generations of Greiffenclaus from 1280 to 1902. Schloss Vollrads was owned by the family up until the 27th generation. Thus it probably is the oldest family business in the world.



## Worldwide's oldest wine bill

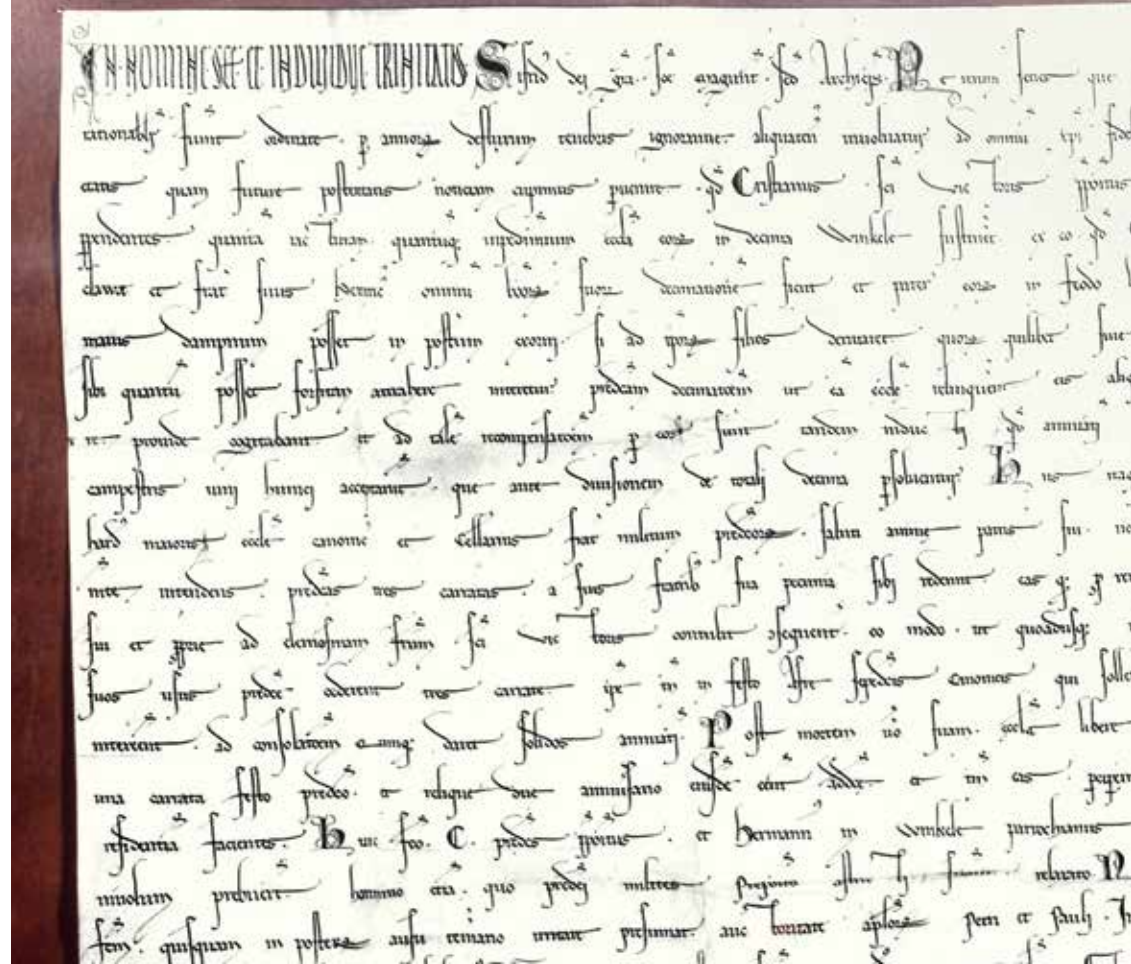
In the summer of the year 1211, a certain Frederick is elected King of the Romans in Nuremberg. Bearing the name Frederick II, he is going to make medieval history as the last emperor of the House of Hohenstaufen. Down in Rome, Pope Innocent III will have another five years to carry papacy to the zenith of worldly power. In the South of France, a crusade against Cathars and Albigenses is raging, and in Tuscany a certain Francis has renounced the riches of this world and feels that God has appointed him to rebuild the church.

On the Rhine, these are turbulent times as well. Within a year, Siegfried II von Eppstein, Archbishop of Mainz and Archchancellor of the Holy Roman Empire, is going to crown Frederick king in Mainz. Meanwhile, the Cistercians, who founded an abbey in the Rheingau region some 100 years before, are taking stock. The goods inventory, known as *Oculus memorie* and compiled in the year 1211, bears witness to their almost legendary abilities in accumulating and profitably cultivating land on a large scale. This is particularly

true in the case of the Steinberg, their own local vineyard.

We have no record of how the Greiffenclaus, lords over the little village of Winkel, regarded their grey-robed neighbors. While they were devout as well, they were also competitors, at least as far as viticulture was concerned. On November 18, 1211, Archbishop Siegfried notarized a contract proving this point. For a compensation of three pieces (casks) of wine, brothers Emmricho and Heinrich Grifenclawa assign their rights to the tenth of the goods of St. Victorstift, a monastery to the south of Mainz. Their brother Ruthart, who holds the office of cellarer of Mainz Cathedral, commits himself to purchasing this wine for an indefinite period of time – but only to donate it to the monastery for the salvation of the Greiffenclau family.

This contract is regarded as Germany's oldest wine bill, and the Greiffenclaus go down in history as one of the oldest wine-growing dynasties in the world, if not the oldest.





## The Residential Tower

Ever since the 11th century, the lords of Winkel had been residing in Germany's oldest stone house, the so-called *Greiffenstein* (griffin stone). At a later point in time, it became also known as *Graues Haus* (grey house), owing to the color of its stones.

We assume that the Greiffenclaus ancestors had come to the region as part of Charlemagne's entourage. He owned an important imperial palace on the opposite side of the Rhine at Ingelheim.

The proximity of the Rhine was both a curse and a blessing. While this meant that the *Graues Haus* was situated right along the vibrant transport artery the river provided, it also made the residence prone to floods and pillages by boating robber barons and rabble. Consequently, at the beginning of the 14th century, the family decided to build a tower castle on the slopes above the village of

Winkel. This was probably based on the residual foundation of a Roman refuge castle from the 1st to the 2nd century A.D.. The lofty tower, set amidst a pond fed by three springs and up to 3 meters deep, was equipped with a drawbridge and easy to defend. It resembled an outstretched index finger, thus also serving as a warning sign and a symbol of strength. Initially, the living quarters on the upper floors were only accessible by movable ladders.

It took until 1471 for a stair tower and a second residential tower made of wood to be erected. However, the latter proved to be unstable and was torn down in 1711.

Up until today, the residential tower is the emblem of Schloss Vollrads and the sole surviving tower castle along the Rhine between Mannheim and Koblenz.

## Book “De Speculum naturale- Bellovarensis vincentius“

Only a short period of time had gone by since Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of the printing press with movable metal types in nearby Mainz in 1450, before the new craft spread like wildfire, inter alias via the monasteries. The Marienthal Abbey in the Rheingau also adopted the art and craft of printing.

This 2-volume work was printed there in 1463 and still enjoys pride of place in Schloss Vollrads’ historic library today. The remarkable thing about this book is that – unlike most early prints – it is neither a Bible nor a book with theological contents. Instead, it is about natural science. Consequently, “De Speculum naturale” is probably one of the earliest books ever printed on natural sciences.

*Next pages:* The books were printed with black ink and subsequently colored by hand in red and blue, to render them more valuable and make them more closely resemble the previously common manuscripts – a symbol of the symbiosis between craftsmanship and manual work.



...um et tenuerit quos euolat a ferro  
...erugo autem exaffione liquefit  
...tionem splenis ualeat vinū in quo fe  
...uio subtilissimum ferruginio cū vino tpe  
...pecu debet dari aqua in qua post etiam  
...mit em violentiā eius et sistit vomitū cū  
...te oyafco rōde. sed ibi remittit feriticoles  
...vino non laudo fieri. Cōtra emorroidas pulu  
...cuis sū ferruginio vel squame ferri subditi con  
...siccū cū succo capsi barbati & bombicem inticā  
...supponit sibi pariter. Scoriat ferri subditi  
...fensiois canone. Scoriat ferri fortioris exica  
...tionis oibus ceteris. In ipsa ē virtus solutū exica  
...qua ade siccū in cereo graou. Erigas scoriat ei apt  
...caus. Scoriat ferri resolute apoftemata & ex  
...asperant palpebras. Cōtra apoftemata & fluxū  
...sciat humilitate eius. spōgia remouetq; emor  
...atōnes eius. quando autē impignatōes et fluxū  
...et admittit. apibet autē sanguinis et fluxū emor  
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...mēs i uenere. et siccitas i ore. & in flarō. Supatq;  
...poloz et violacco oleo. siccō folioz de salicib; qd  
...facoz cū aceto sup capita eoz. Darur etiā qnq;  
...i potu aliquo de magnete ut adhibent solutia.  
...peratū est ad ipm. dēde adhibent solutia.  
...tū. **De quibusdam metallis cōmix**  
**Electrū** dicitur. eo qd ad radios solia da  
...tū hoc metallū eibus metallis. Huius tria sunt  
...genera. vnū quod ex a. bore fini fluit. et succinū  
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...quodem simile est  
...at iueniē et f

**VI**

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**H**

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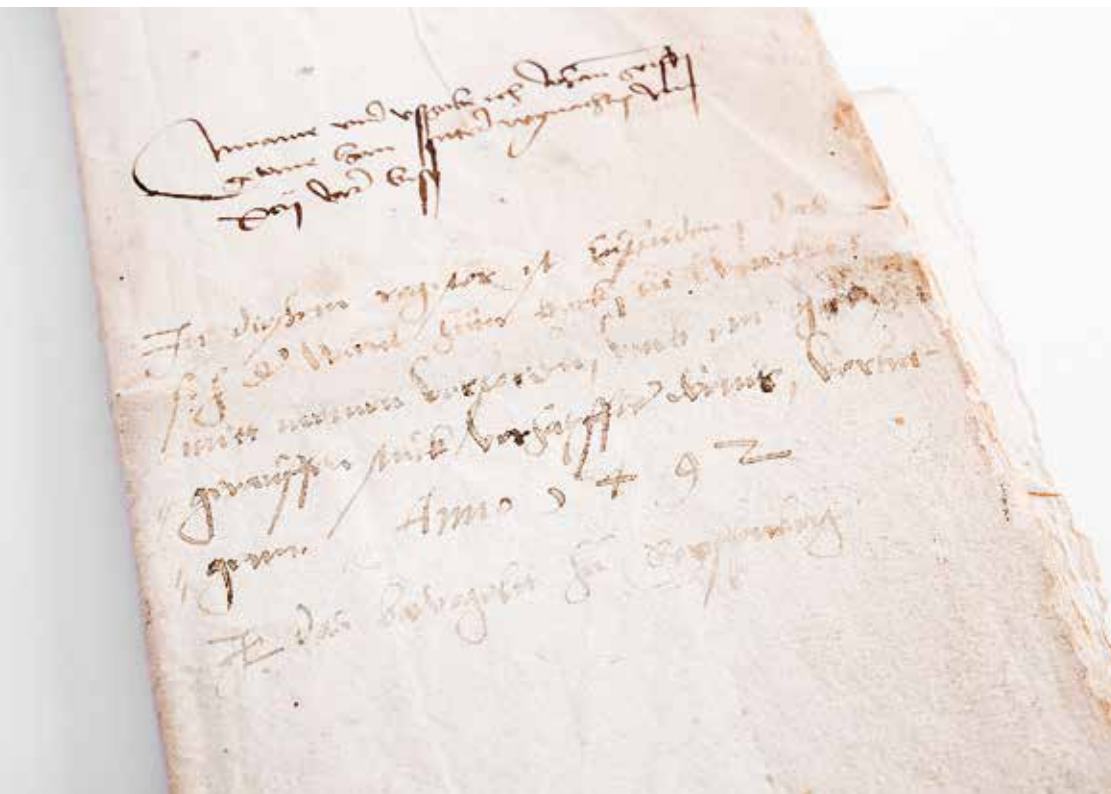


## Gutsausschank

The year 1492 marks a milestone in world history - Columbus discovers America. During the same period in time, life in the old world was moving at a very tranquil pace. A record compiled only one year later contains a report about the predecessor of the *Gutsausschank* (winery-run tavern) at Schloss Vollrads.

Ever since Charlemagne's passed the so-called *Strausswirtschaftserlass* (decree on winery-run taverns) in the year 812, winemakers and -growers in Germany have been allowed to serve their own wines in rooms marked by bouquets or wreaths.

It appears as if Schloss Vollrads adopted this practice quite early, because as far back as in 1493 a certain *Michel aus Dexhet* (meaning Michel from Dickschied, a small village not far away) ran up a wine bill amounting to 11 denars and 2 farthings "all by himself". This is a considerable though not an exceptionally high bill. It amounts to roughly two days' wages by contemporary standards or the equivalent of 12 loaves of bread at that time. Well, maybe Michel had been paying a tab accumulated over a longer period of time.



# The Book of 1495

Very early on, the lords of Schloss Vollrads took an interest in the improvement of agrarian methods and techniques of grape cultivation and wine-making. In the book "Ruralia Commodo", authored by Petrus de Crescentiis in Speyer in 1495, he uses writing as well as imagery to describe, among other things, the professional pruning of vines in the vineyard and the racking of the wines (the separation from the yeast – not known and declared as such in those days) in the cellar. This may be regarded as impressive evidence of the combination of research and teaching on the one hand and practice on the other – a tradition that has been kept alive until today at Schloss Vollrads in its multilayered cooperation with the Geisenheim University of Viticulture e.g. with planting of the first and unique Riesling biodiversity vineyard in the world (starting 2015).

Only 22 copies of this book exist in the world today. The one owned by Schloss Vollrads is in especially good condition.



## Das drit

**was gesprochen sei ein we**  
insock vnd von seiner kras. blata asch  
ei vnd isiana. Ca. I.



**O**er weinstock ist bei uns wol be-  
kannt funde in gar kalten länden  
Da er nit lebē mag ist er vnbe-  
dankt fagen wie was es sei. Es ist ein  
demütiges baumlut kromp vñ fruchtete  
vuren. Da hat gar weit schweischsche  
vñ grofse kren vñ breitzweg. Die be-  
schneidung vñnd stacken oder hülfst ande-  
rer bawm nit mag lang zeit leben vñnd  
bequemlich stan. Sein frucht ist die dye  
aus der safft wird edelst vñnd best getran-  
ck der wein. Sein blatter son gar nüz in  
der argen wann sie reuigen die wondar  
vñ halen sie vñnd wän sie in wasser gefort  
tar wardar vñnd das wasser getruncken er  
hilft die huz der seker wän der mag byz  
ig geschwilt bat vñnd hat an also gefort  
vñnd geplaster silten die geschwilt dye  
schwangen frawē habe dar von hülf sie  
mache wol schlaffe vñnd starkē das bunn  
Das ist des sprache das san rene zu dem  
dickem mal in genommen brach den stein

## von manthualtritz der weingarten Ca. II.



Wingarte ist manco geselche  
nach mancher land gewonhet  
wän glich werdē gemacht mit

hülff d' stecken nach oder  
schlecht in zweierlei weis  
stehen stecken sie zu geschi-  
also werdē sie gemacht in  
contimol vñ in d' weis  
de andern drei schick an  
geren boden. In meiste bodē  
schick. In meiste bodē  
and was das ein sock a  
aus vñ stacken. Also we-  
zu rom vñ in vil oiden d  
chona. der weise sollen sie  
weiden nach od wart nach  
schweicher des bodens a  
mögen den gäzen boden  
nit anders gegeben ward  
war sie wän dän ser hoch  
ander. Eliche werdē gep-  
baumt vñ kelenen stan  
am oder bunte. Eliche  
dar gepflanz an solich  
zwischen mag geackert v  
du als in vñsem land. o  
pflanz also dick vñ in g  
do zwischen nit geackert  
warden mag. Eliche werd  
stangen in wass der bergl  
mit in dder vñnd die ander  
also werden sie gemacht zu  
vil andern steck vñnd nich  
den tinnē oder weite der g  
werden gepflanz mit clain  
mit in vñnd wachsen in dē er  
war vñnd curand als der par-  
estē geschick sein. vñnd er  
sauer ecken vil wass od v  
sig vñnd gemut weise ist. v  
vñ curand. vñ die weise v  
medelant vñ in den landē  
wede gepflanz in dē tinnē  
mit die mache zu erf oder d  
auch in den ecken wo grof  
das sie also bodēt werden  
bung mögen. die weise w  
te in vil andē weltliche lan-  
volbas dē solich fische. Jed  
auff vñnd wurtelst oder zu  
gündar mit stangen. d.

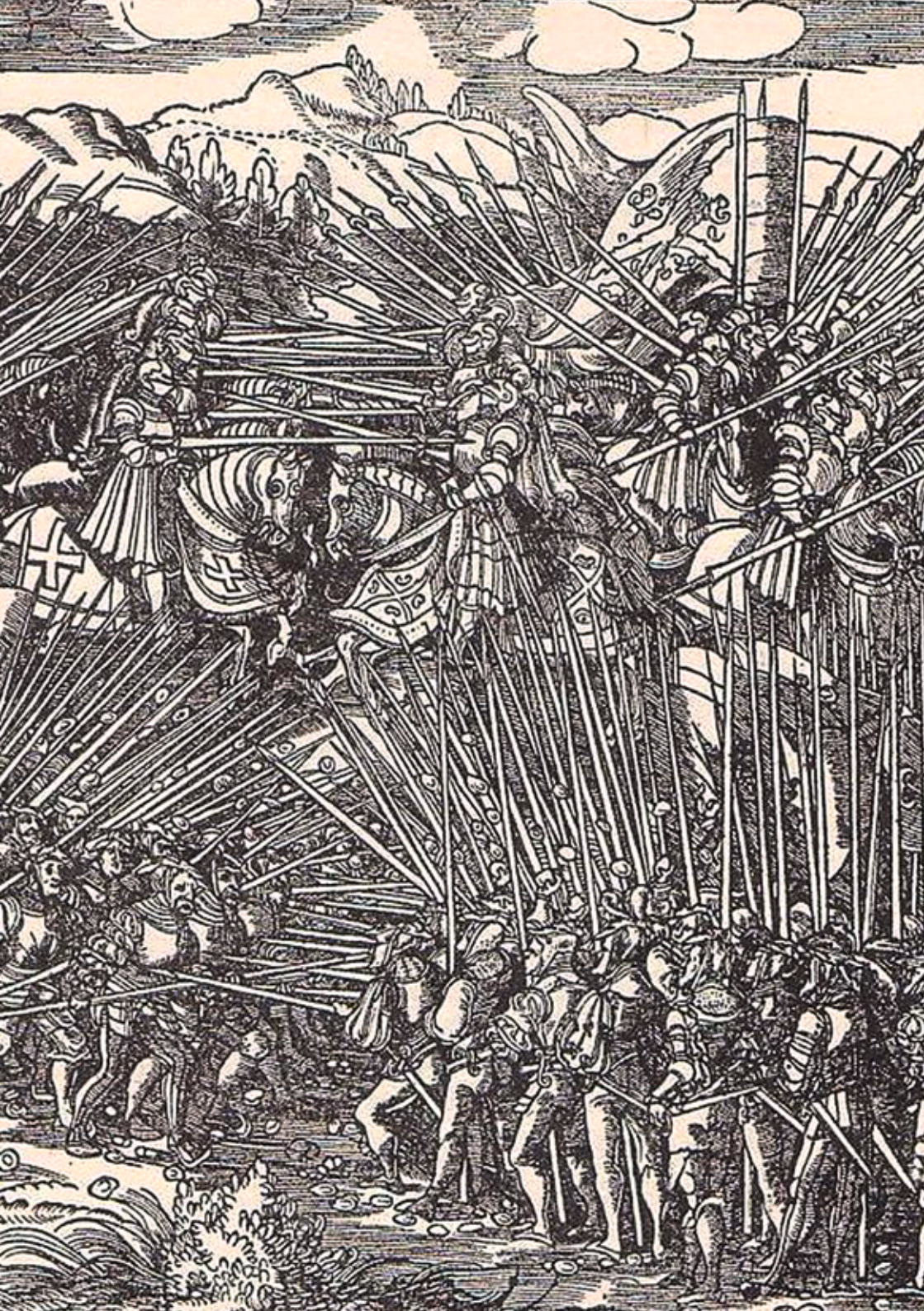
## Richard von Greiffenclau – Peasants' Revolt

In the Peasants' Revolt, the peasants fought against their crushing load and restrictions as well as against the privileges of the nobility and clergy. As Archbishop and Elector of Trier (term of office from 1511 until 1531), Richard von Greiffenclau played a significant key role among the ranks of their antagonists.

His reputation and influence were boosted by being the leading authority in charge of the court proceedings against Martin Luther in the course of the *Reichstag* (imperial parliament) at Worms in 1521. The outcome of the imperial parliament was Luther's banishment, the results of which are still apparent today in the schism of the Christian Church into Roman-Catholic and Protestant-Lutheran.

During the Peasants' Revolt, Richard von Greiffenclau took a leading role as commander of the Catholic and aristocratic forces. As opposed to this, his brother Friedrich, who was then lord of castle Vollrads, campaigned for the peasants and mediated between the conflicting parties. Thus he was able to prevent major bloodshed in the Rheingau. Even though the peasants laid siege to Eberbach Abbey, they ultimately went unpunished – and in return nobility and clergy kept their privileges.

The only thing that Friedrich could not prevent was the looting of the enormous and legendary wine barrel of Eberbach – the siege incurred a great degree of thirst and the barrel's contents went down the peasants' thirsty throats.



„Cavalrymen and foot servants in battle “  
Woodcut by Hans Burgmair (1472–1559)  
Image: Wikipedia

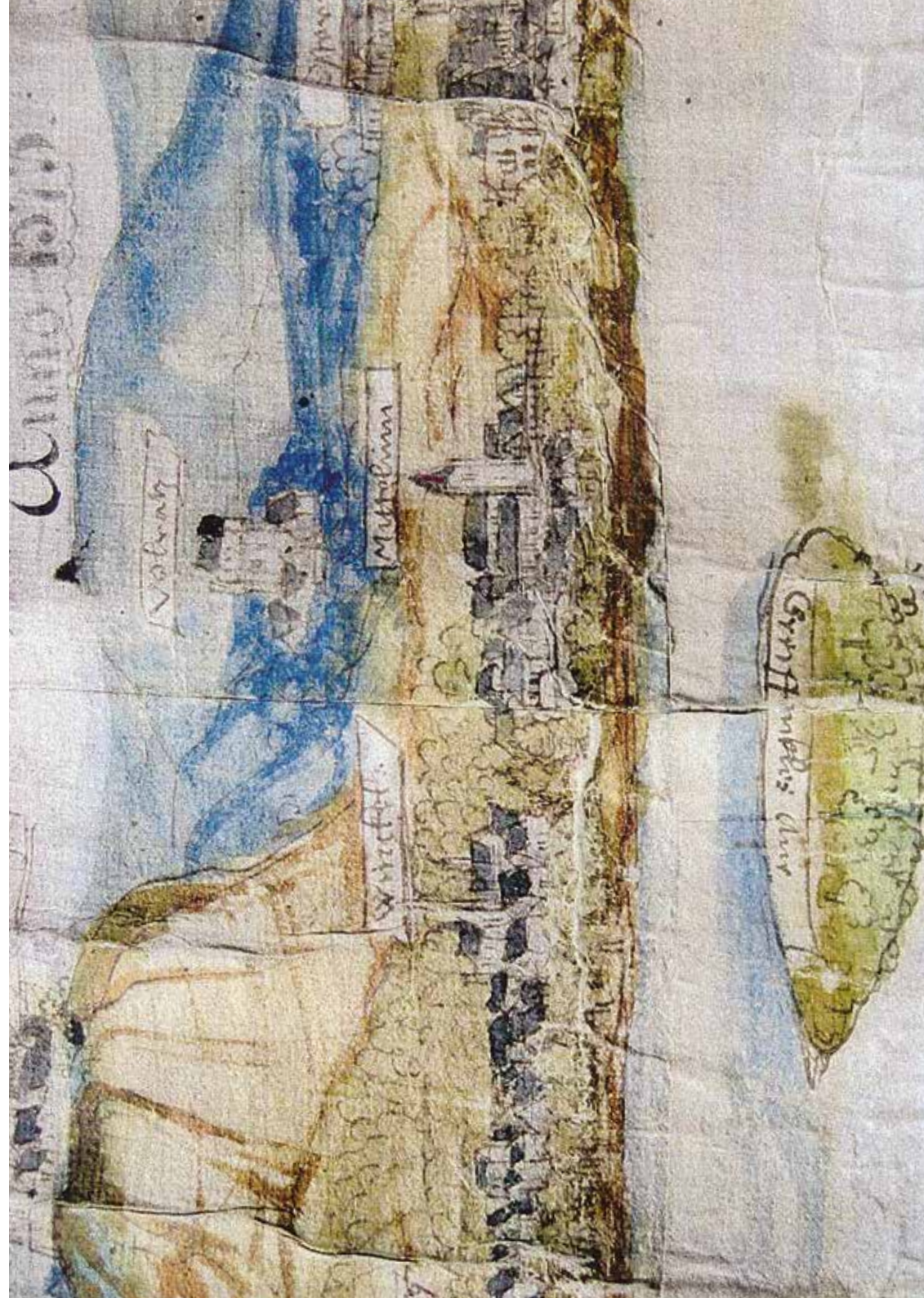
## Map of 1573

In the year 1573, Ulrich Pletzner, a painter from Mainz, drew an impressive map of the Rhine's course from its spring to its estuary.

It depicts all settlements, distinctive buildings and natural phenomena of the times. This includes Schloss Vollrads with its residential tower as well as the *Greiffenclau'sche Aue*, an island in the middle of the Rhine.

The map survives perfectly intact. Even after more than 450 years, its dazzling blue colors have not faded and continue to please the eye. Consequently, it does not come as a surprise that this oldest depiction and image of the Vollrads tower was utilized in the design of a wine label. The label design uses the spelling "Volratz", based on the pronunciation at that time.

Thus every bottle of "Volratz Riesling" bears a symbol of the ancient history and tradition of Schloss Vollrads.



## Georg Friedrich von Greiffenclau Archbishop and Elector of Mainz and Archchancellor of the Holy Roman Empire



The Thirty Years' War was marked by the conflict between Catholic and Lutheran Christians. However, it was also yet another war fought for the retention of the power held by the nobility and clergy. This brutal and gruesome war spread all over Central Europe. The war itself, diseases, hunger and epidemics depleted the population by almost 50%. For nearly three decades people lived in fear and terror. Looting, pillage and rape by marauding troops from both sides were the order of the day.

As a result, the Greiffenclaus sought refuge behind the city walls of Cologne. When the most influential Greiffenclau of the times – Georg Friedrich, Archbishop and Elector of Mainz and Archchancellor of the Holy Roman Empire – died in 1629, this chest was used to convey his precious legacy to his relatives in Cologne.

After the end of the war, the chest found its way back to Vollerads – but on arrival it was discovered to be empty. It seems as if the contents had remained with the relatives in Cologne.



## Georg Philipp and Johann Erwein von Greiffenclau

After the end of the Thirty Years' War, it took a long time for the people and society to regain their balance and recover from the effects of this gruesome war. And only after they had also adopted a positive outlook on the future, they were able to take courage again. This resulted in intensified economic and agrarian production as well as brisk construction activity.

A new era dawned for Schloss Vollrads, too. Georg Philipp von Greiffenclau wanted to provide his large and growing family with an adequate homestead as well as pay heed to the family's considerably heightened renown. Consequently, he decided to build a manor house with sufficient rooms for his many children, the conveniences of the new modern times (fireplaces for heating), large cellars to accommodate the growing wine production and – last but not least – housing for staff, storage facilities, stables and farm buildings. His son Johann Erwein continued his building activities with undiminished force.

He fathered 17 children from 4 different wives – unfortunately, post-natal mortality rates for children as well as their mothers were still rather high in those times. Our painting on the stairway up to the manor's hall depicts Johann Erwein amongst some of his elder children. Behind his back – in picture-portraits – you see his deceased former wives and some of his children who had already died.





## Leather wallpaper room

For the embellishment of the manor house, Johann Erwein chose a variety of interior decoration that has remained extremely rare to this day because of its staggering expense. Unlike the developers of many other profane residential buildings constructed in the late 17th century, he did not opt to have a stately entrance hall but gave a lot of attention to the decoration of his reception and dining room. This was fitted with the most expensive material of the times – leather wallpaper which came from Spain and was refined in the Belgian town of Mechelen with silver- and gold-plated imprints.

This incredibly valuable and rare wallpaper impressed guests while they were waiting to be received by the Greiffenclau family. During dinner in the candle-lit leather wallpaper room, the shimmering leather wallpaper creates a unique mood even today. And the atmosphere becomes even more pregnant with meaning with the most influential members of the Greiffenclau dynasty severely gazing down from the walls.

After a more or less successful restoration at the beginning of the 20th century, this unique piece of cultural heritage was comprehensively and carefully cleaned up and protected in the year 2011.

Not just because of this, Schloss Vollrads holds a firm place among the listed European monuments and is subject to the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property.

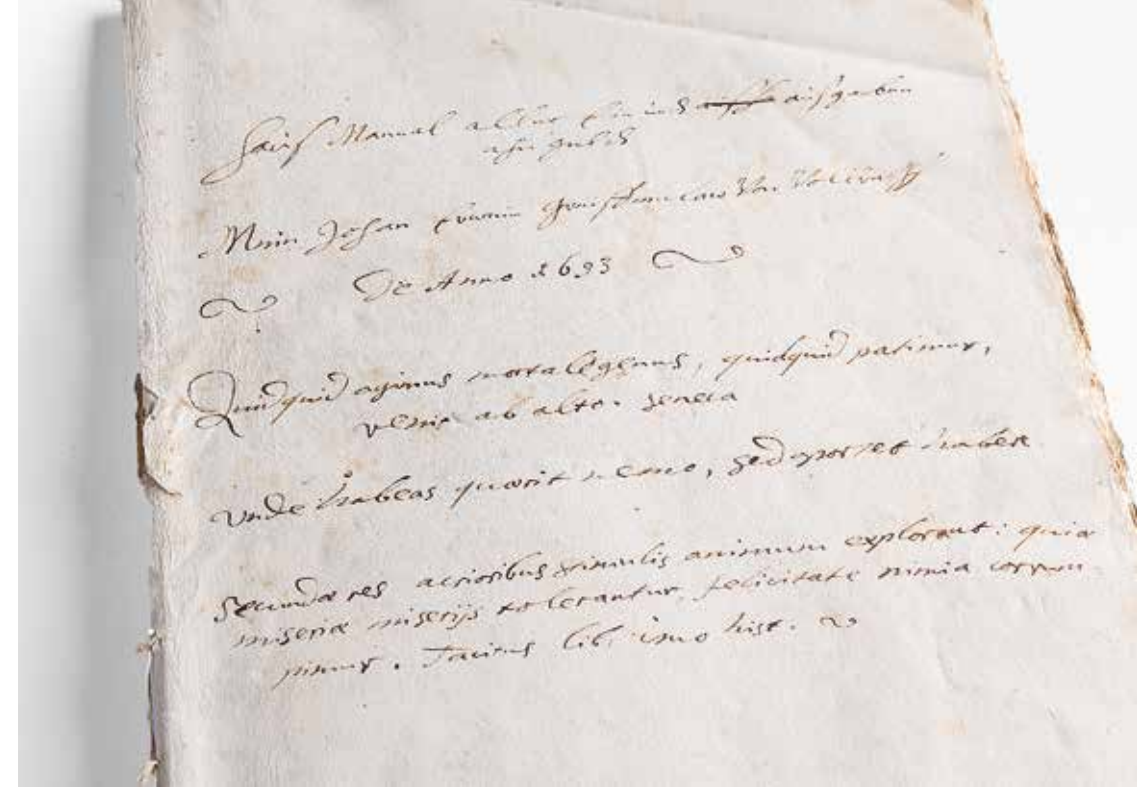


## Gewegs

Not only conceptions of beautiful architectural development became more refined during those times – the quality of wine also steadily improved as well, owing to better cultivation techniques, sufficient availability of workforce and also a series of better vintages thanks to beneficial weather conditions.

As far back as in 1693, wines with attractive flavor profiles already traded for higher prices than ordinary wines. *Gewegse* (plants) with notes of maturation or from allegedly superior vineyard sites achieved higher prices and were increasingly sold supra-regionally. For this, boats that one could use to sell and ship wine to the bigger towns were a crucial and strategically important factor. Quite early in the 17th century, Vollrads wines were not only being shipped to nearby Frankfurt, but, via Cologne, also took the journey to the wealthy towns of the Lower Rhine, the Netherlands and, beyond this, to England, Northern Europe and the Baltic states.

If you come across terms such as *Erstes Gewächs* (first growth) or *Grosses Gewächs* (great growth) in the classification of German wines today, you may safely assume that these terms had their predecessors at Schloss Vollrads in the *Gewegsen* (plants) of the 17th century. Another example of how Schloss Vollrads did not just influence wine culture in the Rheingau but throughout Germany.





## Cabinet Cellar

In the 17th century, winegrowing in Central Europe was ill-starred, at least during the first couple of decades. As a result of many failed harvests, vineyard acreage had already shrunk considerably in the course of the 16th century. The Thirty Years' War, which ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, made life hell for the country and its citizens. In the Rheingau region, former wealth finally returned after decades with a couple of good vintages. However, this posed the problem of where to store the fine wines, since even though times had become more peaceful again, there were not always buyers willing to pay just any price for the best quality wines.

Never in the course of history had it been easy to store wines without them oxidizing quickly or turning into vinegar. By the end of the 15th century, it finally got to the point where the *Reichstag* (Imperial Parliament) in Freiburg approved an *Ordnung und Satzung über weyne* (Order and Statute regarding wines). Among other issues, the statute regulated the use of sulfur in the preparation of the casks taking in wine, leading to a microbiological stabilization.

Obviously, the winemakers of Schloss Vollrads had mastered this technique by the beginning of the 18th century. After all, a mason was asked to write an invoice for the construction of a special cellar, known as a Cabinet, during

the times of the Prince Bishop of Würzburg, Johann Philipp von Greiffenclau-Vollraths, who was the first important ecclesiastical dignitary from this ancient Rheingau-based noble dynasty. Henceforth, the best of a good vintage was to be matured in this cellar and – after years of diligent care – to be sold privately or even brought to auction.

For a long time, the honor of having invented Cabinet wines was attributed to the Cistercians of Eberbach Monastery. However, it now appears as if they did not order their first Cabinet Cellar any time before 1739. And the great era had also not dawned for nearby Johannisberg yet. This abbey, so rich in tradition but decrepit, had temporarily been transferred into the possession of the Prince Abbot of Fulda in 1716.

The historic evidence of the establishment of the first Cabinet cellar and the sale of Cabinet wines is to be found in the diligently administered archives of Schloss Vollrads and goes back to an invoice dating 1716. The master bricklayer Johann Muter zu Winkel charged 150 Florin in addition to 10 Malter of corn and 2 Ohmb of beer. In exchange, he created, among other things, an aperture for a door, a rock cave as well as cellar holes. He also constructed a staircase and a chimney. Both – document and cellar – still exist to date.





## Cabinet wine

Vollrads' ledgers for bygone centuries do not only mention the conversion works for the Cabinet cellar in 1716, but also provide records of the income derived from the sales of wines from the Cabinet cellar – those wines which would later become known as Cabinet wines, or, after 1971, as Kabinett wines. It appears that investments into this cellar paid off, since, after aging, bottles from the Cabinet cellar achieved higher prices than regular wines.

In its classification, the VDP (Verband der Prädikatsweingüter, Association of German Prädikat Wine Estates) lists "Kabinett" as a dry Gutswein (regional wine) or respectively a Lagenwein (cru wine) with residual sweetness as VDP.ERSTE LAGE (first-class vineyards) or VDP.GROSSE LAGE (the very best vineyards of Germany).

Internationally, the term "Kabinett" typically stands for Prädikat wines that distinctly reveal their provenance, the characteristics of their grape variety and the hand of the vintner. This applies especially to the grape variety Riesling – the noble white wine variety that Schloss Vollrads fully concentrates on cultivating. The entire team of Schloss Vollrads takes pride in preserving and developing this remarkable story as a legacy and an impulse, particularly in times of globalisation.

This photograph of the annual financial statement for 1728 shows the sale of wine from the vintage year 1727. Only the best wines were stored in the Cabinet cellar, and its capacity was deliberately limited to achieve exclusiveness.



## Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is widely regarded as Germany's most famous poet and thinker by far. Since he was the scion of a family of innkeepers from Frankfurt, who had their own extensive wine cellar, he was familiar with the origins of many wines throughout his life. Among these, the grape varieties from the Rheingau occupied a special place because they were produced near Frankfurt's city gates and thus easy to procure. Goethe's ties with wine from the Rheingau were further strengthened by his special friendship with the von Brentano family. The Brentanos owned a winery in the Rheingau town of Winkel, and Goethe was a frequent visitor.

During one of his summer sojourns in the Rheingau in 1814, Goethe also took a hiking tour through the Vollrads vineyards to the castle and recorded his impressions in his diary. He found "the gardens in a negligent and poorly maintained state and the leather wallpaper flapping on the walls". Hardly surprising, as the Greiffenclaus had relocated the center of their life to Würzburg at that time and only made sporadic visits to Vollrads, which was maintained by a steward and several workers.

Every year, under the registered trademark of *Goethe-Riesling aus dem Rheingau*, Schloss Vollrads dedicates a wine to Goethe, his attachment to the Rheingau and its wines, as well as his visit to Schloss Vollrads and the immortalization of this visit in his literary remains.



” DIVINE PLEASURE –  
I DON'T KNOW  
HOW – HAS TAKEN  
ME IN ITS GRIP.

Goethe's "Tischlied" from 1802

## Auctions – Vineyard Maps

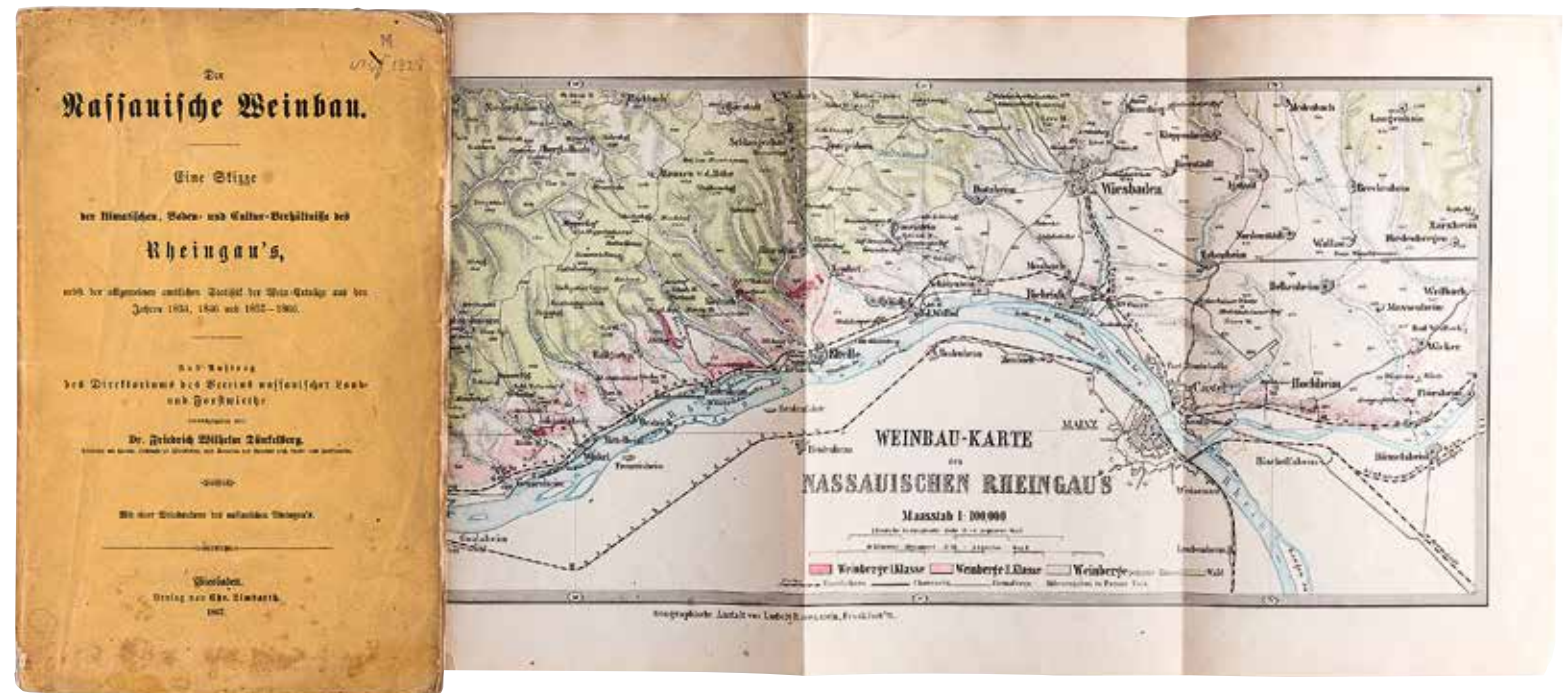
During the first weeks of the year 1867, the board of directors of the *Verein Nassauischer Land- und Forstwirte* (Association of Farmers and Foresters in the Duchy of Nassau) had decided to publish a book, including a vineyard map, about winegrowing in those parts of the Rheingau region that belonged to the Duchy of Nassau. They could not have chosen a better time: A few months before, Prussia had annexed the Duchy of Nassau, including the world famous wine-growing region between Hochheim and Rudesheim. Faced with this destiny, what could be more prudent than making the Prussians aware of the value of their most recent conquest in writing? And then let them be celebrated for the value of this trophy in due style during the upcoming world exhibition in Paris?

However, the *Weinbaukarte für den nassauischen Rheingau* (Vineyard map for the Nassau Rheingau) never reached its destination. When its compilation drew to a close in the summer of 1867, it was too late for Paris. And at home in the Rheingau, not all vineyard owners were likely to feel elated by it. Only a small portion of the vineyards had been granted the honor of being rated as premier cru sites. The vineyards of Count Guido von Matuschka-Greifenclau, owner of Schloss Vollrads, were deemed 2nd class at best.

Well, the vineyards surrounding the castle, with its tower visible from afar, were certainly not inferior to those of neighboring Johannisberg or those of the former Eberbach Monastery. But if one compares the prices which Rheingau wineries achieved during the at that time truly sensational auctions of the 1840s and 50s, one is bound to notice that the Schloss Vollrads Rieslings did not count among the most expensive wines of the region.

And this was the only criterion for the division of vineyards into 1st and 2nd class. Other vineyards were not even deemed worth a mention.

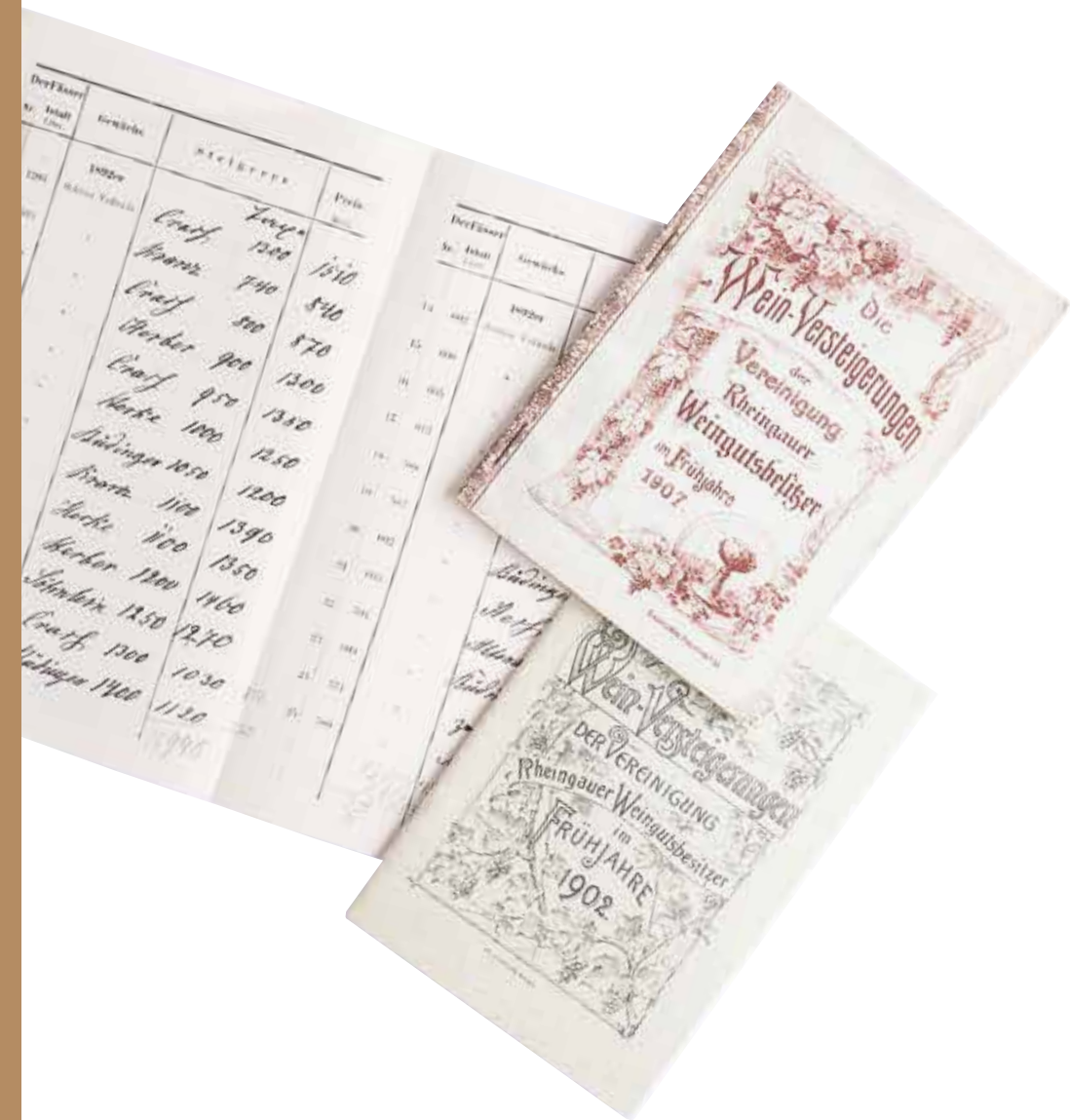
But only a few years later, Schloss Vollrads Rieslings were regarded as equal to the best wines of the Rheingau. On May 21, 1863, wines of the famous vintage of 1862 were auctioned off at prices of up to 1965 guilders per *Halbstück* (a barrel of around 600 liters). This is recorded in the unique book accurately documenting all wine sales from Schloss Vollrads between 1860 and 1918. The wines of the great vintage of 1868 did even better. In the following year, they were sold to connoisseurs at up to 2460 guilders per *Halbstück*.



So it does not come as a surprise that, in the year 1880, a Vollrads wine vintage of 1868 graced a table in Cologne: This was during the festive banquet commemorating the completion of Cologne Cathedral, which was celebrated in the Gürzenich festival hall in the presence of Frederick III (1831 – 1888), who later made history as the “Emperor for 99 days”. In the meantime, an Auslese of 1862 had matured and was offered by Wiesbaden-based wine dealer Acker for the princely sum of 32 gold marks per bottle in the spa rooms of the imperial city in 1891. By comparison, a Chateau Margaux 1er Cru came relatively cheap at 22 marks.

As Rhine wines par excellence, the Vollrads Rieslings counted among the best and most coveted white wines of the world at this time.

The vineyard maps with their classifications fail to mirror this development. The pertinent map by Heinrich Wilhelm Dahlen dated 1855 already marks great portions of acreage in the color assigned to the second-highest category of property tax. The Prussian *Rhein-Weinbaukarte* (map of Rhenish vineyards) from 1902 ends a few kilometers to the east of Rüdesheim. Over time, auction prices have remained the only true indicator of value. For instance, the best Halbstück Schloss Vollrads vintage 1949 was auctioned off at 1700 marks on May 12, 1950. Few wines are more valuable.



## Richard Count Matuschka-Greiffenclau and the times of war in the 20th century

When Richard, the first and only son of Guido Count Matuschka-Greiffenclau and his wife Clara from the Cologne-based Oppenheim dynasty of bankers, was born on May 11, 1893, one of the greatest vintages of all times was ripening in the vineyards surrounding Schloss Vollrads. To this date, the vintage of 1893 is regarded as the measure of all Rieslings throughout the world. And thus, within the wine circle, Count Richard – hailing from this same year – is globally renowned as one of the 20th century's most important personalities.

Richard initially takes a university degree in jurisprudence. To prepare him for the management of the winery, this is followed by vocational training at the Royal Prussian Teaching and Research Institute of Viti- and Horticulture and Pomology at Geisenheim. Subsequently, he serves in the war for 4 years from 1914. His final rank is reserve officer of the *Kraftfahrtruppen* (automobile corps). In 1924, the aristocratic landowner from the Rheingau finally comes into the position of his life in Koblenz. At the Koblenz Provincial Administrative Council, he is taken on as Head of the Department of Viti- and Agriculture. Soon after, the word *Winzernot* (winegrowers' distress) is circulating again. Since 1922, there has been an unbroken series of failed

harvests. After the Great Inflation wine trade is at a low point, and the Great Depression is yet to come. On top of that, the war and the ensuing post-war chaos have allowed phylloxera to spread unimpeded along the rivers Rhine and Nahe.

"Modern viticulture" is the order of the day: systematic extermination of the phylloxera droves and a replanting of vineyards with grafted rootstocks on a cooperative basis, accompanied by a relocation of the areas of cultivation in order to make a mechanization of the laborious work in the vineyards possible. Side by side with the Provincial President Fuchs, Count Richard becomes the savior of viticulture along Rhine and Nahe.

When the Nazis come into power in 1933, Count Richard's days are numbered. First, he loses his post as the President of the *Rheingauer Weinbauverein* (Rheingau Association of Viticulturalists), and half a year later, being the son of a née Oppenheim – like tens of thousands of other full-, half- and quarter Jews – he falls victim to the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service and is fired from his position in Koblenz due to racial fanaticism. In 1945, US troops find him and his mother unscathed at Schloss Vollrads. Count Richard declines the American offer

to become Provincial President as one of the few blameless personalities far and wide. Instead, he dedicates himself to the rebuilding of winegrowing organizations, Germany's Christian Democratic Party, and his own winery. In 1948, the aristocrat from the Rheingau becomes the first post-war president of the *Deutsche*

*Weinbauverband* (German Association of Viticulture), and almost two decades later he represents "good" Germany at the International Organization of Vine and Wine (OIV) in Paris. His death in 1975 marks the end of the most dramatic and checkered period in the recent history of German viticulture.





## Reconstruction of the castle

After the wedding of Guido Matuschka and Clara von Oppenheim, it took a couple of years until the young couple relocated to Guido's ancestral seat at Vollrads.

Clara, a modern and dynamic woman, used a family loan in anticipation of her inheritance to reconstruct the castle, to add another floor and the two round towers. In this context, the existing rooms were also redecorated in line with the preferred societal style at the end of the imperial era.

Apart from the leather wallpaper room, the parlor in particular became the scene of many ladies' meetings, during which embroidering and parlor games were not the only activities – Clara also was an active member of the Red Cross and highly committed to her new Rheingau homeland.



## Erwein Count Matuschka-Greiffenclau

Erwein Count Matuschka-Greiffenclau, the middle one of Count Richard and his wife Eleonore's three sons, was a gifted ambassador of the Rheingau and its wines. In the 1980s, when German viticulture was shaken by scandals and even his father's successor to the position of President of the *Deutsche Weinbauverband* (German Association of Viticulture) was called to account for wine fraud in a court of law, Count Erwein defended the honor of German Riesling as head of the *Verband der Prädikatsweingüter* (Association of German Prädikat Wine Estates – VDP) and, later on, as a top official for the Rheingau Association of Viticulture.



It was a matter of the heart for this descendant of one of Germany's oldest aristocratic dynasties to try and establish German wines in top gastronomy, which was still a rare phenomenon in those days. But how was this supposed to work – Riesling rather than Chardonnay or Sancerre? Not only did Count Erwein, who had earned his stripes in business inter alia as the head of marketing for office device manufacturer Olivetti, need to combat the prejudice that Riesling was completely unsuitable to pair with food: He also had the misfortune that this claim was true for many of the wines of these times. They were either too sweet, too dull, or too sour.

The 27th-generation "wine count" knew better. After all, countless menu cards from Germany and abroad were stored in the tower of Schloss Vollrads. And on those he could see the wines which his ancestors had produced and vouched for with their good name. In addition, there was an array of old labels, still chastely wrapped in envelopes but ready to testify that there was nothing greater than a mature Riesling to go with fish and meat dishes. A Riesling, for instance, like the 1889 Schloss Vollrads featured on the wine list of the Wiesbaden spa rooms on January 27, 1902, at a birthday celebration for his Majesty the Emperor and King William I. Or like the

1893 Schloss Vollrads Riesling that was served during a gala dinner on August 18, 1910, at the summer residency of Emperor Franz Joseph I in Ischl, when his Majesty celebrated his 80th birthday. Wines well and truly fit for emperors.

Count Erwein left no stone unturned to restore the Rhine wine's reputation as the best white wine in the world, which it had once before enjoyed at the turn of the 20th century. In the *Graues Haus* (Grey House, a Romanic residence) in Winkel, he sought to meet the standards of international top gastronomy. In the Rheingau, he promoted efforts for the improvement of quality such as the initiative of the *Charta-Weingüter* (chartered wine estates), and he sponsored the development of events that have lost none of their sparkle to this day, such as the *Glorreiche Rheingau Tage* (glorious Rheingau days) which mark the end of every year's harvest season.

He died among the vineyards of Schloss Vollrads on August 19, 1997. The economic situation of his own wine estate appeared so hopeless to him that he rather took his own life than share the ancient heritage with others.



## New era

Ever since the death of Erwein Count Matuschka-Greifflenclau in 1997, a team under the leadership of Dr. Rowald Hepp has been dedicating itself to the upkeep and restoration of the castle complex. In addition, a lot of highly sustained effort is made to establish and develop the brand Schloss Vollrads Riesling on the wine markets throughout the world and in Germany. Moderate and adapted concepts for the use of the castle and its unique rooms enable visitors and guests to experience authentic Riesling wines at their place of birth – in the traditional ambience of the castle or during one of the many events focusing on art, culture, cuisine and cellar.

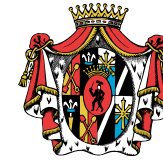
The team lives by its belief in the symbiosis of an impressive tradition on the one hand and modern winegrowing and winemaking on the other hand. This also applies to the winery's gastronomy. It is apparent at every turn that the Vollrads team does not just rest on its laurels of history and tradition.

Their aim is not to preserve the ashes but to pass on the flame. And the fresh and elegant Kabinett wines are a potable testament to this conviction.

Back to the future – Schloss Vollrads shows how to do it.



# SCHLOSS VOLLRADS



WELCOME TO RIESLING.