

Sepp Moser Estate

Press dossier

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1. The Family

The Moser family is one of Austria's grand, traditional viticultural dynasties. Since 1848, the knowledge of wine has been passed on from generation to generation. Without a doubt, the most famous descendant of this family is the renowned viticulture pioneer **Dr. Lenz Moser**, who in the 1950s developed the high training system of the vine - the so-called "Lenz Moser system". Through this, he made the work in the vineyards easier, not only in Austria, but also in many other wine-growing countries - thus contributing to the economic survival of many wine producers under the new general conditions.

His twin sons, **Laurenz und Sepp**, took over the estate in the second half of the 20th century. They divided their tasks: Sepp Moser was in charge of cultivation of the vines; Laurenz Moser was responsible for wine vinification. The Lenz Moser winery had the reputation of being a pioneer whose wines were exported to countries all over the globe. However, in the mid-1980s, nearly all of Austria's export market collapsed due to the country's "wine scandal", and the Lenz Moser winery was faced with economic difficulties and, finally, had to be sold.

A new wine estate is born

As a consequence, Sepp Moser decided to go his own way. He reduced the number of family vineyards in Rohrendorf, in the Kremstal area, and in Apetlon at Lake Neusiedl, keeping only the best sites. Then he ambitiously dedicated himself to creating exquisite wines full of character from a new total of 33 hectares (82 acres) of vineyards.

He also took over the Atrium House in Rohrendorf, where the Moser Family had once lived, and turned the home's regular cellar into a wine cellar. Thus, in 1987, he founded the new estate "Sepp Moser". It is one of Austria's youngest estates, but at the same time, it looks back on 150 years of viticultural tradition.

Today, the enterprise is run by Sepp's son, Nikolaus, who sticks to the structure established by his father and cultivates vineyards in Lower Austria as well as in Burgenland.

After having completed his secondary education, Nikolaus Moser studied Wine Management in Krems, Austria, plus acquired valuable experience through several internships in Burgundy und Bordeaux. In 1991, Nikolaus began assisting his father in the enterprise, and in 2000 assumed complete responsibility.

Back to the Roots

Nikolaus Moser is devoted to regional wine growing, especially the expression of the soil in the two very diverse wine regions in which the Sepp Moser vineyards are located. And while he is also a viticultural pioneer, just like his grandfather had been, Niki Moser is now taking a very different direction. His grandfather tried to rationalize viniculture and adapt it to the modern times, but Niki's focus is to cultivate healthy vines growing on balanced, vigorous soils. The Sepp Moser winery under the direction of Niki Moser is one of Austria's first wine estates to have converted to biodynamic viniculture.

Niki Moser's objective is not only to produce lively wines with a strong personality, but also to pass healthy soils as well as a maximum of knowledge and insight of nature on to his four children and the following generations of Mosers.

2. The Estate

Because of its vineyards in the two diverse regions, the Sepp Moser estate produces a wide range of wines every year - from fruity, animatingly charming white wines and full-bodied reds to expressive Beeren- and Trockenbeereause wines.

As expected, Niki Moser combines his family's knowledge and tradition with the possibilities of modern technology and, particularly, with his philosophy of regional identity and a viniculture which stays close to nature.

The grapes in the Sepp Moser vineyards are harvested by hand, and are brought to the cellar of the Atrium House in Rohrendorf. Here, Niki Moser emphasises gentle vinification, and tries to interfere as little as possible with the process, so that each wine can develop its own individual style. The white wines are fermented and aged primarily in stainless steel tanks. The red wines are gently matured in oak casks.

The Vineyard Sites

a.) Rohrendorf in the Kremstal area (Lower Austria)

The ancestral seat of the family is located 70 kilometres west of Vienna, in Rohrendorf, a small village in the Kremstal wine growing area, and just a stone's throw from the Danube river.

This area is characterized by a permanent exchange of air masses with differing temperatures. While in the east, continental dry and hot air comes up the Danube valley, the cool air from the Waldviertel region to the north streams down the valley of the Krems river. As a result, there are repeated, significant drops in temperatures, especially at night – something that favours, above all, the fruitiness and freshness of the wines.

The terraced vineyards of the Sepp Moser estate are composed of loess and conglomerate soils, mainly south-facing, and planted with white varieties. Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, and even the red Blauburgunder (Pinot noir), are cultivated on an area of 24 ha (60 acres).

The Sites

Wolfsgraben

2.5 ha (7 acres). The nine terraces of the site Wolfsgraben (“rift valley of the wolves”) are, as the name suggests, situated in a rift valley extending from west to east. The deep loess soil offers ideal conditions for the Grüner Veltliner, which develops here – owing to the somewhat cooler climate – in rather light versions, yet with very fruity and spicy qualities.

Gebling

8.5 ha (21 acres). The first documentation of the Gebling sites dates back to 1284 (!). It is assumed that the name originates either from the colour of the soil or from the yellow autumn leaves (as in Cote d’Or). The partly-overlapping terraces are up to 700 metres long and are south-facing. The soil consists of conglomerate rock, on which the vines Chardonnay, Grüner Veltliner, Riesling and Blauburgunder (Pinot noir) are cultivated at a slope inclination of up to 45%. The wines from Gebling are characterized by their particular minerality and expression – but despite their high maturity, they are never heavy.

Schnabel

1.4 ha (4 acres). The Schnabel site is located east of Rohrendorf, and in fact, faces east as well. The upper layer of soil consists mainly of loess, while the subsoil is stony conglomerate. Grüner Veltliner and Sauvignon Blanc are cultivated here. The wines from the Schnabel show an extremely high maturity.

Breiter Rain

2.5 ha (7 acres). The five terraces are exposed to the south and planted exclusively with Grüner Veltliner. The site is not too steep and consists of loess and conglomerate rock soils. Because Breiter Rain protrudes from the vineyard, there is resulting ventilation, and the grapes remain longer on the vine, healthy, and reach high concentrations.

b.) Apetlon at Lake Neusiedl (Burgenland)

With an altitude of only 114 metres (374 feet), Apetlon is the lowest spot in Austria. At the same time, the region has the most days of sunshine in the country. Because the climate of this region is influenced by Lake Neusiedl, even various Mediterranean fruits and vegetables prosper here. And Nikolaus Moser's ancestors had recognized that these conditions are ideal, particularly for growing grapes for red and sweet wines. The Moser Family has cultivated vineyards in Apetlon since 1960.

The soils consist of deep "Tschernosem" (black earth), with parts heavily laced with gravel – which can radiate heat well after sunset. A high proportion of humus is typical for all sites. The estate's 27 ha (67 acres) of vineyards are flat or only slightly undulated and, apart from the most important variety by far - the Blauer Zweigelt – they are also planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Every year Pinot Blanc, Chardonnay and Muskat Ottonel are vinified into dry white and well as dessert wines of the highest quality.

Immediately after the harvest, all grapes are transported for processing to Rohrendorf, where the wines develop until they can be bottled.

The Sites

Hedwighof

14 ha (35 acres). The vines of these vineyards are up to 36 years old. Planted with Zweigelt in 1970, today they provide the grapes for the Zweigelt “Große Reserve“. Also planted here are Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Reflecting the terroir, the wines tend to feature a mild salty touch. Only Hedwighof is acknowledged as a denomination for Moser’s classic Zweigelt; none of the other wines have a site denomination.

Hollabern

10 ha (25 acres). Since the mid-1990s, the Sepp Moser estate has leased these vineyards from the Apetlon parish. These are planted with Zweigelt, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay and Muskat Ottonel.

Fuchsenloch

3 ha (7 acres). The Fuchsenloch site is considered one of Apetlon’s best. Since 2003, these vineyards have been leased and planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, Weißburgunder (Pinot blanc) and Sämbling. The structure and complexity of the soils ensure the high quality of the grapes.

3. Biodynamic Viticulture under Demeter contract

The way to biodynamic viticulture

Niki Moser has always been interested in environmental protection and organic viticulture. However, the first book he had read on the subject - "Hinweise aus der Konstellationsforschung für Obst- und Weinbau", by Maria Thun – was quickly put aside. His scepticism towards the methods of moon-oriented farming was still too high. His attitude changed dramatically, however, in the year 2000, when he travelled with friends to Alsace. There he met Pierre Frick (Domaine Pierre Frick) and Marc Kreydenweiss (Domaine Marc Kreydenweiss), whose vineyards were the most beautiful and healthiest in the region – despite the extreme peronospera that had occurred that year. When he returned from his journey, he passionately began to study the topic of biodynamics.

Niki Moser decided to work in a biodynamic way in a vineyard of 2.5 ha (7 acres) in Wolfsgraben. But in his second and third year, he had to learn the hard way. A massive infection with oidium caused a crop failure of around 30%. Nevertheless, he continued his project and, in 2001, converted vineyards in Apetlon (parts of the Hedwighof and Hollabern vineyards). At the beginning, he regularly telephoned Marc Kreydenweiss for advice, and was supported as much as possible. Meanwhile, Michael Andert, the vineyard manager in Apetlon, had also become firmly convinced about biodynamic viticulture, and the vineyards in both regions were gradually converted until the biodynamically cultivated area totalled 18 ha (45 acres).

The two challenging vintages of 2004 and 2005 can in some respect be regarded as a touchstone, because heavy rainfalls at the end of the vegetation period and, above all, during the harvest, were the nightmare of every winemaker. But the biodynamically-run vineyards were already resistant and robust enough to remain healthy all by themselves, without any chemical protection against fungus infections.

This experience ultimately convinced Niki Moser to convert the entire estate into a biodynamic one, which he did in 2005.

Demeter and Biodynamic Working

Working in a biodynamic way basically means to understand the connections of life in nature and to support or reproduce them. By taking good care of soil fertility, cultivars and seeds under the natural conditions of a site, an entire wine estate can be turned into one living organism in which causes and consequences form a healthy cycle.

To this aim, it is of essential importance to reliably and regularly use biodynamic preparations and to consider the cosmic rhythms in plant cultivation.

Apart from basic biodynamic preparations like horn manure (500) and horn silica (501), a compost of manure from steppe cattle of the Neusiedlersee-region is made and inoculated with special compost preparations. In the Kremstal area, the estate uses horse dung from the family's stable.

Absolutely forbidden are pesticides, herbicides, artificial fertilizers and synthetic spray agents. Instead, fennel oil extracts, various teas made from regional herbs like stinging nettle, horsetail, dandelion, yarrow, sage, etc., are applied as prevention and remedy against fungi. Sulphur and copper are also used as plant protectants.

Facts & Figures

At 75 years old, Demeter (the name originates from the ancient Greek goddess of fertility) is the oldest association of organic farmers, and the only one which is organized on a global level. In total, there are 4.000 Demeter farms in more than 40 countries, with 110 of them in Austria. They offer 3.000 different products, from fruit and vegetables to antipasti, coffee, wine, cheese, rice and many more.

Detailed information can be found at: www.demeter.at, www.demeter.de or www.demeter.net.

4. Cooperation with the WWF

Niki Moser is devoted to sustainability and, therefore, does not only rely on biodynamic farming under Demeter contract. He also feels obliged to preserve the countryside.

In Rohrendorf, a few solitary trees of original varieties are planted every year. In autumn 2005, the first ones (maple, oak, lime and walnut) were planted amidst the vineyards. On one hand, these trees embellish the landscape; on the other - and this is much more important - they provide birds and other creatures with room for breeding and living. In addition, Niki Moser plans to propagate site-specific plants - of which there exist some very rare ones - on the dry grasslands between the terraces in Rohrendorf.

Karin Böhmer, an expert in wild flowers from the Waldviertel region, and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Holzner from the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna, were consulted for advice and support.

The vineyards in Apetlon are situated in the Lake Neusiedl National Park, a place with extremely rich flora and fauna. Already for several years, Niki Moser has been in close contact with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in the region. Finally, at the beginning of 2006, a cooperation was established between the Sepp Moser estate, the WWF and the responsible representatives of the Lake Neusiedl National Park.

This cooperation includes the following projects:

- Every year, numerous school classes visit the WWF's base in Apetlon to study the special features of the region's flora and fauna. In the future, the children will also see the vineyards in order to learn about the ecosystem, the particularities of cultivation and about biodynamic agriculture. And they will also help to collect plants (stinging nettle, dandelion, sage, etc.) for the preparations. This way, they get an idea of how it is possible to grow vines in an environmentally-friendly way in such a sensitive zone.

- In late summer, when most of the work in the vineyards is done, the employees of the estate will remove trees and shrubs (Russian olives, wild roses, etc.) from the steppes around the Lange Lacke lake, in order to recreate the original conditions and prevent an excessive growth of shrubs. As a compensation for this, the National Park provides the estate with cuttings from these ecologically valuable lands. This organic material is full of rare wild herbs, some of which are highly aromatic. This is to be turned into special compost – made exclusively from plants - for the vineyards.
- Also in Apetlon, the space between the vine rows is revegetated more and more with autochthonous plants.

Niki Moser and Michael Andert (vineyard manager in Apetlon) are convinced that in the long run, these measures will have a very positive influence on the ecological balance in and around the vineyards. Studies in the Loire valley have shown that diseases and pest infestations of the vines have been significantly reduced due to the sustainable expansion of biodiversity.

5. The Wines

a.) Rohrendorf

Grüner Veltliner Wolfsgraben DAC

Yellow-green brilliance; perfume of grapefruit and spice; animating and pleasant on the palate

Grüner Veltliner Gebling

Characteristics: fresh green-yellow colour; in the nose, a fine spiciness; the palate is expressive and voluminous with a fruity elegance; the more mature, the more its minerality is expressed; long finish

Grüner Veltliner Schnabel

Green-yellow colour; exotic spice in the nose; the palate shows a good balance between exotic fruit and minerality; very impressive on the palate, and an extremely long finish

After clearing a vineyard, it usually takes three full years until the young vines produce their first yield. Niki Moser didn't want to forgo the potential of the old rootstocks of the Chardonnay site dating from 1989. In order to change to the variety Grüner Veltliner, he decided for site grafting, an absolutely unusual method in this area. A team of French experts grafted the new variety by means of T-budding onto the stems of the old vines – with remarkable success: 93% of the vines grew on, and the first Veltliner harvest vintage 2005 was excellent as well.

Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain

Strong brass-yellow; in the nose a combination of spice and exotic fruit; a powerful and mineral palate; elegant texture; enormous length of finish

Grüner Veltliner

In 1 liter bottles with screwcap

Light yellow brilliance with green reflections; mainly fruity, spicy expression in the nose; on the palate, particularly animating and playful

SEPP Grüner Veltliner

Green-yellow brilliance; perfume of fresh apple and citrus fruits; animating and pleasant on the palate

Riesling von den Terrassen DAC

Strong green-yellow brilliance; profound perfume of stone fruits; the palate shows corpulence – but is nevertheless charming; long aftertaste

Riesling Gebling

Bright green-yellow brilliance; perfume of peach and grapefruit; on the palate, full-bodied fruitiness and well-balanced texture; vivid and deep wine

Sauvignon Blanc Schnabel

Brass-yellow; exotic perfume (grapefruit and passion fruit); a voluminous and very complex palate; very long finish. This wine gets even better when decanted.

Sauvignon Blanc süß „Ohne Sanctus“

Brass-yellow; elderflower in the nose; voluminous and very complex on the palate; shows a good balance between power and elegance; never ending finish

Niki Moser: *“When we began harvesting the Sauvignon on November 18th, we didn’t expect a gradation in the range of a Beerenauslese (25.5° KMW/127°Oe). Therefore, we hadn’t informed the cellar inspector to confirm the “Prädikat”, that is, to give his stamp of approval. The wine is now sold as a sweet quality wine.”*

Sauvignon Blanc von den Terrassen (Sauvignon Blanc Atrium)

Perfume of nutmeg and gooseberry; elegant wine

In June 2005, we received a letter from Miguel Torres, S.A., Spain, stating that the mentioned winery has held the trademark rights for the word “Atrium” since 1997 and, thus, we should refrain from attributing this melodious and classical name to our Sauvignon blanc.

The grapes for this wine come from the vineyards directly behind our house – a house that my grandfather had built in the Roman Atrium style. Therefore the wine had been denominated “Atriumweingarten”, or “Atrium”, since 1991.. We decided to award the Sauvignon Blanc 2005 the new denomination “VON DEN TERRASSEN” because “on the terraces” is where it actually grows.

Chardonnay Gebling

Bright green-yellow brilliance; perfume of fresh apples and exotic fruit; on the palate an impressing co-existence between power and elegance; characterized by its long-lingering fruity taste

Blauburgunder (Pinot noir) Gebling

Garnet-red brilliance; pronounced soil character in the nose; perfume of sour cherry and wood soil; on the palate is a combination of power and charm; complex structure and character; long-lingering aftertaste, caressed with soft tannins

b.) Apetlon

Zweigelt Hedwighof

Ruby-black brilliance with violet reflections; intensive perfume of wood berries; on the palate, mild, velvety and powerful

Zweigelt Reserve

Brilliance of ruby-black silk; attractive aromas of sour cherry and vanilla; the palate is enormously full and velvety, combined with a certain strength paired with fruity charm; long finish

Zweigelt Große Reserve

Deep garnet-red; perfume of sour cherry and walnut; the palate is subtle and shows touches of salty minerality; lightly toasty, with long finish. The vines are 36 years old and among the oldest at Lake Neusiedl.

SEPP Zweigelt

Ruby-black brilliance with violet reflections; intensive perfume of forest berries; on the palate, mild, very fruity and animating

Zweigelt Rosé

Onion skin-coloured; perfume of red berries; lively-charming and fruity character on the palate

Banfalu White

50% Chardonnay, 35% Weißburgunder, 15% Muskat Ottonel
Bright light yellow with green reflections; peaches and exotic fruit in the nose; powerful but elegant structure; long lasting and creamy

Banfalu Red

50% Blauer Zweigelt, 25% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Cabernet Franc.
Ruby-black colour; black currant, blackberries and a toasty touch in the nose; powerful, yet elegant on the palate ; lingering, toasty finish

Merlot

Dark garnet-red; nuances of mint, black currant and chocolate in the nose; a soft tannin structure and unobtrusive power on the palate; long, spicy and velvety finish

Muskat Ottonel

Exotic fruit and elderflower in the nose; on the palate, effervescent elegance and juicy fruit components; fresh and animating to drink

Weißburgunder (Pinot blanc)

Green-yellow brilliance; perfume of sugar melon and quince; the palate is vivid, with well-balanced fruit; a playful finish

Weißburgunder (Pinot blanc) Beerenauslese

Shining gold-yellow brilliance; caramel, honey and exotic fruits in the nose; on the palate, a malty opulence; perfume of exotic fruit; presenting a lively acidity; endless finish

Chardonnay Beerenauslese

Bright straw-yellow brilliance; perfume of honey, nut and tobacco; creamy structure on the palate; spicy aromas (bread) on the finish

Chardonnay Trockenbeerenauslese

Bright straw-yellow brilliance; perfume of sugar melon and honey; caramel, nut and ripe apricot on the palate; well-balanced acidity; never ending finish

Welschriesling Trockenbeerenauslese

Bright straw-yellow brilliance; perfume of apricot and exotic fruits; palate is fruity and very full, but still lively due to its hearty acidity; very long finish

6. The Estate at a Glance

Owner:	Nikolaus Moser
Vineyards:	51 ha (126 acres), of which 24ha (59 acres) are in Rohrendorf, and 27ha (67acres) are in Apetlon
Yield per hectare:	2.700 – 5.500 kg (depending on site and vintage)
Yearly production:	approx. 300.000 bottles
Capacity:	500 hl including wooden casks (approx. 200 pcs. 300 and 500 lt. casks)
Ratio red – white wine:	50% red; 50 % white
Export:	approx. 50% of production
Main export markets:	Germany, Switzerland, Netherlands, Finland, Great Britain, the USA and Japan

7. Awards and Present Ratings

Awards in the A la Carte Gourmet Guide 2009/ Austria:	
91	Sauvignon Blanc von der Terrassen 2007
90	Blauburgunder Gebling 2006
90	Riesling Gebling 2007
90	Riesling von den Terrassen Kremstal DAC 2007
Awards in the Guide Gault Millau 2009 / Austria:	
18	Riesling Gebling DAC Reserve 2007
18	Blauburgunder Gebling 2006
Awards in the Falstaff Weinguide 2008/2009:	
A la Carte, May 2008	
92	Sauvignon Blanc von den Terrassen 2007
Awards in the A la Carte Gourmet Guide 2008:	
94	Sämling Essenz 2005
91	Banfalu rot 2005
91	Zweigelt Große Reserve 2004
93	Riesling Gebling 2006
91	Blauburgunder Gebling 2006
90	Grüner Veltliner Schnabel 2006
90	Sauvignon Blanc Schnabel 2006
Awards in the Falstaff Wineguide 2007/2008:	
90-92	Sauvignon Schnabel 2006
89-91	Grüner Veltliner Schnabel 2006
90	Blauburgunder Beerenauslese 2005
92	Sämling Essenz 2005
Awards in the Vinaria Wineguide 2007/2008:	
***	Sauvignon Blanc Schnabel 2006
***	Sämling Essenz 2005
**	Grüner Veltliner Schnabel 2006
**	Banfalu rot 2005
**	Blauburgunder Beerenauslese 2005
Awards in the Gault Millau Guide 2008:	
19	Sämling Essenz 2005
18	Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain 2006
18	Sauvignon Schnabel 2006
17,5	Banfalu rot 2004
A la Carte Magazine, July 1, 2007, Michael Prónay, Austria	
92	Grüner Veltliner Gebling 2006
Wine Spectator, April 30, 2007, Kim Marcus	
90	Grüner Veltliner Wolfgraben 2005
Awards in the A la Carte Gourmet Guide 2007:	
94	Riesling Gebling 2005
93	Grüner Veltliner Schnabel 2005
90	Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain 2005

90	Sauvignon Blanc Ohne Sanctus 2004
Awards in the Falstaff Wineguide 2006/2007:	
90-92	Grüner Veltliner Schnabel 2005
89-91	Riesling von den Terrassen 2005
89-91	Riesling Gebling 2005
88-90	Banfalu Rot 2004 (ZW/ME/CS/CF)
88-90	Merlot 2004
88-90	Banfalu Weiß 2005 (CH/WB/MO)
Awards in the Vinaria Wineguide 2006/2007:	
***	Riesling Gebling 2005
**	Grüner Veltliner Schnabel 2005
Wine Spectator, June 2006	
92	Chardonnay TBA 2004
90	Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain 2004
89	Grüner Veltliner Gebling 2004
88	Grüner Veltliner Wolfsgraben 2004
Mundus Vini 2006	
Silver medal for Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain 2005	
Vinea D'Or 2006 (Mondial du Pinot Noir Switzerland)	
Award for Blauburgunder Gebling 2003	
International Wine Challenge 2006	
Gold medal for Chardonnay TBA 2004	
Silver medal for Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain 2004	
Mundus Vini 2005	
Silver medal for Sauvignon Blanc Süß Ohne Sanctus 2004	
awc vienna 2005 international austrian wine challenge	
Gold medal for Riesling Gebling 2004	
Gold medal for Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve 2002	
Silver medal for Sauvignon Blanc Schnabel 2004	
Silver medal for Grüner Veltliner Breiter Rain 2004	
Silver medal for Muskat Ottonel 2004	
Silver medal for Grüner Veltliner Gebling 2004	
Silver medal for Chardonnay TBA 2004	
International Wine & Spirit Competition 2005	
Bronze medal for Weißburgunder Beerenauslese 2002	
Vinea D'Or 2005 (Mondial du Pinot Noir Switzerland)	
Award for Blauburgunder Gebling 2002	