



‘WE WANT GOOD AUSTRIAN SPARKLING WINE TO BE SEEN AS AN EVERYDAY DRINK FOR MANY OCCASIONS.’

EVA STEININGER

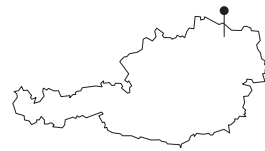
In this winery, the term cellar master has several meanings. This is because Karl Steininger (born in 1958) has understood for many years how to produce first-class wines and sparkling wines in a long cellar, which extends underground far beyond the magnificent winery on Walterstrasse in the centre of Langenlois. In 2000, he first expressed his idea of using the underground rooms for tourism, which was a contributing factor to parts of this cellar, up to 900 years old, becoming an integral part of the Loisium Wine Experience World, a fantastic complement to the 4-star Loisium Wine & Spa Hotel above ground. This is why the Steininger family is also a member of the trio of partners at the Loisium, which opened in 2005. The family of course also owns the carefully tended vineyards in the hotel's immediate vicinity.

Nothing like this was in the pipeline when Karl Steininger and his wife Brigitta took over his parents' small business with agriculture and some vineyards in 1980. They quickly established that something of this ilk had potential and decided to concentrate on viticulture. However, they were somewhat shaken by an early

frost in 1981 and an enormous harvest with plenty of sweet wine in 1983. But gradually everything began to fall into place, because Karl was a good winemaker and Brigitta, a Zöbinger native, came from a winemaker family and knew how to get a winery up and running. A trip to the Champagne region led to a big bang moment, so to speak. Karl decided to go into sparkling wine production on a larger scale. At that time, Austrian sparkling wine was more on the agenda in large and very large wineries, which bought the base wine for it from winegrowers predominantly in the north of the Weinviertel. Winemakers themselves entering into sparkling wine production were quite the exception.

Wine merchant Rudi Kroll from Murnau in Upper Bavaria has summed up in one sentence what happened to the Steiningers over the years: "This is outstanding Austrian sparkling wine in art form - like sparkling wine from another planet." Karl and his eldest daughter Eva, born in 1981 and entrusted with the management of the winery and sparkling wine cellar since 2021, don't get carried away by such compliments. Their feet are still very much on the

Photo: Boss Eva and her father Karl Steininger



WEINGUT STEININGER

Walterstrasse 2, A-3550 Langenlois
www.weingut-steininger.at
office@weingut-steininger.at
+43 2734 2372



2019 Riesling
Reserve

2018 Sauvignon Blanc
Reserve

2017 Riesling Große Reserve
Ried Heiligenstein

Founded: 1938 | Owner: Eva Steininger | Winemakers: Peter and Karl Steininger | Vineyard area: 70 hectares | Key grape varieties: Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, Weissburgunder, Traminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Zweigelt, Cabernet Sauvignon | Sparkling wine: 17 different varieties | Also: Vinegar; fortified wines | Memberships: Österreichische Traditionsweingüter (ÖTW)

ground. Eva had known since she was a child that she would enter the business and has gained additional support from her husband Peter (born in 1983), who switched careers and whose grandfather ran a small winery, although this had long been a thing of the past. Nevertheless, he attended the School of Oenology and Viticulture in Krems and did work experience at the Steininger winery, amongst others. This is where they both met. Peter Lehner took his wife's family name and is now responsible for tending the vineyards and working in the cellar with Karl.

Sparkling wine now represents a third of production. What started with Riesling has now become a wide range of varieties, even including prickly wines like Zweigelt, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon (as a rosé). Karl Steininger was the first who dared to name a single vineyard (Heiligenstein) on the label despite the ban. Bureaucracy took its leave; nowadays, in addition to Heiligenstein with Riesling, the provenances Panzaun (Weissburgunder) and Steinhaus (Grüner Veltliner) make up the three "Grosse Reserven", which must be aged on lees for a particularly long time, at least three years according to the new rule in Austria. The base wines are aged for a year in large wooden barrels, which provide more complexity and make them even better suited to the traditional fermentation method. A particular source of pride is the elegant Traminer sparkling wine with a subtle aroma. The 2018 Reserve was the most recent national champion.

There is a clear objective with sparkling wine, which Eva expresses as follows: "We want to give premium Austrian "Winzersekt" the status that champagne has long had in its homeland - it should be an everyday drink for every occasion." A speciality like the "Methode elementar" (elementary method) can contribute to this. This involves the Grüner Veltliner, Riesling and Weissburgunder for the base wine having their first fermentation interrupted and then being fermented for the second time unfiltered

in the bottle with a yeast selected in the winery. Afterwards, the sparkling wine is riddled and dosage is foregone. The natural carbonic acid prevents oxidation. The result is golden yellow and according to Karl, has "a different, exciting, elementary taste profile". At €28 in price, it is €6 more than the usual, already very enticing bottles.

The vineyards owned by the Steiningers are also crucial in producing first-class wine. They are called Heiligenstein, Kogelberg, Seeberg, Steinhaus, Kittmannsberg and Lamm. They are all given the highest "Erste Lagen" (Premier Cru) classification according to the rules of the Österreichische Traditionsweingüter, of which this winery has been a member for some time. According to Karl and Eva, the cool climate in Kampthal with high diurnal variation lends the wines "a special aroma, flavour and personality".

The red varieties (Zweigelt, Merlot, Pinot Noir) are colourful additions making up just five hectares and are also used for sparkling wine production. Grüner Veltliner and Riesling are by far the most important white wine varieties. Anyone who tastes them will notice significant differences in origin: Kittmannsberg Grüner Veltliner is supple, generous and intense in taste. Aged in oak barrels, this wine from Lamm has a balanced opulence and a creamy note. The Steinhaus Riesling impresses with smooth zest and fine minerality, whilst the Seeberg Riesling offers citrus and grapefruit aromas and demonstrates how long a finish can be.

The immense stability of the (sparkling) wines can be demonstrated in the wine collection organised in 2021 and 2022. There are also outstanding sweet wines, which were last possible on a larger scale in 2018. The normal dry wines, some of which are available for sale on demand, are of course dominant. The collection dates back to the 1977 vintage. There is also a cherished "Doppler" from 1958, the year Karl was born. The two-litre bottle has an invisible label: No uncorking...



A grand house with an inconspicuous entrance in the centre of Langenlois is home to the Steiningers. The famous Loisium is just a few minutes away on foot.