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WEINGUT  
**ROBERT**  
WEIL

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THE ESTATE

# Since four generations...

## Quality through the union of tradition and modernity



Vines have been cultivated at Weingut Robert Weil for four generations. The founder of the estate, Dr. Robert Weil, purchased the first vineyards on the Kiedricher Berg in 1867. At the time he was still a professor of German at the Sorbonne in Paris until events prior to the Franco-Prussian War (1870/71) forced him to leave. He bought the manor of the late English baronet, Sir John Sutton, in Kiedrich (a village in the Rheingau dating from 905) and settled there.

Sutton, quite a wealthy man and a patron of the arts, first came to Kiedrich in 1857 in the course of one of his art tours. He fell in love with its unique ensemble of architectural gems such as the St. Valentine's Gothic church and also the numerous aristocratic estates dating from the medieval, Renaissance, and baroque periods as well as the Scharfenstein castle ruins of the Mainz electors and of course the vineyards and forests of the surrounding countryside.



*Dr. Robert Weil (1843–1923)*



*Dr. Robert Weil estate with the Scharfenstein castle ruin in the background (1910)*



*Dr. Wilhelm Weil (2nd generation) and his son Robert Weil (3rd generation)*



*Salon (1910)*

As of 1875, in addition to his work as a journalist, Dr. Robert Weil expanded his wine estate by acquiring the finest parcels of the Kiedricher Berg. Thanks to his uncompromising, quality-oriented viticultural philosophy, the estate advanced quickly and its wines were soon distributed internationally. As such, Auslese Rieslings from the Dr. Robert Weil estate were served as the white wine counterparts to great Bordeaux wines at many European imperial and royal courts. A Gräfenberg Riesling from the 1893 vintage helped spread the estate's renown throughout the world. The royal court of Austria purchased 800 bottles of the 1893 Auslese from the "Kiedricher Berg" for sixteen gold marks per bottle—an astonishing price even in those days when Rheingau

Rieslings were already the most expensive growths in the world of wine. Not only the nobility drank Weil Rieslings at the turn of the century but also the burgeoning middle classes. Ausleses from the Kiedricher Berg were on the wine list of the Hotel Adlon in Berlin as well as those of other distinguished hotels throughout Europe. In 1928, on its maiden voyage to New York, the wine list of the airship "LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin" featured a 1920 *Kiedricher Gräfenberg Trockenbeerenauslese Best Cask No. 20* from the Weil estate.



With vision and a spirit of enterprise, Dr. Robert Weil successfully established his civic-level wine estate among the ranks of famous Rheingau estates that had long ecclesiastical and aristocratic viticultural pasts.



Today, the estate is run by Wilhelm Weil, the great-grandson of the estate's founder. The estate's 90 ha (222 acres) of vines are planted exclusively with Riesling. The focus on Riesling as well as meticulous, quality-oriented work in the vineyard and cellar enable the estate to produce wines of the highest quality – just as it has done since the days of its founding. Our motto is quality through the union of tradition and modernity.



The elegant, fruit-driven as well as complex and concentrated character of Weil Rieslings is influenced greatly by the mineral-rich, slate soils of the Kiedricher Berg vineyard sites. Whether dry or naturally sweet, these Rieslings are perfect partners with food and equally delightful on their own. Weil Rieslings are marked by their harmonious intermingling of fine, yet firm, acidity with natural sweetness and extract. This style – and its acceptance among wine enthusiasts – has led numerous observers of the domestic and international wine world to regard Weingut Robert Weil, with its "château character," as a global flagship and symbol of German Riesling culture.



*The historic manor house of the Robert Weil estate in the shadow of the Gothic Basilica of St. Valentine*

*Salon – today's new interpretation*





# "Location, location, location"

## Our origin: The Kiedrich vineyards

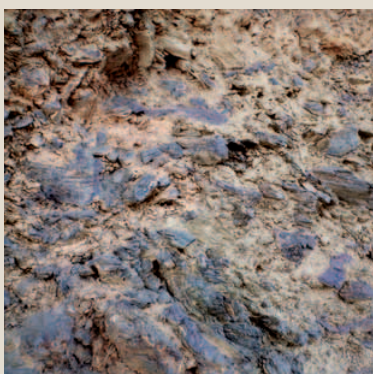
Although the Rheingau is one of Germany's smaller winegrowing regions, its 3,000 ha of vineyards are vastly diverse in their geological makeup. They can be divided into three zones: vineyards in proximity to the Rhine, vineyards on the higher reaches of the middle plateau and higher-elevation vineyards located at the foot-hills of the Taunus mountains. Among these higher-elevation sites (up to 240m/780ft above sea level) surrounding Kiedrich lie the three steep hillside sites of Weingut Robert Weil – Kiedricher Klosterberg, Kiedricher Turmberg and Kiedricher Gräfenberg. The microclimate of these three southwest-facing sites is excellent, with perfect exposure to the sun and correspondingly high temperatures

as well as good air circulation from the Taunus winds drawn into the Rhine Valley. Furthermore, the vines are able to permeate the stony soils and develop deep roots, while the water-retaining soil layers ensure the vines have a good water supply. Inclination (up to 60%), exposure (southwest) and the ability of the barren, stony soils to absorb heat are the factors that make for three perfect Riesling sites. These conditions, as well as ideal air circulation, enable a long hangtime for the grapes that can last well into November. Wines made from loose clusters of small, intensely-flavored berries are the basis for archetypal Riesling: fine acidity, distinctive mineral tone and complexity as well as elegance and finesse.



*Kiedrich and the three classified hillside sites: Kiedricher Klosterberg, Kiedricher Turmberg, and Kiedricher Gräfenberg (from left to right)*

*The phyllite-slate soil of the Kiedrich hillsides*







## Kiedrich Klosterberg

The name Klosterberg (literally, monastery hill) derives from "Closterweg," the old path that ran through this vineyard in Kiedrich en route between the Kloster Eberbach monastery and its mill near Eltville.

**Soil:** The medium to deep, stony, coarse-grained soils of this south-west facing site contain Devonian rock (variegated slate) and pre-Devonian rock (phyllite and sericite gneiss). The phyllite rock (a metamorphic clay slate), which occurs in all three of our Kiedrich vineyard sites, forms a distinctive foothill zone in the eastern part of the Rheingau, which is located in front of the actual Taunus Mountain ridge. Phyllite soils are very rich in minerals and the weathering of the rock ensures a constant supply of minerals to the vines.



## Kiedrich Turmberg

The vineyard name Turmberg is derived from the remaining tower of the former Scharfenstein Castle, which was built around 1160 on the mountain spur to the north-east of Kiedrich, at the behest of the archbishops of Mainz, as a protective fortress. With the wine law of 1971 and its amendment to the vineyard register, the old site designation Kiedricher Turmberg was merged with other smaller sites into the "Kiedricher Wasseros" site. In 2005, it was reinstated as a single vineyard and monopoly property of the Robert Weil winery with 3.8 hectares in the parcels of the former Turmberg.

**Soil:** The stony, coarse-grained slate crag of the Turmberg spur consists of high proportions of phyllites with loess-loam admixtures.



## Kiedrich Gräfenberg

The first documentary evidence from 1109 mentions the clearing of the Gräfenberg as an allotment of the Rheingrafen (Rhine earls) and also names the famous location as "mons rhingravii" (mountain of the Rhine earls). The name "Grevenberg" is first recorded in two documents from 1258 and 1259.

The great career of the Gräfenberg began at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In these times of the highest reputation for Rieslings from the Rhine, the Gräfenberg Rieslings from Dr. Robert Weil were in demand at the tables of European royal and imperial houses as well as on wine lists of international grand hotels. The Prussian site classifications of the time always assigned it and its neighbor, the Turmberg, the highest classification. The history of the Gräfenberg as well as its soil, its special geographical features and its cool climate microclimate represent the ideal terroir of a Grand Cru, a.k.a. GROSSE LAGE. Today, the Gräfenberg is considered a "flagship wine" and a "great classic" by observers of the international wine world.

**Soil:** The stony, coarse-grained soil of the Gräfenberg has a high proportion of phyllite rock, which is also interspersed with loess loam. This composition of the soil, consisting of a high proportion of rocks as well as water-retaining layers, gives the Gräfenberg an optimal and balanced water supply.



# Handcraft in the vineyard

## Quality-oriented work in the vineyard and selective harvesting

The quality and unmistakable identity of a wine originate in the vineyard. The renown of a site, which is determined by historical as well as microclimatic and geological circumstances, plays a role, but strict quality-oriented vineyard management is the decisive factor. Weingut Robert Weil's vineyards in the higher-elevation foothills of the Taunus Mountains rank among the Rheingau's finest sites. The vines range in age up to more than 50 years old and plant density ranges from 5,000 to 6,000 vines per hectare (ca. 2.5 acres).

The vineyards are cultivated according to the standards of certified organic viticulture. Organic fertilizer is used as needed and green cover is planted in alternating rows to optimize the humus content of the soil. In addition to this, no herbicides are used and plant protection measures are applied sparingly and with respect

for the habitat of useful organisms. Ecological vineyard management is also designed with future generations in mind. Stringent pruning to control yields, thinning after blossoming, halving of grape bunches, careful canopy management and negative selection are all part of the estate's quality-oriented philosophy.

Maintaining low yields and achieving a fully-ripened crop are also self-imposed goals. As such, the harvest seldom begins before October and continues for at least eight to ten weeks. During this time, the grapes are harvested by hand with an extremely critical selection that involves up to seventeen rounds through the vineyards. The grapes are then gently transported to the estate. The goal is to harvest the finest fruit possible to make Riesling wines in every "Prädikat" level, all the way up to Trockenbeerenauslese.





# Handcraft in the cellar

Following the quality maxim of “controlled nonintervention”



*Traditional “Doppelstück” wooden barrels with computer-controlled temperature fermentation*

The high-quality standards for the work in the vineyard also apply equally to the vinification and aging of the wines at Weingut Robert Weil. Modern technology is optimally combined with proven traditional winemaking methods. The top priority is to utilize the potential of the grapes and bring them gently into the bottle because quality is created in the vineyard and is only accompanied and maintained in the cellar.

Careful handling of the grapes is essential at three key stages: the harvest, the grapes' journey to the winery and their reception and pressing in the winery. The grapes are brought to the presses according to the vertical principle. After gentle pressing, the musts are transferred to the collection tank by gravity. There they are pre-clared using natural sedimentation. The clear must is then stored for fermentation in stainless-steel tanks or traditional wooden barrels. Fermentation takes place under strict temperature control and is therefore moderated over a period of six to twelve weeks.

The use of stainless-steel tanks or traditional wooden barrels is not a question of quality but of the style of the wines. The full-bodied dry wines are fermented spontaneously in wooden barrels in order to achieve a complex structure and authenticity of origin through micro-oxidation. The lighter, fruity and sweet Rieslings

are all fermented in stainless-steel tanks to bring out the finesse and elegance in the best possible way.

For this purpose, more than 300 individual containers, ranging from stainless-steel tanks in various sizes to wooden barrels (some with capacities of 1,200 liters and others with 2,400 liters), are available to us with a total capacity of more than one million liters.

Fermentation and the appropriately long maturation on the fine lees are followed by filtration and simultaneous gentle bottling of the wines. The aim here is to bottle our wines without any loss of aroma.



*Computer-controlled temperature fermentation in stainless steel tanks for the best possible safeguarding of the Rieslings*

# Tasting Room and Glas.Cabinet

## Experience Robert Weil Rieslings



Weil Rieslings are distributed in over 50 countries. The "sky-blue label" can be found not only in specialty shops and top restaurants but of course also in our tasting room in Kiedrich. It is open seven days a week and offers visitors the opportunity

to taste the current vintage in a unique atmosphere. In addition, our Rieslings can be experienced at a variety of events, such as our annual vintage tastings.

In our Glas.Cabinet, with a direct view of the Kiedricher Berg, we offer various types of exclusive wine tastings. The individual tastings range from set tastings of the current vintage with a cellar tour and Sekt reception to verticals of selected wines from our Wein.Archiv.





# Wein.Archiv

## Our winery's liquid encyclopedia

At the foot of the Gräfenberg vineyard lies our WEIN.ARCHIV. It is built directly into the hill and provides optimal conditions for our wines to age and be stored for many generations to come.

The Wein.Archiv acts as a repository for our winery's long history. The oldest bottle stored here is from 1893, and the vintages continue upwards almost uninterrupted up to the current vintage.



Tucked away amongst its shelves you can find such treasures as the *1893 Gräfenberg Auslese*, from the early years of the winery, as well as the *1920 Gräfenberg Trockenbeerenauslese Best Cask No. 20*, which was on the wine list of the airship "LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin" during its maiden voyage to New York in 1928. Furthermore, there are a few bottles left of the *1921 Kiedricher Berg Auslese*; a wine that was auctioned off at a Christie's rarity auction in 1999 for 20,000 Mark, which was the highest price worldwide for a white wine from the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Coming into more recent times, there are also bottles of the *2003 Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 316° Oechsle Goldkapsel*, which was auctioned off in 2010 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the VDP and achieved a price of 5,117 €, again another world record price for a wine to receive upon its initial release.

Starting with its inaugural 2018 vintage, you can also find the new Weil family ultra-premium Riesling, MONTE VACANO, which harkens back to the family's historic roots in this region. The grapes for the MONTE VACANO come from a tiny parcel in the Gräfenberg, called the "Lay," which was added to the estate with the help of the dowry from Dr. Robert Weil's wife, who was a member of the noble Vacano family. The larger formats of the MONTE VACANO continue to secure sensational prices at VDP auctions, and the wine trade press have acclaimed it with superlatives like "Wine of the century," "Super Grand Cru" and "New iconic wine."



The Wein.Archiv is an inter-generational contract put into every-day practice. The bottles that we take out to highlight the long aging potential of our Weil family Rieslings are replaced by current vintages for future generations to enjoy.



# Classification

## Historically and at Weingut Robert Weil

Highlighting and classifying exceptional vineyards is a tradition in all of the world's major wine-growing regions, including the Rheingau, whose sites have always had an excellent global reputation. In keeping with this tradition, our higher-elevation vineyards are classified as follows: Kiedrich Klosterberg and Kiedrich Turmberg are classified as VDP.ERSTE LAGE® sites (corresponding to Premier Cru) and Kiedrich Gräfenberg as VDP.GROSSE LAGE® (corresponding to Grand Cru).

The first evidence of a classification concept in the Rheingau can be found in 1498 in the cellar inventories of Kloster Eberbach, in which special wines were listed for the first time as "crescentia," a designation given to wines of the highest quality and from special sites. In 1788, Thomas Jefferson ranked the Rheingau vineyards in his Rhine Travel Diary and Goethe wrote knowledgeably in 1814: "The quality of the wine depends on the vineyard."

In 1885, the Secretary General of the German Winegrowers' Association, Heinrich Wilhelm Dahlen, published his "Map and Statistics of Viticulture in the Rheingau" together with an accompanying book. His creditworthiness map determined the net property tax yield of the various Rheingau sites based on the quality of the soil and put them into in four color-coded classes. The Kiedricher Berg, with its Gräfenberg and Turmberg sites, also belonged to the highest site class in the Dahlen map. It was a time when Rheingau Rieslings, such as the Gräfenberg, enjoyed the highest reputation as "Grand Crus from German soil" in their own country and in the international wine world.

It was not until 1987 that the Rheingau CHARTA Association took up the idea of classification (which had initially fallen by the wayside in the 20<sup>th</sup> century) again and went "back to the roots" by classifying the top sites of its members as "the best sites



Johann Philipp Bronner and Wilhelm Hamm published their "Rangordnung der Rheingauer Weine und Lagen unter sich" in 1836 and 1865.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, following the Bordeaux classification of 1855, wine-growing maps to classify vineyards also appeared in many German wine-growing regions after they became Prussian administrative districts in 1866.

The first was in the Rheingau in 1867. In this year, Friedrich Wilhelm Dünkelberg, Secretary General of the Nassau Association of Farmers and Foresters, published his book "Der Nassauische Weinbau" (Nassau Viticulture). Part of this book was a map of the Rheingau vineyards, which divided them into vineyards of the first, second and "lower" classes. This Dünkelberg map lists the "Gräfenberg" in Kiedrich as "Weinlage I. Klasse" (first-class vineyard site).

*The oldest vineyard classification map in the world, F. W. Dünkelberg (1867)*

in well-known locations from time immemorial." In 1999, the Rheingau quality map for the production of "Erste Gewächse" classified sites according to scientific parameters.

In 2012, all of these classifications resulted in the VDP classification, which places the origin (the "terroir") at the center of the pursuit of quality. It structures the hierarchy of wines from "Gutswein" to "Ortswein" up to "Erste Lagen" and "Grosse Lagen." In keeping with tradition, a "Prädikat" (i.e. Kabinett, Spätlese, etc.) is not used for the dry wines from these four categories. This is reserved solely for the fruity-sweet Rieslings. This means that the traditional designation nomenclature, as it was used in the Rheingau more than 100 years ago, has been reinstated.



## VDP.GROSSE LAGE®

### *The top of the vineyards*

The VDP.GROSSE LAGE® classification is used only for our most-prized vineyard, the Kiedrich Gräfenberg. Riesling wines with expressive site character and special aging potential have been maturing here for centuries. In addition to the dry Riesling (VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS®) we produce the classic fruity-sweet and noble-sweet "Prädikat" wines in the Kiedrich Gräfenberg, which have a long tradition in the Rheingau.



The Weil Rieslings can be recognized by the capsule with the VDP "grape eagle" and the surrounding gold band on which the four classification categories – VDP.GUTSWEIN, VDP.ORTSWEIN, VDP.ERSTE LAGE® and VDP.GROSSE LAGE® – are highlighted; there is also the unique blue label, which harkens back to the founding period of the winery, the 1870s.

## VDP.ERSTE LAGE®

### *First class*

Our Erste Lage vineyards, Kiedrich Klosterberg and Kiedrich Turmberg, are characterized by their unique character and optimal conditions for the vines. It is a demonstrable fact that wines of sustained high quality have been produced in these higher-elevation vineyards for generations. Alongside the dry Riesling from the VDP.ERSTEN LAGE® sites, we also have the classic fruity-sweet "Prädikat" Rieslings.



## VDP.ORTSWEIN

### *Ambassadors of the best soils*

Our Ortswein is produced from grapes that are preselected from our best vineyard sites in Kiedrich.



## VDP.GUTSWEIN

### *Good from the ground up*

Our Gutswein is a perfect introduction to the terroir-driven quality hierarchy of our vineyards. The wines are produced from grapes grown in our estate's vineyards adjacent to our classified hillside sites. These are light and elegant wines for all types of occasions.





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*The digital estate*

