

PRESS RELEASE:

Alto Adige Wines classification of vineyard sites greenlit:

86 additional geographical units (UGAs) delineated and recognized

As 86 clearly defined and meticulously documented geographical units are recognized, Alto Adige viticulture takes another step toward uniqueness. In the future, this classification and delineation will make sure that the optimum grape varieties are grown in each officially designated area. Moreover, it determines a further reduction of the harvest yield and makes it even easier for consumers to pinpoint the origin of the wines, i.e. the vineyards the grapes were grown in.

Following its recognition by the Italian Ministry of Agriculture, the classification and delineation of additional geographical units now enjoys a special legal status. From now on, the location – such as Gries, Mazon, Eppan Berg, or Brenntal, to name but a few of the 86 UGAs recognized – may be listed on the label as an additional geographical designation (“unità geografica aggiuntiva,” UGA) apart from the designation “Alto Adige DOC.”

This concludes a complex process that the Consorzio Alto Adige Wines initiated many years ago.

“Commissions were formed in the wine-growing regions consisting of agronomists, enologists, wine growers, producers, and experts in the history of wine growing,” says Andreas Kofler, President of the Consorzio Alto Adige Wines and of Cantina Kurtatsch. “Their job was to delineate and define the locations and decide which varieties are ideally suited for these vineyards.”

Complex delineation and classification

The classification of vineyard sites is built on the rationale that the quality of grapes and wine is primarily influenced by the soil and microclimate as well as altitude above sea level, slope inclination, sun exposure, thermal lift, air circulation, and precipitation. Homogeneous locations were identified by analyzing data on microclimate, sun exposure, altitude above sea level, shadowing, and soil conditions.

“It was particularly important for us to select locations with a strong historic tradition. Thanks to the land register originally created by Maria Theresia dating back to the mid-18th century, we had access to valuable historic land names,” emphasizes Martin Foradori, Vice President of the Consorzio Alto Adige Wines and owner of the Tramin-based J. Hofstätter wine estate.

Grape varieties defined, harvest yield reduced

In addition to geographic delineation, the ideal grape varieties for each individual vineyard were also defined. “It is important to clarify that winegrowers will still be allowed to grow all varieties approved in Alto Adige,” explains Eduard Bernhart, Director of the Consorzio Alto Adige Wines. “However, designating them as UGA wines is only possible if the cultivated grape variety is one that was selected as suited for the

specific geographical unit by the experts. Depending on the location, these may include up to five varieties, but there are also locations for which only one or two grape varieties were defined,” says Bernhart.

“By reducing harvest quantities by an additional 25 percent compared to the DOC-stipulated amounts, we will ensure a significant boost in the quality of these special wines,” says Andreas Kofler. Martin Foradori adds: “Our goal is to capture the characteristics of the individual vineyards in the bottle. ‘Terroir’ should not just be a marketing term but something you can taste in every glass of wine.”

Easier choices for consumers

Another new introduction is a pictograph specially designed by the Consorzio Alto Adige Wines. Producers are required to include both the denomination of a designated growing area and this new pictograph on their labels. This will make it possible for consumers to clearly recognize the designated wines in the future.

Andreas Kofler also outlines which vision Alto Adige winemakers pursue with the introduction of the additional geographical units. “Much like what we have witnessed in other renowned wine-growing regions, successful implementation of our concept will turn these wine growing areas into hallmarks of exceptional, unique, and distinct wines.”

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