

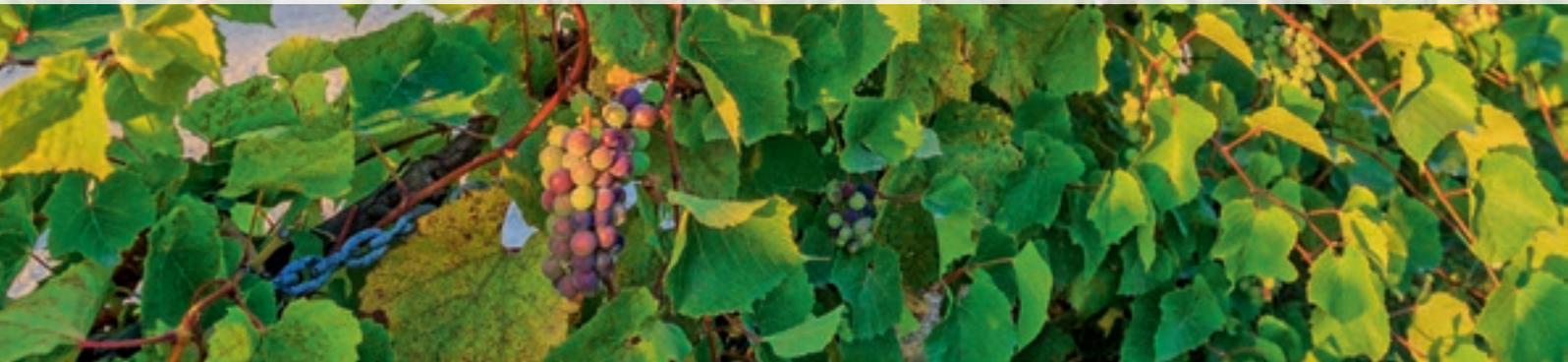


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*Wine Country Brandenburg*



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The publication of a new edition of the “Wine Country Brandenburg” brochure within only a few years is evidence of the great interest in this topic and at the same time an expression of gratitude for the extraordinary enthusiasm displayed by viticulturists and wine growers associations in reviving the long stagnant tradition of viticulture in the federal state.

Of course, compared to the major German wine growing regions, the area under vines and crop yields are hardly impressive. Yet that what is by now being accomplished in the approximately 30 viticultural sites in the federal state is highly appreciated. As so often is the case with niche cultures, regionality and rarity create a particularly high degree of attention. The few acres that Brandenburg is allowed to allocate to viticulture mainly produce wines that are directly marketed for consumption at family celebrations and public events and are bought as presents and souvenirs. Part of the vintages is sold through specialised wine merchants.

The Mosaik-Werkstätten workshop for disabled people in Potsdam maintains a historical vineyard with the help of people with disabilities. In Brandenburg an der Havel, pupils learn about the basics of horticulture and viticulture in a dedicated project. The replanting of old vineyards in Schlieben has enhanced the town’s social life and sociability. Also a good example is Brandenburg’s largest site of viticulture, the town

of Werder (Havel), where first attempts at making wine in the region had been undertaken already in GDR times.

This summary demonstrates how lively and differentiated the wine scene in Brandenburg is these days. The Fachgruppe Weinbau (Viticulture Section) at the Gartenbauverband Berlin-Brandenburg e.V. (Berlin-Brandenburg Horticultural Association) is the professional centre and is also the driving power behind many initiatives for marketing the local viticulture. For example, Brandenburg wine growers have for many years been involved in the *Brandenburger Landpartie* (Brandenburg Country Outing, an agricultural and culinary outings event).

The expansion of the area under vines in the federal state depends not so much on the commitment of the immediately involved stakeholders, but rather on the organisation of the wine regulations within the European single market. The crucial issue here is the awarding of so-called vineyard planting rights. Even so, experts and non-professionals alike know by now that even the so-called sand box of the Mark Brandenburg produces some good drops.

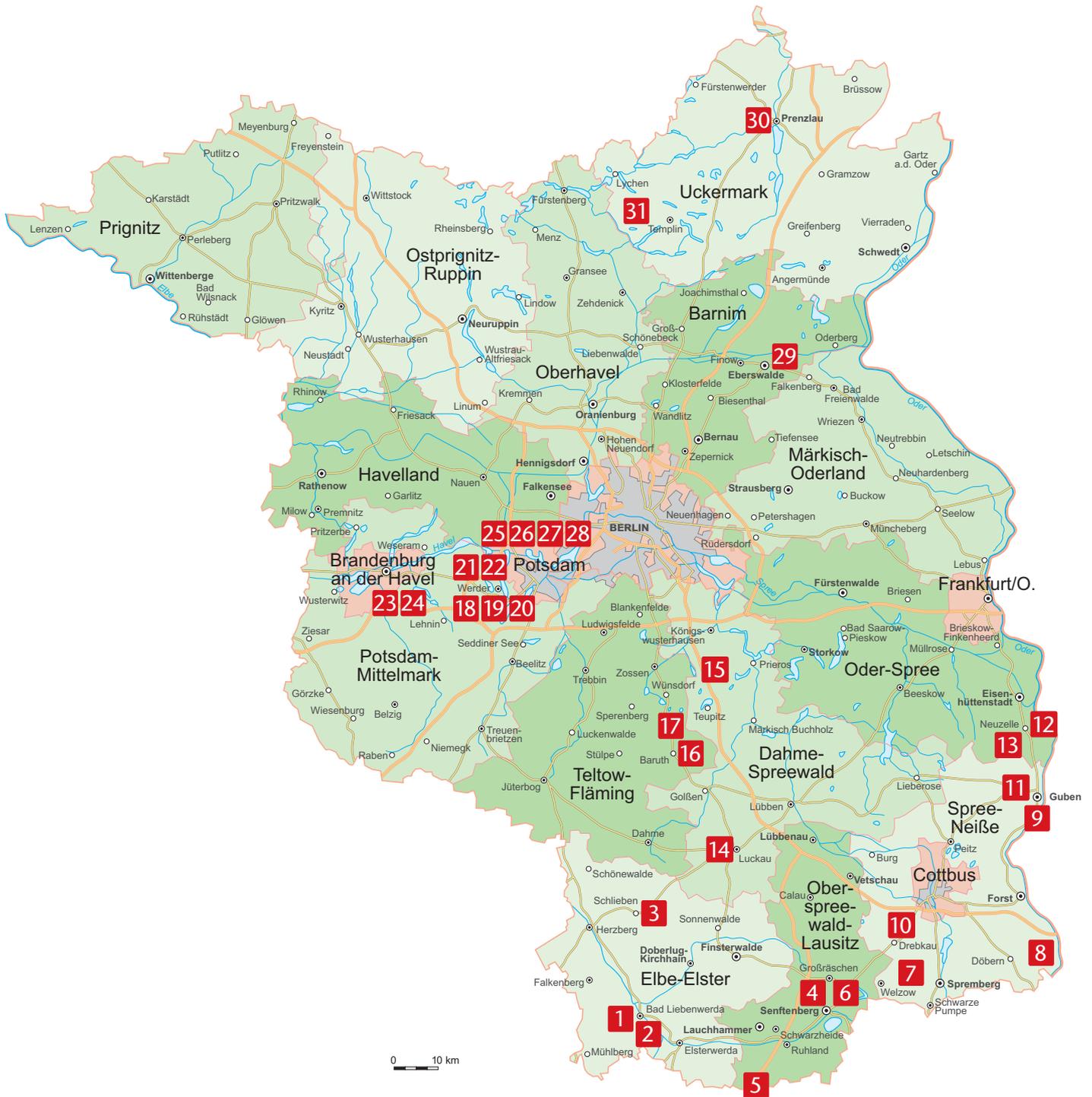
Jörg Vogelsänger  
State Minister  
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Potsdam, November 2016

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# A lobby for viticulture in the Federal State of Brandenburg

**The sun in the March of Brandenburg is ideal for growing grapes of very good quality. After all, the continental location provides more hours of sun here than in the regions of Rhenish Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate.**

The wines produced here convince wine lovers at wine tasting sessions, win wine awards and have found regular customers amongst connoisseurs. And each year it is more than remarkable that, in a state with such a small yield, the annual grape harvest, pressing and ultimate dégustation of the local wine is met by such a great degree of public interest. Wine festivals are well-attended. Regional wines are sought-after souvenirs and presents at public and private events. So, while Brandenburg may be a small wine-producing state with regards to its area under vines, it is a wine region with a great public image.

Wine-making in the region is as old as the March itself. A vineyard was documented in the town of Brandenburg on Havel as early as in 1173. The precious grapes were cultivated and pressed in many locations in Brandenburg from the Middle Ages until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Settlers from western territories, who had been recruited as part of the German eastward expansion, cultivated the common grape vine (*Vitis vinifera* L.), native to the Mediterranean region. Viticulture was further advanced by the monasteries that were founded in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and by the expanding towns and villages.

The wine production accounted for a large part of the monasteries' wealth. Every monastery owned several vineyards. The Cistercians, who were the predominant missionaries in the March, were the first to classify the vineyards to reflect

the differences in quality depending on location. "They produced Holy Communion wine for the village churches", wrote Roland Fröhlich, a Potsdam historian specialising in the history of wine-making. "Lehnin Abbey alone had, at one time, to supply 70 villages. Wine was usually offered in addition to bread in the distribution of Holy Communion up until 1415, requiring large quantities. According to the synod's instruction, the drink was not allowed to be sour in order to avoid driving away the faithful." Wine continued to be required for hosting the visitors, who were guaranteed free board and lodging at the monasteries. The requirements of these usually high-ranking guests resulted in increased quality standards. The monasteries continued to need wine also for medical purposes – and, of course, for personal consumption. "Whereas initially the monks were allowed only a quarter litre per day diluted with water, the morals became more relaxed at a later stage and a period of tipling began", Fröhlich found out. For instance, the Zinna Abbey annals record that the monks had been "oftentimes very gay". The per capita consumption in Germany in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was 150 litres per year (Fröhlich, R. [2001]: *Am Polarkreis des Weinbaus. Der Werderaner Wachtelberg, Vacat, Potsdam*).

The quality of the wine from vineyards in the March was assessed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and deemed good, reported Vicar Peter Coler, who had grown up in Berlin: "Baruth wine / in the Chur Brandenburg / is oftentimes equal to the Rhenisch /

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*The Großräschen vineyard has been planted below the IBA Terraces since 2012. 2,200 red pinot noir vines and 2,800 vines of the white varieties Solaris and Cabernet Blanc grow on loam mixed with glacial till. Vintner Dr Andreas Wobar ensures good irrigation due to the location's distance to groundwater.*



and eagerly bought by great lords” (quoted after Heinz-Dieter Krausch, transl. from German). Reports also repeatedly mentioned the export of Brandenburg wines.

Viticulture in the region of today's Federal State of Brandenburg reached its heyday at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The frequent occurrence of extreme winters severely damaged the vines. The last vines on the 58.5 metre (c. 191 feet) high Wachtelberg hill in Werder an der Havel succumbed to freezing in the winter of 1956. Yet also market regulations, changing drinking habits and, most of all, the forceful implementation of railway construction as of 1838 led to the collapse of most vineyards. In 1868, according to the Brandenburg horticultural historian Heinz-Dieter Krausch, the administrative district of Potsdam still had 64 hectares (c. 158 acres), the district of Frankfurt (Oder) 764 hectares (c. 1,888 acres) under vines: “The very last vineyards, often cultivated only for pleasure, were maintained in these parts up until the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”

By 1990, when the Federal State of Brandenburg was re-established, only a few traces of the former extensive cultivation of vines remained. At least local coats of arms, field and street names are reminders of the viticultural tradition in the March.

The 1990s following the German reunification constituted a break in the East-German economy and consequently its agriculture, but it was also a time for testing new ideas and the targeted investigation of the past heritage. Regarding the Brandenburg wine-growing region, the long-standing mayor of Werder, Werner Große, stated: “The vineyards are one of our roots. Viticulture was a main source of income for the people of Werder. Wine made us famous (...).”

The *Wende* generated a lot of initiative particularly in horticulture. It gave entrepreneurs the chance to apply their skills

as they either reclaimed for their families businesses that under GDR rule had been transformed into state or cooperative property or created new businesses from out of the liquidation assets of the large GDR horticultural farms.

The new liberties of these usually well-educated entrepreneurs included the freedom to develop their own preferences and signature, free of state planning and allocation targets. This ensured the preservation of the tentative revival of viticulture in Brandenburg in spite of the turmoil of the *Wende*. Even before the end of the GDR, in 1985, traditionally minded citizens of Werder had planted vines on five hectares (c. 12 acres) of the old cultural location of the Wachtelberg hill – the nucleus of what is today the largest wine estate in Brandenburg.

With the German reunification, the entire European and German national wine law had to be introduced in Brandenburg – and this had a limiting effect, particularly when it came to vineyard planting rights. Areas under vines of more than 100 square metres (c.119.6 square yards) require the approval of the agricultural authorities. The vineyard planting rights are indispensable in keeping cultivation and hence prices as stable as possible in the European single market.

In 2007, 15 hectares (c. 37 acres) of vineyard planting rights that were not needed in Rhineland-Palatinate were allocated from the national reserve. An additional 3.5 hectares (c. 8.65 acres) from Hesse were added in late 2015. So in a way, West Germany contributes to the revival of viticulture in the March.

The new nationwide allocation of vineyard planting rights in 2016 gave Brandenburg yet 2.8 hectares (c. 6.9 acres) more. The current area under vines in Brandenburg is 33 hectares (c. 81.5 acres). These days, 95 per cent of the area under vines is concentrated in the south of the state and in Werder.

The Brandenburg State Ministry for Agriculture is the authority responsible for the vineyard register, the census of harvest and production reports as well as generally for the wine laws.

Federal state provisions governing viticulture are set down in the Ordinance on the implementation of the wine laws in the Federal State of Brandenburg. The ministry website provides up-to-date figures regarding viticulture in Brandenburg ([www.mlul.brandenburg.de](http://www.mlul.brandenburg.de)).

Even though the area under vines in Brandenburg is only very small compared to the total area of more than 102,000 hectares (252,042 acres) in the whole of Germany, it is a diversified and interesting wine-growing region. 78 per cent of the area under vines is being cultivated by individual businesses. These include some businesses with a very intensive and professional approach to viticulture and which fulfil the requirements of being regarded as a full-time operation.

The viticultural associations are of great importance to viticulture in Brandenburg. They manage about a fifth of the entire area under vines.

White wine varieties include Müller-Thurgau, Pinot blanc, Riesling, Pinot gris and Sauvignon blanc. In addition, new varieties are grown that are resistant against fungal diseases, such as Johanniter (as a substitute for Riesling), Solaris and Helios (as substitutes for Müller-Thurgau), as well as Muscaris and Saphira as new bouquet varieties. The red fungus-resistant variety Regent is the most extensively planted vine in Brandenburg, accounting for 5.7 hectares (c. 14.1 acres). The other red wine varieties are Dornfelder and Cabernet Dorsa. The past two years were gratifyingly good years with increased yield. Nearly 1,400 hectolitres were harvested in 2015; this is more than double the average of the previous years that had seen a yield between 300 and 600 hectolitres. The yield per hectare/acre is low and averages between 30 and 40 hectolitres per hectare (2.471 acres) across all vineyards and varieties; 2015, however, was an exception with about 55 hectolitres per hectare (2.471 acres).

The names of the German wine regions are governed by the German Wine Law and the German Wine Regulation.

A distinction is made between specific regions producing quality wine and country wine, respectively. The existing cultivation areas as per the early 1990s in Schlieben in the administrative district of Elbe-Elster as well as Werder/Havel in the administrative district of Potsdam-Mittelmark were assigned to the quality wine regions of Saxony and Saale-Unstrut. Most of the area under vines in Brandenburg now is part of the country wine region of Brandenburg that was licensed in 2007.

On 16 August 2013, ten Brandenburg vintners joined forces on the IBA Terraces in Großräschen to establish the Section Viticulture in the Berlin-Brandenburg Horticultural Association. Four more vintners have since joined the section. The objective of the section's activities is to gain a hearing for the interests of all viticultural businesses and associations in the state independent of their legal form and mode of cultivation and to introduce the local viticulture to a wider public. These activities include the centralised organisation of events that are advertised throughout the federal state, such as the *Brandenburger Jungweinprobe* (Brandenburg Young Wine Tasting) and participation in state-wide events such as the *Brandenburger Landpartie* (Brandenburg Country Outing) and the *Tag des offenen Weinbergs* (Open Day at the Vineyard).



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# The singing vintner – Schurig's sunny landscapes



**Gunter Schurig is happy when he works in his vineyard. He continues a family tradition. Together with his father, he planted the first 99 vines in the vineyard in the Bad Liebenwerda district of Lausitz (Elbe-Elster) in 1998.**

In 2008, the Agricultural Ministry in Potsdam granted Gunter Schurig the long-awaited planting rights. Only one year later, he had a thousand vines growing on his vineyard. He introduced his cuvée *Weißer Rebling* to the public at the Brandenburg Young Wine Tasting in 2009.

He visits the wine estate that he manages together with his wife Heike and his son Christian almost daily. "We work on the basis of biological guidelines, without being certified, and improve our vineyard with homemade terra preta, that is, nutrient-rich black soil."

All the hard work is rewarded by the autumn harvest. It yielded about one thousand bottles of wine in 2015, which Gunter Schurig diligently presses himself by hand. His son and aspiring vintner Christian bottled his first own wine, made from Cabertin grapes and named *Chris Cabertin*, in 2016. The Cabertin variety was first selected in 1991 in the Palatinate as a hybrid between Cabernet Sauvignon and resistant grapes and was registered for variety protection in 2004. Gunter Schurig is the only vintner in the state who also makes some bottles of Elbling each year from old vines that grow on his property. The once wide-spread white wine vine now is being cultivated only by a few aficionados. "I am an organic vintner and with me the wine is allowed to mature for nine months just like a baby", he emphasises. The wines are bottled without filtration and contain only a small amount of sulphites. The Schurig wine estate also refrains from using fining agents in favour of a more natural wine.

Gunter Schurig hosts wine tasting sessions (booking required) and then likes to entertain his guests by playing the guitar and singing folk songs and his own compositions. Yet this is only one of his creative talents. He likes to draw sunny landscapes and decorates the wine bottle labels with miniature pictures. Visitors to his wine estate have access to an exhibition featuring his own pictures, ceramics and photographs. Subject to advance booking, the Schurigs prepare for their guests specialities in their historical wood-fired baking oven. One such delicacy might be Lusatian bread cake.

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*Heike and Gunter Schurig at the Young Wine Tasting. The vintner knows the young wine is in good hands, "it can happily ferment right up until it is time for racking."*



**Weingut Gunter Schurig**  
**Wine estate with ArtHeim Gallery**

[www.weingut-schurig-lausitz.de](http://www.weingut-schurig-lausitz.de)

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*The change from extensive farming to cultivation on climatically favourable heat islands has been effected in Brandenburg over a long period of time. Today, 95 per cent of the area under vines is concentrated in the southern parts of the state and in Werder (Havel).*

# A boat ride to the vineyard – Young vintner out of passion

**The passion for agriculture runs in the blood in the Leonhardt family from Bad Liebenwerda (Elbe-Elster). Son Rico, born in 1986, embarked on a new path and, after completing his sixth form, decided to get some work experience at a wine estate in Meißen. He liked it so much that he knew what he wanted to do professionally.**

From 2007 to 2009, the young man learned the profession of vintner from the bottom up in the Saxon cathedral city and its surrounding vineyards. The tasks ranged from planting and nursing the vines to pressing and bottling. Following his training, Rico Leonhardt planted the first vines on three quarters of a hectare (c. 1.85 acres) in Bad Liebenwerda in 2011; by now, their numbers have increased to 2,300. Four varieties, Bronner, Silvaner, Kerner and Cabernet Cortis, grow on his vineyard and the matured wine bears the distinct hallmarks of the South Brandenburg vintner. The variety Bronner that grows here is unique in the whole of Brandenburg. It is a variety that was newly cultivated at the Staatliches Weinbauinstitut Freiburg im Breisgau (German National Viticultural Institute) in 1975 – a white variety that is resistant against fungal diseases. The fungus-resistant red wine variety Cabernet Cortis was likewise cultivated in Freiburg, where it was cross-bred as late as in 1982, but to this day remains a rare vine to be planted by vintners.

The must matures into a fine wine in Leonhardt's own cellar, constantly monitored by the vintner. It is his passion to produce fresh wines. "The 2015 grape harvest was of very good quality; the grapes were fully ripe and healthy", the young vintner is pleased to say. For the first time he was able to press this vintage on his own property, in the specifically modified stable. Previously, he had processed the grape harvest at

facilities on his parents' farm. "Now I stand on my own two feet, if you like", says Rico Leonhardt with pride, adding: "For me, viticulture is a calling." The small operation has become profitable by now. Even so, being a vintner is a sideline for him. He mostly earns his living on the Bielighof belonging to his grandparents, who run a hotel on their farm and also offer tastings of their homemade wines. The guests can use the farm's boats to paddle on the river Schwarze Elster and can include a little detour to Rico Leonhardt's vineyard.



## **Weingut Leonhardt**

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# Terracing across the slope – Quality wine from Schlieben



The Schlieben Vineyard (Elbe-Elster) on the southern slope of the Langer Berg hill consists of glacial sands mixed with loess soil. The one hectare (2.471 acres) large vineyard is one of two regions in the Federal State of Brandenburg that has legal permission to produce quality wine. With respect to wine law, however, the wine-producing area belongs to the Elstertal region in



the wine-growing district of Saxony. The early-ripening varieties Bacchus, Müller-Thurgau and Regent are cultivated in Schlieben. An additional speciality is the Schieler wine, a so-called rotling made from white Müller-Thurgau and red Regent grapes. As regards to taste, it is more like a white wine than a red. The vines grow on terraces across the slope, corresponding to the historical way of cultivation, yet which is unique in Brandenburg.

The Schlieben vineyard has been managed by the Verein zur Förderung des historischen Weinbaus (Association for Promoting Historical Viticulture) since 1993. The association is a member in the vintners' cooperative Meißen, where the grapes are separately pressed and processed to make dry or medium dry wines. "The approximately 80 association members are active in maintaining traditions, conservation of the landscape, promoting tourism and researching the history of viticulture in Schlieben", explains Anette Engel, Chairwoman of the Association. Wine is once again being cultivated in Schlieben since 1992, after a break of about a hundred years. The viticultural association is involved as a host in the annual *Brandenburger Landpartie* (Brandenburg Country Outing) taking place on the second weekend in June. Visitors can then explore also the other small vineyards belonging to association members.

The association members and their helpers maintain the vineyard as a natural monument in unnumbered hours of voluntary work. A special feature of the region are over 30 wine cellars along the historical Kellerstraße (Cellar Road), that have been dug into the Langer Berg since about 1540. They were used not only for storing wine, but also for stockpiling supplies and storing ice. These days, the cellars are used as event venues. Subject to booking, wine evenings

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*The Schlieben Vineyard and the Kellerstraße are authentic cultural relics of an old viticultural tradition. In 1992, the Lower Lusatians were the first in the state to once again offer wines 'Made in Brandenburg'.*

with dégustation are organised there. Panels providing information about various aspects of viticulture are dotted along the wine educational trail between the *Kellerstraße* and the vineyard. The wine cellars have become hugely important because of the *Moienmarkt*. This fair has been celebrated since 1593. It is one of the largest fairs in South Brandenburg, attracting several thousand visitors. During the fair, a young woman is chosen to be the so-called *Moie*, who will represent viticulture and the Amt Schlieben (Schlieben municipal federation) at events. A regular annual event takes place on the first weekend in July, when wine is served in many of the 35 old vaults deep in the loess soil. Musicians in the wine cellars or outside their entrances liven up the scene. The event goes on for three days with celebrations often going on well into the early morning.



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# Enjoying wine from the Raunoer Höhe – Federweisser festival in Senftenberg

**Wine lovers in Senftenberg (Upper Spreewald-Lusatia) cultivate vines on an area of 400 square metres (c. 478.4 square yards). Diggers extracted lignite on the site in the Meuro opencast mine up until 1989.** Subsequently, the Lausitzer und Mitteldeutsche Bergbau-Verwaltungs-Gesellschaft (LMBV – Lusatian and Central German Mining Company) raised the ground at the south-eastern edge of the opencast mine. Now, six white wine varieties and two red wine varieties, 220 vines in total, have been growing at the end of Calauer Straße (Calau Road) in Senftenberg since 2012. These days, the district is called Raunoer Höhe. For

centuries it belonged to a 40 hectare (c. 99 acres) wine-growing area that had to make way for opencast mining in the past century. The name is reminiscent of the village of Rauno between Senftenberg and Großräschen that was demolished in 1983. The 35 per cent of clay and marl that the LMBV worked into the ground provides favourable soil conditions and supports water retention.

The association's 25 hobby vintners have considerably improved the soil quality by adding lupins, horse manure and, for several years, lime. The reclaimed area was planted with old varieties such as Chasselas, Frühmuskat (also Frühmuskat, early Muscat Oberlin), Agostenga and Tauberschwarz, thus reanimating a viticultural tradition that can be traced back in the region to 1416. "Our great-grandparents already loved these wines", says Marianne Körner, Senftenberg wine connoisseur and Chairwoman of the Association, explaining the choice of varieties. However, the new red wine variety Regent constitutes the main variety.

The Senftenberg Wine Lovers celebrated their 10-year anniversary in 2014 looking forward to the first harvest as reward for their labour. But their joy was marred by bad news: unknown perpetrators stole the entire harvest only a few days before the harvest. The thieves came back a year later – one day before a fence was about to be built around the vineyard. Again, the ripe grapes were gone and all the labour in vain. "It was only about two buckets full of grapes. But the shock and the moral damage was huge amongst the by now 36 members of the association", says Marianne Körner. Yet the Wine Lovers did not let that spoil their good mood. Since 2015, they have been celebrating the Federweisser festival on the last Sunday in September with the Wine Princess.



## Senftenberger Weinfreunde e. V.

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*The former mining company Vattenfall (now: LEAG) and the Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg (BTU) jointly maintained a trial vineyard at the Welzow opencast mine. The objective was the analysis of prospects of profitable viticulture as an alternative form of land utilisation in the recultivation process and as a potential contribution towards the revival of the Lusatian viticultural tradition.*

# Good wines from the Pulsnitz Valley – Wine Estate Rico Gärtner

**Rico Gärtner, born in 1974, likes drinking wine, preferable his own house wine. “This is why I bought a stretch of land for growing wine in Burkersdorf near my parents’ house in 2004”, he says. Since that time, 800 vines grow in a favourable location in the district of Ortrand (Elbe-Elster) not far from the small river Pulsnitz.**

Yet hard work is the order of the day before the grape harvest in September, be it pruning in winter, weeding in spring or the removal of excess leaves in early summer. About one thousand bottles of wine are made each year at the in-house wine press house. Rico Gärtner, whose main job is in the building materials industry, sells his delicious wines directly at the vineyard. “Our wines can moreover be bought at shops in Ortrand and Senftenberg. Each year, we sell mulled wine at the Ortrand Christmas Market.” In April 2016, he took part with his country wines in the Brandenburg Young Wine Tasting in Werder an der Havel. The varieties Regent, Goldriesling and Traminer grow well on the soil in Burkersdorf, a village nestling between the Elsterland and Upper Lusatia. Goldriesling is a rarity in German viticulture, but has nothing to do with Riesling. In Germany, this variety is mainly grown in Saxony. It originates in Alsace and is a hybrid between Riesling and Malingre Précoce, crossed by Christian Oberlin in Colmar in 1893. The bouquet of this white wine is fine-aromatic with a hint of nutmeg.

The vineyard gently slopes in a southerly direction, ensuring that the vines get plenty of sun. They are moreover protected against cold winds by the houses surrounding the vineyard. “The addition of wood ash remedies the slight lack of magnesium in the soil”, explains Rico Gärtner. He owes his passion



for viticulture and plenty of expert knowledge to his father, who had cultivated a few vines on his property and made wine for personal consumption already in GDR times. Son Rico acquired further professional knowledge through reading and talking to vintners. He also makes use of contacts to other colleagues in Brandenburg, for example, during the Young Wine Tasting in Werder. Once the white wine has been bottled in spring after maturing in barrels, Rico Gärtner accepts bookings from visitor groups for sociable wine tasting sessions.

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*Rico Gärtner may not have a traditional hillside vineyard, but at least a 'wine field' – with a gentle southward slope; above: Traminer grapes.*



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# Vineyard on the steepest shore – Lake Großräschen



**The vineyard at the bottom of the IBA Terraces in Großräschen (Upper Spreewald-Lusatia) may well be the steepest of its kind in Brandenburg.** The one hectare (2.471 acres) large vineyard grows on a south-facing slope with a gradient of 30 to 33 per cent between Lake Großräschen (a flooded former opencast mine) and the long building of the Lusatian Lake District Visitor Centre. Viticulture is facilitated by the natural ground, the unrestricted drain of cold air and the lake's function as a heat storage.

In 2012 and 2013, local farmer Dr Andreas Wobar, one of the protagonists in the Viticulture Section of the Berlin-Brandenburg Horticultural Association, and his wife Cornelia planted about 5,000 vines of varieties that are resistant against fungal diseases and can cope with strong frost on the slope near the pier. The family business entrusted the making of the wines

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*Lusatia is increasingly becoming a tourist destination in the Lusatian Lake District; left page: Solaris grapes, right: Vineyard on Lake Großräschen*

to the experienced wine maker Jacques du Preez from the Saxon wine estate Schloss Proschwitz Prinz zur Lippe. In 2015, the second vintage was harvested, yielding remarkable must weights of 83 degree Oechsle for the Pinotin grapes and 93 degree Oechsle for the Solaris grapes. The wines proved to be particularly fruity. In its very first vintage, the Cabernet Blanc even achieved a peak value of 103 degree Oechsle, that is, *Spätlese* quality. This is as much as is achieved in the well-known wine-producing areas in South Germany. The red wine in the first vintage of 2014 met with much approval at the Brandenburg Young Wine Tasting in Werder an der Havel.

The wines can be tasted directly at the vineyard during guided tours for groups of twelve or more from June to the end of September. Regular events are the *Tag des offenen Weinbergs* (Open Day at the Vineyard) in the context of the *Brandenburger Landpartie* (Brandenburg Country Outing) on the second Saturday in June and the Großräschen Federweisser festival on the second Saturday in September. Parties organised by the Förderverein für das Haus der Landwirtschaft und den Großräschener Weinbau e.V. (Friends' Association for the House of Agriculture and Viticulture in Großräschen, reg. ass.) in the wine barn and fêtes in the courtyard of the House of Agriculture enjoy great popularity. The wines, including the new Lake District Wine Edition featuring sail boats on the labels, are available at the IBA Terraces Visitor Centre and at the farm shop in the House of Agriculture on the market square in Großräschen. Guided tours for exploring the Lusatian Lake District on foot, by raft, bicycle and bus start at the terraces that were opened in 2000 at the beginning of the 10-year *Internationale Bau-Ausstellung* (IBA – International Building Exhibition).



## High on the Wolkenberg – Vines and travel in the mining landscape

**The vineyard on the Wolkenberg hill is regarded as a successful example for the revival of old traditions in the Lower Lusatian lignite mining region.**

In the early 1990s, the village of Wolkenberg (Spree-Neiße) had to make way to the coal diggers of the Welzow-Süd opencast mine and the 170 inhabitants were resettled. After coal mining had ceased, heavy-duty opencast mining equipment was used to shape the embankment on the northern edge and a 30 metre high hill was created at the same time. It was given the name of Wolkenberg (Cloud Mountain) to commemorate the lost village. In the recultivation process, the idea of re-establishing a vineyard at the site emerged. The Lusatian

people had gained some previous experience on a small experimental area with about 200 vines several hundred metres distant. This project was implemented in 2005 by the former mining company Vattenfall Europe Mining in cooperation with the BTU Cottbus and Geisenheim University (Hesse). The test results regarding the optimal mix of the recultivated soil and suitable vine varieties encouraged the parties involved. They decided to establish a vineyard on six hectares (c. 14.8 acres), in terms of surface area the second largest in the Federal State of Brandenburg after the Wachtelberg in Werder. Since 2010, 26,000 vines have been growing on the southern slope, including the two red wine varieties Cabernet Dorsa and Rondo as well as the five white wine varieties Pinot gris,



*The recovery of land for agriculture is pursued with great effort in the context of recultivating the former opencast mining regions. The fact that it was possible to establish successful viticulture here is deemed a great success by experts. Far left: Martin Schwarz in the vineyard.*

Pinot blanc, Kernling, Schönburger and Red Riesling – still a rarity. This old white wine variety with its dense aromas and fine acidity has been rediscovered as of 1991 owing to the efforts of the Institut für Rebenzüchtung (Institute for Vine Cultivation) at Geisenheim University and now is to become more widespread again.

“We were able to harvest about 20 tonnes of grapes. All that effort has paid out”, says Managing Director Bettina Muthmann. Oenologist and Co-Director Martin Schwarz ensures the optimal winemaking conditions at his Weinmanufaktur am Marienberg in Meißen. The wines can be bought at the Excursio Visitor Centre in Welzow and at the Weinmanufaktur



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in Meißen. The visitor centre offers detours to the Wolkenberg in the context of its guided mining tours with subsequent wine tasting at the Gut Geisenhof estate on the edge of the Welzow-Süd opencast mine. The Wolkenberg offers extensive views across the opencast mine and recultivated landscape; the peak features a shelter and panels with information about the region.

# Wine from the Wolfshügel – Hubert Marbach in Jerischke

**Jerischke (Rural District of Spree-Neiße), a district in the Neiße-Malxetal municipality, is situated amid extensive pine forests and roads lined with oak trees. A circular path leads from the information centre of the Geopark Muskauer Faltenbogen to the vineyard. The vineyard offers ideal conditions for a high-quality wine with a south-facing gradient of 17 per cent and many hours of sunshine.**

It was established by Hubert Marbach in 2008 and revives a 700-year-old tradition of viticulture that used to play an important role in the economy of Lower Lusatia. The former

manager, who together with his wife lives in a lovingly restored country house at the foot of the vineyard, is the son of a vintner from Bacharach and thus returns to his roots. He sourced his vines in the Rhine wine-growing region, where many vineyards cover the river banks, and sought advice from wine experts before planting the vineyard in Lusatia in South Brandenburg, where severe frosts and hot summers are the norm.

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*Wolf and wine have once again become endemic in Brandenburg after 1990; Hubert Marbach combines both in the trademark of his wines.*





Marbach carries weight within the Brandenburg vintner community with a vineyard acreage of four hectares (c. 9.9 acres). He grows the vine varieties of Riesling, Johanniter, Red Riesling, Regent and Cabernet Cortis. With the exception of the Riesling vine, these are fungus-resistant varieties that support the wine quality through reduction of pesticides. The vines are being cultivated in a natural manner. This also means that horse and goat manure is used to fertilise the soil and herbicides are avoided. The grapes are processed at the Schloss Proschwitz wine estate near Meißen. The resulting wines are excellent to drink, made according to natural principles and meet with great approval at the Brandenburg Young Wine Tasting sessions.

Second-generation vintner Hubert Marbach not only welcomes guests for wine tasting sessions, but also offers accommodation in the comfortable rooms of the renovated former horse stable of this country house. The wine tastings are hosted in the rustic log cabin. The guests are invited to acquaint themselves with the work in the vineyard and to lend a hand, if they like.

The labels of the wine bottles are inspired by Saxony to commemorate the former affiliation. They were designed by Professor Ulrich Eißner from the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts.

The lettering 'Marbachs Wolfshügel' runs above the silhouette of a wolf on a hilltop carrying some grapes in his mouth. "A wolf howled in the distance when we took soil samples in what was to become the vineyards in 2007", Hubert Marbach recalls. "That is why we chose the name Wolfshügel", the wine aficionado explains.

In the 2015 vintage, Hubert Marbach, his employees and helpers were able to harvest almost 20 tonnes of grapes – enough for up to 20,000 0.75 litre bottles of Brandenburg country wine.

The vintner sells his tasty wines at the country house next to the vineyard and for the most part to retailers and restaurant proprietors in Brandenburg, Berlin and Saxony. "We also receive requests from other federal states, where people are interested in our delectable and as yet still somewhat exotic Brandenburg country wine", Hubert Marbach remarks with pleasure.



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# Barn show – Country wine from Grano

**Wine became one of the most important sources of income in Guben (Rural District of Spree-Neiße) as early as in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is said that once upon a time the region featured about a thousand vineyards.** Later, it produced wine of such quality to satisfy even the spoiled palates at royal and aristocratic courts in Europe. Even the Russian Tsar Peter the Great and the Saxon King Augustus II the Strong are reported to have drunk wine from the Guben region. Yet by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, viticulture was unable to recover from several winters with extreme frost and a massive infestation of phylloxera.

The Gubener Weinbau e.V. viticultural association was established in late 2003. “Our objective is to build on the old traditions and to produce a good quality wine in our own winery”, explains Chairman Dietmar Heinze. The association cultivates a vineyard of one hectare (2.471 acres) in Grano, a district of Schenkendöbern. It is connected to an experimental garden with 30 varieties growing on 1,000 square metres (c. 1,196 square yards). The field is used to test the growth of different varieties of vines in the region and for demonstration purposes. The Guben wine lovers cultivate seven white wine varieties, Pinot gris, Pinot blanc, Riesling, Phoenix, Johanniter, Goldriesling and Gewürztraminer, as well as four red wine varieties, Pinot noir, Regent, Dornfelder and Acolon. The latter is rare throughout Germany. It was created in 1971 by the Staatliche Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Wein- und Obstbau (German National Academy and Research Institute for Viticulture and Pomiculture) in Weinsberg by crossing the varieties Blaufränkisch and Dornfelder. The old estate barn in Grano was converted into a wine barn with the help of funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the Federal State of Brandenburg. It is owned by the Förderverein Niederlausitzer Weinbau e.V. (Lower Lusatian Viticulture Friends’ Association, reg. ass.) that dedicates

itself to the revival of viticulture in the region and maintains contacts as far as the Polish wine-growing regions around Zielona Góra and Krosno Odrzańskie. The building houses the show winery of the Guben viticultural association. This is where the varietal wines are pressed, bottled, sealed and labelled. They are allowed as per the German Wine Law to feature the trademarked geographic denomination *Brandenburger Landwein* (Brandenburg Country Wine). Guided tours through the vineyard, the wine barn and the winery provide visitors with first-hand experience and insights into the association’s work. Wine lovers and others with an interest in wine can try the wines during the traditional young wine tasting sessions on the last weekend in April and the vineyard fêtes on the last weekend in September.



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*Top: Wine fête in Grano. It is said that royals throughout Europe had ordered wine from Guben for their banquets.*

# Solaris thriving on the Sonnenhügel – Brandenburg country wine

**The area around Cottbus featured about 200 vineyards in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. For instance, a vineyard in Klein Oßnig (Spree-Neiße) belonging to the knight's estate von Gladitz was maintained until 1850. The married couple Martin and Karola Krause revived this vineyard south of Cottbus in 2011. They planted some 2,000 vines on 0.4 hectares (c. 0.9 acres) on the south slope.**

The radio transmission tower in Klein Oßnig is the widely visible landmark of their hill, which measures 110 metres after all. The vineyard is located two kilometres outside the Cottbus city gates. Martin and Karola Krause know that this hill supplied the Franciscan monastery in Cottbus already more than 500 years ago. They cultivate the vines with a lot of commitment and enthusiasm together with the Cottbus Vineyard Friends. Martin Krause moreover collaborates in the Viticulture Section of the Berlin-Brandenburg Horticultural Association.

The varieties growing on the Sonnenhügel (Sun Hill) are Johanniter, which is similar to Riesling, Solaris, a fruity white wine variety, and the strong red wine variety Regent that tastes like Merlot. They are new varieties that were crossed in the second half of the past century and were sourced from the Antes vine nursery on the Hessische Bergstraße (Hessian Mountain Road). These grapes produce a high-quality wine, are frost resistant and show a high degree of resistance against fungal diseases. The sandy, easily warming soil of Lusatia as well as sunshine above the average amount of hours combine to produce high-quality grapes.

The Krause couple harvested their first vintage in 2013, 161 years after viticulture ceased here. They were rewarded with 1,500 bottles of tasty Brandenburg country wine. The Son-

nenhügel grapes are processed at the quality wine estate Gebrüder Hanke in Jessen (Saxony-Anhalt). The first sparkling wine to be made of the Krauses' grapes was prepared in 2014. The traditionally made Sekt (bottle fermented, riddled by hand) was ready for tasting in June 2016. It proved to be a good one. Both the wines and sparkling wine from Klein Oßnig are mainly available at wine merchants in the region. The wines are presented at the Young Wine Tasting in April and during the Brandenburger Landpartie and can be tasted and bought during the newly revived wine fêtes. Wine tastings of four wines in the vineyard can be booked for companies or groups of 15 to 30 people. Guided tours through the vineyard can be booked on request.

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*Solaris grapes: the fruity white wine variety has won over a good number of vintners in Brandenburg. It is also being cultivated on the Wachtelberg in Werder as pictured here.*

# Cheers, good neighbour – Wine cooperation across Neiße and Oder

**Viticulture has been experiencing a revival for many years on both sides of the rivers Neiße and Oder. This is evident also in the closer cooperation between vintners and vine growers in Brandenburg and the neighbouring region in Poland.**

The individual vintner's signature, the self-made wine from one's own vineyard is increasingly in demand. The Polish vintners as well as some of their colleagues in Brandenburg process their own grapes. The resulting wines are mostly sold directly. The prices tend to be similar for wines bought straight from the vineyard.

The 'Weinbau in der Niederlausitz' (Viticulture in Lower Lusatia) network was established in 2007 in the context of a LEADER project. One year later, it was extended to in-



clude the entire Federal State of Brandenburg. The website [www.weinland-brandenburg.de](http://www.weinland-brandenburg.de) has been designed in the context of this LEADER project and serves as an open platform for the exchange of information and experience also after the project's conclusion. The network is sponsored by the Förderverein Niederlausitzer Weinbau (Lower Lusatian Viticulture Friends' Association, reg. ass.). This non-profit association is the owner of the wine barn in Grano (Spree-Neiße), where it has been maintaining an information centre for viticulture in Brandenburg since 2011.

On the other side of the river Neiße, a vintners' centre was established in the Polish Lubusz Voivodeship in 2015. This involved close cooperation with vine growers in Brandenburg. The building is located in Zabór on the largest communal vineyard in Poland (35 hectares / c. 86.5 acres) the cultivation of which is shared by 13 vintners. Wine tourism has recently been rediscovered, providing a combination of active leisure pursuits and culinary enjoyment. The attractions range from show plantations and regular wine fêtes, for example, in Zielona Góra, to viticultural exhibitions and discussions about the revival of viticulture in Cottbus.

Starting in Grano, a new section of the so-called *Wein- und Honigstraße* (Wine and Honey Road) will in future lead through the town of Guben to the Polish partnering town of Gubin with its hills and further along the banks of the rivers Neiße and Oder to Krosno Odrzańskie (Crossen an der Oder). A good number of vintners have learned their trade at the Crossen School for Viticulture and Pomiculture since its establishment in 1891 under Brandenburg rule. The Lubuski Centre for Innovation and Agricultural Implementation was built in Kalsk in Western Poland, costing EUR 9.4 million. Its



local experimental vineyard features the varieties Solaris, Johanniter and Regent as well as young vines of the Tauberschwarz variety, also called Franc grape.

A project by the Förderverein Niederlausitzer Weinbau e.V. in 2010 and 2011 helped to save the heritage of the former vineyards in cooperation with Polish wine lovers; the frost resistance of these old vines is of equal interest to the fast-growing viticultural sector in Poland and vintners in Brandenburg.

With an acreage of about 193 hectares (c. 477 acres), the area under vines in Poland is about six times larger than that in the Federal State of Brandenburg. A comparison: the area under vines in Germany is 102,400 hectares (c. 253,030 acres). 106 Polish vineyards have forecast a total yield of 4,000 hectolitres for the 2015/16 vintage. The number of vineyards in the neighbouring country is growing faster than is possible in Brandenburg. For instance, 18 vineyards with a total acreage of 49 hectares (c. 121 acres) in the Lubusz Voivodeship produced 900 hectolitres of wine in the 2015/16 vintage. The

*A successful network of Polish wine estates has recently been established on the other side of the river Oder. A German-Polish Wine and Honey Road aims at improved marketing of regional products for tourism.*

numbers in the previous vintage 2014/15 was 14 vineyards with acreage of 36 hectares (c. 89 acres) and 661 hectolitres. The first sparkling wine in Germany used to come from Zielona Góra, previously called Grünberg under German rule. This, too, is a good reason for wine lovers in the March to revive the shared German-Polish viticultural tradition. For this reason, Sabine Zachau has developed a concept for viticulture on both sides of the rivers Neiße and Oder for the Förderverein Niederlausitzer Weinbau e.V., commissioned by the Agricultural Ministry in Potsdam. This work was made possible by funding from the ministry and support from the Lubusz Voivodeship.



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# Following in the monks' footsteps – The monastery vintners of Neuzelle



**Only one of the three historical monastery vineyards in Neuzelle (Oder-Spree) remains today. It takes its name Scheibe (Disc) from the hill on which the vines grow and is the only vineyard in the Federal State of Brandenburg to be located within a preserved monastery complex.**

Some of the numerous visitors to the Baroque building with its magnificent church also find their way to the vineyard in the southern part of the complex. This is where, following the recultivation of the slope, the Association of Neuzelle Monastery Vintners, established in 2002, has been reviving the heritage of the Cistercian monks, who had cultivated vines there a long time ago. "21 volunteer association members look after 420 vines in their free time", says Uta

Kaufmann, Chairwoman of the Association. The vines do not grow on trellises, but in the traditional manner on individual stakes. The men and women's commitment to the vineyard is required throughout the year. It begins with pruning in February, the tying of the typical 'ears', the so-called Moselle stake training in March and continues with the constant pruning of foliage until the autumn harvest. The association members tackle any weeds with a hoe. They meet at regular intervals after work and on the weekends to work in the vineyard. Their labour is rewarded by words of appreciation and sometimes a glass of wine, yet they always are guaranteed a beautiful view across Neuzelle to the meadows on the river Oder.

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*Culture meets cultivation: vines in front of the Neuzelle abbey church.*

The vines cultivated here are the white wine varieties Phoenix, Muscat, Merzling, Solaris, Aron and the two red wine varieties Regent and Pinot noir précoce. Aron is a rather more modern table grape variety with very big grapes that sadly is as yet rarely cultivated here in Germany. The variety needs a good, warm spot for growing. It grows strongly and beautifully straight. Its grapes taste very pleasant, fruity, with mild acidity. Merzling, a fungus-resistant white wine variety, is likewise not very common in Brandenburg. It is a cross of Riesling and Pinot gris that was created at the Staatliches Weinbauinstitut Freiburg im Breisgau (German National Viticultural Institute) in 1960.

Since 2013, the harvested grapes can be pressed, fermented and ultimately bottled in a new wine press house directly at the vineyard. The association members offer guided tours and are happy to talk about their work and the history of viticulture in the region. The wine is for the most part sold to visitors taking part in the vineyard tours. By now it has become a nice tradition for the monastery vintners to offer white mulled wine at the Neuzelle Christmas market on the second weekend in Advent.



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# Cheers to the namesake – In the ancestor's arbour on the Neuzelle Reisberg

**Viticulture in Neuzelle (Oder-Spree) has been revived after lying dormant for more than 150 years. Credit for this goes mainly to Hans-Wilhelm Richter, who was the first to plant vines on a newly acquired plot on the Reisberg hill in 2000.**

The local dry and mild climate is perfect for viticulture. Richter started slowly: family, neighbours and friends initially helped in picking the grapes from the first 40 Müller Thurgau and 40 Dornfelder vines. At first, the grapes were destemmed by hand and pressed by foot. He then proceeded with anticipation in making the initially small quantities of wine. Some years later, the Richter family acquired a destemming machine from the show wine press house in Grano (Spree-Neiße). They moreover added a hydraulic press to their equipment. For the vintner of pensionable age, who also owns an engineering office and maintains a small farm with Heidschnucke sheep, chicken and a cow, this means a considerable relief from manual labour. Because of the experience he has gathered in his own vineyard, Hans-Wilhelm Richter was commissioned with the planning and planting of the Neuzelle monastery vineyard Scheibe. He also was a member of the monastery vintners association that was established in 2002, but gave up his membership in 2015 due to lack of time.

Neuzelle had three monastery vineyards near the Reisberg in the times of the Cistercian monks. Vines grew on the 15 degree steep south-west-facing slopes of the Reisberg in the idyllic Dorche valley west of the Schlaube valley for more than 700 years, providing the abbots, monks and their frequently

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*Hans-Wilhelm Richter was the first in 150 years to grow wine again in Neuzelle. Although viticulture on the monastery vineyards survived for a few decades after the monastery's secularisation in 1817, it was discontinued on other abbey holdings.*

high-ranking guests with wine. These days, some 500 vines of various varieties thrive there, including Domina, Phoenix, Solaris, Muscaris, Hiberna and Pinot gris. Old varieties grow against warming walls, including some that previously survived in the local villages. Nets protect the red wine varieties from greedy starlings. The 2015 vintage produced a gratifying yield after several unremarkable years. The Richter family, their neighbours and friends traditionally gather around the Easter fire for tasting the young wine. In rainy weather, the ancestor's arbour provides welcome shelter. It protects the tombstone of Ernst Richter, a Guben vintner who died in 1915; his Neuzelle namesake Hans-Wilhelm Richter was given the headstone as a present by a Polish friend from Gubin. Ernst Richter is regarded as one of the last vintners in the region of today's Federal State of Brandenburg before viticulture de facto disappeared from the map – until its renaissance as of 1990.



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# Historical vineyard – Grapes from Luckau

**In 1376, the Silesian Piast Duke Bolko III gave the citizens of Luckau permission to cultivate vineyards. Some were planted directly in the town in today's administrative district of Dahme-Spreewald.**

Yet viticulture survived there only until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 2005, Jürgen Rietze planted his first 1,200 vines, including some table grape varieties, on a south-facing slope on one of these historical sites. The plantation was later more than doubled to comprise 0.7 hectares (c. 1.73 acres) due to increasing demand. “By now, some 3,500 vines grow in our vineyard”, says the dedicated vintner. He has his work cut out, doing it all on his own. His white varieties Solaris and Johanniter and the red varieties Acolon and Regent are processed in the show wine press house in Grano near Guben to make Brandenburg country wine, which then is mostly sold in Lower Lusatia. “My Solaris made the ‘Berlin Wine Guide’, particularly recommended to accompany prawn cocktail and other sea food”, Rietze is proud to tell.

He acquired basic knowledge about viticulture in early 2000 when visiting a vineyard near Stuttgart, where he was led to as a job-seeker. Back in Luckau he solicited support from his family for his plan to cultivate vines on the edge of town. He sought to exchange experience with Brandenburg vintners and gathered information from specialist literature. He moreover closely studied the small vineyard on the Luckau Schlossberg that was planted for the Brandenburg State Horticultural Show in 2000. It features 150 vines of the varieties Müller-Thurgau and Dornfelder. Jürgen Rietze used the accumulated knowledge to establish his own vineyard. Together with his family and other helpers he was able to harvest his first vintage in 2007. However, the joy about the first wine was

short-lived: severe frost during the icy winter of 2009 killed many vines. As a result, there was no harvest. Another setback followed two years later. A violent hailstorm destroyed the entire vintage one day before the harvest in September 2011. “Again we had no yield”, Jürgen Rietze looks back. Yet he did not give up. Thanks to mild winters in the past years he was eventually able to enjoy the fruits of his labour in the vineyard in the form of many bottles of good wine. Luckau country wine is served in the region at harvest festivals, at the *Niederlausitzer Leistungsschau* (Lower Lusatian Exhibition) and in Jürgen Rietze's home.



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# Wire frame on the Mühlenberg – Wine sponsors with heart

**The establishment of the Bestensee viticultural association (Rural District Dahme-Spreewald) in September 2010 launched the relandscaping of one of the municipality's most beautiful areas next to the old village church. The south-facing slope and the old tradition of wine growing in the region motivated the association to plant 3,200 vines here in 2011. The roots of viticulture in the Dahmeland can be traced back well into the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The Mühlenberg hill offers visitors the best views of the village in the Dahme-Spreewald district.**

The planted vines are the red varieties Cabernet Cortis and Pinotin as well as the white varieties Cabernet Blanc, Johanner and Solaris. An initial requirement was the construction of a wire frame on the 0.75-hectare vineyard (c. 1.85 acres). It is constructed of 3,500 posts, 750 stakes, 150 ground anchors and 22 kilometres (c. 13.67 miles) of tension wire as well as a fence around the vineyard. "A sandy hill in the March is not exactly typical of German viticulture", explains Herbert Krenz, Chairman of the Association. "Yet with the help of drip irrigation for every single vine and a comprehensive care programme, the association members were able to harvest their first vintage in 2013." As many as 3,200 bottles of the 2015 vintage were available for sale. The demand for the red and white wines is considerable at local events and markets.

Visitors to the vineyard learn a lot of interesting facts about the cultivation and care of the vines during guided tours. They can also enjoy a wine tasting of the previous year's vintage. A small, newly built mill next to the vines symbolises the Mühlenberg (Mill Hill). A nearby big wooden sculpture of Bacchus, God of Wine, makes a good photographic motif. Citizens of the Bestensee Municipality and in particular the association

members demonstrated their commitment to viticulture by symbolically adopting a vine and by planting 90 rose bushes at the respective ends of lines. The rose bushes are adorned with heart-shaped plaques made of fired clay on which men have inscribed the names of their wives or girlfriends. Vine sponsors enter into no obligation regarding maintenance of the vineyard and harvesting; however, they acquire a right to two bottles of wine each from three vintages.



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# Institutionally certified – Gold dust from Baruth

**Wine is once again being grown on the Mühlenberg in Baruth (Teltow-Fläming) since a few years ago. The vineyard was created in 2007 by the Institut zur Entwicklung des ländlichen Kulturraums (Institute for the Development of the Rural Cultural Region), which was established two years before by artists, geographers, landscape architects and cultural scientists.**

With a size of easily one hectare (c. 2.471 acres), the Baruth vineyard is by now regarded as a part-time farm. Yet this does not even begin to describe it. The vines grow in a diversified and scattered vineyard landscape totalling three hectares (c. 7.4 acres) that features individual trees, groups of trees and erratic boulders. Pine forests, typical of the March, surround it to the East and South; an old lilac hedge, a newly established hedgerow and young fruit trees grow on the northern border. A number of old fruit trees grow on the western fringes, followed by a dense grove. Piles of fieldstones for lizards and boxes for birds, bats and insects promote biodiversity in the vineyard. The favourable south-facing slope provides excellent conditions for 4,600 vines of the white varieties Helios, Johanniter, Solaris



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*'Echt Fläming' with wine bouquet can by now be enjoyed also in Potsdam and Berlin, yet the experience is most authentic in Baruth.*

and Muscaris. These are fungus-resistant new breeds that were selected by the Staatliches Weinbauinstitut Freiburg im Breisgau (German National Viticultural Institute) and are suitable for the climate in the March. The grapes are pressed at the Hanke wine estate in Jessen (Saxony-Anhalt). The association members call it 'gold dust from Baruth' because of its rarity.

The first vintage in 2010 was not yet very productive with 100 bottles. But four years later, as many as 3,200 half-litre bottles of cuvée, Helios and Solaris were filled. Also in 2014, construction of the vineyard barn started with the help of EU funds; it was completed in 2015 and provides the wine estate with an attractive event venue. The Baruth architect Thomas Näther incorporated elements of the regional building tradition. Amongst other things, the barn is used for young wine tasting sessions. The wines are also available at the institute's farm shop on Hauptstraße in Baruth as well as at the museum village Glashütte Baruth, the market stall 'Echt Fläming' in the 'Markthalle Neun' in Berlin-Kreuzberg and at the 'Brandenburger Kultur- und Weinkontor' on Lindenstraße 18 in Potsdam. The 'gold dust from Baruth' is moreover available at restaurants in the region.

Maps from the 17<sup>th</sup> century indicate numerous vineyards in the Fläming region. Back then, the old coat of arms of the Town of Baruth featured a vine. Wine was grown there up until about 1830 and on small private plots and stakes even until the 1960s. A sumptuous grape vine decorated the coat of arms as late as the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Several decades passed before the region's first wine was bottled again. Since 2007, the Baruth vineyard fête is celebrated each year on the first weekend in September.

# A long pedigree – Sun-kissed on Lake Zesch

**The vineyard in Zesch is an authentic witness to a centuries-old viticultural tradition in Brandenburg. The Association for the Promotion of Historical Viticulture in Zesch am See near Zossen (Rural District of Teltow-Fläming) contributed to the revival of this tradition by planting 1,500 vines in 2013.**

The project was made possible also owing to the support of the owner, Hermann Graf von Hatzfeldt-Wildenburg. The two red wine varieties Regent and Acolon as well as the white variety Pinot blanc grow on an area of 3,000 square metres (c. 3,588 square yards). So far, the years of work in the Zesch vineyard have paid out. The association members and their



helpers harvested their first vintage in the very good wine year 2015. The area under vines on the south slope of the 93-metre-high hill (c. 305 feet) has a gradient of 15 per cent and offers optimal conditions for viticulture. The grapes from Zesch are made into wine at the Hanke wine estate in Jessen in Saxony-Anhalt. The wine bottle labels were designed by the artist Bernd Stiehler, who lives in Wünsdorf. Since 2014, an open day at the Zesch vineyard has taken place every year in June on the occasion of the *Brandenburger Landpartie*. It commemorates the former extensive viticultural activities in the area and serves to advertise the region. The trail around the *Großer* and *Kleiner Zeschsee* (Great and Small Lake Zesch) runs directly past the vineyard. The wine is sold in shops in the region, directly at the vineyard in Zesch during the *Brandenburger Landpartie* and during the *Lindenblütenfest* (Lime Blossom Festival) in the Zossen district of Lindenbrück.

The Zesch vineyard was first mentioned in a document in 1595 and originally belonged to the princely House zu Solms-Baruth, which for a long time had been a Lower Lusatian mediatised house. In contrast to other vineyards in the region, this plantation was the only one to be cultivated up until 1945. Even some architectural remains survive. Foundations made of glacial erratics on the southern slope of the vineyard were restored. They belonged to the vintner's house with its wooden wine press that was mentioned in 17<sup>th</sup>-century records and stood there until 1945. Remains of a former wine cellar are located in the vicinity of today's vineyard. It was dug into the vineyard and constructed as a vaulted cellar. The members of the vintners association care for the vines with much dedication and attention to detail. The easily warming, sandy clay soil, the proximity to the Großer Zeschsee lake and above-average hours of sunshine create good grapes.

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*Visitors frequently explore the vineyard in Zesch. The grape harvest, in particular, is the most beautiful and important event in the vintner's calendar. Left: Portal to the wine cellar valley.*



▶ **Verein zur Förderung des historischen Weinbaus in Zesch e. V.**

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## Can make more than fruit wine – Werder friends of the vine

**The town of Werder an der Havel (Potsdam-Mittelmark), known for its fruit wine, has over the past years also emerged as a good address for wine lovers.** An increasing number of wines made of grapes is being served in addition to fruit wines during the Baublütenfest (Tree Blossom Festival) in spring, Brandenburg's largest fair. The four vineyards in the environs of the town, totalling 11.1 hectares (c. 27.43 acres), are located on the 52<sup>nd</sup> parallel, which constitutes the northernmost border of the specified wine-producing area of Saale-Unstrut. The region produces a pleasantly mild wine with low acidity that can be certified as a quality wine. This is exactly the location of the largest vineyard in Brandenburg, a plantation on 6.2 hectares (c. 15.3 acres) on the Wachtelberg,

which was first mentioned in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Viticulture was revived here in 1985 and the town of Werder did much in the 1990s to maintain it. Two educational trails on the site provide visitors with information on 140 vine varieties. The vineyards on the Wachtelberg and on the significantly smaller Galgenberg in Werder are managed by the family business Weinbau Dr Manfred Lindicke. The vines growing here are the white varieties Müller-Thurgau, Sauvignon Blanc, Saphira, Kernling, Muscaris, Cabernet Blanc, Solaris and the experimental variety VB Cal 6-04. The red varieties are Regent, Dornfelder and Pinotin. The 2014 vintage produced a total of 31 tonnes of white wine grapes and 24.5 tonnes of red wine grapes, reports Dr Manfred Lindicke. "It was significantly more in



*Wines from Werder quickly made a name for themselves due to professional marketing. The fruit cultivation know-how also helped to once again make wine 'Made in Brandenburg'. Top: Grape variety Regent, right: Weintiene*

2015. The harvest yielded 40.2 tonnes of white grapes and 29.8 tonnes of red grapes.” The wines are sold by food retailers in the Havelland and Berlin, through regional partners and the Internet. For many years, Lindicke has also been an exhibitor at the Brandenburg Hall that is hosted by the Federal State of Brandenburg during the International Green Week in Berlin.

During the season, visitors to the Wachtelberg can enjoy Brandenburg wines and regional specialties at the Strausswirtschaft 'Weintiene'. From 1991, for two decades, the wines from the Wachtelberg were processed at the State Wine Estate Kloster Pforta Bad Kösen in Saxony-Anhalt. These



wines have already won numerous national and state wine awards. The construction of a dedicated wine press house in Werder further increased the quality. It processes the grapes from the Wachtelberg, in addition to those from the Werder districts of Phöben and Galgenberg, from the Royal Vineyard in Potsdam and from the Marienberg in Brandenburg an der Havel.



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# Savoir vivre below the Galgenberg – Vines for rent

**One of the oldest vineyards in Brandenburg is the Galgenberg (Gallows Hill) in Werder (Havel) in the Rural District of Potsdam-Mittelmark. It is assumed that the first vines were planted there in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.** These days, the successful cooperation between the city, the vintner family Lindicke and wine lovers quite literally bears fruit in abundance. The city acquired the site in 2011; fruit had been cultivated there after the decline of viticulture in the March in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet the land ceased to be cultivated because the barren sandy soil yielded only limited crops. A few years ago, the town council and the Association for the Promotion of Historical Viticulture in the Werder region once again brought attention to this site. The complex was opened in 2012 and consists of the 1.4-hectare (c. 3.46-acre) vineyard, the Lindowsches Haus fruit farm and four traditional *Schuffelgärten* (scuffle gardens). These are multi-level fruit gardens, which previously were weeded with so-called *Schuffeln* (wheeled scuffle hoes), that easily dig into the barren sandy soil of the March. The vines growing here are the fungus-resistant red variety Pinotin as well as the white varieties Muscaris and Cabernet blanc that are likewise resistant against fungal diseases. The grapes are processed in the vineyard's own wine press house in Werder.

The friends' association launched a project in summer 2012, enabling wine lovers to rent part of the vineyard. This means that interested individuals can rent either twelve or twenty vines for ten years. Some 2,600 of the total of 6,000 vines were rented out in 2016. The 142 rent payers receive their share in the average wine yield depending on the number of rented vines. In 2016, the yield was 13 and, respectively, 22 bottles of wine. "The rent payers do not have to contribute to the work in the vineyard. They only have to pick up their

wine bottles on schedule; however, that seems to be quite difficult somehow", explains Manfred Lindicke. The vintner and his family also maintain the vineyard on the Wachtelberg, only a few kilometres away and about five times as large as the Galgenberg vineyard. According to the German Wine Law, both sites belong to the wine-growing district of Saale-Unstrut, so that the wine can be sold as quality wine.

The friends' association has more than 80 members. They jointly organise events such as the stand at the Federal State's Brandenburg Hall during the International Green Week in Berlin, the Grand Brandenburg Young Wine Tasting, the Easter fire at the vineyard, pruning seminars and the Vintners Festival.

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# An imperial cup – Kagelwit's Phöben heirs

**In the Middle Ages, the vineyard in the Werder district of Phöben belonged to the holdings of the Cistercian Lehnin Abbey (Rural District of Potsdam-Mittelmark). As the person responsible for the abbey's economic operation, the monk Dietrich Kagelwit (1300 – 1367) was also responsible for the kitchen and hence for the fields and vineyards.**

Most of all, he was a medieval financial genius. In Brandenburg, Kagelwit unsuccessfully applied for the vacancy in the Diocese of Brandenburg. He then went to the court of King Charles of Bohemia (later Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor), where he was most welcome due to his efficiency. According to legend, Kagelwit managed to impress Charles IV with his meals typical of the March and good wines when the emperor visited Lehnin Abbey during a hunting excursion. This cannot be proven, but the wine that since 1996, after a long interruption, is once more being produced in Phöben is marketed under the name of Kagelwit. Back in the 1990s, the Lehmann family planted an experimental vineyard on a south-east-facing slope with the varieties Regent, Dornfelder, Pinot blanc and Merzling, a cross between Riesling and Pinot gris. 15 years later, the Poel family from Potsdam acquired the vineyard and expanded it by adding another plot. In 2011 they added the varieties Sauvignier gris, Trollinger and Riesel, a total of 4,000 vines. After initially low yields due to the clay soil and unfavourable weather, almost 4 tonnes of grapes were harvested in 2013. Two years later, the yield was about three tonnes, producing 2,000 bottles of wine. The Sauvignier gris achieved a remarkable 99 degree Oechsle, as much as in South German regions. However, sale of the wines remains difficult because a sales network has to be set up first. The idea is to offer sponsorships to increase the vineyard's profile and thus improve sales of the Kagelwit brand.

Since 2012, the wine has been made at the newly established wine press house of Havelland OWS GmbH in Werder that is jointly operated by several vintners and belongs to the family company Dr Lindicke; the Poel family holds a share. It also processes grapes from the other vineyards in Werder and environs, including those from the Wachtelberg and the Galgenberg. As the sites belong to the designated wine-growing region of Saale-Unstrut, much sought-after quality wines are made under expert supervision from the various varieties.



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# Fresh and fruity – Organic wine from Töplitz

**600 years ago, Cistercian monks already grew vines for making wine at the Klosterhof Töplitz monastery near Werder (Havel) in the Rural District of Potsdam-Mittelmark. Many years later, this activity was continued by Swiss settlers who had been recruited by the Great Elector Frederick William of Brandenburg (1620 – 1688).**

Here, too, viticulture fell into neglect during GDR times. In 2007, the former Berlin civil servant Klaus Wolenski started his new career as vintner by once again planting vines here. After some ups and downs with other partners, Wolenski remembered the strength of family ties and now is assisted in his wine production by daughter Lara, who maintains an equestrian farm right next to the vineyard.

The 200-year-old cistern at the highest point of the vineyard has been restored and continues in its purpose of irrigation. By now, the first wine cellar has been established, where the grapes grown in the vineyard are processed and the wine is bottled. This appeals to wine lovers. The Klosterhof Töplitz wine estate is a certified organic vintner business. The organic wine market has been growing in Germany for many years and that has an effect also in Brandenburg. Eight varieties grow on the 2.5-hectare (c. 6.2-acre) vineyard, including the white varieties Pinot blanc, Riesling, Pinot gris, Bacchus and the red varieties Saint Laurent and Regent. Wine critic Stuart Pigott, well-known in expert circles, has planted 1,200 vines of the variety Pinot noir here.

The microclimatic conditions are favourable and encourage good growth in frequently dry and sunny weather. The hill's soil gives these wines an unmistakable character. The vines grow in the typical sandy soil of the March that is mixed with

layers of loess and clay. The south-facing slope produces particularly fresh, fruity wines that are representative of their respective grape varieties and are a pleasure to drink even as a young wine.

The 'Besenwirtschaft' restaurant that is affiliated to the vineyard has adopted the motto: enjoy wine where it grows. If they like the wine, guests can also buy bottles of it here. In addition to the wines, the restaurant offers a small selection of regional dishes and homemade cake on weekends and public holidays. The patio is a lovely spot for taking a break in nice weather. Visitors particularly enjoy taking a picnic basket with wine and food to the vineyard, where at the highest point they sit down at tables and benches between the vines and enjoy the view across the Havel river.



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*Klaus Wolenski was one of the first in Brandenburg to cultivate organic wine in Brandenburg.*



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# On the sunny side – Vineyard on Lake Schwielow

**Since 2015, vines have once again been growing on a sunny south-facing terrace between Lake Schwielow and the Glindower Alpen Nature Reserve.**

The small vineyard of 0.1 hectares (c. 0.25 acres) in the Werder district of Petzow has been planted with 325 grafted vines of the red variety Regent. These vines are particularly resistant against fungal diseases and can often also withstand the icy winter frost in Brandenburg. The near-natural cultivation helps to limit the use of pesticides to a minimum.

The vineyard is maintained by the family of Horst and Eva-Maria Koj and their friends. They tackle this self-imposed challenge with great commitment and enthusiasm. “Our motive is to revive the tradition of viticulture in the March also in Petzow”, says Horst Koj.

The Cistercian monks of Lehnin Abbey had been the first to propagate viticulture in the region in the Middle Ages. They planted vines in the villages and towns that formed part of the abbey holdings. The Potsdam wine historian Roland Fröhlich has extensively researched the wide-ranging impact of the two monastic orders of Cistercians and Premonstratensians (White Canons) in the cultivation of vines for winemaking in the wake of the state’s colonisation in a number of publications and has thus on his part provided decisive impulses for a renaissance of viticulture in today’s rural districts of Potsdam-Mittelmark and Havelland. The Cistercians in particular, whose economically strong Lehnin Abbey, founded in 1180, led to additional establishments further east, are specifically connected to the development of a wine culture in the March. Their holdings also included, as of 1437, the village of Petzow in today’s municipal area of Werder (Havel).

Petzow offers a balanced microclimate for viticulture owing to its location on Lake Schwielow and the proximity to the Havel river and Havel lakes. As late as in 1780, the Prussian viticultural register recorded an area under vines of 15 morgen in Petzow, nearly 4 hectares (c. 9.9 acres). Petzow still employed a wine master in 1810. Yet viticulture lost its significance in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and ceased also in Petzow for a long time. This is about to change. The vineyard owners hope to produce the first vintage of Petzow country wine after a successful harvest in 2018.



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# Water makers making wine – Marienberg in Brandenburg an der Havel

**The oldest site of growing vines in the March is located in Brandenburg an der Havel. Brandenburg's fourth-largest town is also regarded as the March's cradle.**

This is where Bishop Wilmar laid the foundation for the St Peter and Paul Cathedral on 11 October 1165. The diocese had been established by King Otto I in 948. The Harlunger Berg, today's Marienberg hill in the historical old town, had been regarded as a sacred site by the Slavic Hevelli. The new lords of the land assimilated this tradition by building their cathedral. The vineyard on Harlunger Berg was for the first time mentioned in a document from about 1150. Other records mentioning it date from 1157 and 1173.

The archive documents record over 80 wine growers and vintners as well as numerous wine taverns in the old town of Brandenburg and later in the new town (Neustadt) and Klein Kreuz. The oldest image of the city by Zacharius Garcäus from 1582 shows how the vineyard around the Marienkirche church on the Marienberg extended well into the town.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the vintners achieved such good yields on the Marienberg that, according to contemporary witnesses, it was hard to keep an overview of the abundantly growing vineyards. Yet icy winters, malformation and neglect brought an end to viticulture there and elsewhere in the March around 1820. The art of growing vines was revived on the historical site almost 200 years later. Here, too, a group of enthusiasts wishing to revive old traditions joined forces. Since a few years ago, vineyard terraces extend on the site where once the pilgrimage church of St Marien stood. They surround an elevated potable water tank owned by BRAWAG GmbH Wasser- und Abwassergesellschaft Brandenburg an

der Havel (water and sewage company) that is covered with soil with the exception of the access area.

BRAWAG started designing the profile of the future vineyard on the Marienberg in October 2012. The terraces were constructed and an irrigation system was installed in the following spring. 2,000 vines of the white variety Solaris and 1,000 Johanniter vines, also a white variety, have been planted in the prepared ground. The first harvest in the Federal Horticulture Show (BUGA) year 2015 was promising.



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# Sweet dream of grapes is the reward in sight – School vineyard on the Dominsel

A real eyecatcher has been created on the Dominsel island in Brandenburg on the Havel: the school vineyard of the Evangelisches Domgymnasium (cathedral grammar school). Headmaster Dr Winfried Overbeck had the idea. He soon won over sponsors, parents and pupils to engage in the project. The small vineyard was created with expert help on an area of 150 square metres (c. 179.4 square



yards) on a south-west-facing slope on the school campus and is partly surrounded by dry walls made of sandstone. The terraced plot was planted with 150 vines of the varieties Solaris, Johanniter and Cabernet Cantor in May 2014.

“Our objective is to acquaint the young generation with the old viticultural tradition in the Havel region and to introduce them to this attractive trade”, explains the headmaster. The vineyard is managed according to the principles of ecological viticulture. The vine rows are planted with greenery. The vines are sprayed with liquid manure made of plants, which works well for the fungus-resistant vine varieties. The first 75 kilograms (c. 165.35 pounds) were harvested in time for the Federal Horticultural Show 2015 in the Havelland and processed in the school kitchen to make varietal grape juice and a fruit spread called ‘Traubentraum’ (grape dream). The final products were available for tasting and buying at the first cathedral vineyard festival in September 2015. The vineyard is managed by the pupils company ‘Schülerweingut am Dom’, established in September 2015. In the teaching subject economy-work-technology, the boys and girls not only learn the basics of the viticultural trade. They also study accounting and marketing. Moreover, the Weinbau AG (viticulture school work group) helps a lot each week. The headmaster personally manages all these activities. First attempts at winemaking have already taken place. The establishment of winemaking facilities on the small school wine estate is planned and the necessary equipment is being acquired. The targeted customers for the wine are churches that might wish to obtain their Holy Communion wine from the school vineyard. This ties in with the medieval tradition, when the Brandenburg Marienberg belonged to the cathedral chapter and produced wine for the numerous masses.

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*The cathedral school vineyard is unique in Brandenburg. In this special school garden project, the children and youths learn the basics of viticulture according to the principles of ecological agriculture. Upper left: Headmaster Dr Winfried Overbeck (left)*



### ▶ **Schülerweingut am Dom**

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## Frederick above the vines – Sanssouci Palace and Park

**The magnificent setting of Sanssouci Park in Potsdam includes also the terraced vineyards. They hark back to a passion of King Frederick II, who liked to eat fresh fruit, yet also was a great wine lover.** However, Frederick preferred Bordeaux wine, just as he generally preferred everything French over anything German. Between 1744 and 1769, he had vineyards planted in three locations in the city, where grapes, peaches, apricots, apples and other fruits

grew. The first of these locations was the ridge called Wüste Berg, where the monarch built his summer palace Sanssouci in the Rococo style from 1745 to 1747. Even prior to that, the southern slope overlooking the garrison town had been cultivated by the creation of vineyard terraces. The terraces are designed in symmetrical curves. Under the supervision of the architect Friedrich Wilhelm Diterich, the slope was structured into six broad terraces with inward curved



walls to get the most out of the sunshine. The supporting walls featured an alternating succession of 168 flat areas and glass-encased niches each. Their trellises initially supported neighbouring pairs of various foreign wine varieties for the purpose of testing their suitability for the local climate. Figs grew on the bottom terrace. Above the walls, the terrace sections were planted with espalier fruit and decorated with citrus plants in planters.

Numerous changes have been implemented over the years. The restoration of the terraces between 1979 and 1982 effected the reconstruction of the original state. For instance, the lawn area on the terraces on the fringes of the vineyard was fitted with chains to prevent trespassing. Figs now grow behind the glass panels and wine grapes next to the niches function as show vines. "This is the variety *Vitis riparia* Michx, the American riverbank grape", explains park gardener Sven Hannemann of the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg. The grapes have been pressed and processed once. But the wine tasted so sour that this remained a one-off test. The advantages of this wild vine are its resistance against pests, its strong growth and ease of care.

*The view of Sanssouci Palace with its vineyard terraces is one of best known picture motifs in Brandenburg.*

The tomb of Frederick the Great is located on the uppermost vineyard terraces, directly below the sculpture of the goddess Flora; small tombstone slabs denote the resting places of his favourite dogs. The king had his tomb constructed alongside the building of his palace. However, his successor's denial to grant his last wish and the turmoil of German history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century meant that after an odyssey of 205 years his remains were finally laid to rest here in August 1991.



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# Via Triumphalis – Potsdam Winzerberg

**The Winzerberg (Vintner's Hill) is yet another vineyard in Potsdam that was established in the time of Frederick the Great in 1763/64. Back then, a plantation over four terraces was built in a clay pit on the southern slope of the Mühlenberg hill.**

Wine grapes, peaches, apricots, apples and figs grew behind the glass panels of the roofed over retaining walls. With his passion for architecture, King Frederick William IV had the idea of erecting a temple-shaped monument for Frederick the Great on the top of the hill, as his hand-drawn sketches dating from the 1830s reveal. A 'Via Triumphalis', a ridgeway, was added to the plans in the revision by Karl Friedrich Schinkel in 1838. Ultimately, only the triumphal arch was completed in 1850 to 1851 following plans by Friedrich August Stüler to add architectural appeal to the Winzerberg and its vintner's house. When the terraces were modernised in 1848 by garden director Peter Joseph Lenné, the lower terrace wall was decorated with fair-faced masonry and a stairway adorned with a monumental head of the wine god Bacchus. The vintner's house was moreover converted into a turreted villa over the course of the following years.

The building became more and more dilapidated after the end of WWII and eventually the overgrown ruin was cordoned off by the building inspectors. Even so, the Bauverein Winzerberg association that was newly established in 2004 under the aegis of the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg dared to take up the challenge of reviving the complex against all odds.

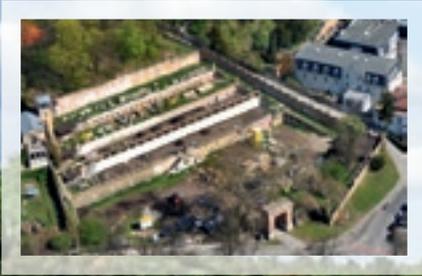
Unfortunately, the first drawing from 1854 by the Potsdam architect Ludwig Ferdinand Hesse showed a wrong cross section. He had sketched one-metre-deep strip foundations, giving rise to the long prevailing assumption that the Winzerberg

walls could not be restored. Imbued with the urge to explore, degree candidate Sebastian Miethé dug as far as the lower edge of the foundations. Already the second wall revealed that, in contrast to Hesse's drawing, the foundations are more than five metres deep. This insight made thinking about the feasibility of reconstruction possible in the first place.

The association pursues the objective of safeguarding the historical complex, restoring the derelict structure and creating a functional utilisation in keeping with heritage conservation principles. Ownership remains with the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg. The association was able to win over hundreds of volunteers for this mammoth project and free support from universities and institutions, educational establishments, clubs, associations and businesses. For instance, a company drilled a well so that now water flows on every level for irrigating the plants. A major fund-raising campaign made it possible to start fitting the 5,000 glass panels of the terrace glazing in 2016. "All these helpers made the reconstruction of the long-lost Winzerberg possible in the first place, for which we would like to express our thanks", Monika Lange, head of the association's 'Green Group', is happy to say. The Winzerberg was opened for visitors for the so-called 'Bacchus Hour' every Thursday and Friday evening in July and August 2016 by way of a trial and to present the results of ten years of reconstruction work to the public. The first harvest from one hundred vines of historical table grapes was picked in 2013; two years later, the remaining acreage was planted with table grapes. In total, more than 20 vine varieties grow on the Winzerberg. Following the historical model, vegetables and fruit are cultivated in addition to wine.

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*Winzerberg in Potsdam – the two small photographs document the stage of construction in 2010 and 2012.*



## ***Bauverein Winzerberg e. V.***

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## Court gardening at the Belvedere – Wine from the Klausberg

**The Klausberg, planted under Frederick the Great, is the third vineyard in Potsdam. After construction work on the New Palace was completed in 1769, the king wished to also improve the landscaping on the nearby Klausberg hill.** In 1769, fruit terraces and vineyards were established on its southern slope by the former guard soldier Jürgen Friedrich Werle, a native of the Rhineland. The Dragon House directly next to the vineyard was to be the gardener's domicile. The cultivation and forcing of fruit and vegetables were the most important tasks of the court gardeners up until the end of the monarchy. Over the years, this garden was repeatedly rede-

signed and expanded. In 1771, glazed retaining walls were constructed under the supervision of court gardener Heinrich Christian Eckstein, because the royal court paid high bonuses for the early delivery of exotic produce. In 1862, the French fruit grower Alexis Lepère the Younger was commissioned to construct the special walls he had invented. These south-facing walled gardens with their favourable climate prolonged the vegetation period and enabled earlier harvests of improved quality. Two modern glasshouse facilities that could be heated by steam and warm water were constructed between 1895 and 1902 under the supervision of court gardener



*The Belvedere on the Klausberg was constructed between 1770 and 1772 and is the last building in Sanssouci Park that was commissioned by Frederick the Great. Left: Andreas Kramp in the Belvedere vineyard.*

Guided tours have been offered since 2010. The vine and tree sponsorship programme was launched in 2011 and the first wine was pressed in the same year. The first Royal Wine Festival took place in 2012 and has since been celebrated every year in early July.

Johann Joseph Glatt. The garden supplied excellent fruit and grapes as well as vegetables and flowers up until 1918. The end of the monarchy and the impact of the two world wars spelled the end for the Royal Vineyard.

After decades of neglect and deterioration, maintenance has been resumed at the Klausberg since 2003. In 2007, the Mosaik-Werkstätten für Behinderte gGmbH (sheltered workshop non-profit organisation) took over the horticultural maintenance. The gardening activities on this site open up new prospects also for people with disabilities. New fruit trees have been planted and a trellis for the establishment of a future educational trail about vine varieties has been constructed. Also, some ancient vines have been rediscovered alongside the crumbled retaining walls. This has enabled the renewed breeding of some forgotten varieties such as Agostenga and Black Hamburg. Owing to numerous donations, more than 3,000 vines and about 200 apple and pear trees once again thrive here today. The prevailing variety Phoenix is a modern vine and is a cross between the varieties Bacchus and Seyval blanc. It thrives mainly along the uppermost retaining wall of the Royal Vineyard below the Belvedere. The planting of the variety Regent has commenced on the lower terraces. The garden has once again been open to the public since 2008.

The Royal Vineyard on the Klausberg is to be fully returned to its former glory by the time of its 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2019. Yet in contrast to Frederick's times, the grapes are not used as table fruit, but are made into wine by Dr Manfred Lindicke in Werder. The 2014 vintage alone produced more than one thousand half-litre bottles of a dry Regent red wine and a medium-dry Phoenix white wine. The first bottles of a vintage are presented each year at the Royal Wine Festival and auctioned off to benefit the reconstruction of the vineyard. The wines are also available at the museum shop in the old palace kitchen of Sanssouci Palace, at the Dragon House, at wine merchants and the online farm shop. Part of the profits goes towards the reconstruction of the Royal Vineyard.



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# Pinot noir précoce at Potsdam Park – Villa Jacobs

## **The work of the previous years in the vineyard next to Villa Jacobs in Potsdam is slowly beginning to pay off.**

The first harvest one year after owner Stefan Ludes had planted the terraces with one thousand vines of the variety Pinot noir précoce in 2011 was obviously small. Yet the 2012 vintage already yielded 624 bottles of Pinot noir précoce. This increased to 876 bottles in 2014. The high-quality vine has a long history of cultivation. The Potsdam wine matures in the cellars of experienced vintners, friends of the Ludes family, in Erden on the Moselle river, where its character is developed in barrels made of the best French oak. Pinot noir précoce can be harvested very early and is therefore perfect for the climate in North Germany. The natural topography of the site in Potsdam and the rich soil of the former clay pit that was created in a natural south-facing location provide additionally favourable conditions.

Viticulture on the grounds of Villa Jacobs follows in the footsteps of the more than 200-year-old horticultural and viticultural tradition in Potsdam. The slopes of the nearby Pfingstberg hill had already been planted with vines in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. When a park was created as of 1835 on the basis of plans by landscape architect Joseph Peter Lenné, who also had a determining influence on Brandenburg's capital city, the grounds of Villa Jacobs saw the establishment of extensive fruit plantations and a vineyard. Already in previous times, the summer residence of the Jacobs family was always referred to as 'the vineyard'. A fire destroyed the villa in 1980/81 and the ruin had to be demolished. At least, beautiful old vaults survived, much to the delight of conservators. Marianne Ludes, who rebuilt the demolished Villa Jacobs in 2008 together with her husband, architect Stefan Ludes, had read in the memories of the granddaughter of Ludwig Jacobs that vines once grew

in the garden "at granddad's". The vaults, once again usable, now serve as a wine cellar and storage for the wine. Once to twice a year, a vintner's festival is organised in the park during which the wine can be tasted and bought. Guided tours through the 4.5-hectare (c. 11.12-acre) park that by now has been made a UNESCO World Heritage Site are also offered on those days. Visitors are invited to bring their own picnic blankets. From the park, visitors can enjoy the beautiful view across the Jungferensee lake – best with a glass of Pinot noir précoce in their hand.



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# Thirst for knowledge leads to wine – In the vineyard with Mother

**Viticulture in Niederfinow (Rural District of Barnim) has been recorded as a main source of income as early as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The coat of arms on a town seal from that time features a full, hanging, ripe grape and vine leaves before the harvest. The inscription surrounding it reads “Nedder Vin an der Wein Ranke Anno 1668.” (Nedder Vin [Niederfinow] on the Vine in the Year 1668).**

Yet many vines froze in severe frost in 1740. Since then, viticulture was no longer of significance in the town. Peter Zabłowski from Berlin sought to change this. In 1993, he acquired a suitable plot in Niederfinow and for many years spent his free time reading specialist literature in order to learn about viticulture and in preparation of once again planting vines near the lift lock. He also researched in the Internet and talked to friends from wine-growing regions. “My thirst for knowledge knew no bounds”, he looks back. “I contacted and visited wine-growing areas both at home and abroad and attended wine tastings and seminars on cultivation, care and management of vines.”

In March 2011, Peter Zabłowski submitted an application to the Brandenburg Agricultural Ministry in Potsdam for vine planting rights for an 800 square metres (c. 956.8 square yards) large vineyard in Niederfinow on the southern slope of his double-sized plot. Two months later, much to his delight, he received the license for the production and sale of Brandenburg country wine. The first hurdle was taken. He now directed all his attention to improving the soil.

His mother, then already over 80 years of age, helped him in planting 150 vines of the variety Cabernet Cortis, a breed by the German National Viticultural Institute in Freiburg. They

moreover planted 200 vines of the white variety Saphira that was bred in 1978 by the oenologist Helmut Becker at the Research Institute for Vine Cultivation in Geisenheim. The wine is reminiscent of Pinot blanc, with the average percentage of acid being up to three per mille higher in the Saphira variety. The first harvest is planned for 2017 with the family coming together to help.



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*Burkhard Jantke drips grape juice from a grape onto a refractometer in Neuzelle. The device is used to ascertain the sweetness of grapes directly in the vineyard.*

# Double highlight – Vines on the Prenzlau Town Wall

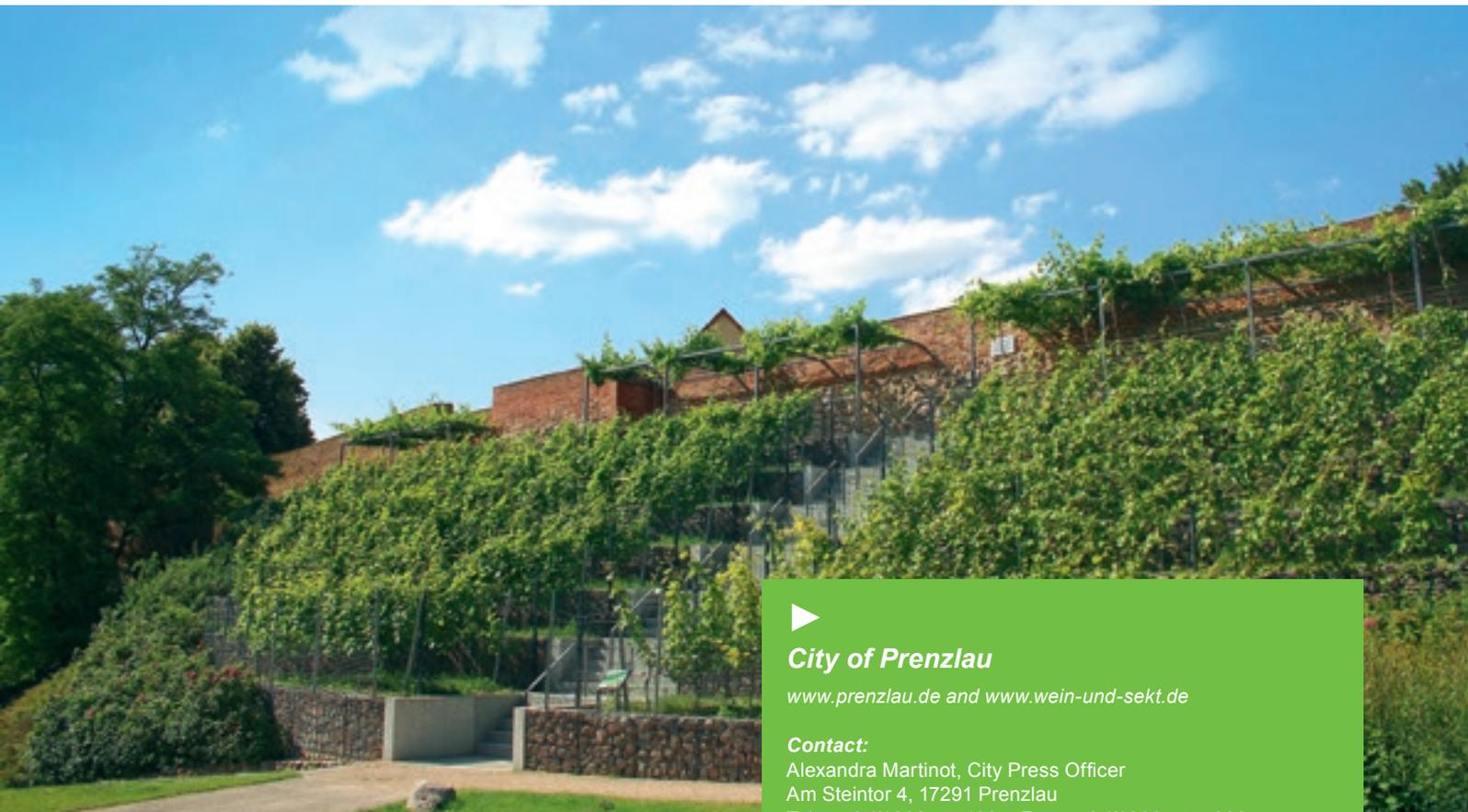


*The Brandenburg State Horticultural Show in 2013 saw Prenzlau once again becoming a lakeside town. The main grounds with their varied designs also featured a terraced vineyard at the medieval town wall.*

The vineyard in Prenzlau was part of the horticultural presentation in the context of the successful 5<sup>th</sup> Brandenburg State Horticultural Show (LAGA), which in 2013 was hosted by the Uckermark district town. In their search for historical evidence of horticulture in the region, the event organisers also came across the topic of viticulture.

99 vines of the varieties Solaris and Regent that are very well adapted to the climate in North Brandenburg grow on the town wall. Wine lovers had been planning a revival of viticulture on the time-honoured town walls long before Prenzlau was chosen to host the State Horticultural Show. The vineyard on the fieldstone and brick wall near the former Dominican monastery was established in 2011 and 2012. EUR 46,000 from the European Social Fund (ESF) and additional funds from the rural district administration helped to create the Prenzlau wine terraces. The terraces are retained by gabions, a first in Brandenburg. Gabions are wire baskets filled with stones. Those who climb the 35 granite steps of the vineyard will be rewarded with a wide view across Lake Unterucker.

Young vintner Ronny Gotzmann and oenologist Tobias Fiebrandt planted the first vines and were rewarded with high Oechsle values already in the first vintages. Back then, the vineyard was maintained by the association 'Wir für Prenzlau' (We for Prenzlau). Its area under vines may measure only a few square metres, but offered the best view of the horticultural show grounds with their abundance of varieties and structures during the LAGA – a highlight for visitors in more ways than one. As is the case after every State Horticultural Show, a solution had to be found also in Prenzlau to maintain the projects after the show's conclusion. Since early 2016, the wine merchant Christian Soyeaux from Bertikow-Uckerfelde



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has been managing the vineyard on behalf of the town in the context of a voluntary sponsorship. He is also responsible for the pressing, maturing and sale of the white and red wines from Prenzlau.

The viticultural tradition in Prenzlau dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Old hooks in the town wall that functioned as a climbing support are evidence of this. The wine back then is reported to have been very sour, whereas today's wines taste excellent according to the town council. The 2012 vintage achieved a sugar content of 84 degree Oechsle, which is on a par with wine-growing regions in the South.



# The glass to go with the wine – Art and vines in Annenwalde

**The northernmost vineyard in Brandenburg is located in Annenwalde, not far from the spa town of Templin (Uckermark). The vineyard is a popular destination for day-trippers: Annenwalde is surrounded by the so-called Schorfheide, the state's largest woodland.**

In 2003, the glass artist Werner Kothe and his wife Christa planted 520 vines of the variety Regent on the southern slope on the shores of Lake Densow. "Unfortunately, the first harvest in 2005 was completely claimed by racoons", says Christa Kothe. "This was the price we had to pay here in the Uckermark Lakes Nature Park." As a consequence, the entire vineyard was fenced in. No protection was available against voles, wasps and hornets. The replacement planting resulted in relatively small harvests. For this reason, the Kothe family was unable to renew the annual wine sponsorships.

The wine friends at the 'northern polar circle' of the Brandenburg wine production meet in early October to harvest the grapes. The Kothe family's biggest yield so far was 500 litres in 2009. The grapes are immediately transported to Schloss Rattey in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, a journey of 80 kilometres (c. 49.7 miles). Since 2014, part of the vintage has been maturing in 120-litre oak barrels. The wine is sold exclusively at the glass works' shop. The tourist information in Templin and the Templin heritage shop receive some bottles for advertising purposes. The labels were designed by Stefan Schmidt, the Rattey wine estate's winemaker. His calendar about viticulture in North Germany and his book on viticulture are available for sale at the glass works.

The vineyard in the old glassmakers' village Annenwalde is only one of a range of tourist attractions that have been

initiated by the Kothes since 1991. Each year on 1 May, the *Besenwirtschaft* (tavern selling homegrown wine) in front of the glass works is a meeting point for visitors and locals to taste the young wine. The glass works and park featuring some 50 glass sculptures are added attractions.



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