

THAT LITTLE WINE BAR

James The Sommelier – Austrian Wines

'Wine honors the soul, so honor it with yours.'

Austria, its small but it packs a big punch!

Austria's role in the world could be mistaken for being that of an observer, at best. It's not exactly a country that immediately stands out as a leader in political diplomacy, a juggernaut of the world economy, a military powerhouse, or the inspiration of all around. Yet, it has been all of these things during its... divided history. This small, unassuming area of land had its golden ages in the 18th century and ruled an empire spanning Europe, leading hundreds of millions of people through politics, war, economics, architecture and fashion. Not so bad for a little guy, eh?

It's not as if this period has been forgotten about, discredited or anything like that but it's just not... famous. Austria is just not a famous country. How obvious is it that lithography, the Laws of Inheritance, bagels, Speedos and sugar cubes are all Austria's own inventions? It certainly wasn't to me - Austria rose in my estimation when I heard this. Like I said, small but packing a big punch.

Austria's wine scene has been viewed with pity by its neighbouring wine professionals in France, Italy and Germany. These visionary developers, creators of wine, have historical roots stemming back to the dawn of the Roman Empire and hold the top vineyards, crus and grapes in the world. Wine was invented in modern day Europe... enough said. So how could a pea-by- comparison ever measure up and compete with these wine leviathans. It is certainly a long way from the limelight and fame seems to elude it.

You could be mistaken into thinking this about Austria, but how mistaken you would be. With sixteen wine regions all enjoying the most diverse of country-sides and climates, from the Alps to plains, Austria is making varied and exciting wines. Methods and techniques are used that are moving the wine world forward and giving it an exciting and dynamic image. For example, Austria's invention *Eiswein* (Ice Wine) is a sweet dessert wine made from grapes picked while covered in frost in the morning dawn. They also lay claim to *Strohwein* (Straw Wine) made from grapes dried on straw mats. Taking a bicycle tour through a region is as much a wine experience as an architectural one, with stunning old and new wineries.



Originality does not guarantee quality, I hear you say. If you want proof of the quality of wine from Austria just refer to its appellation system Districtus Austriae Controllatus (DAC). Under this system different varietals from particular regions are worth bearing in mind. Make the opportunity to try a Blaufränkisch from Burgenland, a Grüner Veltliner from Kremstal or a Reisling from Kamptal. I guarantee you

won't be disappointed.

Equally important is that Austrian wines are some of the most food-friendly wines in the world. The range of Austrian wines go together perfectly with hearty Viennese dishes as well as Austrian regional recipes. And even better, they fit brilliantly to a vast array of food styles from all around the world- everything from continental European to Mediterranean to Asian.

**TIPS: Come to our Austrian food and wine paring on the 26th May
Try Austrian wine as the go-to choice for Asian food pairings**

For more information about wine join our wine classes at That Little Wine Bar, 54 Chow Thye Road,
George Town, Penang

Email info@thatlittlewinebar.com for details