



Riesling, Burgundy and all that.

At the edge of the Haardt mountain range the sea of vines measures almost 23,500 hectares. That's a lot for Germany – in fact, making the Palatinate the second largest wine-growing area in the nation – however, it's still small by international standards. But, these days, the Palatinate region no longer shies away from comparing itself internationally.

An ever increasing number of top level producers characterises this aspirational wine region and win one prize after the next.

The classical varieties are on the increase in the vineyards, most especially the Riesling. It's the undisputed number one along the German Wine Route: with 5,814 hectares area the Palatinate itself is the largest Riesling region in the world. Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris (Weißburgunder and Grauburgunder), Gewürztraminer and Chardonnay as well as -the latest trend- Sauvignon Blanc complete the range of white wines from the Palatinate. The range of red wines is also full of nuances. There are lively fresh rosé wines from the Portugieser varietal, fruity Pinot Noir and deep dark red from the Dornfelder grape, most dry in style and with southerly colour. More than 36% of the vines in the Palatinate now bear red grapes and this makes the Palatinate Germany's largest region for red wine.

One of the loveliest landscapes in Germany lies here sheltered to the east by the Palatinate (Pfälzer) forest and to the west by the Rhine.

In this area enjoyment and joie de vivre have always been a big priority and that's not just because the most southerly vineyards of the Palatinate lie in Alsace. Wine, viticulture and love of life simply belong to this country and people. So it's no wonder that both Romans and vines felt at home here even thousands of years ago and the slogan for the area is simple and plain: Cheers! The Palatinate.



As colourful as a vineyard in autumn.

The dry and Mediterranean climate in the Palatinate region gives the vines good flavour and creates the character of Pfalz wines: The grapes reach a high degree of ripeness and that ensures aromatic white wines and gives an even more enchanting perfume to bouquet varieties like Gewürztraminer, Scheurebe or Muscatel. As well as that, the sunny, mild climate provides the best conditions for producing ripe, rich red wines. Even grape varietals from southern realms like Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot are at home in the Palatinate. When the Rhine valley was being carved out the layers of earth were mixed up with each other, and because of this the soils from edge of the Haardt are varied. Calcium-rich loess and loess-lime soils are most common but many place-names indicate the presence of basalt (Pechstein) or slate (Schäwer). What typifies the landscape though, is the red and yellow sandstone and on these variegated weathered sandstone soils grow exceptionally elegant Rieslings with incisive acidity.

But it's all the same whether it's Rhine gravel or "rotliegend" - the Palatinate terroir is as colourful as the vineyards in autumn and learning to recognize the nuances is a great pleasure.

Old varietals and new ideas.

People in the Palatinate region uphold their wine making traditions but they are not hidebound traditionalists. Old varietals and new ideas is the motto, there's a great emphasis on creativity and innovation. So there's something for everyone to enjoy in the Palatinate. For lovers of the sun-sweetened Late Harvest wines or fine Ice-wines just as much as for champions of earthy dry wines or friends of barrel ageing.

And their inventiveness does not only extend to wines. Sparkling wines, produced using the time-consuming traditional method of bottle fermentation, are now part of the range for most of the wineries.

In addition there are 'secco' semi-sparkling wine, grape juice, verjus, grape-seed oil, wine vinegar and brandy and grape marc spirit - the full palette of products from the Palatinate; everything connected to wine is almost as diverse as the wine menu itself. Variety is in any case the strong point of this wine region; the two regions, Southern Wine Route and Middle Haardt/ German Wine Route have been dealt very different hands. The burgundy varieties set the tone for the south, in the middle Haardt, it's traditionally Riesling. Of course, the quality always has to be right.



Local delicacies.

Nature looks with favour on the Palatinate region. Because the Palatinate countryside supplies all sorts of interesting accompaniments for the local wine. More than 80 types of vegetables grow in the Rhine valley, Germany's largest vegetable garden. Already in late March the first asparagus are popping their white heads out of the ground. Later follow the strawberries and then the potatoes - locally called 'Grumbeere' (pears of the earth) because of their favourable climate the Palatinate produces the first home-grown produce. It's easy to carry on with the list of delicacies, with exotic figs in high summer, sweet chestnuts in autumn - to go with the new wine - or mushrooms and trout from the Palatinate Forest.

With all these 'natural resources' the Palatinate is a true land of plenty.

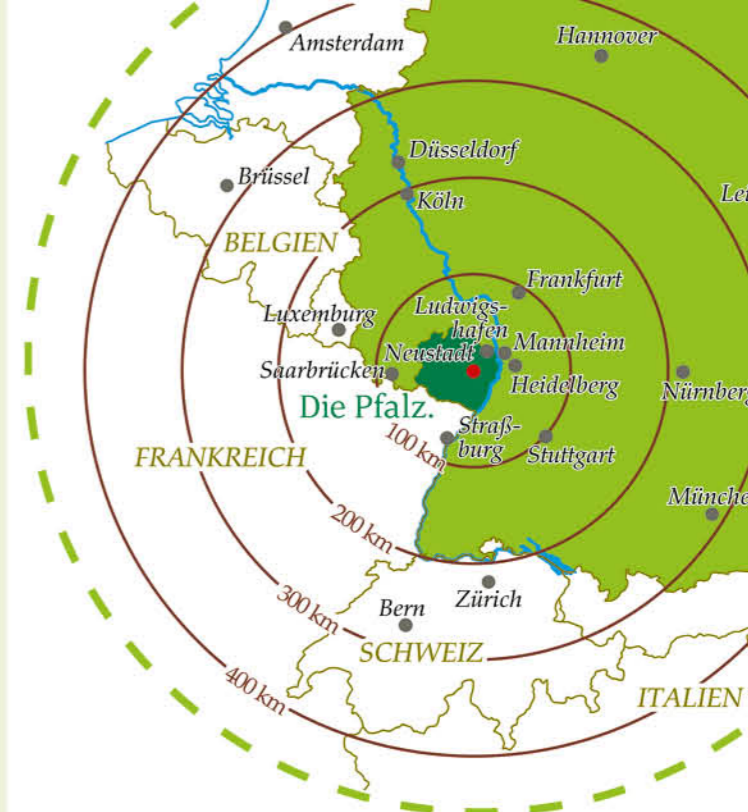
And the chefs, just like the winemakers, are always searching for new ways to tickle your palette. The products of this creative dialogue can be enjoyed by everyone, either in a wine bar, restaurant or at one of the many wine festivals. And here also there's a wide range, with almost 200 events from the homely 'Woifeschd' (local dialect for wine festival) all the way to exclusive culinary festivals.

Pure Nature – in wine and hiking.

The winemakers and vineyard cooperatives of the Palatinate set great store by doing business in a sustainable, environmentally conscious manner. More than 3,000 hectares are cultivated according to the standards of "environmentally-friendly viticulture" or ecological viticulture; some of the best bio-wineries are located in the Palatinate - more than 1,100 hectares of vineyard area even belong to the biosphere reserve natural reserve of the Palatinate Forest.

No wonder then, that hiking in the Palatinate region is closely connected with wine enjoyment.

The "Pfälzer Weinsteig" (wine climb) is one of the most popular long-distance trails and with more than 100 rustic huts the network is uniquely rich in resting places. Cyclists will appreciate the well signposted tracks and many Bicycle Discovery Days where the joy of moving in nature is made even sweeter with wine and regional specialities. Spa towns like Bad Dürkheim and Bad Bergzabern and the hotels of the cooperative "WellVinEss" offer wellness and relaxation. Those at home who gush about Germany's Tuscany - the people of the Palatinate will excuse them. To outsiders this blessed stretch of land may well resemble a piece of Italy in Germany. For the locals, the Palatinate is simply the Palatinate - that's more than enough.



Find out more about the wines of the Palatinate – and all the other great things that go with it – at:

Pfalzwein e.V. | Martin-Luther-Straße 69
67433 Neustadt an der Weinstraße
Telephone: +49(0) 6321 912328 | Fax: +49(0) 6321 12881
info@pfalz.de | www.pfalzwein.de | www.pfalz.de
www.facebook.com/die.pfalz

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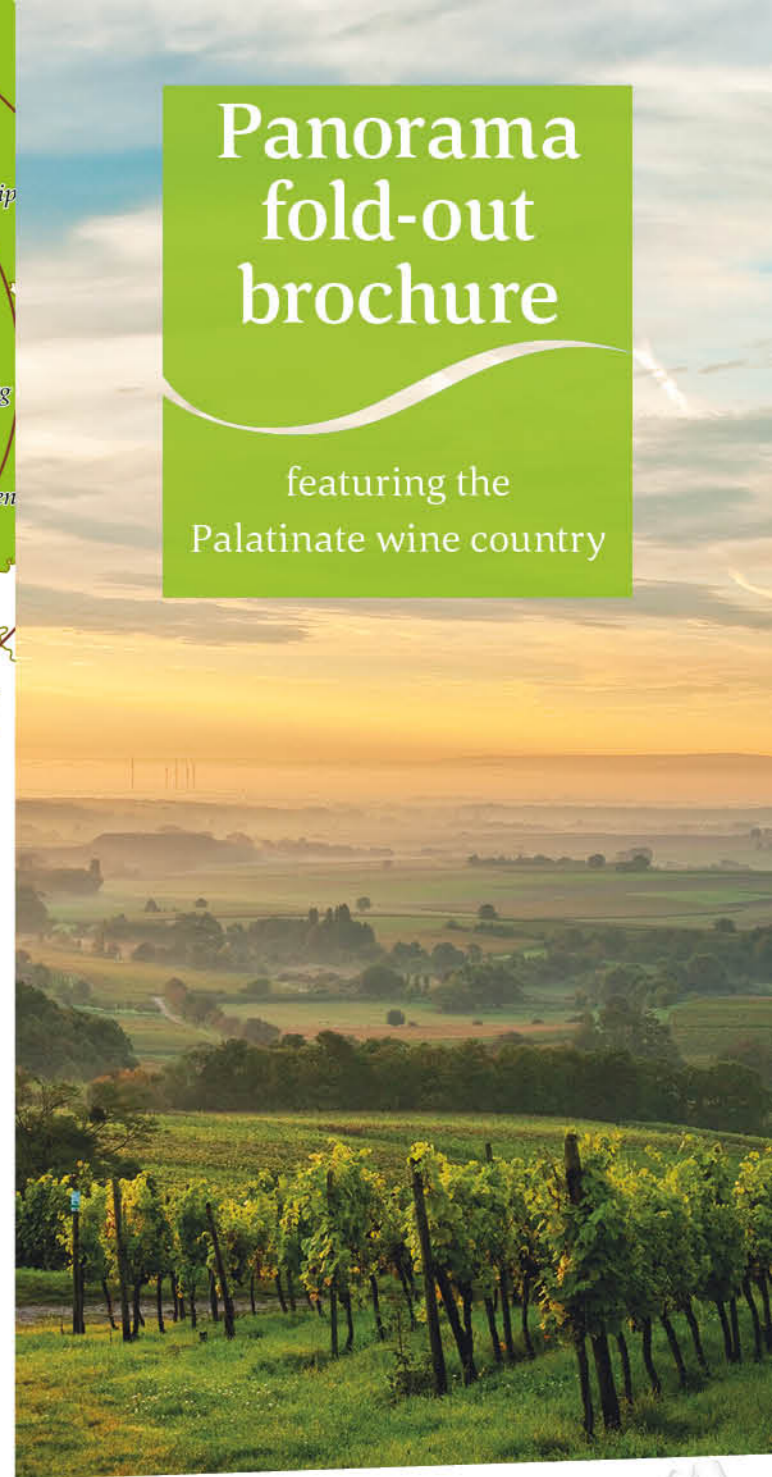
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Zum Wohl. Die Pfalz.



Panorama fold-out brochure

featuring the Palatinate wine country



Zum Wohl. Die Pfalz.





"Palatinate" is a protected designation of origin (PDO). Typical for the Germany's second-largest wine cultivation region on the border to Alsace is the mild climate that's perfect for ripening almonds, figs and chestnuts. Shielded by the Palatinate Forest, white grape varieties flourish along the German Wine Route, especially Riesling, Pinot blanc and Pinot gris. With almost 5,800 hectares of acreage, the Palatinate is the world's largest Riesling growing region. Insofar as the red varieties, the Dornfelder and Pinot noir variants dominate. While the determination of maturation periods and degrees, wine production methods and the sensory evaluation of the wines originating in the PDO Palatinate are all governed by EU regulations, they simultaneously remain individualised expressions of the Palatinate's wine culture.