



O L I V E R Z E T E R

For fifteen years now, the Oliver Zeter name and striking bear label have been synonymous with Sauvignon Blanc. This starts with the native Pfälzer's curated portfolio of vineyard sites, selected following deep study of the local terroir and clones. His estate today is an essential part of Germany's winemaking firmament—not least because of his remarkably expressive Sauvignons.

When Zeter, who with self-deprecating candor called himself the “oldest young winemaker in the Pfalz,” originally switched from wine selling to winemaking at age forty, he started with almost nothing. No estate. No vines. No equipment. Nothing save an idea. Over his travels to South Africa, the USA, Chile, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, the Loire and Bordeaux, he had fallen into an enduring fascination with a variety that was not yet known in Germany for producing terroir wines. But Sauvignon Blanc's flexibility in terms of style and aromas was precisely what Zeter found so enchanting. With nothing to speak against his concept, he launched into it with a distinct underdog spirit. That was in 2007.

15 years later, Oliver Zeter greets his guests with a firm handshake at his “domaine” on the Haardt, a district of Neustadt on the German Wine Route. Oliver and brother Christian Zeter oversaw an elegant renovation of the imposing building from 1922, erected from the same light sandstone that dominates the vineyards. A regular gathering of friends met at an establishment just 400 meters away. That legendary group included Prof. Otto Dill, illustrator of the bear caricature of Zeter's grandfather Walter Baer that is forever commemorated on the label. Standing at the domaine, one's gaze sweeps across an ocean of land under vines.

The mild climate and fertile soils of its diverse sub-regions help shape Zeter's approach. A collector and connoisseur of vineyard sites, his portfolio stretches from Kallstadt in the extreme north to Siebeldingen in the south, encompassing various micro-climates perfectly suited for Riesling, Chenin Blanc, Viognier, Semillion, Syrah, and Cabernet Franc. All in all, he's a champion of the 'big ten' of international noble grapes. His personal prism: embracing the freedom to stay open and interested.

While the Haardt serves as the 'public face' of the estate, it actually contains but one small barrel cellar. Felix Forster, the estate's cellar master, typically works in a modern but unimposing hall—the “chai” to the “domaine,” so to speak. One look at their production facility, with small and large barrels, concrete, amphora and steel all side-by-side, quickly reveals Zeter's wealth of ideas and joy at stylistic diversity. Final blends and barrels are tasted and decided as a trio, including Robin Spitz, sommelier and Oliver Zeter's right hand. 15 years in, Zeter remains as inspired now as he was at the beginning. The dynamic spirit of his young team continues to drive new projects.

Today their sights are set on Chardonnay, starting with the Mineral range—a style shaped by saline freshness and elegance—and extending all the way to a single site bottling from the Haardter Herzog. They are also pursuing Pinot Noir, in the belief it can develop even greater levels of finesse than ever before. The release of the latest grand cru—a Pinot Noir from the Sonnenschein site—is on the horizon. And if the past 15 years are any indicator, the next 15 at Weingut Oliver Zeter can be expected to deliver more than a few exceptional surprises as well!

FACTS

OWNER:

Oliver and Christian Zeter; General Manager: Robin Spitz

CELLAR MASTER:

Felix Forster

PRODUCTION:

300,000 bottles

SITES & DISTRICTS:

Appenhofener Steingebiss, Haardter Herzog, Siebeldinger Im Sonnenschein, Kaiserberg (Nussdorf), Ungsteiner Weilberg, Ungsteiner Nussriegel, Kallstadter Saumagen

PRIMARY VARIETIES:

Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Pinot Noir, Chenin Blanc, Viognier, Cabernet Franc, Syrah

CONTACT INFORMATION

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