



**A PÉT NAT Á LA CHRISTOPH HOCH, HOLLENBURGER**



## THE BIRTH OF A NEW PROJECT

***"Every success originates from an idea"***

Christoph Hoch's decision to make sparkling wine was inspired by a simple comment made by his friend and business partner, Franz Hofstätter, while tasting barrel samples from the 2012 still wine vintage. Standing by one of the barrels, Franz said "This wine has so much acid, you can't make anything other than sparkling wine out of it!"

Those who know Christoph, know that he:

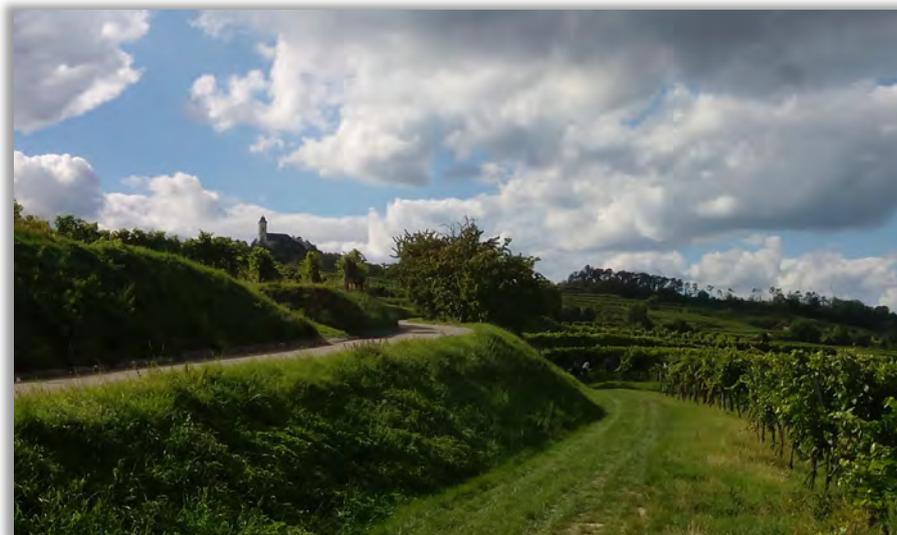
- a) copes well with criticism and
- b) criticism arouses a search for new ideas and projects.

His natural curiosity precipitated research into sparkling and perlant wines. Starting with soil type, he realised that Hollenburg shares a similar, predominantly chalk, soil structure as Champagne and that both regions experience continental climatic conditions, characterized by hot summers, cold winters, and little rainfall, typical of the interior of a continent.

Again, anyone who knows Christoph Hoch would never expect him to make conventional sparkling wine.

*"When I do something, it has to be very, very different,"*

he thought, and got down to work...



## **KALKSPITZ: AN IDEA THAT LEADS TO THE PRODUCTION OF PERLANT WINES** **"Euphoria turns a job into a hobby"**

In the wine-growing regions along the river Danube, chalk soils are very rare. Hollenburg is a kind of "geological exotic island", sui generis, in this region. The Hollenburger Konglomerat is the exception that allows the making of wines which are structured, retaining a balance between ripe fruit and acidity and with a moderate alcohol content.

Christoph Hoch's winery has been granted biodynamic certification by Demeter International, so, for that reason, he sought advice from other producers making sparkling wine using biodynamic methods. He got in touch with the champenois vintners, de Sousa, Tarlant and Laherte, who also produce bio-dynamic wines. At the same time, it was important for Christoph that Kalkspitz should be an independent project, his own personal creation.

*"I get inspired by vintners like Eric de Sousa, Benoît Tarlant and Jacques Selosse from Champagne, as well as Domaine Julien Meyer from Alsace, Domaine de l'Octavin in the Jura region and the Italian producer, Christian Zago, making the premium prosecco, Ca' dei Zago in Valdobbiadene."*

Nevertheless, despite the inspiration gained from other biodynamic wine makers, Christoph's Kalkspitz is his own creation, based on his own, personal conception and made according to his philosophy. In effort to get a pure vinous expression from the terroir, he decided to produce sparkling wine by the most natural method, the Méthode Ancestrale, also known as 'Pétillant Naturel', or Pét-Nat, method.

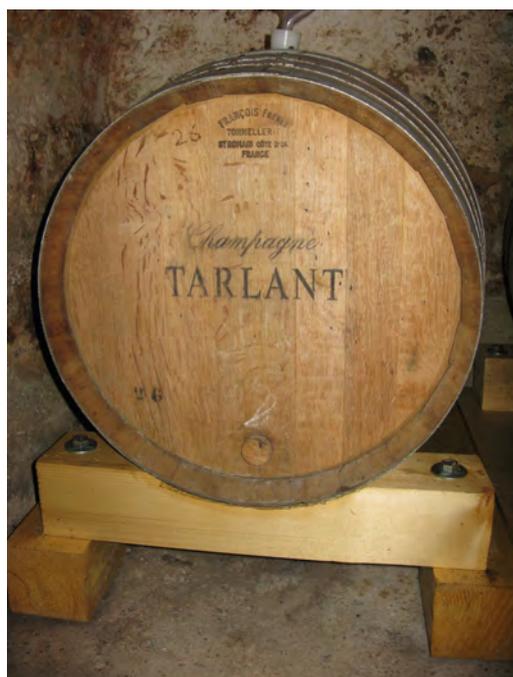
This is the most natural, and, probably, the most ancient way of producing sparkling wine, involving little interference from the maker. The must is allowed its natural fermentation, with residual sugar still present, and is then bottled and sealed with a crown cap. The amount of residual sugar determines the atmospheric pressure. Fermentation is completed in bottle and there is no disgorgement and thus the yeasts remain in the wine. As a result, the wine is slightly cloudy, but can be laid down. This combination of yeast and carbon dioxide helps to preserve the wine and retain its freshness.



This method carries a high risk of failure and requires meticulous handling of the grapes, extreme sensitivity and considerable experience.

*"Everyone wished me good luck, adding that it will never work!"*

Benoît Tarlant, giving him twelve used barrels which had never been in contact with chemicals and therefore retained the yeasts and bacteria that have a positive influence on wine, made a wager with Christoph, this 'crazy, young Austrian', that he would never be able to produce a Pét-Nat of consistently good quality and with little bottle variation. If Christoph failed, he'd have to pay for the barrels.



## THE BIRTH OF KALKSPITZ

*"Low Technique and lots of love"*

The basic production method is explained above but Christoph made certain changes, based on his own concepts.

As the wine has been certified by Demeter International, their rules are strictly adhered to. According to Christoph, organic grapes are particularly suitable for this kind of production.

*"There are no additives and so everything has to be more active, more vital. If the natural nutrients and yeasts are intact, the process works far more effectively than if you have to add them!"*

Furthermore, Christoph is using grape varieties which have firm structure, body and tannins, but lower acid levels. Autochthonous varieties, like Grüner Veltliner or Zweigelt, are particularly suitable.



As always, Christoph Hoch abides by his own philosophy. Kalkspitz is a blend of different grape varieties and combines an earthiness with a pronounced fruit character. It's dry, with maximum 11% alcohol and an atmospheric pressure of less than three. There is a crisp, refreshing acidity along with a creaminess on the palate.

Christoph chose the oldest cellar, dating back to 1640, at the Hoch winery to place the barrels in. This would become the birthplace and home of his sparkling and perlant wines. With a temperature of 16C, it is a little warmer than the other cellars and so the microbiological influence is more reliable for these wines.

So, in 2015, after three years of trial and error, Kalkspitz has been launched!





## FUTURE TRENDS

***"A system contains many elements but we are the catalyst"***

Another sparkling wine project is being tried out, but is still at the experimental stage. "It will be something totally new and should help me in my thirst for experience and knowledge." He is also taking part in a winemaking project with Champagne de Sousa and Laherte, who are trying to cultivate old, ungrafted vines, replanted in 2015 and continuing next year, in 2016. Diversification is at the root of bio-dynamism and has to be experienced. To gauge the results, they keep a detailed record of each vine. According to his motto:

*'Every year I have a chance to learn something, so I must make the best use of it possible!'*



## INFORMATION

Area under cultivation: 5 ha

Method: Biodynamic, following the certification by Demeter International (AT-BIO-401)

Production: 100% white wine

Grape Varieties: Grüner Veltliner 70%  
Riesling 20%  
Red varieties 10% (only for the production of sparkling and perlant wine)

Volume: 35.000 bottles per year, 70% still wines, 30% sparkling and perlant wines

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