

SCHLOSS WACKERBARTH

WELCOME TO ONE OF THE UNIQUE WINERIES OF THE WORLD

Just outside Dresden, in the midst of the picturesque steep slope vineyards of Radebeul, lies Schloss Wackerbarth. Where counts once resided and the Saxon court celebrated, Europe's first adventure winery now welcomes its guests every day. On site, they experience a unique ensemble of baroque palace and gardens, historic steep slope vineyards and a modern wine and sparkling wine manufacture.

ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES EVERY DAY

Schloss Wackerbarth invites its guests to enjoy Saxon wine and sparkling wine with all their senses. Whether on guided tours, in its own restaurant, or at a variety of exquisite events. At the winery, they'll learn how the elegant "cool climate" wines of Saxony are being crafted to perfection, as well as how the sparkling wines of one of Europe's oldest sparkling wine producers and Germany's "Best Sparkling Wine Producer" of 2018 (German Sparkling Wine Award) is still today created by classic bottle fermentation. As early as 1836, French sparkling wine maker Johann Joseph Mouzon brought this craftsmanship from his home in Reims to Radebeul.

UNIQUE IN MANY WAYS

For several years now, the experts of VINUM have been honoring the world's most unique wineries. As "Unique Wineries of the World", they are selecting wineries and wine makers, which have been a model for others around the world for decades. Their know-how has been applied worldwide, and their constant strive for greatness and drive for innovation has produced great wines. In February 2022, the editorial team awarded Schloss Wackerbarth with this prestigious title.

"Those looking for an example of exemplary state investment will find it in Radebeul near Dresden [...]. [Schloss Wackerbarth] is one of the must-visits on a tour of Saxony, also because an enormously varied program is offered here," the authors write.



IN VINO VERITAS – THE WINE-GROWING ESTATE IN FACTS AND FIGURES

Re-opened:	August 2002
Shareholder:	100% Saxon Reconstruction Bank (SAB)
Director:	Mr. Andreas Stuhl
Cellar master:	Mr. Jürgen Aumüller
Employees:	120
Product range:	White wine, red wine, sparkling wine (classic bottle fermentation), winter drinks, spirits
Events:	Daily guided tours, tastings, concerts, readings, company and private events (e.g. weddings)
Gastronomy:	Sophisticated saxon dishes – refined with Mediterranean accents
Premises:	Belvedere, castle, restaurant, wine cellar, vinothek, sand stone cellar
Cultivated area:	90 hectares & 17 grape varieties approx. 82.5% white wine; 17.5% red wine
Special areas:	„Goldener Wagen“ – steep slopes in Radebeul „Wackerbarthberg“ – steep slopes in Radebeul „Paradies“ – steep slopes in Radebeul „Thonberg“ – slopes in Laubach near Diesbar-Seußlitz „Seußlitzer Heinrichsburg“ – slopes in Diesbar-Seußlitz
Grape yield per hectare:	45 hectolitres / hectare; in the steep slopes significantly less
Production:	600.000 bottles approx. 350.000 bottles of wine, 250.000 bottles of sparkling wine
Geographic situation:	Located on the 51st parallel north, southern slopes of the Elbe valley
Climate:	The Saxon Elbe Valley is located in the cool temperate climate zone, but also has influences of the continental climate; it is the warmest region in Saxony and at the same time one of the sunniest regions in Germany; warm, sunny days, cool nights as well as an extended ripening phase favor elegant and finesse-rich "cool climate" wines.
Soil types:	Rock weathering soil, loess clay soil, sand
Distribution:	Sales at the vineyard, selected specialty and specialist wholesalers, food retailers, gastronomy



SCHLOSS

Wackerbarth

THE HISTORY OF SCHLOSS WACKERBARTH AND HOW IT BECAME EUROPE'S FIRST DESTINATION WINERY

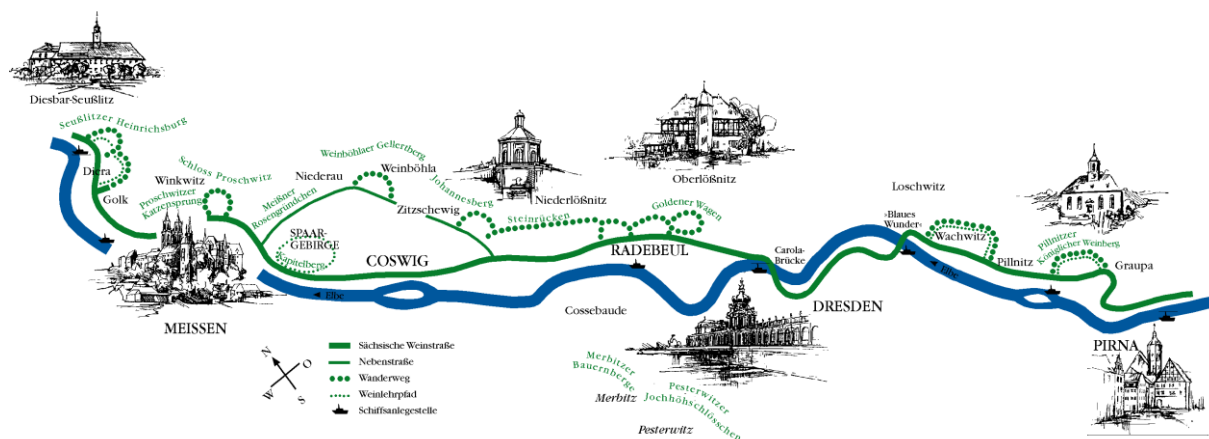
Schloss Wackerbarth's roots lie in the Saxon Elbe valley's centuries-old tradition of fine wines: viticulture has shaped the local landscape and lives for more than 850 years, and it was more than 180 years ago that cellar masters from Reims brought the French art of sparkling wine production to Radebeul.

Our history is also closely linked to the Saxon court in the golden age of Dresden baroque. Between 1727 and 1730, Count August Christoph von Wackerbarth had a baroque palace and grounds built in the middle of Radebeul's vineyards. The count was part of Augustus the Strong's closest circle and held several important positions. To this day, however, the field marshal and privy councillor is most famous for commissioning buildings; as Dresden's governor he is known as the "stage manager of Dresden baroque".

It is the eventful history of the state of Saxony and this baroque palace and grounds – which had changed hands more than 20 times by the start of the 20th century – that made it the birthplace of Europe's first destination winery.

1. WINEMAKING IN THE SAXON ELBE VALLEY

One of Germany's smallest wine regions is found on the 51st parallel north in the Saxon Elbe valley. The winemakers here are passionately devoted to cultivating an area of 500 hectares – only about 0.5 % of Germany's total viticultural territories. As a result, roughly 1 in 300 bottles of German wine comes from the Saxon wine-growing region.



Source: Weinbauverband Sachsen

Saxony's vinicultural landscape is characterised by impressive steep slopes and terraced vineyards. The latter were first built at the start of the 17th century, when winemakers from Württemberg brought this concept to Saxony. Today, these historic monuments are an important piece of cultural heritage, popular among tourists and the foundation for the elegant wines of the region.

As a wine-growing region, Saxony stands out for its large variety. Over 70 grape varieties are cultivated by almost 1,800 wine-growers, including more than 1,700 hobby winegrowers - and thus around 20 percent of all hobby and leisure winegrowers in.

Schloss Wackerbarth's winemakers cultivate 17 grape varieties on an area of 90 hectares, making us one of the largest wine estates not just in Saxony but also in Germany. The white varieties that grow on more than 80 % of our vineyards include Riesling and Müller-Thurgau (the leading grape varieties in Saxony), Goldriesling, an elegant summer wine that is now only cultivated in the Elbe valley, and a special type of Traminer that is found only in Saxony, and makes a name for itself with its flowery, yet delicate play of aromas.

2. MAINTAINING SAXONY'S VINICULTURAL LANDSCAPE

Although the steep slopes and terraced vineyards of the Elbe Valley produce wines of excellent quality, the dry stone walls were neglected under Socialism – i.e. for almost 50 years. To this day, as a result of that backlog of investment and renovation, the winemakers face challenges that can only be overcome with great effort and not in the short term.

As Saxon state winery, Schloss Wackerbarth has more steep slopes than any other Saxon estate; cultivates over 20 hectares and thus about 20% of all steep slopes in Saxony and maintains a total of about 25,000 m² of dry stone walls on this area.

3. SAXON WINE IS SOMETHING SPECIAL

It is not just the centuries-old dry stone walls that stand out; here on the 51st parallel north, the vines are also regularly subjected to extreme weather such as winter and spring frosts, hail, torrential rain or extreme or prolonged heat. Extremely low harvests caused by the weather, combined with the above-average amount of handwork in the steep slopes, regularly present winemakers with new challenges. Between 2009 and 2013 alone, winegrowers in the Elbe valley lost a total of 2.5 vintages, and thus several million euros in turnover, because of extreme weather. This also gives Saxony the lowest mean harvest of any German wine region, at 47 hl/ha – only around half of the overall German average of 90 hl/ha. Wines from Saxony are something special.

4. COOL-CLIMATE WINES

In Saxony, grapes grow in unique climatic conditions resulting from the influences of a Continental climate, the large temperature differences between warm days and cold nights, and the long ripening period. The grapes thus retain their distinctive aromas and natural freshness until late in the ripening process.

From our Saxon grapes we produce cool-climate wines with aromatic elegance and finesse. They are regularly recognised and win awards at renowned national and international competitions and tastings such as “Mundis Vini”, “AWC Vienna” or “Best of Riesling”.

5. GOURMET WARMING SINCE 1834

When the days grow shorter and the temperatures fall, it's time for Glühwein, Glögg, grog or hot punch. Looking into the origins of these warming winter drinks, one trail takes us back to Schloss Wackerbarth more than 180 years ago.

In December 1834, Count August von Wackerbarth, a descendant of the builder of Schloss Wackerbarth, stood in his belvedere. The art enthusiast and gourmet was in search of a drink that would chase away the cold and warm the very cockles of his heart. He combined white wine with a medley of exotic spices such as saffron, aniseed and pomegranate – and had a brilliant idea: he heated the mixture up.

Long lost and forgotten over the years, the count's recipe was rediscovered at the end of 2013 in the Saxon State Archives in Dresden. A thorough investigation revealed that this was a very special recipe for what is now known as Glühwein, or mulled wine. That makes it Germany's oldest known mulled wine recipe.

Having examined the original document, we immediately got to work reviving this exceptional tradition. For our “Wackerbarth's Weiss & Heiss” – a select winter drink made from Saxon white wine, grape juice and fine seasoning ingredients – we carefully adapted the count's historical recipe to suit modern tastes. And that is how “Wackerbarth's Weiss & Heiss”, with its delicate, enticing fruity taste, came to be known beyond the borders of Saxony as an ambassador for the Saxon Elbe valley's traditional Christmas customs and fine fare.

6. ONE OF EUROPE'S OLDEST SPARKLING WINE TRADITIONS

Saxony has a long history of sparkling wine production following the traditional, or classic method – the original and still the most prestigious. We are grateful that more than 180 years ago, when the first champagne producers or “houses” were appearing in the Champagne region, our ancestors had the brilliant idea of establishing a sparkling wine production facility in the vineyards of Radebeul. In taking that step, they laid the foundations for one of Europe’s oldest sparkling wine traditions.

In 1836, the three highly regarded wine estate owners Ludwig Pilgrim, Georg Schwarz and Karl Friedrich Sickmann joined forces as the founders of the first facility producing mousseux in Saxony; what would become the Bussard cellars. The savvy businessmen had recognised that the grapes in Champagne and the Elbe Valley ripen under comparable climatic conditions. To this day, the two regions have a similar terroir in terms of the average temperature, the sunshine duration and annual amount of precipitation.

The founders required expertise to produce premium sparkling wines from Saxon grapes, which they found at source, in Reims: their first cellar master, Johann Joseph Mouzon, was a practised expert in sparkling wines, and introduced the French production method at the newly established facility, bringing the “traditional method” to Radebeul from his native land.

Initially, the producers used only grapes from Lössnitz and nearby areas to make their classic sparkling wines, fermented entirely in the bottle. Due to the great demand and the decline in Saxon winemaking during the 19th century, the production facility later also increasingly used grapes from other celebrated German and European wine-growing regions, such as those on the Rhine or the Mosel, or from Champagne.

The Bussard cellars became a nucleus for fine sparkling wines in Saxony. They were also a popular attraction among Saxony’s kings, who selected these tongue-tickling creations for their table and also made regular visits to the production site.

During that time, in the 1920s and 1930s, the baroque Schloss Wackerbarth and its grounds came into the hands of the Saxon State Bank when its final owner was no longer able to pay his mortgage.

7. BUBBLY BLISS IN THE GDR

Just ten years after the end of the Second World War, the Bussard cellars began producing traditional-method sparkling wine again in their own premises on Moritzburger Strasse, partly funded by the state.

In 1972, the cellars were declared the property of the “people” under Socialism. As there was limited space for growth in their old premises, in the 1970s the Bussard headquarters had to be moved to Schloss Wackerbarth. All the machinery, staff and centuries of expertise in sparkling wine were moved just a kilometre down the road to the headquarters of VEG (Z) Weinbau Radebeul, where sparkling wines had been produced on a large scale since 1958 using Eastern European base wines. The sparkling wines from Schloss Wackerbarth, however, were in short supply, available only to a select group of customers.

8. THE POST-REUNIFICATION TRANSITION PERIOD

When the Berlin Wall fell and the GDR came to an end, the baroque Schloss Wackerbarth and its grounds were returned to the Free State of Saxony in a state of dilapidation and neglect.

The newly opened borders gave East German connoisseurs their first chance to try wines from all over the world without difficulty. As a result, local winemakers lost a large chunk of their customer base during the first few years after reunification. Following the principle “noblesse oblige” and investing in their own products, during the 1990s Schloss Wackerbarth began to win back customers, though without being able to pay the high cost of renovation entirely alone.

9. SCHLOSS WACKERBARTH BECOMES EUROPE’S FIRST DESTINATION WINERY

In the second half of the 1990s, the Free State of Saxony tried to sell the entire Schloss Wackerbarth. This approach failed due to the huge amount of renovation work required and the potential buyers’ unwillingness to make investments.

To preserve Schloss Wackerbarth as an item of cultural heritage, in 1999 the Free State of Saxony decided to carry out the renovations itself and, moreover, create Europe’s first destination winery here under the aegis of the Saxon Development Bank (SAB) – and of Stefan Weber and Jochen Freiherr von Seckendorff, then members of the SAB board.

That step was connected to the Saxon state estate’s ongoing mission to preserve and promote Saxony’s vinicultural landscape, and to train apprentices to that end. The decision made Schloss Wackerbarth a trailblazer within Germany, and was an important factor in the move to secure Saxon and German winemaking’s position as a cultural asset, and preserve it in the long term.

It is a pleasure to us to see increasing numbers of wine estates in Saxony, Germany and Europe picking up the idea of a destination winery in the last 20 years, opening their doors to visitors and thus playing an active role in maintaining their local vinicultural heritage. They have recognised the promise of combining wine, new experiences and tourism.

10. EUROPE'S FIRST DESTINATION WINERY – THE REALM OF THE SENSES

As Europe's first destination winery, we are a popular attraction, welcoming more than 190,000 visitors a year to our unique combination of a baroque palace and grounds, picturesque vineyards and a modern production site. Our wine estate offers an immersive experience: every day, visitors can watch the cellar master go about his work in the production facility, uncovering the secrets of winemaking and experiencing Saxony's fine still and sparkling wines with all their senses.

We also open our doors for a variety of other functions and events, from hikes through the vineyards and culinary "wine and chocolate" or "wine and cheese" tastings to classical concerts during the Dresden Music Festival; from "Ballet at the Vineyard" and readings with Donna Leon or Ingo Zamperoni to our popular Federweisser festival or the Christmas crafts market during Advent. At Schloss Wackerbarth, art, culture and fine fare go hand in hand.

As a destination winery, we can whet guests' appetites at bespoke functions – from conferences and corporate events to private celebrations and dream weddings.

11. FOCUS ON THE BELVEDERE

Since it reopened as Europe's first destination winery in 2002, Schloss Wackerbarth's progress has been a real success story: over the past 20 years, we have dedicated ourselves to preserving Saxony's vinicultural landscape, restructuring our vineyards and constantly improving the quality of our still and sparkling wines.

We represent Saxony's centuries-old tradition of enjoying life's luxuries, and today we have made it to the top of the German wine industry. Every year, we produce roughly 600,000 bottles of still and sparkling wine. Of those, some 350,000 are in the cool-climate style typical of the Saxon wine-growing region, while 250,000 bottles are sparkling wines produced using the classic method. Last year, our popular "Wackerbarth's Weiss & Heiss" – a delicately fruity winter drink made to a historic recipe written by Count von Wackerbarth in 1834 – could be found at more than 20 carefully selected Christmas markets in eastern Germany, where we drew local wine lovers' attention to Saxony as a wine-growing region.

To make the high quality of our products more obvious to customers, and to stay in line with what is currently considered contemporary and modern, over recent months we have revised our design with the help of the Fuenfwerken agency from Berlin. The belvedere, a historical symbol of the Saxon culture of fine fare and wines, was placed at the heart of the new look, firmly establishing it as the centrepiece of the design.

Entirely unexpectedly, but much to the delight of everyone involved, the German Design Council nominated the new look of our brand and products for the 2020 German Design Award – one of the most well-known and important design competitions in Germany. The award’s international panel of judges were also impressed by the new design, naming us a winner in the category “Excellent Communications Design. Brand Identity”.

12. UNIQUE WINERIES OF THE WORLD

For some years, the expert gourmets at VINUM have been presenting awards to the world’s most unique wine estates. The companies that are named “Unique Wineries of the World” have acted for decades as role models for other wine estates around the world. Their expertise has been put into practice all over the globe and their insatiable curiosity and urge to innovate have produced great wines. These are the success stories of special wine estates with time-honoured traditions, coming from Germany, Austria, Italy and France.

In February 2022, the editors presented the latest award winners and “Unique Wineries of the World” from Germany, including Schloss Wackerbarth.

“Anyone looking for a copybook case of state investment will find just that in Radebeul, near Dresden [...]. [Schloss Wackerbarth] is an absolute must-see on a trip to Saxony, in part because of its extremely varied calendar [...] – all managed by a well-established, dedicated team”, the authors write.

Following extensive redevelopment and the site’s reopening as a destination winery in 2002, “a Saxon wine success story began under difficult conditions: as well as focusing on top quality, the team also had to restore the steep, centuries-old vineyards with their many terraces, and ready them for the future. That aim has already been achieved on the roughly 70 hectares of mechanically harvested vineyards, and some of the terraced vineyards. [...] The trend towards environmentally friendly, sustainable winemaking has added to the complexity of the white and red wines [...]. The efficient team also causes a sensation with their large quantities of sparkling wine, as can clearly be seen from the fact they were awarded the title of ‘Germany’s best sparkling wine producer – best collection’ at the VINUM 2018 German Sparkling Wine Awards. It should also not be forgotten that Wackerbarth has always played an important role in training the next generation of Saxon winemakers.”



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FURTHER SELECTED AWARDS & PRIZES AS EUROPE'S FIRST DESTINATION WINERY

- 2010: Award as „Höhepunkt der Weinkultur“ by German Wine Institute (DWI)
- 2012: Awarded with „Schönste Weinsicht Sachsens“ by German Wine Institute (DWI)
- 2013: Award for „2012er Scheurebe“ at Mundus Vini for the best semi-dry white wine in Germany
- 2017: Awarded the third grape in Gault&Millau wine guide Germany
- 2018: Award at the "Deutscher Sekt Award" as "Bester Sekterzeuger Deutschlands“
- 2019: Awarded at the German Design Awards
- 2020: Awarded the fourth star in Falstaff wine guide Germany

In addition, we received a lot of further awards and prizes for our cool-climate wines and classic bottled fermented sparkling wines.



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