

MARCEL DEISS | ALSACE



Jean-Michel Deiss comes from a family of winegrowers who settled in Bergheim, Alsace in 1744. Since taking over his grandfather Marcel Deiss' estate, Jean-Michael Deiss has transformed it into one of the world's great wineries.

Jean-Michel Deiss seeks maximum vineyard expression

- ✦ He rejects varietal purity in favor of vineyard expression.
- ✦ His goal is to drive the vines' roots deep and transmit the character of the subsoil
- ✦ The Deiss vineyards were organically farmed for 20 years and have been biodynamic since 1997.
- ✦ For his extraordinary field blends, Deiss actually harvests, vinifies and blends together the varietals from a single vineyard.

Extraordinary vineyards

- ✦ Deiss owns 64 acres of hillside vineyards spread over 12 miles.
- ✦ These vineyards represent some of the great sites in Alsace.
- ✦ Density of planting is very high, with around 8,000 vines per hectare on average.
- ✦ Grand Cru vineyards have plantings up to around 12,000 vines per hectare.
- ✦ Yields are typically 40 hectoliters per hectare, half the average yield in Alsace
- ✦ Deiss' Grand Cru sites have yields of 25-30 hectoliters per hectare.

Cellar work

- ✦ Deiss uses three pneumatic presses that for 24 hours apply minute pressure to harvested grapes.
- ✦ Each press is used once per day, so each day's harvest stops when the three presses are full.
- ✦ Skins are barely ruptured and the juice literally aspirates through the skins of the grapes.
- ✦ Using only indigenous yeasts, fermentation begins naturally and continues in either stainless steel for wines from the lighter soils, or large old wooden casks for the more powerful wines.
- ✦ Wines rest on their lees for six to eight months, are racked once and then bottled without fining or filtration.

The wines

- ✦ **Terroir Wines:** field blends of varietals designated, indeed dominated, by their terroir and soil specificity, which are referred to as Premiers Crus (AOC classification pending) and as AOC-recognized Grands Crus.
- ✦ **Varietal Wines:** varietally labeled wines from a single commune or village; the variety shows through and is complemented by the characteristics of the vintage. These wines are fresh, well-balanced and quick to enjoy.

GRAND CRU SCHOENENBOURG 2002

The Schoenenbourg has a very specific topography, facing south, with a steep slope and the geology formed of Keuper marl. The combination of a light, airy, friable topsoil on a clay based, fertile substratum with good water retention properties, accounts for the fact that the personality of the Schoenenbourg wines is dominated more by their native soil than by their varietal. Schoenenbourg produces wines which age extraordinary well with outstanding body and richness, and characteristics not common for this type of wine: a nose with a hint of pepper or even a smoky aroma similar to a Tokay, a light acidity hidden by the fullness of its body, and a mineral nature not evident when young but developing fossil traces in time.

"Excellent harmony and beauty. Supple, full and off-dry, delivering delicate flavors of white flowers, peach, mango and mineral. It stays with you, in a vibrant, lilting way, through the long aftertaste of apricot. Roughly 70 percent Riesling, with Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer and Muscat." **93 Wine Spectator, October 2003**



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