

Vinalu®

'Luxembourg's first Online Wine Magazine'

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*Retrospective on the VieVinum
2024/Picture Report*

*AMG CLE 53 4MATIC/COUPE
Testdrive*

*Vinalu Special Reports BRAZIL/ SERRA
GAUCHA (PART III)*

VINALU SPECIAL REPORTS BRAZIL/ SERRA GAÚCHA (Part III)

by Liliane Turmes, Helen Latour and Harry Montagnola

The Serra Gaúcha wine region



MYTHOS BRAZIL

Brazil is a fascinating country of extremes, with a renowned attraction for the joie de vivre of the Brazilians, the Samba, the famous carnival of Rio de Janeiro, the Copacabana, for the exotic paradise, the rainforest, the spectacular waterfalls, the exuberance of fauna and flora, for the great coffee and last but not least for the top sparkling wines. What probably some are not so familiar with, is the high quality of the Brazilian fine wine production.

THE SERRA GAÚCHA WINE REGION

We had the pleasure to discover, together with Rafael Romagna, the experienced gerente of Wines of Brazil, the astonishing wine region of the Serra Gaúcha, situated 120 km Northwest of Porto Alegre, in the southernmost state of Rio Grande do Sul, the 'coldest' part of Brazil, neighboring Argentina and Uruguay. The Serra Gaúcha, with its wine capital Bento Gonçalves, with its valleys and hillsides, the serras, with many micro regions, with a moderate and wet climate and with the most wellknown and greatest concentration of wineries, is home to the famous 'Vale dos Vinhedos'. An average altitude of 600 meters above the sea level ensures the freshness and acidity of the wines; the clay and basaltic soils offer the minerality.

The Rio Grande do Sul region, where immigrants from Italy made the first sparkling in the early 19th century, is standing for 90% of the wine production of the country and is a reference for the cultivation of grapes.

In 1875 the great take-off in the Brazilian wine production occurred with the arrival of Italian immigrants to Rio Grande del Sul, as they brought the knowledge and the culture of wine to Brazil. In the 1970ies multinational wineries brought their new technics to the vineyards and the grape cultivation areas expanded. Despite that there are six wine regions in Brazil, the Serra Gaúcha is the cradle of most of the traditional wineries and also the center of the wine tourism in the country. The most common white varietals in Serra Gaúcha are the Chardonnay, the Italic Riesling (Welschriesling), the Moscato grapes, for the labels inspired by the Italian sparkling wines from the Asti region of Piedmont, with the sweetness and the aromatic characteristics with the Moscato Giallo, Moscato Bianco, Muscat of Alexandria, Muscat Hamburg and the Glera, used in the Prosecco production. The reds planted are mainly Merlot, Pinot Noir, Tannat, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.

FAMOUS VALE DOS VINHEDOS & ALTOS DE PINTO BANDEIRA

The famous pioneer subregion of Serra Gaúcha, the Vale dos Vinhedos, recognized for its Chardonnay and Merlot wines and for the sparkling wines produced with the traditional method got the Geographical Indication GI protection in 2002 and the Denomination of Origin DO in 2012. Besides the flagship sparkling wine production, which has become an important part of Brazil's winegrowing identity, another highlight of the Vale dos Vinhedos, is the Merlot, which holds since 2002 a denomination of origin. The wines produced in the Denomination of Origin DO of Vale dos Vinhedos are essentially based on this grape, the only red varietal certified in this region. Another subregion of the Serra Gaúcha is the Altos Pinto Bandeira, with its high quality traditional method sparklings and with the only DO from the New World, exclusive to sparkling wines. To receive the seal, the sparkling has to be produced with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Riesling Italic grapes... the 'typical Brazilian assemblage', as they say...



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BRAZILIAN GOVERNMENT
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UNITING AND REBUILDING

VISIT AT CAVE FAMÍLIA GEISSE

Vinhedos de Terroir

THE VISIT

In 1976 the Chilean agronomist and winemaker Mário Geisse came to Brazil, hired by Moët & Chandon do Brazil, looking for the best location for the production of sparkling wines. He realized the potential of the micro-region Pinto Bandeira in Serra Gaúcha, at that time mostly unknown for sparklings and in 1979 he opened the Vinícola Geisse in the Pinto Bandeira region.

Since the beginning, Geisse decided to work with the espalier system in the vineyards and with a controlled production, one of the key events of Brazilian viticulture, in the search for quality.

Years later, after his first vintage of sparkling in 1981, using the traditional method, Geisse founded the 'Pinto Bandeira Wine Producers Association' in 2001, with the idea of starting the important process for the geographical indication (GI) for the region. In 2022, the Altos de Pinto Bandeira appellation received the only New World Denomination of Origin, specific to sparkling wines.

With his high commitment to the region and with the support made to the development of the fine wine industry in Brazil, Mário Geisse is recognized as the winemaker, who put Brazilian sparklings on the map of the top international sparkling wines.

Today Vinícola Geisse has 40 ha of vineyards, with exclusively Chardonnay and Pinot Noir planted in Pinto Bandeira, with an annual production of 500.000 bottles.

The elaborated visit with Ezequiel Biesek Wagner, the hospitality manager at Cave Geisse, gives us a comprehensive knowledge, also about some of the high technologies used in the winery, like the sophisticated ballon press, allowing a slow and gentle pressing, beneficial for the production of top quality wines.

After the promising introduction, with the focus on high quality sparklings, we are obviously looking forward to the tasting.



Familia Geisse, Vinhedos de Terroir



The cellar with the riddling desks

THE TASTING

CAVE AMADEU ORANGE NATURE, 100% Chardonnay, Espumante 'Laranja', with spontaneous fermentation, with a long skin contact, with the traditional method, 18 months on the lees, 12%

In the glass: golden yellow

On the nose: citric fruits, bread

On the palate: pleasant creaminess of the yeast, apples, graphite, a harmonious sparkling

CAVE GEISSE NATURE, 70% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, from Pinto Bandeira/ Serra Gaúcha, with the traditional method, 24 months in the bottle, hand harvest,

In the glass: fine perlage, shining light green

On the nose: brioche, citrus fruits, nuts

On the palate: ripe yellow fruits, pleasant acidity, good structure, salted notes at the end, an elegant sparkling of the Geisse traditional line

CAVE GEISSE TERROIR NATURE, 50% Chardonnay, 50% Pinot Noir, from Pinto Bandeira / Serra Gaúcha, with the traditional method, 48 months on the lees, hand harvest

In the glass: golden colour, fine perlage

On the nose: flowers, dried fruits

On the palate: complex, anise, herbs with a long aftertaste, a gastronomic elegant sparkling, considered as the Geisse icon sparkling

CAVE GEISSE ROSÉ TERROIR 2019, 100% Pinot Noir, Pinto Bandeira/ Serra Gaúcha, 48 months in the bottle, with the traditional method, vinified as a rosé, 50% elaborated in stainless steel, 50% elaborated in barrels, with manual harvest, in a limited production

In the glass: brilliant, light rose colour

On the nose: ripe strawberries, red fruits, almonds

On the palate: red currants, soft tannins, full bodied, with a nice acidity, a delicate wine with a long aftertaste

CAVE GEISSE brut 2015, 70% Chardonnay, 30% Pinot Noir, from Pinto Bandeira/ Serra Gaúcha, 72 months on the lees, with natural autochthon yeasts, with the traditional method, with manual harvest,

In the glass: intense gold colour, fine persistent perlage

On the nose: toast, almonds, dried fruits

On the palate: impressive creaminess, honey, almonds, citric fruits, great structure.

Our respect to the wine maker Carlos Abarzúa, enólogo de Família Geisse since 30 years, for the fantastic wines. And as they say at the Geisse winery: **IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE! CHEERS!**

Location: Cave Família Geisse Jansen Line, S/N Pinto Bandeira, Rio Grande do Sul/Brazil



The tasting with Ezequiel Wagner & Felipe Abarzua

Cave Geisse nature



Cave Geisse Terroir Nature



Cave Geisse Rose Terroir Nature



Cave Geisse brut 2015 with autochthon yeasts

THE SUCCESS STORY OF TENUTA FOPPA & AMBROSI

In 2017 Lucas Foppa and Ricardo Ambrosi, two young enologists started with a tiny garage wine production and developed their project in 2019, in founding the Tenuta Foppa & Ambrosi in Garibaldi/Rio Grande do Sul and in opening a branch in Caligosta/California in 2021, making their wines in the U.S. with grapes from Napa Valley.

In the same year, they expanded their facilities for maturation and bottling to an old historic house in Garibaldi and since then increased their production up to 29 labels and 80000 bottles. The success story behind the label, besides the fine quality, is certainly also due to a different philosophy, in sharing the winemaking by buying all the grapes, in integrating innovative and unusual ideas in the elaboration, with the objective of producing outstanding wines.



Tenuta Foppa & Ambrosi



The young team at the winery



Viticcio Brut Rosé



Alvarinho 2021

THE TASTING

VITICCIO BRUT ROSE, from Garibaldi and Bento Gonçalves 60% Pinot Noir, 40% Chardonnay, Charmat method, 10,5 g sugar
In the glass: fine perlage, brilliant rose colour
On the nose: mineral and fresh
On the palate: red fruits, pleasant acidity

INSOLITO EXTRA BRUT, from Serra Gaúcha, Rio Grande do Sul, Chenin Blanc, Trebbiano, Riesling Italiceo, 24 months on the lees, traditional method, 12%
In the glass: golden colour
On the nose: yellow fruits, yeast, brioche
On the palate: ripe fruits, citrus fruits, good balance, long in the aftertaste, elegant, a top sparkling, with an unusual blend

TENUTA FOPPA & AMBROSI 'Brazilian Collection', Alvarinho 2021, from Serra Gaúcha, 6 months with oak staves, 13%
In the glass: straw yellow
On the nose: almonds, citrus fruits
On the palate: stone fruits, nice acidity with a hint of salinity in the aftertaste

CABERNET FRANC 2022, 100% Cabernet Franc from Campanha Gaúcha and Serra do Sudeste regions, 12 months in French and American oak barrels, 13,50%
In the glass: garnet red colour
On the nose: anis, herbs
On the palate: red and black berries, good tannic structure, with a long persistence. A gastronomic, elegant wine.

INSOLITO RED BLEND CORTE V, from different vineyards in Rio Grande do Sul, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Marselan and Tannat, 3 vintages 2020/2021/2022, 14 months in French and American barrels second use, 13%
In the glass: cherry red colour
On the nose: cassis, chocolate
On the palate: ripe black and red berries, complex

GOAT 2020, (standing for 'Greatest of all time'), from Pinheiro Machado / Rio Grande do Sul, 82% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon, aged in French and American first use oak barrels for 19 months, 15%
In the glass: ruby colour
On the nose: herbs, violets, vanilla
On the palate: strong tannic structure, complex with a good aging potential.



Insolito White Blend



Cabernet Franc 2022

ADDRESS: Tenuta Foppa & Ambrosi Vinhos, rua Buarque de Macedo, 7325 Borghetto, Garibaldi Rio Grande do Sul / Brazil

CAVE ANTIGA

In 1997, the enologue João Carlos Taffarel founded the Cave Antiga winery, located in the interior of Farroupilha, in the Serra Gaúcha region. He bought the 5ha winery from a family, who closed their business, renovated the old building of the 1920ies and prepared the winery for changes in the vineyards and in winemaking, by starting the production of fine and sparkling wines, first with the charmat method and later also with the traditional method. Natália Taffarel, his daughter, the export and public relation manager at Cave Antiga, is our host during our visit and we are curious to discover more wines of Cave Antiga, after our exquisite tasting experience with her at the Enoteca of the Spa do Vinho hotel in Bento Goncalvez.

(reported in Vinalu/ edition 71).



Tasting at Cave Antiga



with Natália Taffarel and Rafael Romagna from Wines of Brazil



Moscato Bianco



The Rosé 2023



Cave Antiga Iridium 2020

THE TASTING

CAVE ANTIGA Moscato Bianco, from Farroupilha vineyards, Rio Grande do Sul, 11,50

On the nose: bouquet of exotic fruits, floral

On the palate: pleasant freshness, a light and easy drinking wine

CAVE ANTIGA ROSÉ 2023, 40% MARSELAN , 60%
SCHOENBURGER, 12%

In the glass: salmon colour

On the nose: freshness of citrus fruits

On the palate: elegant bitter notes, strawberries, with a long persistence.

CAVE ANTIGA IRIDIUM 2020, with a blend of 3 grapes Marselan,
Tannat, Merlot and from 3 regions of the Serra Gaúcha, 18 months in French
oak, 14%

In the glass: cherry red colour

On the nose: Plums, cassis and vanilla

On the palate: black berries, plums, strong tannins , good structure, full
bodied, complex, nice acidity, long in the aftertaste, with a good aging
potential, a gastronomic wine

CAVE ANTIGA, MOSCATEL ESPUMANTE, Moscato bianco and
Moscato giallo grapes, from Farroupilha vineyards, Rio Grande Do Sul, 68 gr
sugar, Charmat method, 7,7 %, gold medalled in Brazil,

In the glass: light yellow colour, decent bubbles

On the nose: roses, white flowers

On the palate: well balanced acidity /sweetness, a festive sparkling

CAVE ANTIGA, VINHO LICOROSO SAFRA 1999, Moscato from
Farroupilha vineyards, Rio Grande do Sul, 15 years in French and American
oak, 84 gr sugar, 18%

In the glass: amber, golden colour

On the nose: candied fruits, honey

On the palate: dried fruits, a wine for special occasions and probably fantastic
with dark bitter chocolate...

ADDRESS: CAVE ANTIGA, Linha Rio Buratti 3°, Distrito Farroupilha-RS,
95180-992, Brazil



The Moscatel sparkling



The golden Vinho Licoroso 1999

THE HIDDEN GEM

VISIT AT ARTE DA VINHA WINERY

In 1999 Eduardo Zenker, a self-made, passionate winemaker, produced wines for pleasure, together with his wife Gabriela Schäfer, a studied biologist, before founding the Arte da Vinha winery, with the idea of making natural wines, expressing the Brazilian terroir. The Arte da Vinha project, also rescuing ancestral grape varieties and working with old techniques, is since then focused on the production of organic and biodynamic wines, inspired in their elaboration by French natural winemaking. Some of their grapes are purchased from partner vintners, as the Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from high altitude vineyards in Campos de Cima da Serra, in Rio Grande do Sul, a windy plateau, with big temperature differences between day and night, obviously very beneficial for the freshness in the wines.

Since 2020, the 5000 bottle production takes place at the Arte da Vinha winery, located in a hidden place, in the middle of a splendid nature.



*Eduardo & Gabriela of Vinicola
Arte da Vinha*



Art on the label at Arte da Vinha



From the barrel into the glass



Tasting the fresh Magmatic Chardonnay 2022



...the elegant Pinot Noir 2021

THE TASTING

MAGMATIC 2022 CHARDONNAY, 100% Chardonnay from Campos de Cima da Serra in Rio Grande do Sul, at an altitude of 1000 m, no filtration, 20 months in French oak, 13%, production 530 bottles

In the glass: light yellow

On the nose: mineral,floral

On the palate: pleasant acidity, ripe yellow fruits, good structure

CAMPOS DE CIMA DE VACARIA 2021, 100% Pinot Noir, from Vacaria region, Campos de Cima in Rio de Grande do Sul, a high altitude Pinot Noir, 11%

In the glass: light cherry red

On the nose: red berries

On the palate: almonds, red currants, nice acidity, elegant

UNDER MY SKIN 2022, 100% Sauvignon Blanc, from Monte Alegre in Rio Grande do Sul, vinified in orange wine, 18 days maceration with the skin, 1 year in barrels, 13,50%

In the glass: golden colour

On the nose: herbs, floral

On the palate: well structured, soft tannins, long in the aftertaste

UH! Làlà, 100% Gamay, from Pinheiro Machado in Rio Grande do Sul, 15 days of carbonic maceration in a closed tank (to give another dimension to the wine, as Eduardo says) 6 months in barrels, 12,1%

In the glass: violet, red colour

On the nose: spices, herbs

On the palate: ripe red berries, round tannins, pepper, pleasant structure, an easy drinking summer wine

FRANCAMENTE FRANC 2022, 100% Cabernet Franc, from Monte Alegre do Sul in Rio Grande do Sul , semi-carbonic vinification in open tank, 4 months in barrels, chosen 'Melhor Tinto Brazil' in 2023 by Descorchados Guide, 12%

In the glass: garnet red

On the nose: leather, tobacco

On the palate: black berries, complex, good tannique structure, sharp acidity, long aftertaste.

A top wine! Our favorite of the tasting.



The complex Cabernet Franc 2022



and the spicy Gamay 2022

Address: ARTE DA VINHA, Linha São Rafael S/N Centro,
Carlos Barbosa - RS, 95185-000 Brazil

A RETROSPECTIVE ON THE VIEVINUM WINE FAIR 2024

Text & pictures by Liliane Turmes

From 25th to 27th, May 2024, the glittering Hofburg Palace in Vienna served as the beautiful setting for Austria's renowned international winetrade fair, the VieVinum. Every two years the VieVinum attracts winemakers, wine experts and wine lovers from all over the world. Despite the world's increasingly competitive wine market and challenging times in the wine business, the VieVinum 2024 was showing signs of strength in the Austrian wine industry and the wine fair closed with positive feelings. More than 1200 international retailers, sommeliers, restaurateurs and journalists, on invitation by the OEWM, the Austrian Wine Marketing, as well as 16000 visitors came to the elegant venue at the Hofburg.

Over the three days of the fair, attendees enjoyed a varied program. Some 550 exhibitors from Austria and other parts of the world showcased their wines. In addition new programs offered the opportunity to explore award winning wines in special tasting zones.

Furthermore the School of Wine was also very popular with a series of high-calibre guided tastings.

TheVieVinum in pictures



Welcome to the VieVinum



Austrian Wine presents:



Fine Austrian bubbles



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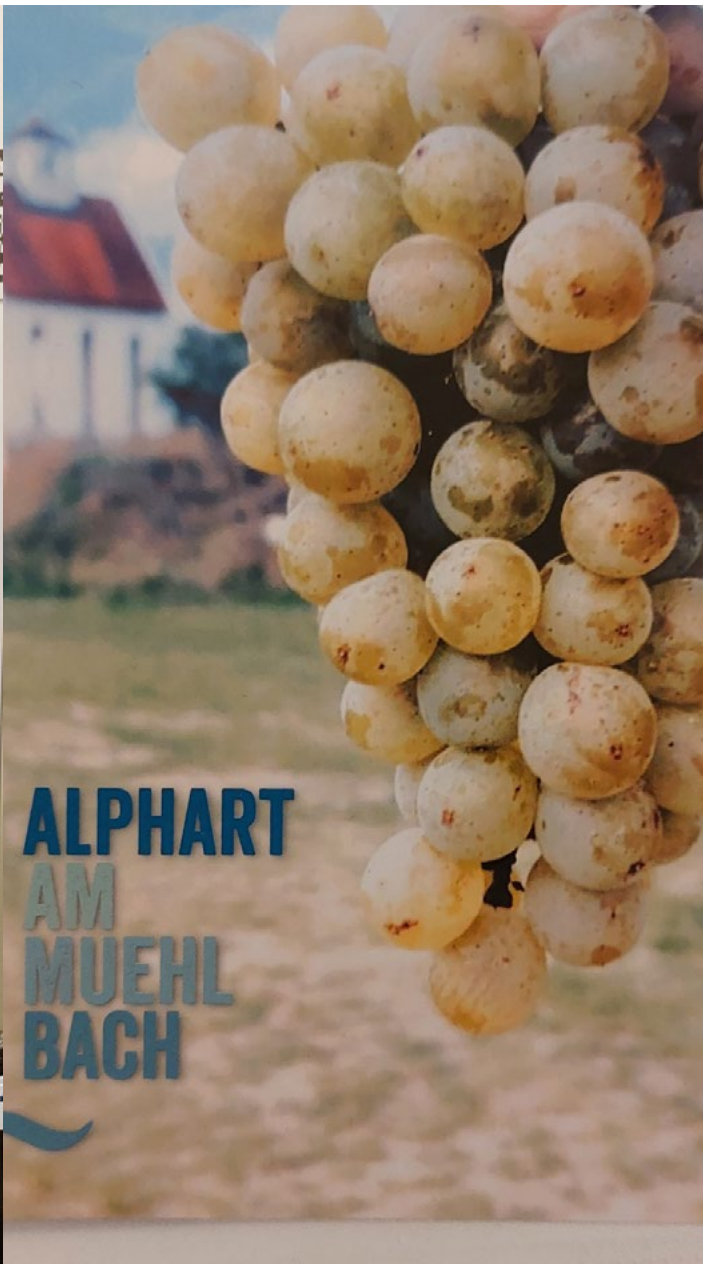
The young wild vintners



Natural wine producer Michi Lorenz



Biodynamic winegrower Urban Stagard



Family winery from the Thermen region



Robert & Lorenz Alphart



Pinot Noir from winery Auer



Great Zweigelt at St Bayer winery



Top Wines from Thom Wachter



Prestigious Sparkling from Neusiedlersee



Liliane Turmes, editor of Vinalu, enjoying the premium masterclasses

VINALU'S TOP CAR CHOICE:
Mercedes AMG CLE 53 4MATIC Coupé:

Powerful cherry on the cake!

by *Sully Prud'homme*

(all pictures: Mercedes-Benz)

Unfortunately, it is one of the species that is probably threatened with extinction these days, but it still causes delicious heart palpitations, sweaty palms and breathless gasps when you press the accelerator and your facial features twist in all directions due to the sheer centrifugal force when accelerating and cornering.



The Mercedes AMG CLE 53 4MATIC is certainly the cherry on the cake of the CLE series, and it is available in two styles, as a convertible and as a coupé, which was available to us for testing. The focus of AMG models is of course always the engine, in this case a powerful, classic 6-cylinder, which, as the only concession to today's electrified times, also has an additional electric compressor and an integrated starter generator. The classic combustion engine alone delivers 449 hp and 560 Nm of torque, and even 600 Nm for a short time in overboost, while the tiny electric motor brings 23 additional hp and 205 Nm.. All in all, this results in a sprint from 0 to 100 in 4.2 seconds and a top speed of 250 km/h, optionally even 270 km/h. These are of course still breathtaking figures, but if you compare this acceleration performance with that of a modern electric drive, you will still find a significant difference in seconds, but it is nowhere near as impressive as in the days of exclusive combustion technology. According to the manufacturer, the Mercedes AMG CLE 53 4MATIC Coupé has a combined fuel consumption of 9.4-9.7 l/100 km.

To ensure that this sheer power ends up where it belongs, namely on a road surface with the best possible grip, the AMG Speedshift TCT 9G is used, which is probably also an endangered species, but which dutifully and reliably ensures short and crisp shift times and lightning-fast reactions and, as a masterpiece of German engineering, also allows a double-declutching function and multiple downshifts. The transmission supports the safe handling of the car by a fully variable all-wheel drive and all-wheel steering for agility and stability. 5 different driving programs can be selected and adjusted using the AMG Dynamic Select switch.

When the Mercedes-AMG CLE 53 4MATIC Coupé lurks at the side of the road with sleepy eyes in the camouflage matt paintwork that still takes some getting used to, you can almost hear the quiet rumble as if from the throat of a predator ready to attack. Sportiness and dynamic design characterize the classic coupé proportions with a long bonnet and short overhangs.

In the interior, fine carbon underlines the sportiness as do the exclusive graphics of the digital instruments.

The Mercedes-AMG CLE 53 4MATIC Coupé test vehicle we drove costs from 85,995 euros TTC. Prices in Luxembourg, as of August 2024. We would like to thank MB Belgium and Merbag Luxembourg for providing the test vehicle.



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Based on an idea by Romain Batya



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