

Wine Estates in Germany

Ernst Bretz, Bechtolsheim

Region: RHEINHESSEN
Vineyards: Bechtolsheim (Homburg, Sonnenberg, Klosterberg, Wingertstor, Petersberg)
Varietals: Riesling, Silvaner, Scheurebe, Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Weissburgunder, Grauer Burgunder, Bacchus, Müller-Thurgau; Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Dornfelder, Spätburgunder.
Owner: the Bretz families.
Winemaker: Horst & Harald Bretz

Remarks: the specialists for very favourably priced top predicate wines.

The village of Bechtolsheim is situated in the heart of Rheinhessen, at the foot of the Petersberg hill, a landmark offering a superb view across the wine-growing countryside. The Bretz family has been producing wine since 1721, now in its 9th generation. The wine estate itself dates back to the 17th Century when it belonged to the Welchnonnen Convent (nunnery) of Mainz. An old stone relief was found in the courtyard relating to the Convent. The wine-making tradition is today continued by the two sons, Horst & Harald Bretz.

Around 23 hectares of vines are cultivated on the secluded slopes of the Petersberg hill. The climate is favourable and the rich soil structure is suitable for many different varieties, including various new vines such as Ortega, Huxelrebe & Siegerrebe. Both sons studied viticulture and the estate specializes in producing sweet Auslese, Beerenauslese, Eiswein & Trockenbeerenauslese, although nowadays a very high percentage of dry wines are produced. Traditional methods, coupled with low yields and investing into modern technology have resulted in a high standard of quality for the region. Not being blessed with great classified vineyard names, the emphasis is kept on producing wines at favourable prices.

Not being near to the river, the vineyards are ideal for the risky production of ice wines. The Bretz family has gained ample experience since 1978 and has been able to produce ice wines most years, although the losses have been drastic many a time. Apart from Riesling and Silvaner Eiswein, the family has also been very successful with Spätburgunder Weissherbst rosé Eiswein since 1992.

