

Wine Estate in Germany

Dr. Heyden, Oppenheim

Region: RHEINHESSEN
Vineyards: Oppenheim (Sackträger, Kreuz, Herrenberg, Herrengarten), Dienheim (Paterhof)
Varietals: Riesling, Silvaner, Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Dornfelder
Owner: Frank Heyden
Winemaker: Frank Heyden

Remarks: a new estate with a young talented winemaker, combining passion & devotion to fine wines and ownership of grand cru vineyard sites.

This is an exciting new estate, which was established with the vineyards and assistance of Friedrich Baumann, who had retired. The long-established Baumann estate had owned some of the best vineyards in Oppenheim. Dr Karl Heyden thus founded his estate in 1999 with his wife, Anita and their two sons, Frank and Harry. Frank completed his studies at the famous Geisenheim viticultural institute, and has already convinced the German critics. This young talented generation is already crafting great wines from these highly rated vineyards. Sadly, Karl Heyden died in 2005.

Traditional and meticulously detailed cultivation of the vines with strict pruning, very careful soil & foliage management, interrow crops, low yields and selective harvesting, are coupled with modern technology in the cellars, fermentation taking place in stainless steel under controlled temperature conditions. Production can be regarded as sustainable, and nearly organic, apart from the restricted spraying of a fungicide, if necessary.

The terroir of the Oppenheim vineyard slope is limestone, and this is reflected in the character of the wines, giving a fine chalky, salty minerality. The proximity to the river and the amphi-theatre slope on the edge of the Rhine valley, facing SSE, provide a great macroclimate. The Sackträger is rated as one of the best sites in Rheinhessen.

Although dry-style in taste, the Oppenheimer Riesling Kabinett (sourced from the Herrenberg & Kreuz) shows a fine, smooth balance with appealing peachy flavours. The Sackträger wines are even more complex with pronounced sweetness, as well as these typical juicy peach and apricot flavours from the rich limestone soil. Apart from fruity-style wines, Frank also produces a high percentage of dry wines, especially dry Silvaner from old vines.

The Pinot Noirs from various clones are harvested at perfect physiological ripeness, fermented traditionally on the mash, and matured in new and old oak barrels for 12+ months, and then bottled unfiltered & unfiltered. The free-run juice is also used in the cuvée with Portugieser to produce their appealing dry rosé. The wines are sealed with a Stelvin closure.

