

Wine Estates in Germany

Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch (Müller-Burggraef) Bernkastel

Region:	MOSEL
Vineyards:	Bernkastel (DOCTOR, Graben, Lay, Badstube), Brauneberg (Juffer-Sonnenuhr), Wehlen (Sonnenuhr), Graach (Himmelreich), Lieser (Niederberg-Helden, Schlossberg)
Varietals:	Riesling, Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder)
Owner:	Willkomm family
Winemaker:	Maximilan Fergner
Remarks:	the estate has a major holding of the most famous German vineyard, the Berncasteler Doctor

The wine-growing tradition of the Thanisch family can be traced back more than 350 years. In 1636, the name was mentioned for the first time in the registers of Bernkastel. The quality of the family's wines soon extended their excellent reputation far beyond the Mosel valley.

At the end of the 18th Century, the Thanisch family acquired the *Berncasteler Doctor* vineyard, a very steep site with deep Devon slate structure, situated behind and overlooking the rooftops of the quaint old town of Bernkastel. A vineyard that is still today planted with ungrafted original Riesling vines. The Doctor name originated from a legend about Prince Boemond II of Trier who fell sick and then was cured by a wine from this vineyard, after his physicians had failed to find a remedy. Without doubt, the Doctor vineyard is the most valuable and most famous German site, not only due to its apparent medicinal powers. The Dr. Thanisch estate (the heirs Müller-Burggraef) includes 16 hectares (40 acres) of best sites in the middle Mosel valley. International reputation was gained in the mid-19th Century under the management of Dr Hugo Thanisch, and his widow continued the tradition, whereby the estate has kept the name, Witwe (= widow of) Dr. H. (Hugo) Thanisch. From that time on, Thanisch wines fetched spectacular prices at international auctions. In 1986 a bottle of 1921 Berncasteler Doctor fetched the incredible sum of 11200 DM. This was a bottle of the first Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese ever produced in the Mosel valley. The bottles had been hidden, together with other rarities, during WW2, and found by chance in 1959: a former employee, who knew about the hiding place, approached the estate manager of that time and asked about these wines. The bottles were found behind a double wall. This unique and rare treasure can still be viewed today in the Doctor cellar, but not available for tasting!

Striving for the highest quality is still the standard philosophy at the Dr. Thanisch estate. Barbara Rundquist (née Müller), who had inherited the estate from her aunt, has retired in 2018, and the Willkomm family is dedicated to continue the tradition. A part of this quality is due to the Doctor Cellar which is hewn deep into the rocks beneath the vineyard. Here the Doctor Rieslings are matured in traditional old oak Fuder casks at a constant year-round temperature of 8 C (45 F). Sustainable agriculture, avoiding insecticides and herbicides with careful vineyard management, strict pruning and hand-selecting grapes add to the quality picture. A new modern facility was built in Bernkastel-Andel, just in time to process and cellar the 2017 harvest. The gentle production process is not rushed, and wines are not bottled until sufficient maturity has been reached. The dry-style estate Riesling and standard Kabinett are sealed with Stelvin, but best natural corks are still used for Spätlese & Auslese, as also for the Doctor wines.



Bernkastel-Andel
(new cellars)

view towards Bernkastel

