

Wine Estates in Germany

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

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| <i>Region:</i> | MOSEL |
| <i>Vineyards:</i> | Bernkastel (DOCTOR, Graben, Lay, Badstube), Brauneberg (Juffer-Sonnenuhr), Wehlen (Sonnenuhr), Graach (Himmelreich), Lieser (Schlossberg) |
| <i>Varietals:</i> | Riesling, Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder) |
| <i>Owner:</i> | Barbara Rundquist |
| <i>Winemaker:</i> | Maximilian Ferger |
| <i>Remarks:</i> | 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. 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 over 12 hectares 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 bottle had been hidden, together with other rarities, during WW2, and found by accident again in 1959: a former employee, who knew about the hiding place, approached the estate manager of that time and asked about these wines. He then went to investigate in the cellar and found the wines hidden behind a double wall.

Striving for the highest quality is still the standard philosophy at the Dr.Thanisch family estate, and the ownership has since passed on to Barbara Rundquist (née Müller). A part of this quality is due to the Doctor Cellar which is hewn deep into the rocks beneath the vineyard. Here the Thanisch 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. Recently, the family has invested heavily into modern technology, gentle handling of uncrushed grapes and cold, controlled fermentation; or mash fermentation for the Pinot Noir. The 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.

