

## Wine Estates in Germany



# VEREINIGTE HOSPITIEN Trier

Region: MOSEL & SAAR  
Vineyards: Wiltingen (Scharzhofberger, Hölle), Kanzem (Altenberg), Serrig (Schloss Saarfelser Schlossberg), Piesport (Goldtröpfchen), Trier (Augenscheiner)  
Varietals: Riesling, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir  
Owner: foundation  
Director: Joachim Arns (wine estate); Dr Hubert Schnabel (foundation director)  
Wine-maker: Klaus Schneider  
Remarks: finely-structured wines with characteristic style and good maturing potential, founding member of prestigious VDP association

Whether the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great ever visited his wine cellars in Trier, is not documented, but probable. Around 330 A.D. he had the Horrea, the Roman's largest warehouse North of the Alps, built on the banks of the Mosel. Later on, the warehouses, now the oldest cellars in Germany, became a Franconian King's palace, and then in 640, the noble Benedictine Abbey of St. Irminen. This Abbey existed more than 1100 years until it was secularized in 1796. In 1805, Napoleon issued an imperial edict which consolidated all the various hospitals in Trier; homes for lepers, for the poor and orphanages. This was the beginnings of the foundation of the United Hospices, Vereinigte Hospitien, which was then part of the French Empire. Part of the buildings are still used as a nunnery and the main field of activities remains in the medical, social, nursing and educational work for patients, for the elderly and for orphans and disabled persons. Vineyards, forests, farmland and real estate contribute to the financing of the foundation.

Over 25 hectares of vineyards are cultivated mainly thanks to endowments and gifts, and are situated in the Saar (Kanzem, Wiltingen, Serrig) and Mosel (Piesport, Bernkastel, Graach) valleys. The Hölle ("hell", referring probably to the heat generated in this steep slaty hillside) in Wiltingen is a monopole site of the estate. The Scharzhofberg is one of the finest vineyards in Germany, probably planted by the Romans. It is one of the very few famed sites whose wines are sold without mention of the village.

Riesling is the main varietal (90%), and even some old ungrafted vines. The remaining 10% are concentrated on the pinot varietals, 1/3 each Grauburgunder (pinot gris), Späetburgunder (pinot noir) and Weissburgunder (pinot blanc).

All grapes are processed at the central cellars in Trier. Although being the oldest cellars in Germany, modern technology has been employed since the 1997 vintage with controlled fermentation in stainless steel tanks. Ernst Ehlen, the former winemaker, retired in 1999 after a lifetime devoted to fine wines, and the young generation, Klaus Schneider (vintage 1967) has taken over the reins.

The wines are marketed under the Sanctus Jacobus label name, depicted on the labels by St. Jacob or James with a pilgrim's staff and seashell. This relates to the St. James Public Hospital which was originally a hostel for pilgrims on their way to the tomb of James the Apostle in Spain. Records mention Sanctus Jacobus wines as early as 1464 and this is the oldest written documentation of Riesling being cultivated on the Mosel.

