



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE OSTERTAG

Country: France

Region: Alsace

Appellation(s): Alsace, Alsace Grand Cru

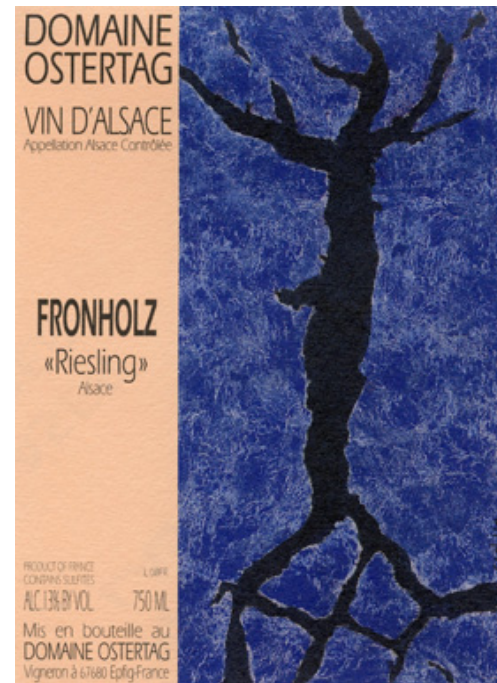
Producer: André Ostertag

Founded: 1966

Annual Production: 8,300 cases

Farming: Biodynamic (since 1998)

Website: <http://domaine-ostertag.fr>



To call André Ostertag a revolutionary winemaker is to tell just half the story. He is a pioneer, certainly, but also an ardent environmentalist (as demonstrated in both his wine and his sculpture, another passion). After training in Burgundy, André returned to the family domaine in Alsace with renewed zeal: he lowered yields considerably and introduced viticultural and vinification techniques from other regions to his own home ground. The 1996 vintage marked his first collaboration with KLWM, and the following year he brought biodynamic viticulture to his fourteen hectares of vineyards, including his flagship parcel in the Muenchberg *Grand Cru*.

There is poetry to Ostertag's practices. He looks for the nuance of *terroir* rather than the typicity of a grape varietal. In an act of rejection against the official classifications dictated by the A.O.C., he made up his own categories: *Vins de Fruit* that express fruit character rather than that of a specific vineyard site, *Vins de Pierre* reflecting the *terroir* from which they originate, and *Vin de Temps* that rely on time and weather to encourage the development of botrytis. He ferments the majority of his wines completely dry, so their versatility at the table surpasses that of many other wines from the region. In Ostertag's experience, a careful use of oak subtly enhances the traditional Alsatian varietals from the Pinot family, giving them greater depth on the palate. He uses oak sourced exclusively from the Vosges Mountains and, for his Pinots, prefers *barriques* to the traditional *foudres*. He rejects formulaic, scientifically engineered wines, and since going biodynamic in 1997, has been an active member of the natural farming community. As he so beautifully explains in Kermit Lynch's *Inspiring Thirst*,

...true quality is that which succeeds in surprising and moving us. It is not locked inside a formula. Its essence is subtle (subjective) and never rational. It resides in the unique, the singular, but it is ultimately connected to something more universal. A great wine is one in which quality is contained. Such a wine will necessarily be uncommon and decidedly unique because it cannot be like any other, and because of this fact it will be atypical, or only typical of itself. (p 279)

That is a quote we wish more wine critics would take to heart.



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DOMAINE OSTERTAG (continued)

<u>Vins de Fruit</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Gewurztraminer “Les Jardins”	Gewurztraminer	20+ yrs	Gravel, Clay	1.5 ha
Pinot Blanc “Les Jardins”	Pinot Blanc	20+ yrs	Clay, Limestone, Granite	0.8 ha
Pinot Gris “Les Jardins”	Pinot Gris	20+ yrs	Gravel, Clay, Schist	0.8 ha
Cuvée “Pinot”	Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris	20 + years	Clay, limestone, gravel, clay	.16 ha
Pinot Noir “Les Jardins”	Pinot Noir	20+ yrs	Gravel, Clay	0.5 ha
Riesling “Les Jardins”	Riesling	30+ yrs	Gravel, Sand, Silica, Clay	2.5 ha
Alsace Blanc “L’Exutoire SVV3”	Sylvaner	30-80 yrs	Clay, Sandstone, Granite	1.2 ha
Alsace Blanc “SylvaneR”	Sylvaner Rouge	5-20 yrs	Quartz, Clay, Sandstone, Marl, Granite	N/A
Sylvaner “Vieilles Vignes”	Sylvaner	55+ yrs	Clay, Granite, Gravel	2 ha
Alsace “Les Aventures de l’Agneau Masqué” Macération	Varies, see below	N/A	Clay, gravel	N/A

<u>Vins de Pierre</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Muscat Fronholz	Muscat Ottonel	40+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	0.3 ha
Pinot Gris Fronholz	Pinot Gris	20 yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	0.25 ha
Pinot Gris Muenchberg Grand Cru “A360P”	Pinot Gris	30 yrs	Red Sandstone, Volcanic Soil, Limestone	0.4 ha
Pinot Gris Zellberg	Pinot Gris	20+ yrs	Clay, Limestone, Pink Sandstone	0.5 ha
Pinot Noir Fronholz	Pinot Noir	40+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	0.3 ha
Riesling “Le Berceau lieu-dit Pflanzler”	Riesling	35 years	Quartz, Sandstone, Clay, Marl	0.8 ha
Riesling Fronholz	Riesling	30+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	1.2 ha
Riesling Heissenberg	Riesling	25+ yrs	Pink Sandstone, Gneiss, Granite	0.75 ha
Riesling Clos Mathis	Riesling	25 + yrs	Granite	0.60 ha
Riesling Muenchberg Grand Cru	Riesling	35+ yrs	Volcanic Sediment, Pink Sandstone	1.7 ha
Gewurztraminer Fronholz “A l’Orient d’Eden”	Gewurztraminer	40+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	1.2 ha

* “ha”=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres



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<u>Vins de Temps</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Gewurztraminer SGN	Gewurztraminer	20+ yrs	Gravel, Clay	1.8 ha
Gewurztraminer Fronholz SGN	Gewurztraminer	40+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	1.2 ha
Gewurztraminer Fronholz VT	Gewurztraminer	40+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	1.2 ha
Muscat Fronholz SGN	Muscat Ottonel	40+ yrs	White Sand, Quartz, Clay, Marl	0.3 ha

* "ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Certified Biodynamic and practicing since 1998
- Hand harvested
- Domaine owns 14.4 hectares of vineyards in over 88 separate plots spread over the villages of Epfig, Nothalten, Itterswiller, Ribeauvillé, and Albé
- Gentle pressing, fermentation with indigenous yeasts until fully dry (with exception of Gewurztraminer)

Alsace Blanc "L'Exutoire SVV3":

- Fermentation lasts 18 months in stainless steel
- wine completes malolactic fermentation
- Aged 20 months in stainless steel
- Sylvaner sourced from Nothalten
- L'Exutoire is a series of "special" cuvées. In the case of the SVV3, the Sylvaner came from old vines, harvested earlier than other Sylvaner at the domaine. The grapes were vinified separately from other Sylvaner vineyards and had a very different character so the domaine bottled it separately.

Alsace Blanc "Sylvaner" :

- Sylvaner Rouge, vinified as a white wine
- Fermentation lasts 9 months in stainless steel
- Wine completes malolactic fermentation
- Aged 12 months in stainless steel

Riesling "Les Jardins"

Gewurztraminer "Les Jardins"

Sylvaner "Vieilles Vignes":

- Fermented and aged in stainless steel tank
- Aged 12 months, *sur lie*, before bottling



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DOMAINE OSTERTAG (continued)

Riesling “Le Berceau lieu-dit Pflanzer”:

- Fermentation lasts 18 months in stainless steel
- wine completes malolactic fermentation
- Aged 20 months in stainless steel
- Sourced from the *lieu-dit Pflanzer*. *Pflanzer* means “the planter” in Alsatian. This *lieu-dit* was originally used as a vine nursery because the soil is fertile and well ventilated.

Pinot Gris “Les Jardins”

Pinot Blanc “Les Jardins”:

- Aged in old 228 L oak barrels, for 9 months

Cuvée “Pinot”

- Due to low yields in 2021, the grapes destined for the Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc “Les Jardins” cuvées were harvested together and co-fermented

Pinot Noir “Les Jardins”:

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermentation in stainless steel tank for 10 days with daily pumpovers
- Ages in stainless steel for 1 year

Gewurztraminer *Fronholz* “A l'Orient d'Eden”

- Fermented and aged in stainless steel tank
- Aged, *sur lie*, for 8 months
- 48 g/L RS

Muscat *Fronholz*

Riesling *Clos Mathis*

Riesling *Fronholz*

Riesling *Heissenberg*

Riesling Grand Cru *Muenchberg*:

- Fermented and aged in stainless steel tank
- Aged 12 months, *sur lie*, before bottling

Pinot Gris *Fronholz*

Pinot Gris *Zellberg*

Pinot Gris Grand Cru *Muenchberg* “A360P”:

- Aged, *sur lie*, in oak barrels, 10 – 20% new, for 1 year

Pinot Noir *Fronholz*:

- 100% de-stemmed
- Fermentation in stainless steel tank for 10 days with daily pumpovers
- Ages in older barrels for 1 year



DOMAINE OSTERTAG (continued)

Alsace “Les Aventures de l’Agneau Masqué” Macération:

- Arthur Ostertag's “Les Aventures de l’Agneau Masqué” series of orange wines have a new name each vintage, correlating to a new episode in “The Adventures of the Masked Lamb.” The blend may change each vintage.*
- 2020 “Le Bal des Masques”: 100% Gewurtraminer
- 2019 “Le Grand Bain”: 75% Gewurtraminer, 20% Pinot Gris, 2.5% Riesling, 2.5% Sylvaner Rouge
- 2017 “Dans La Fosse Aux Loups”: Gewurtraminer
- 2016 “Le Pas.Sage de L’Aube”: Gewurtraminer
- Fermented and macerated on skins for 3 weeks in stainless steel tanks
- 30% whole clusters, 70% de-stemmed
- Daily pumpovers
- Malolactic fermentation in stainless steel
- Aged in stainless steel for 9 months, then 6 months in bottle before release
- Neither fined, nor filtered
- Fully dry

Muscat *Fronholz* SGN

Gewurztraminer *Fronholz* VT

Gewurztraminer SGN

Gewurztraminer *Fronholz* SGN:

- Fermented and aged in stainless steel tank
- Aged, *sur lie*, for 8 months

The Fronholz Vineyard:

Located on the top and the southwest slopes of the hill of Epfig, the Fronholz vineyard gives wines with marked minerality, firm acidity, and elegant aromas that can be rather discreet in their youth. The estate’s four hectares are divided among Riesling (1 ha), Muscat (0.3 ha), Pinot Noir (0.3 ha), Pinot Gris (0.75 ha), Gewurztraminer (1.3 ha), and Sylvaner (0.35 ha).

The Heissenberg Vineyard:

Domaine Ostertag owns 0.75 hectares of vineyards in the Heissenberg or “Hot Mountain” vineyard in Nothalten. With a soil of pink sandstone of the Vosges and gneiss, this south-facing slope is planted exclusively to Riesling and gives fleshy, mineral wines with generous, exotic aromas.

The Zellberg Vineyard:

The southeast facing Zellberg vineyard is located on the mid-slopes in the village of Nothalten on a soil of clay, limestone, and the pink sandstone of the Vosges that gives fat, sensual wines with delicate aromas. The estate’s 0.45 hectares are planted to Pinot Gris.



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Clos Mathis:

The Clos is located near Ribeauville at the foot of the *trios châteaux* and next to the *grand cru* Kirchberg. It is a terraced hillside of granite with south-east exposure.

The Muenchberg Vineyard:

From the Alsatian “muench” meaning monk, this vineyard is named for the Cistercian monks who originally planted vines here in the 11th-12th centuries. In a south-facing amphitheater in Nothalten at the foot of the Vosges mountains, the Muenchberg site combines volcanic sediment and the pink sandstone of the Vosges with a touch of limestone. The vineyard offers definition, elegance, and great length and class to the Riesling (1.65 ha) and Pinot Gris (0.40 ha, aka A360P) planted here.

MISCELLANEA

The Ostertag Family:

The name Ostertag means “Easter day,” and the family coat of arms shows the Easter lamb carrying a battle flag. This image was the inspiration for the estate’s logo of a sheep.

The Labels:

The images on the *vins de fruit* and *vins de pierre* labels are by André’s wife, Christine Colin-Ostertag.

* “Les Aventures de l’Agneau Masqué” bottlings pay homage to a series of wines that André released in the 1990s under the label “Aventures du Mouton Masqué” (Adventures of the Masked Sheep). The Masked Sheep label, designed by his wife Christine Colin, represented André’s alter-ego. Correspondingly, the wines were experimental, often dismissed by the appellation tasting panel for being atypical. The 2016 “Le Pas.Sage de l’Aube” bottling was André’s son Arthur’s first macerated wine and because it stands out from the domaine’s more traditional wines, Arthur decided to bring back this alter-ego under the name “Les Aventures de l’Agneau Masqué” (Adventures of the Masked Lamb). The new name—agneau instead of mouton—symbolizes the transition from André to Arthur, father to son. Each new vintage of the maceration bottling will feature a new label, still designed by Christine, and a new installment in the series of Les Aventures de l’Agneau Masqué.