



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## MAISON KUENTZ-BAS

Country: France

Region: Alsace

Appellation(s): Alsace, Crémant d'Alsace,  
Alsace Grand Cru

Producer: Olivier Raffin

Founded: 1795

Annual Production: 12,000 cases

Farming: Lutte-raisonnée, Organic,

**Biodynamic (starting with 2008 vintage)**

Website: [www.kuentz-bas.fr](http://www.kuentz-bas.fr)



Maison Kuentz-Bas was first established by the Kuentz family in 1795, and the domaine as we know it today was forged through a marriage that joined the Kuentz and Bas families in 1895. Nestled in the town of Husseren-les-Châteaux, it sits at one of the highest points in Alsace, and the vineyards stretch out from the village over an area of ten hectares. More than two hundred years of tradition and vineyard pedigree have made these wines perennial favorites, with the *grand crus* of Eichberg and Pfersigberg earning the highest esteem. However, when the family sold the property to famed *vigneron* Jean-Baptiste Adam in 2004, many wondered what direction the new team would take. Adam, like the estate's former owners, has a reputation for being an advocate of Alsatian *terroir*, and he is the fourteenth generation to continue a family winemaking tradition that began as early as 1614. Eager to restore Kuentz-Bas to its former glory, Adam lowered yields significantly and reverted to natural methods, following organic and biodynamic approaches to vineyard work.

Meticulous attention to detail is the defining characteristic of both the viticulture and the vinification at Maison Kuentz-Bas. Winemaker Olivier Raffin, who took over direction of the cellar after Samuel Tottoli's departure in 2017, puts a strong emphasis on both *terroir* and accessibility. The wines are divided into two tiers: *Tradition*, a fresher collection focusing on fruit character, fermented and aged on the lees in oak *foudre* for 6-8 months and *Trois Châteaux*, from the domaine's finest vineyards. The *Trois Châteaux* wines are fermented and aged in stainless steel tank, then bottled and held for a year before release. Raffin embraces hard work in the vineyards and minimal work in the cellar. Reduced doses of sulfur allow for a greater expression of fruit, and a drier fermentation yields crisp, mineral-laden wines with less residual sugar. The wines are therefore more open than ever while still reflecting the unmistakable character of the vineyards that clients have come to expect from the Maison Kuentz-Bas. Alsace's noble *terroir* shines through like never before in the domaine's wines, making these among the greatest white wine values to be found.



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## KUENTZ-BAS (continued)

<u>Regional Wines</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Alsace Blanc	Varies, see below	25 - 45 years	Loess, Silt, Limestone	2 ha
Crémant d'Alsace "Brut"	60% Pinot Blanc 40% Auxerrois	25 - 45 years	Limestone, Silt, Loess	.2 ha
Crémant d'Alsace "Trois Châteaux"	Pinot Noir, Chardonnay	30 years	Clay, Limestone	2 ha
Gewurztraminer	Gewurztraminer	25 - 45 years	Limestone, Silt, Loess	2 ha
Muscat "Tradition"	65% Muscat Ottonel, 35% Muscat d'Alsace	25 - 45 years	Loess, Silt, Limestone	2 ha
Pinot Blanc	70% Pinot Blanc 30% Auxerrois	25 - 45 years	Limestone, Silt, Loess	4 ha
Pinot Gris "Tradition"	Pinot Gris	25 - 45 years	Clay, Limestone	1.5 ha
Riesling "Tradition"	Riesling	25 - 45 years	Limestone, Silt, Loess	4 ha
Pinot Noir	Pinot Noir	25 - 35 years	Clay, Limestone	1.2 ha
Riesling <i>Grand Cru</i> Geisberg	Riesling	70 years	Limestone, Marl, Sandstone	2 ha
Muscat <i>Grand Cru</i> "Kirchberg de Ribeauvillé"	50% Muscat d'Alsace, 50% Muscat Ottonel	Planted in 1998		.3 ha

<u>Biodynamic Wines</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Sylvaner "Trois Châteaux"	Sylvaner	25 - 45 years	Mainly Limestone	.3 ha
Sylvaner "E" "Trois Châteaux"	Sylvaner	60 years	Clay, Limestone	.2 ha
Auxerrois "Trois Châteaux"	Auxerrois	25 - 45 years	Mainly Limestone	.6 ha
Muscat "Trois Châteaux"	Muscat Ottonel	25 - 45 years	Mainly Limestone	.6 ha
Riesling "Trois Châteaux"	Riesling	25 - 45 years	Mainly Limestone	.6 ha
Riesling "Trois Châteaux" <i>Grand Cru</i> Pfersigberg	Riesling	25 - 45 years	Marl, Limestone	1.2 ha



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## KUENTZ-BAS (continued)

<u>Biodynamic Wines</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
Riesling "Trois Châteaux" <i>Grand Cru Eichberg</i>	Riesling	48 years	Clay, Limestone	.2 ha
Pinot Gris "Trois Châteaux"	Pinot Gris	25 - 45 years	Mainly Limestone	2 ha
Pinot Gris "Trois Châteaux" <i>Grand Cru Eichberg</i>	Pinot Gris	25 - 45 years	Clay, Limestone, Sandstone, Quartz	.25 ha
Pinot Gris "Trois Châteaux" <i>Grand Cru Florimont</i>	Pinot Gris	42 years	Clay, limestone	.15 ha
Gewurztraminer "Trois Châteaux" <i>Grand Cru Pfersigberg</i>	Gewurztraminer	25 - 45 years	Marl, Limestone	1.1 ha

<u>Vendanges Tardives &amp; Sélections de Grains Nobles Wines</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area</u>
Pinot Gris VT "Cuvée Caroline"	Pinot Gris	25 - 45 years	Clay, Limestone, Sandstone, Quartz	.3 ha
Gewurztraminer VT "Cuvée Caroline"	Gewurztraminer	25 - 45 years	Marl, Limestone	.2 ha
Riesling SGN "Cuvée Jérémy"	Riesling	25 - 45 years	Marl, Limestone	.19 ha
Pinot Gris SGN "Cuvée Jérémy"	Pinot Gris	25 - 45 years	Clay, Limestone, Sandstone, Quartz	.19 ha
Gewurztraminer Pfersigberg SGN "Cuvée Jérémy"	Gewurztraminer	25 - 45 years	Marl, Limestone	.2 ha

\* One hectare equals roughly two and a half acres.

30 hectares total ("ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres)

10 hectares certified biodynamic

6 hectares are organic



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## KUENTZ-BAS (continued)

### VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

The estate owns 10 hectares of vineyards that are certified biodynamic and 6 hectares are organic, with vines ranging in age from 25 to 45 years. The total production comes from 30 hectares on the steep slopes in and around the village of Husseren-les-Châteaux. All grapes are hand-harvested.

#### Still White Wines:

- Whole grapes are pressed slowly (generally 4-6 hours) in a pneumatic press, then the must is chilled to 52° F while the heavy lees settle
- For Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Auxerrois, and Riesling slow fermentation (1-3 months for entry-level wines and up to 6 months for others) takes place in oak *foudres* over 100 years old
- Gewurztraminer and Muscat are fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel
- Wines are aged on the fine lees and raked in the springtime, according to the cycles of the moon
- Wines are generally bottled in May

#### Alsace Blanc:

- 2021 blend: 65% Pinot Blanc, 15% Muscat, 14% Riesling, 6% Gewurztraminer
- 2018 blend: 50% Sylvaner, 15% Pinot Blanc, 10% Muscat, 10% Gewurztraminer, 10% Pinot Gris, 5% Chasselas
- Aged for 6 months in hundred-year-old *foudre*

#### Pinot Noir:

- Grapes are fermented naturally in *foudre* over 2 to 3 weeks with daily pumpovers
- Aged for 8 months in *foudre*
- Bottled unfiltered and aged for 1 year before release

#### Trois Châteaux Wines:

The following wines ferment for 4 to 8 weeks in stainless steel tank and are aged in stainless steel for 7 to 8 months *sur lie*.

Riesling Grand Cru Eichberg Trois Châteaux  
Riesling Grand Cru Geisberg  
Riesling Grand Cru Pfersigberg Trois Châteaux  
Riesling "E" Trois Châteaux  
Riesling Trois Châteaux  
Sylvaner Trois Châteaux  
Gewurztraminer Grand Cru Pfersigberg Trois Châteaux  
Pinot Gris Grand Cru Florimont Trois Châteaux  
Muscat Grand Cru Kirchberg de Ribeauvillé  
Muscat Trois Châteaux



## KUENTZ-BAS (continued)

The following wines ferment 4 to 8 weeks in *foudre* and are aged in *foudre* for 7 to 8 months *sur lie*.

Pinot Gris Trois Châteaux

Auxerrois Trois Châteaux

The following wines ferment for 4 to 8 weeks in 350L *barrique* and are aged in 350L *barrique* for 7 to 8 months *sur lie*.

Sylvaner “E” Trois Châteaux

Pinot Gris Grand Cru Eichberg Trois Châteaux

The Pinot Noir Trois Châteaux ferments for 6 weeks in stainless steel tank and is aged in 350L *barrique* for 12 months *sur lie*.

### **The Eichberg *Grand Cru* Vineyard:**

This south/southeast-facing vineyard sits at an altitude of 340 meters (1,115 feet) above sea level in a dry, warm microclimate that is well protected by the Vosges Mountains. Sandstone rocks can be found throughout the clay and limestone soil, and parts of the vineyard have significant deposits of white quartzite. The soil is well aerated and rich in minerals and gives powerful wines with complex aromatics and substantial body supported by good acidity. These *grand cru* wines age beautifully.

### **The Pfersigberg *Grand Cru* Vineyard:**

Sheltered by the Alsatian *massif*, the southeast-facing Pfersigberg vineyard sits on a marl and limestone soil that is also rich in fossils and various types of stones dating from the Jurassic period. Grapes ripen rather early here, and the resulting wines are very mineral, with bright acidity and good aging potential.

### **The Geisberg *Grand Cru* Vineyard:**

The Geisberg vineyard is one of Alsace’s top *crus*, known for producing razor sharp, high acid, long-lived Rieslings. Only three growers produce wine from this complex *terroir* of limestone, marl, and sandstone. “Geisberg” means “Goat mountain.”

### **The Vineyards of Husseren-les-Châteaux:**

The south- and southeast-facing vineyards in and around Husseren-les-Châteaux have porous soils that are rich in loess and silt, with some sand and limestone.



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### KUENTZ-BAS (continued)

#### ***The Vendanges Tardives and Sélections de Grains Nobles:***

The late harvest and SGN wines are sourced mainly from the grand cru vineyards of Eichberg, Pfersigberg, and Florimont, which enjoy maximum sun exposure and therefore produce very concentrated fruit. The harvest is highly selective, and the gentle pressing can last up to 24 hours. The wines are aged on the fine lees in stainless steel *cuvée* for 8 months. These wines are made only in years when the weather produces overripe or raisinated grapes and favors the development of noble rot.

#### **Crémant d'Alsace "Tradition":**

The grapes are pressed in a pneumatic press and fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. The still wines age on the fine lees for at least six months and are racked the following summer according to the cycles of the moon before being bottled for the second fermentation. The bottles are stored for at least ten months, during which the second fermentation is completed and the wine continues to gain complexity and roundness from the contact with its fine lees. *Dosage* is .75 grams/liter with a residual sugar of 8 grams per liter.