

# THE TERRORIST

RANTINGS & RAVINGS FROM THE ESTATES OF ERNST LOOSEN

## Raising holy terroir

FALL/WINTER 2000/2001



PHOTO Robbin Head

**Terroir** is the name of the game here at Dr. Loosen, and the games begin just down the road from our house with the great sundial vineyard of Wehlen. It is here in the spectacular Wehlener Sonnenuhr that you will find the clearest, most famous example of the classic blue slate of the Middle Mosel.

There's something special about the mineral makeup of Wehlen's blue slate that gives the wines exceptional elegance.

We think the unique characteristics of Wehlener Sonnenuhr are worth the effort.

When young, the wines are simply bursting with fresh peach and citrus fruit, which is balanced by a marvellously crisp and delicate acidity. If you give them 10 to 20 years in the cellar, they develop incredible complexity while maintaining their inimitable freshness.

Of course, it's not just the mineral content of the blue slate that creates all of this. A host of other factors, including the heat-holding capacity of the slate, the southerly exposure of the site, its steepness, and the warm vineyard climate that comes from its proximity to the river all contribute to this vineyard's greatness. In a word, it's all in the terroir.

**So who cares?** If a wine is delicious and refreshing, who cares where it came from? What does it matter if the wine comes from blue slate, or red volcanic

soil, or your grandmother's backyard, as long as it tastes good? These are familiar questions that we hear a lot these days.

For us, the answer is simple: We think the unique characteristics of Wehlener Sonnenuhr are worth the effort it takes to capture them in the wine.

(continues inside)

## Raising holy terroir (continued from page 1)



A closeup view of the blue slate soil of Wehlener Sonnenuhr. The thin rocky soil forces the roots to go deep in search of nutrients. Along the way, they extract an abundance of the unique mineral character of the slate.

It takes quite a bit more work, and you don't get as much wine, but what you do get is a genuine record of what happened in that vineyard during a particular vintage. We think that's interesting, especially when you compare the wines of Wehlen with wines from our other top sites.

The red volcanic soil of Ürzig, for example, really does make a difference. The wines from the Würzgarten vineyard have a flamboyant, tropical fruitiness to them that you just don't find anywhere else. The two vineyards of Erden — Treppchen and Prälat — each have their own distinctive taste and texture.

It's easy to make clean and simple wines that are pleasant to drink. But to us, these wines are just plain boring. Isn't it more interesting, more fun, more pleasurable — more human — to enjoy a fruit of the land when you can clearly taste the land it came from?

Preserving terroir in our wines is important to us. Why else would we bother with such low yields from such steep vineyards? It's really no way to run a business. But we think it's a lot more fun to raise some terroir once in a while.

---

### How to find out if our wines are available in your area

The best way to check on local availability of Dr. Loosen and J.L. Wolf wines is to visit our Web site ([www.drloosen.de](http://www.drloosen.de)), where we have a complete listing of our importers and wholesalers throughout the world. You are also welcome to request the information by phone, fax or email: [sales@drloosen.de](mailto:sales@drloosen.de)

### An Eroica connection

Eroica is distributed by the same network of wholesalers that handles the wines of Chateau Ste. Michelle, our partner in this joint venture project. For contact information, please visit their Web site: [www.ste-michelle.com](http://www.ste-michelle.com)

### About Dr. Loosen

**TOTAL VINEYARD AREA**  
30 acres

**ANNUAL PRODUCTION**  
70,000 bottles

**VARIETIES**  
Riesling 98%

**BEST VINEYARDS**  
Wehlener Sonnenuhr  
Ürziger Würzgarten  
Erdener Treppchen  
Erdener Prälat

**GOOD VINEYARDS**  
Bernkasteler Lay  
Graacher Himmelreich

**CONTACT INFORMATION**  
Weingut Dr. Loosen  
St. Johannishof  
D-54470 Bernkastel/Mosel  
Germany  
Tel: (+49) 6531-3426  
Fax: (+49) 6531-4248  
Web: [www.drloosen.de](http://www.drloosen.de)

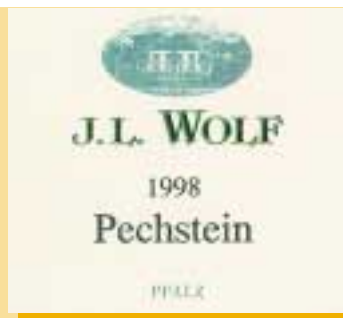
## J.L. Wolf

*A trophy in London*

The 1998 J.L. Wolf Pechstein was a top prize winner at WINE Magazine's International Wine Challenge 2000 in London, taking the Dry Riesling Trophy. The results of the competition were announced in the October, 2000, issue of WINE.

This year, the Wine Challenge had more than 9,000 entries from all over the world. Of those, fewer than 200 were awarded gold medals. And of the gold-medal winners, only 18 wines were awarded trophies as the finest in their respective categories. As you can imagine, we're really happy with the results of the judging.

Pechstein [PESH-styne] is one of the four top vineyards we have at our estate in the Pfalz. In 1828, the Bavarian government put it in the highest classification on their typically thorough property tax assessment map. In France it would be called Grand



"An exciting, enticingly spicy, floral, aromatic nose follows through onto the palate, which also offers grapefruit tartness. The fruit is balanced by crisp acidity, with lychee flavours lingering on a long, pleasant finish."

— WINE Magazine, October 2000

Cru, but that's not allowed in Germany.

We don't really have a catchy alternative, so we simply call it Pechstein. When you see that name on a J.L. Wolf label, you know it's our top dry Riesling from one of our very best sites.

Because the yields are so low, we can only make about 300 cases of Pechstein, and the 1998, sadly, is already gone. But we're very pleased with the '99s from Pechstein and the other three top sites: Leinhöhle, Ungeheuer and Jesuitengarten. Who knows — maybe there's another trophy wine in the bunch.

## Eroica

*A winner in Washington*

The first wine from our joint venture with Washington state's Chateau Ste. Michelle has been quite a hit. Whenever we show the 1999 Eroica, people just flip for it. They can't believe that a Riesling this complex and vibrant can come from the New World.

Well, it just goes to show you what can be done with the right attitude and a willingness to invest in quality. The folks at Chateau Ste. Michelle have put a lot of financial support and effort into this wine, reducing crop levels, modifying vineyard practices and taking extra-special care in the cellar. It's been a joy working with them.



The response from the press has also been very encouraging. Wine Spectator's editor-at-large, Harvey Steiman, chose the 1999 Eroica as the first wine for his special Thanksgiving menu in the Nov. 30, 2000, issue.

This year's harvest looks very good, as well, and we are excited about the prospect of a fantastic Eroica 2000.

### FROM THE WINE PRESS:

"Offers a bouquet of wonderful flavors, pouring out its pear, apricot, mineral and honey notes. Off-dry but balanced, with enough of a steely backbone to make the flavors sing." (91)

— Wine Spectator, Sept. 30, 2000

"A landmark collaboration... Fine-tuned, elegant and powerful, with a concentrated nose of citrus, apricot and white peaches. Firm and racy on the palate, with anise and mineral notes."

— Wine Enthusiast, Oct., 2000



## THE TERROIRIST

Dr. Loosen & J.L. Wolf  
c/o Clarity Communications, Inc.  
9910 SW Quail Post Road  
Portland, Oregon 97219  
USA

This newsletter is also available in electronic form as an Adobe Acrobat PDF. To request future issues in electronic form, or to add your name to the mailing list, please send an e-mail to [newsletter@drloosen.de](mailto:newsletter@drloosen.de)

## RANTING: Analytical tasting

### By the numbers

We're trapped in a vicious numerical circle here in Germany. Whenever anyone talks about wine these days, the discussion always seems to focus on analytical figures — must weight, acidity, alcohol, residual sugar — with very little said about how the wine actually tastes!

It all started in 1971, when the new wine law made numbers measured in the lab the most important factor in determining quality. It was a typically German attempt to standardize the essentially intuitive process of wine making.

Numbers are force-fed to students at the wine schools, so that's all you hear from them. Then the press picks it up, and then the wine-loving public, and then it gets back to the winemakers, who think they must be doing the right thing — otherwise everyone wouldn't be talking about numbers! It never ends.

Laboratory analysis is useful

to the winemaker as a way of gauging how a wine is developing in relation to previous years. But when it comes to describing a

You might as well try to describe Mozart in terms of frequency and amplitude.

wine, you might as well try to describe Mozart's music in terms of frequency and amplitude. It's not useful, it's not the least bit sexy, and it detracts from real, gut-level appreciation.

Forget numbers. Let's concentrate on taste, tingle and texture. Now we're talking!

— Ernst Loosen



With my wonder-dog, Timo, in front of the Wehlen sundial.