



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

DOMAINE OSTERTAG

Country: France

Region: Alsace

Appellation(s): Alsace, Alsace Grand Cru

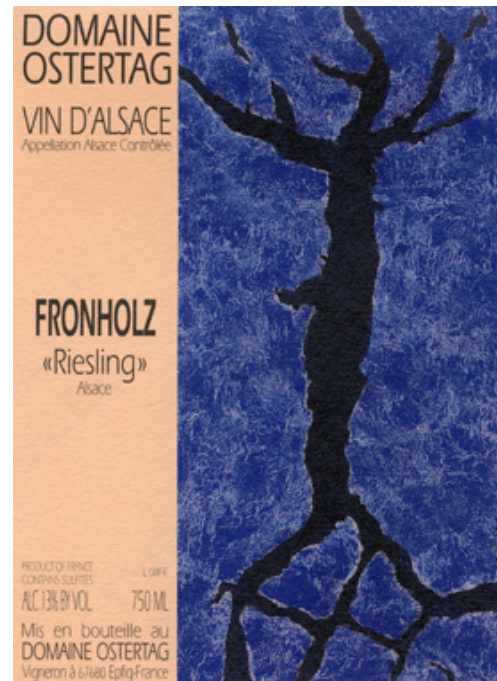
Producer: André Ostertag

Founded: 1966

Annual Production: 8,300 cases

Farming: Biodynamic (since 1998)

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



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
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
Les Vieilles Vignes de Sylvaner	Sylvaner	55+ yrs	Clay, Granite, Gravel	2 ha
Alsace "Le Passage de l'Aube" Macération	Gewurztraminer	1976	Clay, gravel	.12 ha

<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 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

<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



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DOMAINE OSTERTAG (continued)

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)

Riesling “Les Jardins”

Gewurztraminer “Les Jardins”

Les Vieilles Vignes de Sylvaner:

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

Pinot Gris “Les Jardins”

Pinot Blanc “Les Jardins”:

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

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



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DOMAINE OSTERTAG (continued)

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

Alsace “Le Passage de l’Aube” Macération:

- 2016 vintage is made from Gewurztraminer, the blend may change each year
- 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.



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DOMAINE OSTERTAG (continued)

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.

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.