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SECKINGER 'STEINWASSER'

Seckinger's wines have some producers in southern Pfalz scratching their heads, meanwhile Germany's new generation of sommeliers are sipping gleefully. *Was geht?* Here's a biodynamic Pfalz producer taking cues from the natural Chablis and Jura *ouillé* or topped-up contingent, as it digs into the terroir of their historic vineyards of mostly red sandstone (*buntsandstein*). *Aber hallo!* Seckinger's making some outstandingly rakish wines: bone dry, hazy and savoury!

Falstaff Magazine says about Jonas Seckinger: *You can confidently count him among the protagonists of a precocious and well-trained generation of winegrowers who know exactly what they want: his wines already look amazingly mature and stylish. Seckinger produced his first wine at the age of 17, initially experimenting with an old wooden press in his parents' garage.*

Vinification: These are not wines for those that enjoy the so-called 'traditional' style, often with at least some residual sugar and a more fruit-forward style. Wines are vinified bone dry. What's more, the moniker of 'natural winemaker' or 'avant-guard winemaker' irritates Jonas. He's proud of them working biodynamically, but he's not dogmatic about issues such as sulphur, and prefers to talk about his craft as cellar master:

Our goal is to harvest all wines at a maximum of 90 °Oechsle, so that we do not exceed 12.5 percent alcohol by volume...Then, I must follow the wines, barrel by barrel.

Whole-clusters maceration for 10-12 hours; then it's free run juice and a continuing of the spontaneous fermentation. There is nothing technical going on here; there are no temperature controlled tanks. Wine and lees are transferred to barrels made from a relatively unknown small local cooperage called Michel Gieß. Depending on the barrel, some are topped up, others are left to create a controlled oxidation. Natural decant and sulphur addition take place before bottling. The sulphur is not demonized here, but reduced to an absolute minimum and only used when the wines demand it. Jonas says he works *by intuition...smelling and tasting the wine daily, like my grandfather did.*

REGION: Rhineland-Palatinate GROWING AREA: Pfalz FARMING: From 2017, certified organic and practicing biodynamic VINEYARD: 4 Ha in Niederkirchen ALTITUDE: 120 m / 394 ft SOILS: Mostly a mix of yellow and red sandstone, with veins of marl and limestone VARIETIES: 60% Gewurztraminer, 30% Weissburgunder and 10% Savagnin

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VINE AGE: 20 years old VINE TRAINING: Guyot HARVEST DATE: Mid-August YEASTS: Native FERMENTATION & ÉLEVAGE: Whole cluster; spontaneous free run juice fermentation in 500l French Oak Tonneau for 8 months, without temperature control. No filtration and gravity natural decant MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION: Yes, complete and unforced SULPHUR: 5 mg/L SO2 added ALCOHOL: 11% ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 1,600 cases