

Grape varieties

with Julia Harding MW



Roter Veltliner

My choice this month was inspired by one particular wine: Birgit Eichinger's excellent Roter Veltliner. Both parts of the variety's name are misleading: it is neither dark-skinned (*rot* is German for red), nor is it related to Grüner Veltliner. It is in fact an

old pink-skinned Austrian variety. Although its parentage is unknown, DNA testing has shown that it has produced some interesting offspring with various partners: from a natural crossing with Silvaner, Frühroter Veltliner and Neuburger; with Savagnin, Rotgipfler; and, more recently, it was crossed with Gewürztraminer to produce Slovakian varieties Hetera and Devín. Roter Veltliner tends to produce powerful, full-bodied wines not unlike Grüner Veltliner in notes of spice and pepper but often with a little more obvious and riper fruit flavour such as yellow plum or pear, though still with sufficient freshness for overall balance. Austria had fewer than 200ha of this variety in 2015, mostly in Lower Austria, but it deserves to be more widely planted. Try examples from Stefan Bauer, Birgit Eichinger, Josef Fritz, Grill, Franz Leth, Franz-Anton Mayer, Schuster, Setzer and Söllner.

Wine Grapes by Jancis Robinson MW, Julia Harding MW and José Vouillamoz; www.winegrapes.org