

Florian Bergl on Lagrein



How do you characterize the profile/character of lagrein? Are there any other more familiar red varieties to compare it to?

Lagrein ist a powerful ambassador of Alto Adige.

Although it had nearly died out by the end of the 1970s, Lagrein has nowadays gained a big fan community.

The indigenous wine, filled with character, has its roots in Bolzano and is impressive with its velvety fullness and soft acidity. The noble, spicy tones are accompanied by fruity berries, fresh cherries, and violets. When aged in small oak casks, Lagrein unfolds its elegant, full-bodied presence. A rosé version is also made from the grape, known as "Lagrein Rosato" (or "Lagrein Kretzer").

The Lagrein is very similar to the Terlodegio grape from Trentino. Both show not only optical similarities, such as the strong and dark colour of the wine, but also a rustic, fruity and rugged character.

How does terroir and microclimates in Alto Adige come into play with lagrein?

The Lagrein needs a lot of warmth for its successful ripeness. The key growing area for Lagrein lies therefore in the valley basin of Bolzano, the Capital city of Alto Adige. In the south-facing, almost level vineyards at 850 feet above sea-level, the vines find their ideal terroir. In combination with the sandy porphyry-based alluvial soils, the warmth stored in the almost entirely enclosed Bolzano basin enables the grapes to achieve the full maturity that gives the wines their typical velvety mellowness.

Tell me a bit about the lagrein(s) you make (that are available in the U.S.), including a personal tasting note, full name and vintage, suggested retail price and food pairing suggestion.

We produce two kinds of Lagrein, the Lagrein Greif and the Staffes Lagrein Riserva.

The Lagrein Greif, already available in the US, is partly fermented in stainless steel and partly in big barrels, is bottled after an aging period of 6 months in big barrels. The Greif is a "easy-drinking" wine for everyday, with intense aroma of black berries, amarena cherries and spicy notes of pepper. Lightly chilled, it's the perfect partner for antipasti, mature hard cheese and barbecues, thanks to his lively freshness and juicy structure.

The Staffes Lagrein Riserva in contrast is 100% vinificated in oak. After the fermentation in the wooden cask, it stays 1 year in barrique for the malolactic fermentation and ripening process. It takes at least another year, where the Staffes Lagrein Riserva is aging in the bottle, until its market release.

With its intense aromas, creamy structure and a lively aftertaste, we introduce our meaning of a Lagrein Riserva.

Just as with all our other wines that we produce, we focus on creating fresh, fruity and straight dry wines, which mirror our terroir and climate of Alto Adige.

Why is lagrein a good transitional winter to spring wine?

Lagrein is an ancient grape variety that finds its home in the sunny vineyards of Alto Adige in northeastern Italy. Its wines are strong and full bodied with plum and wild cherry flavors, and the variety is particularly well known for the deep, dense color it imparts on wines. Lagrein has a characteristically north-Italian fresh, acidic structure and a slightly astringent finish, making it best paired with food.

When talking about winter, we suggest a strong structured Lagrein Riserva with velvety tannins and dark, fruity aromas.

A young fresh Lagrein with juicy structure, freshness and aromas of black berries and pepper, with a lower service temperature is the perfect wine to welcome the spring.

***Can you give me some food pairing suggestions, especially those for spring.**

Typical for Alto Adige: Asparagus with lamp and Lagrein.

Otherwise you can serve the Lagrein to seasonal pasta plates as well as grilled chicken, parmegiana or spaghetti carbonara.

***Why is lagrein a red wine that is worth seeking out?**

Lagrein is an indigenous grape variety in Alto Adige. Therefore, with its long history and its known ups and downs, it's an absolute must-"drink" in our region.

Because of its flexibility regarding its service temperature and the different characters of a Lagrein and a Lagrein Riserva, it's the perfect partner for nearly every occasion.