

Domaine Bechtold



Jean-Marie Bechtold is the fourth generation to steward this traditional domaine. He began working with his father in 1980 and took the reins in 1995. The estate is located in Kirchheim, west of Strasbourg in the slopes of the “Couronne d’Or”, a region with 2000 years of viticultural history. Bechtold controls 12 hectares of vineyards and is the only organic grower in the village (Jean-Marie Bechtold is currently making the conversion to biodynamic viticulture) and one of the few to harvest by hand. The estate provides the best examples of five of the Bas-Rhin’s greatest vineyards (two of which are classified grand cru): The Sussenberg, Engelberg, Silberberg, Steinklotz, and Obere Hund. The domaine’s wines have a silky structure without being soft and they are complex without being overwhelming; they offer classic examples of the flavor and structure that defines this special terroir: cool, refined, dignified.

Viticulture:

- **Farming:** Certified biodynamic by Demeter since 2016, certified organic by ecocert since 2010, practicing organic since 1996.
- **Treatments:** Traditional medicinal plants (horsetail, nettle, comfrey, meadowsweet) reduce reliance on copper-sulfate considerably, which is only used as a last resort.
- **Ploughing:** Yearly mechanical ploughing to foster healthy soils
- **Soils:** A diverse array of soils, as is typical in Alsace, but all in a lattice of limestone marls on steep south/southeast-facing slopes.
- **Vines:** Between 20-40 years old, all in double guyot at c. 5,500 vines/ha
- **Yields:** No green harvesting, as the domaine relies on debudding to curb excess production
- **Harvest:** Exclusively manual (one of the few in the Bas-Rhin). Harvest ranges from August-September.
- **Purchasing:** Always entirely estate fruit

Vinification:

- **Fermentation:** All wines ferment spontaneously for c. 3 weeks in temperature-controlled, stainless-steel tanks.
- **Extraction:** Pinot Gris Nature and Pinot Gris Engelberg Comme Un Rouge macerate on their skins for c. 1 week.
- **Chaptalization and Acidification:** No chaptalization in recent years with the dramatic effects of climate change. No acidification.
- **Pressing:** Pneumatic. Whole-cluster, direct pressing for whites
- **Press Wine:** Ferments with free-run juice for whites, blended after fermentation for reds, and is c. 10-15% of the final blend.
- **Malolactic Fermentation:** Most wines go through spontaneous malolactic fermentation.



Aging:

- **Élevage:** Gewurztraminer spends at least 8 months in stainless-steel tank, Riesling spends at least 12 months. Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir age in neutral barriques acquired from RWM grower Régis Forey in Nuits-Saint-Georges.
- **Lees:** All wines rest on their fine lees during élevage.
- **Fining and Filtration:** Most wines are unfiltered and undergo plate filtration. The Pinot Gris Comme un Rouge, Pinot Gris Nature, Pinot Noir Obere Hund, and Pinot Noir Steinklotz are unfiltered and unfiltered.
- **Sulfur:** Small dose of sulfur prior to fermentation to guard against volatile acidity and a small dose at bottling. < 80 mg/l total, c. 10 mg/ l free. Pinot Noir Steinklotz, Obere Hund, and Pinot Gris Nature see no added sulfur, and total c. 20 mg/l.