



Stephan Reinhardt für Robert Parker:

Located in Straden, Vulkanland Steiermark (which is the southeastern part of Styria, where the grapes ripen a bit earlier than in the Südsteiermark), Christoph Neumeister farms many different and smaller vineyards around the village, mainly planted with Sauvignon (the cooler, east- or west-facing sites on shallow soils) but also Pinot varieties, which play an important role here in the "land of the volcanoes." Neumeister is quite happy with his organic 2018s, even though he reports a loss of 25%, in particular among the Pinot varieties. The grapes were picked carefully and, due to an uneven ripeness, very selectively, even with single berries that often had to be de-stemmed manually. The harvest went through the last three weeks of September and was finished in early October, so quite normal compared to an average year. Neumeister aims to harvest as late as possible but also as healthy as possible to receive structured rather than fruit-driven wines. Maceration times of 20 to 40 hours (though not for Grauburgunder, a.k.a. Pinot Gris) need perfectly healthy grapes and careful handling. The free-run must runs per gravity into the fermentation vats (mostly a combination of stainless steel and oak when it comes to the Straden wines), whereas the carefully pressed must (with up to 1.2 bars of pressure) settles down over night before it is fermented with indigenous yeasts. "We don't have to press hard because we have already extracted everything we want before the maceration," Neumeister explains. His wine style is focused on elegance, balance and digestibility. Neumeister never looks for "radical" or "ostensible" wines, he prefers "subtleness and stimulation" instead. All his wines are kept on the full lees for at least five months (until mid-April).

2017, 2018 and 2019 form "a trio of vintages that are as rare as they are excellent," says Christoph Neumeister. Especially 2018, which was very wet south of the Alps and the plant protection, especially of the organic winegrowers, ran at full speed. It was rainy during the blossoming, and the subsequent millerandage was between 20% and 50%. The harvest took place 10 days earlier than usual, though 14-21 days

later than in the rest of Austria (Burgenland and Lower Austria). While 2018 was a very big year quantitatively for conventional vintners, Neumeister cannot claim that for himself, thanks to his low yields. However, he is putting a series of decently concentrated wines on the table. 2018 could easily pale between 2017 and 2019, but it impresses with finesse and elegance. Still, the best wines of the vintage are deep, complex and persistent, with remarkable balance. Neumeister admits to initially underestimating the 2018s himself, but he now sees those wines as being on par in quality with the great 2017 vintage and the extremely promising 2019. "2019 has been great, from the whole weather pattern to the harvest, and we are very excited to see if it will eventually even overtake the 2017. Right now, anyway, it's a little juicier and brighter than the 2017 when it was young. However, the 2017s have an incredible amount of structure..." I will taste the 2019 "GSTK" grands crus soon, but among the 2018s, the Moarfeitl again proves its outstanding qualities

2019 Neumeister • Gelber Muskateller • 90 PP

I always have to think about Italian panettone and cantucci when I have a gorgeous Muscat in my glass. Neumeister's 2019 Gelber Muskateller is a beautiful Muscat with an intense, deep and concentrated, highly aromatic yet structured bouquet of almonds, orange essence and juicy mango aromas. Pure, fresh and mineral on the palate, this is a full-bodied, tight and structured Muscat with grip and salt and a long, compact and serious finish. Only 11.5% alcohol, yet this is not really a light wine. Tasted in August 2020.

2019 Neumeister • Gemischter Satz • 89 PP

From a 40-year-old field blend, the pale citrus-colored 2019 Gemischter Satz is bright and finely intense on the elegant and aromatic, even slightly mineral nose. Light, yet with lush and charming fruit as well as structure, this is a stimulating easy-drinking wine that blends varieties such as Müller-Thurgau, Sämling, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Blanc, Goldburger, Welschriesling and Riesling. 12% alcohol. Tasted in August 2020.

2019 Neumeister • Straden Grauburgunder • 90 PP

From vines five to 35 years old and vinified in oak, the 2019 Grauburgunder Straden offers a clear, intense and deeply aromatic bouquet of perfectly ripe and healthy white fruits intermixed with iodine and stony notes. Round, fresh and savory, with stimulating grip, very fine tannins and a remarkable intensity of taste, this is a round and charming yet seriously structured and sustainably salty Pinot Gris that drinks perfectly well with many dishes for lunch and dinner. 12.5% alcohol. Tasted in August 2020.

2019 Neumeister • Straden Morillon • 91 PP

Vinified in stainless steel and oak, the 2019 Morillon Straden is pure, fresh and more reductive than the corresponding Pinot Gris (a.k.a. Grauburgunder), yet it indicates very good concentration and mineral drive. On the palate, this is a dense and juicy, fresh and structured Chardonnay with enormous vitality, grip and tension. A gorgeous wine with a remarkable PQR (price-to-quality ratio). 12.5% alcohol. Tasted in August 2020.

2019 Neumeister • Straden Sauvignon Blanc • 90 PP

Neumeister's 2019 Sauvignon Blanc Straden is from 30-year-old vines cultivated on silt and gravel soils. The wine displays a bright citrus color and a clear, intense and terroir-driven bouquet with delicate iodine and crystalline notes of crushed stones and berry skins. Round and juicy on the elegant, iodine and well-structured palate, this a medium-bodied, fresh and balanced Sauvignon with stimulating grip and lemon zest freshness on the finish. 12.5% alcohol. Tasted in August 2020.

2018 Neumeister • Ried Moarfeitl Sauvignon Blanc • 94 PP

From 30+-year-old vines cultivated on a high plateau on deep, gravelly silt soils and vinified in large, traditional oak casks, the 2018 Sauvignon Blanc Ried Moarfeitl –GSTK– shows a radiant lemon color and offers a pure, intense and mineral bouquet of crushed stones and skins, which gives it an attractive phenolic freshness. On the palate, this is a rich and round, juicy yet firmly structured Moarfeitl with a silky texture and crystalline acidity. The finish is intense, powerful and persistently salty, revealing tight tannin grip that gives tension but also youth. A promising wine that needs some years to reach its climax. It's unlikely you will get many better wines at this price level. The wine is an icon Sauvignon in Austria. The 2018 was bottled with 13.5% alcohol. Tasted in August 2020.

2018 Neumeister • Gelber Muskateller • 90 PP

The 2018 Gelber Muskateller is spectacularly intense on the aromatic and floral-scented nose that also reveals coolish and flinty stony aromas and a serious expression. Macerated for 18 to 24 hours and vinified in large oak until February/March of this year, this is a vivacious, straight, dry and grippy Muscat with highly refreshing acidity and crispy phenolic grip. Good length and tension. Lean and wonderfully pure. Tasted in May 2019.

2018 Neumeister • Gemischter Satz • 88 PP

From a field blend planted 40 years ago, the 2018 Gemischter Satz is pure and slightly flinty on the fine and elegant nose that displays delicate white fruit aromas. The palate is light yet structured, very fine and stimulatingly salty. A pleasant, multilayered wine with great delicacy and finesse. Fabulous. Tasted in May 2019.

2017 Neumeister • Ried Saziani Grauburgunder • 94 PP

From 50- to 55-year-old vines in a south-facing vineyard on shallow, gravelly yet also calcareous soils, the 2017 Ried Saziani Grauburgunder displays a deep, intense yet fine and slightly iodine nose. On the palate, this is a full-bodied, round, lush and salty Pinot Gris with great tension, finesse and lingering salinity. This is a very elegant and tightly woven Pinot Gris with grip and tension. This is a pretty spectacular wine with immense aging potential. Tasted in May 2019.

2018 Neumeister • Ried Klausen Sauvignon Blanc • 92-94 PP

The 2018 Ried Klausen Sauvignon Blanc is pure, deep, fresh and flinty on the nose and clearly dominated by the terroir rather than the variety character. Silky, fresh and linear on the palate, this is a refreshing, terribly pure and salty, grippy and still slightly austere Sauvignon from calcareous sandstone soils. Crisp and fresh, very promising and expressive. Tasted as a sample in May 2019. To be bottled in September this year.

2018 Neumeister • Ried Klausen Weissburgunder • (93 – 95) PP

From calcareous sandstone and vinified in predominantly large oak vats and tasted from the first lees, the 2018 Ried Klausen Weissburgunder shows spectacularly attractive yeast reduction combined with great purity and flintiness. Speck aromas, very stony. Round and fruity on the palate, this is a powerful yet very elegant, round, lush and lovely tannic Pinot Blanc with remarkable finesse and mineral expression. Silky-textured and endlessly aromatic. Jura-like. Highly promising and full of tension. Very expressive and exciting. Tasted in May 2019.

2018 Neumeister • Ried Steintal Roter Traminer • (92 - 93) PP

From roughly 45-year-old vines on gravelly conglomerate terroir, the 2018 Ried Steintal Roter Traminer is super pure, coolish, fresh and aromatic on the floral-scented nose that reveals delicate spicy notes and rose petal aromas. On the palate, this is a round, lush and elegant, pretty charming and highly aromatic Traminer with mineral acidity, grip and lingering salinity. Lovely pure and fresh. Excellent and highly stimulating. Tasted from the barrels in May 2019.

2018 Neumeister • Straden Grauburgunder • 89 PP

The 2018 Straden Grauburgunder opens with an intense and concentrated yet pure and fresh nose with some nutty/caramelly notes. Rich and sweet but also very elegant and even fresh on the palate, this is a full-bodied, fresh and charming Pinot Gris with some lactic notes on the vital and salty, stunningly pure finish. Tasted in May 2019.

2018 Neumeister • Straden Morillon • 91 PP

The 2018 Straden Morillon opens with a charmingly ripe and intense but also fine, fresh and flinty bouquet with some herbal and coolish notes. On the palate, this is a round and textured, very elegant and refined Morillon with good mineral grip and tension. The wine is straight, pure and tight, with a stimulating, long and salty finish. Excellent and perhaps the finest "classic" Morillon at this price range I have tasted here (May 2019).

2018 Neumeister • Straden Sauvignon Blanc • 89 PP

Vinified in large oak and stainless steel tanks and bottled in April, the 2018 Straden Sauvignon Blanc is a lean, elegant and dry yet intense and lush wine. The finish reveals good grip and tangy character with juicy stone fruit and nice bitters. A classic Styrian Sauvignon with a lot of terroir character at this price range. There is frankincense and leafy, coolish aromas on the nose at this early stage. Tasted in May 2019.

2017 Neumeister • Gemischter Satz • 89 PP

The 2017 Gemischter Satz is intense and spicy on the concentrated and mineral nose. Dense and stunningly structured on the palate, this is an age-worthy, grippy and serious wine that does not have the pleasant charm of the 2018, but it does have an impressively persistent and complex finish. Tasted in May 2019.

2017 Neumeister • Ried Moarfeitl Morillon • 93+ PP

From a calcareous gravel plateau with a silt layer and fermented in 500-liter barrels, the 2017 Ried Moarfeitl Morillon is deep, intense and sweet on the generous, yeasty-scented nose, with its ripe and discreetly oaky and refreshing flinty notes. Round and intense, this is a full-bodied, concentrated, firmly structured and lingering, salty wine with fine tannins and a long, dense and complex finish. Still with lots of baby fat, but this is a promising wine that will develop very well over the next 10 to 20 years. Tasted in May 2019.

2017 Neumeister • Ried Moarfeitl Sauvignon Blanc • 93 PP

The 2017 Ried Moarfeitl Sauvignon Blanc is deep and concentrated on the ripe and herbal, stony nose. On the palate, this is a full-bodied, lush and elegant, fruity and well-structured, persistently salty Sauvignon that already drinks pretty well. Tight and tensioned but also with charming fruit. Tasted in May 2019.