



Elisabeth Pichler and Erich Krutzler (for extended accounts of whose young estate consult my issue 181 and 197 reports) continue to hone their distinctive style as well as to freely and intuitively experiment, unencumbered by local habit or by the structure – however arguably useful – of the Vinea Wachau’s trio of wine categories. They carefully filter and critically consider any received opinions, even (or, dare I suggest, especially) those of Elisabeth’s famous father, F.X. (Tasting and trading observations and anecdotes with husbands and wives of both generations was among the highlights of my most recent Austrian travels.) Picking at this estate began already in late September, though Krutzler laughingly attributes that in part to his red-wine mentality which encompasses rigorous crop-dropping, in which he intends to be less aggressive in future. Erich Krutzler places emphasis on the relatively small berries and high skin-to-juice ratio of 2012 fruit in delivering energy, structure and sheer personality surpassing those exhibited in 2011, and he was not afraid to observe his norm of 24-30 hours’ pre-fermentative skin contact. Even as Pichler and Krutzler continue to build their vine surface via some extremely savvy and lucky site selections, their technical capabilities are being enhanced as well. New large casks are gradually being introduced, and beginning with vintage 2014, new equipment will permit movement of fruit as well as wine entirely by gravity and open-up a wider range of pressing options. (I’ll review recent Blaufrankisch bottlings from this estate as part of a separate report highlighting wines of Burgenland, especially those from that grape.) Importer: Weygandt-Metzler Importing, Unionville, PA; tel. (610) 932-9113

#### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Gruner Veltliner Fass 43**

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: (91-92+)

Drink -

Cost:

Tasted off of its lees this January, Pichler and Krutzler’s 2012 Gruner Veltliner Fass 43 represents equal parts Superin and Wunderburg that fermented (for six months!) and matured in a new 600-liter cask without sulfur. Perhaps needless to say under those conditions, it underwent a complete malo-lactic transformation. A fascinating nose encompasses red berries and citrus as well as legumes and herbs, anticipating the diversity encountered on the leesy-rich, silken, yet invigoratingly bright palate. Incisive cut of cress along with piquancy of toasted grains that segue into notes from barrel, all help extend and render more complex a prolonged finish that by no means stints on “minerality,” offering as it does a stony and alkaline undertone. Bottling – with minimal sulfur – is set for spring and release for fall of 2014. (There is a corresponding 2011, but although they bottled it, Pichler and Krutzler are not yet entirely convinced of its success and are for now at least withholding it from public scrutiny.)

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#### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Gruner Veltliner Frauenweingarten**

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 89

Drink 2014 - 2016

Cost: \$24

Lentil and cress are highlighted in a Pichler- Krutzler 2012 Gruner Veltliner Frauenweingarten exhibiting more stuffing and less levity than usual for this bottling. Happily, it is infectiously juicy and the bite of pepper cress in its sustained finish highly invigorating. I would plan on enjoying it through 2016, which is to suggest a bit more rapidly than usual for a Wachau Gruner Veltliner, even one from a gentle, alluvial and gravelly riverside site.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Gruner Veltliner Klostersatz**

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 90

Drink 2014 - 2018

Cost: \$24

The sense of stuffing conveyed in the corresponding Frauenweingarten bottling is enhanced in Pichler and Krutzler's 2012 Gruner Veltliner Klostersatz – which was raised in cask with longer lees-contact – by silken texture and deceased yeast nuances. Stony, cyanic, and mouthwateringly saline notes invigoratingly and intriguingly inflect a matrix of peach, grapefruit and green bean, leading to an exuberant and refreshing finish. Here yet one more demonstration – of which F. X. Pichler's Riesling from the adjacent Oberhauser offers the consistently most striking – that a nearly-flat, gravelly site can by dint of superior drainage or other factors play in the same Wachau league as wines from steep Urgestein sites. Plan to follow it through at least 2018.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Gruner Veltliner Pfaffenberg**

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 92

Drink 2020 -

Cost:

I was taken by joyful surprise to encounter a Pichler and Krutzler 2012 Gruner Veltliner Pfaffenberg, there being very little of Austria's signature cepage planted in that superb Krems-Stein site that abuts Loiben and the nowadays official Wachau. There are only 500 liters of this from 60 year-old vines acquired along with a more substantial planting of Riesling (whose inaugural bottling I also review in this report). The extraordinary nose here encompasses ash, crushed stone, and herbal essences. Firm in feel and infectiously juicy, the palate conveys those mineral and herbal elements in lime, lima bean, and mixed melon matrix. It would be nice to have a bit more textural allure to accompany the wine's otherwise ravishing as well as striking complexity, but that might well come with some bottle age, and I would be unafraid to hold this through at least 2020. It was vinified in tank, but Krutzler intends to acquire and condition a 500 liter barrel for future fermentations.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Gruner Veltliner Supperin**

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 92

Drink -

Cost: \$40

Not bottled until September (whereas the corresponding Frauenweingarten and Klostersatz were bottled in May), Pichler and Krutzler's 2012 Gruner Veltliner Supperin features lentil, spinach and chard for a combination of crispness and invigorating piquancy with rich nuttiness and positive vegetable character not to mention a complex array of intriguing and mouthwatering mineral nuances suggesting inter alia crushed stone, iodine, iron filings and ocean water. Bittersweet floral notes waft alluringly from nose to palate. This polished, low-toned, full-bodied, long-finishing Gruner Veltliner – which fermented in a new large cask before being divided among smaller barrels and a tank – should prove profoundly satisfying through at least 2018. "I can't do anything about the alcohol," confesses Erich Krutzler of his sole 2012 to have significantly cracked 14%, despite an October 4th harvest, "that's just how things ripen in the Supperin." An apology is scarcely appropriate much less necessary considering that this rather Rubinesque beauty handles her alcohol with aplomb. "And strangely," adds Krutzler, "this had the highest acidity of any of my 2012 Gruner Veltliners."

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#### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Gruner Veltliner Wunderburg**

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 91

Drink 2014 - 2018

Cost: \$60

Pichler and Krutzler's 2012 Gruner Veltliner Wunderburg – from a rocky extension of the famed Kellerberg – was picked November 4, exactly one month later than the corresponding Supperin that grew only a few hundred yards away toward the Danube. Satiny in texture, expansive and richly-fruited in its meld of peach and green bean, this delivers a veritable eruption of diverse mineral notes in its finish. Faint warmth is detectable from 14% alcohol, and this lacks the textural refinement, delineated complexity or intrigue of its strongest immediate siblings; but I would feel free to follow it through at least 2018.

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#### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Riesling In Der Wand**

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 92

Drink 2014 - 2016

Cost: \$37

The Pichler-Krutzler 2012 Riesling In der Wand features smoky and incisive sweetness and bite of Szechuan pepper reminiscent of Kellerberg, here in an apple-y matrix and on a palate at once expansive and texturally firm. Forcefully persistent if anything but elegant or refined, this Riesling's robust personality may or may not be accompanied by similar robustness vis-a-vis time; but I would certainly not hesitate to follow it through at least 2016.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Riesling Loibnerberg**

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 93

Drink 2014 - 2020

Cost: \$41

After the opacity of their dense and powerful In der Wand Riesling, Pichler and Krutzler's 2012 Riesling Loibnerberg – raised split between cask and tank – returns us to the refinement and transparency to nuance that characterize the best wines of their vintage collection. A saliva-inducing, sweet-saline, scallop-like savor suffuses this beauty's juicy white peach matrix, through which shimmering mineral nuances and bittersweet, liquid floral notes suggest iris and gentian, leading to a lingering and engrossingly interactive finish. I would expect this to richly reward return visits through at least 2020.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Riesling Pfaffenberg**

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 94

Drink 2014 - 2020

Cost:

From "young" vines (of 40-45 years' age) when compared with those of the small attached parcel of Gruner Veltliner (whose inaugural instantiation I also review in this report), Pichler and Krutzler's 2012 Riesling Pfaffenberg weighs-in at a 12.5% alcohol despite not having been picked until October, 20 – several days after Loibnerberg was brought at a full degree higher. There is fantastic clarity here allied to infectious juiciness. Pungent juniper berry and sage inflect fresh lime, apple, luscious honeydew and cassis, while a suffusion of crushed stone and smoky black tea serves for contrast with the wine's effusive fruitiness. A veritably kaleidoscopic interplay ensues in the endlessly fascinating and refreshing finish of this exciting debut that should merit following through at least 2020.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Riesling Pfaffenberg Alte Reben**

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 90+

Drink 2014 - 2018

Cost:

From the small share of 60 year old Riesling vines adjacent to the equally-old Gruner Veltliner and to the larger 40-45 year old stand of Riesling (picked a week earlier) that also debuted from Pichler-Krutzler in this vintage (and are both reviewed in this report), their 2012 Riesling Pfaffenberg Alte Reben evinces palpably high extract in a firm, compact, somewhat austere context. A suffusion of crushed stone translates in the

long finish into an impression of energetic impingement. But this lacks the gorgeous fruit, clarity, and interplay exhibited by the memorable inaugural “regular” Riesling from adjacent vines – though conceivably this old vine batch was having a difficult day when I tasted it and/or needs more time in bottle. Certainly anyone lucky to latch on to some of this should try to compare the two through at least 2018.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Riesling Trum**

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 89

Drink 2014 - 2016

Cost: \$27

Pichler and Krutzler’s 2012 Riesling Trum is quite full and expansive – albeit at just 12.5% alcohol – yet also tingling and refreshingly bright in its citrus and apple juiciness not to mention sizzling in its conveyance of citrus rind. Scents and suffusion of green tea and crushed stone lend intrigue to this decisive, athletically lean Riesling apt to reward through at least 2016.

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### **2012 Pichler-Krutzler Riesling Wunderburg**

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from, Oberloiben, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #212 (Apr 2014)

Rating: 93

Drink -

Cost: \$60

Harvested in early November and subject to very slow fermentation that finished with 13% alcohol and from which a lot of CO2 was left behind even in January of 2013, the Pichler- Krutzler 2012 Riesling Wunderburg offers satiny texture and surprising fullness yet at the same time the transparency to nuance characteristic of all of the best wines in the present collection. Szechuan pepper, crushed stone, bittersweet flowers and peach kernel are perceived through a clear, juicy, luscious matrix of lime and white peach, leading to a finish not only refreshing and invigorating but almost fiery in its incisive intensity even as it remains rich in ripe fruit. Look for this beauty to yet grow in stature and to prove worth following through at least 2022. In Pichler and Krutzler’s conscientious and talented hands, this little-known site is starting to live up to its name (“miracle castle”)!

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