

Bressanone, Province of Bolzano*Established: 1990**Owner: Peter & Brigitte Pliger**Winemaker: Peter Pliger**Production: 27,000 bottles**Hectares under vine: 6**Viticulture: Natural**Vegan Friendly*

Kuenhof is located in the Valle Isarco (Eisacktal in German) northeast of Bolzano about 50 kilometres from the Brenner Pass. The soil on these steep slopes is based on glacial or alluvial deposits and the climate is moderated by the Continental and Mediterranean winds, from the north and south respectively, that play a large part in determining the vintage conditions. Peter Pliger is the pioneer who first drew attention to Valle Isarco's wines.

The first thing that strikes you about Peter are his sky-blue eyes and you can feel a peaceful energy and in the man. A former Zen student, at one with himself and nature, he describes his viticulture as being neither organic nor biodynamic, but 'sustainable'. Peter asserts that sustainable farming is essential if the microflora in the soil is to properly convert the various mineral elements into the soluble form needed by the vines. Sulphur dioxide might be used, but not synthetic chemical products. The wines are fermented at natural temperatures on indigenous yeasts, but if they don't do the job, selected ones are added. Sustainability seems to be all about striking the right balance.

Peter's wines are stunning and some of the most sought after in Italy. They are bone dry, but loaded with pure, rich fruit, plenty of extract and alcohol. They cut across the palate like a sword, but the complexity and structure is compelling. In many ways the wines' reflect Peter's admiration for Rieslings of the Mosel and Veltliners of the Wachau but they are distinctively Italian, displaying a stony minerality that differs from those grown just north or south of his property and are expressive of a unique terroir. The winemaking is the same for all varieties. They are aged in a combination of stainless steel and acacia *botti* with no malolactic and they age superbly.

Sylvaner DOC

Gold with appealing floral scents, the palate is full bodied with stone fruits, honeysuckle, alpine flowers and freshly cut apple. An undercurrent of chalk and woodsmoke lingers on the palate, giving this elegant wine an added sense of structure.

Riesling DOC

Gold with greenish highlights and faint floral and herbal scents on the nose. On the palate one finds intense flavours of white peach, orange peel and apricot, sharply focussed and delineated, showing noteworthy verve. A strong sense of minerality underlies the honeyed finish, which also conveys nuances of candied ginger and quince.

Veltliner DOC

Exuberant honeysuckle aromas, the palate is a medley of white peach, avocado, sweet baby peas and five spice. Rich and full bodied, there is great freshness and clarity that offset any sense of heaviness.

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