

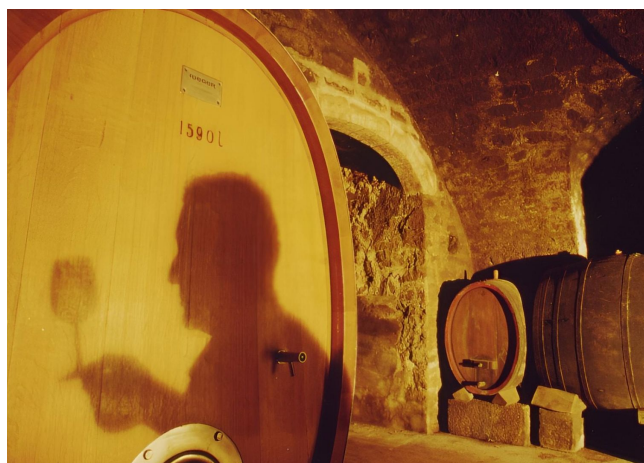
ON THE DEATH OF HANS-GÜNTER SCHWARZ: A MASTER OF "CONTROLLED INACTION"

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Hans-Günter Schwarz, a winemaker from Neustadt, was far ahead of his time and readily shared his knowledge with colleagues. Memories of an unpretentious expert.

He shaped the German white wine style of an entire era and, as a patient and empathetic mentor, molded the working methods of a generation of highly respected winemakers: the Palatinate winemaker Hans-Günter Schwarz. The Neustadt native passed away on Friday at the age of 84.

Wine experts fondly recall the 2001 vintage, the last that Hans-Günter Schwarz produced at the **Müller-Catoir** winery in Neustadt before his retirement. This magnificent collection was the crowning achievement of a career characterized by both wonderful wines and, at the time, a remarkable willingness to pass on his exceptional skills to friends, apprentices, and trainees.



His Students and Today's Great Winemakers

Among his students are today's winemaking luminaries such as Jan Eymael, Hans-Jörg Rebholz, Andreas Schumann, Frank John, Sven Leiner, Konrad Salwey, Markus Wöhrle, and Julia Keller. They all praise his expertise as well as his interpersonal skills – also because he helped them find and refine their own winemaking style.

Schwarz was ahead of his time not only in his open and helpful nature towards colleagues. His approach to winemaking also stood in contrast to the then-prevailing viticultural and cellar techniques. The realization that great

wine originates in the vineyard and therefore requires meticulous work there only gained widespread acceptance decades later.



Criticism wrapped in humor

In an era dominated by machines, powders, and seemingly quality-enhancing interventions, Schwarz embraced the motto of "controlled inaction": good grape must require minimal intervention in the cellar. "Omitting the wrong thing at the right time," he jokingly called his approach. He could also express criticism with humor. He might describe thin, harmless industrial wines as "pleasantly tastes of nothing."

The result of his work, however, was wines that stood at the pinnacle of German wine quality, not just for one grape variety, but for all of them. No one in his time could so brilliantly and clearly bring out the special characteristics of each grape variety. He impressed astonished critics not only with the finest Rieslings and white Burgundies. His ability to elevate the challenging Rieslaner, both dry and sweet, to breathtaking quality gave this now almost forgotten variety a small boom.

Praise from America for his wines

To this day, hardly any winemaker manages to reliably bottle Scheurebe in its finesse, whether dry, sweet, or even as a noble Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese, year after year. This has become known worldwide. His wines have also received top ratings in America.

Winemaking wasn't Hans-Günter Schwarz's birthright. He was born in 1941 in Albersweiler in the Southern Palatinate, one of five siblings. His parents died early. His older brother introduced him to viticulture. After an apprenticeship in Bad Dürkheim and training as a wine technician at the viticultural school in Veitshöchheim, Lower Franconia, he became the manager of the **Müller-Catoir** winery in Haardt at the age of 19. He remained there for 41 years until his retirement. Even after that, he continued to be a sought-after consultant and a selflessly helpful friend for many years.

