

A STAR SOMMELIER IS BORN EMPATHY AND BLACK FOREST WINES MAKE FOR A MICHELIN-WINNING COMBINATION



2023 has already been a heady year for Christophe Meyer, the head sommelier at Germany's 5-star superior Dollenberg resort in the Black Forest. In addition to receiving the Gault&Millau Sommelier of the Year award two years running, the Strasbourg native has received the MICHELIN Sommelier Award for his outstanding expertise and performance.

A Storyteller and Romantic with a Fine Nose for Wine and People

As a youth, Meyer's plan was to train as a chef and marry a French girl. Instead he fell in love with a German woman, moved from France to Germany and, inspired by an internship in Burgundy, developed a burning passion for wine. 16 years ago, he joined the Dollenberg team where he enchants the guests as much with stories about the wines themselves as with his recommendations. An excellent relationship with 2-MICHELIN-starred chef Martin Herrmann and a list that encompasses more than 600 wines are no small aid to the wine expert, but his interest in and sensitivity for the guests and their preferences also inform his choices. Yes, the wine needs to go well with food, but the guests' personal preferences must also play a part.

I like to tell a story about the chosen wine as this adds to the experience.
Christophe Meyer

An Alsatian in Ortenau

Unusually, for a man born and raised in the Alsace region of France, Meyer has a passion for the wines grown in Baden, and especially the Ortenau region of Baden-Württemberg. His list of wines from 30 countries around the world includes the unusual, such a Syrian red, and the lavish (Château Pétrus). Around a third of it, however, is dedicated to German wines – and 70 percent of these are local. Indeed, he considers himself an emissary for Baden's rich wine heritage.

The Wines of Baden

Although Baden is Germany's third largest wine growing region, it is less well known than other German regions or neighbouring Alsace. Exports play a minor role, and the regional cooperatives that market around 85 percent of the region's vinicultural product generally sell to local supermarkets, wine shops, restaurants and direct customers. In contrast to the winemakers of his native Alsace where old traditions die hard, Meyer has found that people in Baden are highly receptive to suggestions. Especially the region's younger vintners are more open to change.

Although best known for its red wines, Baden's whites account for the majority of its output. Pinot Noir is the region's dominant variety. The next most common grape is Müller-Thurgau, followed by Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc. Riesling, so popular in every other German region, accounts for less than 10 percent of Baden's vineyard area, followed closely by the ancient Gutedel variety, known as Chasselas in France and Fendant in Switzerland.

The Dollenberg Schwarzwald Resort

Above all, I would like to thank Meinrad Schmiederer for believing in me and giving me the freedom I need these past 16 years.
Christophe Meyer

Nestling in the lush Black Forest, this luxury resort offers 90 rooms and suites, a 5,000sqm spa and, of course, the Restaurant Le Pavillon where Martin Herrmann makes culinary magic as well as having his two MICHELIN stars reconfirmed this year. The resort's *patron*, Meinrad Schmiederer, has a proven nose for talent as well as being a highly talented hotelier himself.

I'm particularly delighted that our sommelier Christophe Meyer has been presented with this outstanding award, and that our head chef Martin Herrmann has again been crowned with two MICHELIN stars.
Meinrad Schmiederer



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