



Petra Zelger Planer (Prackfolerhof) and Christoph Mock (Wassererhof) at a wine tasting in the cellar - two of the six winemakers from Völs.

—INTERVIEW

Six people, one message

Völs am Schlern. More than ten years ago, the winegrowers of Völs took the initiative and joined forces to put their wine region on the map. Six wineries – Bessererhof, Fronthof, Grottnerhof, Gump Hof, Prackfoler Hof, Wassererhof – one tradition. Petra Zelger Planer (Prackfoler Hof) and Christoph Mock (Wassererhof) explain the network.

Wine has been grown in Völs for centuries. Today, the region is home to around 55 hectares of vineyards. Of the 38 wine-growing estates, six bottle their own wines rather than supplying their grapes to wineries. These six are known as the “Völser Winzer”. Where did this desire to join forces come from?

Petra: For a long time, little attention was paid to wine in Völs – yet this small mountain village has a great deal to offer. In 2013, the idea arose to change things and give the wine greater prominence and visibility. As winegrowers, we soon realised that before we reach out to the outside world, we first need to build connections amongst ourselves. That is how our network came into

being; one small step at a time, using site tours, joint appearances and events.

Christoph: Many guests who come to us in Völs and the Schlern region arrive with clear expectations. They’re looking for local products and want to know where something comes from. Together with our commitment, this has driven development forward.

Petra: Nowadays, there isn’t a single restaurant in the area that doesn’t have at least one Völser wine on its menu. That wasn’t the case 15 years ago.

You, the winegrowers of Völs, are six independent estates, six distinct personalities. What keeps a group like this together over the years?

Petra: In business terms, every winery does its own thing, and each of us has a slightly different idea of what makes a good wine. But that is precisely where our potential lies: six businesses, each with their own story, have come together in a collaborative part-

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A great deal of manual labour goes into every bottle of wine. The winegrowers of Völs want to share this knowledge not only with visitors, but also with their partners in the catering industry.



nership to raise the profile of wine, especially by holding events. And every company shares its own perspective. It's really exciting!

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Christoph: We find that it's just like any good relationship: you have to work at it. For example, we have noticed that interest in certain event formats can wane over time. So we've created new opportunities for people to meet, like a series of events featuring wine and local cuisine held right on the farms. We bring people in, show them what we're making and speak to them. Our cooperation thrives on continuity. That's a great starting point.

Petra: For me, a sense of camaraderie plays a very important role. When competition gives way to this friendly camaraderie, there is also a willingness to do things together. In order to present a united front to the outside world, we need to get on well with one another. Ultimately, we're the ambassadors for what results from this: great wine. And we invite visitors and locals alike to experience it right where it's made.

Ambassadors need an audience, and wine culture needs people who understand what's behind the glass. How do you reach them?

Christoph: One of the hardest things is to get the locals on board. They may know each other, but for many people, attending a wine event is still too great. Wine is often perceived as something elite, and many people say to themselves that they don't get it.

Petra: Often, all that's missing is a single point of contact: a conversation, a tasting, a moment when someone explains what they had in mind when creating the wine.

In the restaurant industry, wine is a highly competitive sector – the wine lists are extensive and the selection is vast. How do you create visibility?

Petra: We now have a reasonably strong presence in restaurants and hotels, but we are also dependent on the goodwill of the hospitality industry. In a small community, this willingness to help is all the more important, as is the local network. That is why we place such a heavy emphasis on guided tours. Wine is far more than just wine: it takes two, sometimes three years for the grapes to grow, develop and reach maturity in the cellar. It's extremely important that someone knows the craft and can pass on the story behind it. If a sommelier is impressed by your

wine, passes that on to the guest and recommends it, that will generate more revenue for you than any wine list.

Christoph: And that is exactly where having a local presence comes in handy. A wine from the region gives the staff the opportunity to tell stories – about a place and the people behind it. Most of the people who buy directly from our vineyard come because they've tried the wine before at a restaurant or pub.

Wine culture isn't created by a single vintage; it requires patience, repetition and trust. What would you like to see more of?

Christoph: We don't really need anything, it just takes time. Culture needs to develop over the course of several years. I see restaurateurs who behave very differently today than they did five years ago, who have developed an interest in the subject and are passing it on. It's a noticeable change.

Petra: In order for our work to come to fruition, we need to be constantly present, to tell the story, to show our faces. The catering sector is an extension of our business. The guest drinks our wine in the restaurant, feels satisfied, and the restaurant receives positive feedback for the recommendation. Sooner or later, the guest comes to visit us on the farm, leaves with a smile, and tells others all about it. This also benefits the restaurant, which, after all, recommended the business. And so we've come full circle.

What the winegrowers of Völs have to offer

In uncertain times, familiar faces become all the more important.

Small producers with a distinctive style hold a real advantage over anonymous large-scale operations.

Don't rely solely on reviews.

Wine guides and tastings play a part, but what really matters is your own attitude. Even more important than points or ratings is the lasting experience that wine can convey.

Anyone wanting to be visible has to get active. Visibility is created when producers engage with people on a personal level, talk about their work and offer insights.



Behind each of these portraits is the **alma** network. The food that ends up on plates in the Seiser Alm region of the Dolomites doesn't happen by chance - it's the result of a close collaboration between farmers and restaurateurs. They discuss quantities, adjust logistics, and decide together what can be grown and how it makes its way from the farm to the table. This creates a local economic cycle in which supply and demand come together - underpinned by trust and reliability.

alma is neither a label nor a campaign, but a network that makes this collaboration visible: specific and closely tied to the daily lives of the people who work and do business here.

—seiseralm.it/alma