



CANTINA  
**TRAMIN**  
KELLEREI

*the scent, a divine prelude*

**dossier**

## **Abstract**

### **The Tramin winegrowers' co-operative cellars: identity and brand strategy of a wine producer in the heart of South Tyrol's aromatic white wine country**

Cantina Tramin is the third oldest growers' cooperative winery in Alto Adige, with a profile based on the excellence of its aromatic white wines: wines which embody the fragrance and elegance typical of the best produced in the region. Over the past 15 years the winery has made enormous strides in optimising quality, both by improving cultivation in its members' vineyards, and in winemaking techniques. It is now recognized as one of Italy's top white wine producers, as evidenced by its numerous national and international awards.

Winemaker Willi Stürz has been the driving force behind this development, guiding our members in the cultivating of their vineyards and introducing cutting edge technology in the cellar. His efforts were rewarded. Gambero Rosso, Italy's most prestigious and trusted wine guide, named him the 2004 Italian Winemaker of the Year.

With help from RobilantAssociati, a branding consultancy firm, Cantina Tramin has repositioned itself as a leading producer of world-class white wines. This has been achieved through an emphasis on the classic varieties and wines of Alto Adige, presented in a precise and straightforward manner; the winery's new logo and stylish packaging reflects that emphasis with simple yet expressive contemporary design.

The architect Werner Tscholl designed the new headquarters and winery of Cantina Tramin on the western side of the Adige Valley, a building constructed in perfect harmony with the surrounding countryside.

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## History

The Tramin growers' co-operative was founded in 1898, the brainchild of the parish priest Christian Schrott, at the time a member of the Viennese parliament, and a group of winegrowers from the area. In 1971, it merged with the growers' co-operative of Neumarkt on the opposite side of the valley which was founded in 1893.

The year 1989 was a turning point in the company's history when preliminary work to launch the prestige range 'Terminum' was initiated. Specific vineyard parcels that yielded wines with very special characteristics were selected, and the vines were cultivated with more attention to detail and the grapes harvested and vinified separately to finally reveal Tramin's true potential for producing world-class wines. The first wines in this selection appeared in 1991 and were immediately acclaimed by critics. In successive years they were showered with the most coveted awards.

Improvements progressed and the cellars were modified in the name of quality. Since 2001, for example, the new press house has been run without the need for pumps and relies entirely on gravity to move the juice.

Extensive remodelling of the Cantina Tramin winery and offices was completed in 2010 by the famous architect Werner Tscholl.



## The Tramin project

The enchanting aromas that invigorate the flavour of the wine, and then stir the heart and awaken your emotions, this is the essence of the Tramin project, the end result of our own research. It is a happy combination of factors where the natural qualities inherent in the soil are intertwined with human care and expertise to become indistinguishable in the final wine.

The Tramin Cellars is a company which incorporates all the typical characteristics of the local terrain: the fascination of nature and its polysensorial evocative powers, the creative and productive precision directed at constant quality and, the capability to adopt a system and to cooperate.

Working together to compose the wines which are always the superb and harmonious expression of the richness deriving from the land and environment represents the guiding principle of the company month after month, year after year. conveyor belts into the press. The juice is extracted at low pressure and in all phases of the fermentation process we avoid the loss of aromas by eschewing the use of pumps and by controlling the fermentation temperature to prevent their evaporation.

These methods respect the raw material and further the physical processes”.



## The forces of change

Willi Stürz is the winemaker and technical manager of the Tramin Cellars. His desire to express the full potential of the land around Tramin to yield superlative wines through respect for the soil and by the sparing use of technology, revealed in his winemaking philosophy. He has also been the driving force behind the company's strategy directed at excellence, resulting in the most coveted international awards being showered on the wines.

"Our approach to innovations is conditioned by the desire to preserve the primary aromas in the grapes. Our grapes are supplied by member-growers from small, family-owned farms who for the most part cultivate less than one hectare of vineyard each. Consequently the relationship between grower and land is still intimate. Growers work rows of vines with dedication and passion, vines which have often been planted by their grandfathers. Even though our company is large with grapes supplied from some 260 hectares of vineyards, the small-scale structure of farms enables us to act decisively on each individual row of vines.

When the grapes are delivered to the winery we avoid damaging them by furthering them on conveyor belts into the press. The juice is extracted at low pressure and in all phases of the fermentation process we avoid the loss of aromas by eschewing the use of pumps and by controlling the fermentation temperature to prevent their evaporation. These methods respect the raw material and further the physical processes".

Wilhelm (Willi) Stürz was born in the village of Tramin and he focuses his expertise on understanding nature in the vineyards and individual sites, on capturing the primary aromas and the character imparted by the terroir in the finished wines. He has been technical manager of the Tramin Cellars since 1995 and the guide Vini d'Italia - Gambero Rosso bestowed on him the title of 2004 winemaker of the year.



## **The cooperative culture**

The ability to adopt a system and cooperate, the flexibility, involving individual growers represents the linchpin to this company's work. The cooperative system combines the advantages of having small plots of vineyard cultivated directly by the growers who own them, while at the same time exploiting economies of scale, enabling the Tramin Cellars to offer superb wines at attractive prices. Given that most member-growers only work an average of three-quarters of a hectare of vineyard, the relationship between the farmer and his land is intimate and each is incentivised by being financially rewarded according to the quality of the grapes he supplies.

Throughout the growing season the company's advisory team visit the members and their vineyards. They warn growers when dangers lurk in the form of fungal diseases and pests, to ensure they take the appropriate preventative measures promptly. Production per vine is scrutinised and the grapes are checked for sugar and acidity to determine the optimum degree of ripeness at which to harvest them. The ability of the winery to order a vineyard to be picked within a couple of hours is of utmost importance during the harvest period, when a delay of a single day can result in loss of flavour and acidity.



## **Tramin and its terroir**

South Tyrol, aka the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen, is Italy's northernmost province bordering onto the countries Switzerland in the west, Austria to the north. Its highest point is the 12,812 foot-high Ortler in the very west, while its lowest point is Salurn on its southern border with the province of Trento at 680 feet. Vegetation and terrain range from the barren world of rock and eternal ice in the high mountains, to olive groves and lush vineyards in the south where Tramin is located.

Tramin is situated in the south of South Tyrol on the east-facing slopes of the Roen mountain. Vineyards are planted on a continuous slope reaching from 820 to 2,800 feet in elevation. The climate is affected by the nearby warm Lake of Kaltern and the Mediterranean to the south. In summer, the heat is tempered by a strong wind called the 'Ora' which picks up in the early afternoon from Lake Garda and stops suddenly after sunset. During the night, warm air rises and displaces the cool air in the high mountains which in its turn descends from the Roen mountain at almost 7,000 feet to the valley, producing a drastic difference between day and night time temperatures. Consequently the vines are able to rest during the night prolonging the ripening period and what the Californians call 'hang time'. Throughout the world a long 'hang time' (meaning grapes which continue to ripen on the vine well into the autumn) yield the most tasty, sweetest fruit with a high level of tartaric acid. Wines from Tramin are characterised by intense varietal aromas and flavours and plenty of body, balanced by tangy acidity. Likewise in all the world's fine



winegrowing regions, the most impressive wines are grown in soils with a high level of

calcium carbonate, typical of the western side of the Adige Valley from Söll overlooking Tramin southwards, where most of the vineyards supplying the Tramin Cellars are located.

## **Tramin, birthplace of Gewürztraminer vine**

Traminer is one of the most ancient cultivars of the European *vitis vinifera* vine (often cited as Pliny's Nomentana) and appears in the pedigree on the maternal side of numerous younger varieties, including Pinot Noir and Riesling.

'Traminer' wine was mentioned in a dispatch by Tyrol's famous bard, knight and diplomat Oswald von Wolkenstein in 1414 during a council in southern Germany when, far from home and dissatisfied with the local offerings, he longed for a drop of 'Traminer'. Today the name stands for the world's favourite aromatic white wine. Gewürztraminer is one of the most easily-recognisable wines, even for novice tasters. The original vine was called Traminer, the suffix -er being the German language possessive form, while the prefix Gewürz denotes spice, though in this context it means perfumed. It seldom produces satisfactory results in hot climates and if the grapes are harvested early to preserve acidity the wine generally lacks the scented and tropical fruit characteristics which we look for in Gewürztraminer. However, in cool regions where the ripening season is long-drawn-out the wines can combine floral and exotic aromas, spice, body and weight but with a firm backbone of acidity making them extremely elegant.

Consequently Traminer / Gewürztraminer is a distinctively cool climate vine. At Tramin the strong contrast between day and night time temperatures in summer and early autumn extends the ripening period well into September and later in higher vineyards, for example around the hamlet of Söll at an elevation of 1,320 feet. A long, gradual ripening season is a pre-requisite for the production of full-flavoured,

aromatic, concentrated white wines whose weight is underpinned by mouth-watering acidity. Around Söll the soils comprise a mixture of gravel eroded from the mountain and clay with a high calcium carbonate content all overlaying a bedrock of volcanic porphyry.

Gewürztraminer wines from the area of Tramin are aromatic, full-bodied and delicately spicy on the palate with vibrant acidity. With a dry and smooth finish, they make excellent partners for savoury dishes, Thai and Asian cuisine in general, mild creamy Indian dishes and flavourfull seafood, especially lobster and crayfish.

The Tramin Cellars have received for Gewürztraminer wines the top award from the Gambero Rosso wine guide, 'Three Glasses', 23 times to date. In fact the company has received more awards for its Gewürztraminer wines than any other in Italy.

## **The road to success and awards**

Over the past 15 years the quality-oriented approach towards vineyard management and winemaking has borne fruit and the wines have been showered with national and international awards.

The first wines to attract attention in the 1990s were dessert wines made from Gewürztraminer grapes which had been left to slightly raisin for several weeks in airy lofts. Later the wine was made from late harvest grapes grown in selected small sites around Tramin. It caused a sensation when it made its debut as the 1997 Gewürztraminer Terminusium.

The successive 'Terminusium' was harvested in November 1998 and was declared the best Italian sweet wine by the Slow Food Guide Vini d'Italia-Gambero Rosso.

In 2002 the prestigious wine magazine Civiltà del Bere included the Tramin Cellars among the 7 best wine producers in all Italy in the wake of numerous awards by the country's most trusted wine guides (Vini d'Italia, Luca Maroni, La guida dell'Espresso, Veronelli, AIS).

In 2003 the Slow Food guide Vini d'Italia declared the winemaker Willi Stürz Italy's 2004 winemaker of the year. Still in 2003 the 'Terminium' 2001 was declared the best Italian sweet wine by the Bibenda (Associazione Italiana Sommelier).

However, 2005 was the year in which the efforts of a decade finally bore fruit when the 2006 Guida ai migliori vini d'Italia declared the Tramin Cellars Italy's top wine producer of the year. Top awards were going to the Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2004, the white blend Stoa 2004, the 2003 late harvest Gewürztraminer Terminum, the Gewürztraminer Roen 2003, and the Pinot Grigio Unterebner 2004.

In 2007 Gambero Rosso recognised the Nussbaumer Gewürztraminer as one of the 50 wines which have fundamentally changed the Italian wine scene.

With a total of 20 "Three Glasses" the Gambero Rosso guide declared 2010 the Cantina Tramin as a two-stars-winery. Actually the number is increased to 22 "Three Glasses".

Prestigious awards have not been limited to Italian magazines and wine guides, however, with recognitions from American critics in the Wine Spectator (93 points for Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer), the Wine Advocate-Robert Parker (94 points for Gewürztraminer Terminum), and the Wine Enthusiast, to mention a few.

In 2011 and also in 2012 the Tramin Cellars were judged as being the "best Italian wine cooperative" by Weinwirtschaft (Germany).

A joyful testimonial of Cantina Tramins continued quality aims confirms the Wine Advocate (Robert Parker) in 2012, with exceptional 96 points for Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer, 94 points for Gewürztraminer Terminum und three more wines with 90+ points.

Still in 2012, the Mundus Vini Great International Wine Award adjudicates to the Gewürztraminer Terminum 2010 the Grand Gold, award limited to the best 37 worldwide wines (more than 6.000 wines of 42 nations entered). In 2013 only 30 worldwide wines were selected for the Grand Gold, out of them Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer, awarded also as Italy's Best White Wine 2013.



## **The new facility accommodation the Tramin cellars**

The newly rebuilt and refurbished winery in Tramin was completed in January 2010, designed by the famous architect Werner Tscholl.

The idea which gave birth to the project was based on the vine, its morphology and its role in the local countryside. It has become an emblem which draws from the soil thanks to the expert hands of the winegrowers. In the case of the winery, it envelopes the building in which it is accommodated. Consequently the fabric becomes a sculpture, a work which announces the cellars' presence and mission. Its iconographic impact is connected with the environment and the building blends a combination of strikingly differing materials - metal, cement and glass - making the edifice a major landmark in Tramin, especially as it is situated at the entrance to the village.

Werner Tscholl was born in 1955 in the village of Latsch in South Tyrol's western valley system. He studied architecture in Florence and in 1983 he established his own architecture company at Morter near Latsch. Perhaps his most famous work is the Messner Mountain Museum skilfully accommodated in the ruins of Sigmundskron Castle on the outskirts of Bolzano..



## **Our most historical and picturesque vineyards**

The Tramin Cellars' finest wines are each identified by the name of the individual vineyard on their labels. These are sites which by virtue of their micro-climates and soils impart characteristics to the wines which are recognisable year after year.

The Nussbaumer farmstead in which the 'Nussbaumer' Gewürztraminer is grown is located close to the hamlet of Söll in a picturesque spot on the lower slope of the Roen mountain overlooking the Lake of Kaltern at 1,320 - 1,640 feet above sea level.

The seductive red 'Lagrein Urban' made from the Lagrein grape, is grown on very old vines in a warm site in the area of Neumarkt on the eastern side of the Adige Valley.

Maratsch is the name of a wine farmstead near the hamlet of Söll, where the Gewürztraminer named after the estate is grown and the main source of grapes which make up the white wine blend 'Stoan'. Stoan is local dialect for Stein or 'stone', reflecting the nature of the soils in this steep site.

Rechtental Castle is situated between Tramin and Söll, and is the site which yields the luscious late harvest 'Terminium' Gewürztraminer.

The steep vineyard faces south-east at an elevation of 1,320 – 1,640 feet above sea level.

## **Our wines**

The Tramin Cellars produce two ranges of wines, each including single grape wines and blends of two or more varieties, ‘compositions’ created by the winemaker.

The prestige range (selections) comprises wines made from rigorously selected grapes grown in the very finest sites, wines which strongly express the unique attributes of the soil and microclimate.

The Classic range consists of sound quality wines, mainly single grape though also blends, with the emphasis on excellent value for money.

### **The white proprietary blends**

STOAN (Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco, Sauvignon, Gewürztraminer)

T Bianco (Chardonnay, Pinot Bianco, Sauvignon, Riesling)

### **The white varietal wines**

Prestige range:

UNTEREBNER Pinot Grigio

NUSSBAUMER

Gewürztraminer

### **Classic range:**

PEPI Sauvignon

Pinot Bianco

Pinot Bianco MORIZ

Chardonnay

### **The red proprietari blends**

LOAM (Cabernet-Merlot)

RUNGG Cabernet Merlot

T Rosé (Lagrein, Merlot, Pinot Nero)

T Rosso (Schiava, Pinot Nero, Merlot)

### **The red varietal wines**

Prestige range:

FREISINGER Schiava

MAGLEN Pinot Nero

URBAN Lagrein

### **Classic range:**

Lagrein Rosé

Lago di Caldaro

St. Maddalena

Schiava HEXENBICHLER

Pinot Grigio  
Müller Thurgau  
Moscato Giallo sweet  
Sauvignon  
Gewürztraminer  
SELIDA Gewürztraminer

**The sweet proprietari**

**blend**

ROEN Gewürztraminer-  
Riesling Vendemmia Tardiva

Pinot Nero  
Merlot  
Cabernet Sauvignon  
Lagrein

**The sweet varietal wines**

TERMINUM Gewürztraminer  
Vendemmia Tardiva  
VOLENTIN Moscato Rosa



## The Point of Maturity

The Cantina Tramin has always been a pioneer on the path toward consistently higher quality, seeking to achieve greater typicity in their wines. In order to express the individual character of the wines even better, as of the 2014 vintage, the Cantina will be giving their white wines - more specifically the white wines from their Selection series - even more time to mature.

In the future, their top series of white wines will spend more time aging in the bottle before wine aficionados will be able to taste them; the wines will not be released to the market in May, as was previously done, but finally become available the following January.

*'We are listening to what the wines tell us about what they need, leaving them to repose as long as possible and now bottling them at the ideal moment, so that they are able to communicate their sense of typicity even better. In recent years we have invested a great deal in the vineyard work. We would like in the end to profit from these improvements;*



*this means that we want to give the wines more time to mature after vinification, so that their aromatics achieve the best possible balance“* explains cellar master Willi Stürz.

This postponement of release, amounting to more than half a year, presents the winery with substantial financial challenges. For a growers' cooperative, a decision of this magnitude brings with it a great expenditure of effort, since they bear responsibility for their some three hundred member growers – the co-owners of the Cantina. In the first year of this programme (2015), the Cantina must absorb an enormous drop in sales – ultimately a significant portion of the 2014 harvest will not be sold until 2016. But their love of quality has motivated the members of the cooperative to willingly bear the weight of this decision.

## Profile

Location	Italy, Südtirol - Alto Adige.
Microarea	Termeno, Ora, Egna, Montagna.
Year founded	1898
Acreage under cultivation	ca. 260 hectares
Winegrowers	ca. 180 families
President	Leo Tiefenthaler
Winemaker	Willi Stürz
Executive Manager	Stephan Dezini
Marketing – Sales	Wolfgang Klotz
Production	around 1,8 mio. bottles a year
Annual sales 2016:	around 14 mio €

## Percentage of varieties

Varietal	ha	percentage
Gewürztraminer	57	21,9
Chardonnay	31	11,9
Vernatsch	29	11,2
Lagrein	25	9,6
Pinot Grigio	24	9,2
Weißburgunder	21	8,1
Sauvignon	21	8,1
Blauburgunder	18	6,9
Merlot	13	5
Cabernet	8	3,1
Others	5	1,8

## Awards and Accolades

### Decanter World Wine Awards

Gold for Gewürztraminer Terminusum 2012

Commended for Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2015

Commended for Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2015

Bronze for Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2014

Silver for Gewürztraminer Terminusum 2013

### Mundus Vini Great International Wine Award,

Grand Gold for Terminusum Gewürztraminer 2012, as well as the special award Best of Show in the category 'Late Harvest'

Grand Gold Award for Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2012. Only thirty wines attained this level of achievement (out of 6,000 wines evaluated from 45 nations) plus a special award as the Best White Wine of Italy

Grand Gold for Terminusum Gewürztraminer 2013

Gold for Nussbaumer Gewürztraminer 2016 and 2014

Silver for Nussbaumer Gewürztraminer 2015

Grand Gold for the Cuvée Stoa 2013, as well as a special award for the Best White Wine in Italy

World champion sommelier Luca Gardini chooses the Terminum Gewürztraminer and the Nussbaumer Gewürztraminer for his listing of the World's Best 100 Wines

Vinum Genossencup, May 2013,  
Best Wine Co-op in the German-language sphere

Robert Parker Wine Advocate

“It's hard to go wrong with any of these wines from Tramin, one of the best and most consistent wineries in Italy”

- 94 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2010
- 92 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2012
- 91+ Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2014
- 92 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2015
- 91 Points Stoan 2010
- 92 Points Stoan 2012
- 91 Points Stoan 2014
- 93 Points Stoan 2015
- 94 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2008 DOC
- 96 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2009 DOC
- 95 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2011 DOC
- 93 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2012 DOC
- 95 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2013 DOC
- 88 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2010
- 90 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2012
- 89 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2014

Wine Spectator

- 90 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2009
- 91 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2010
- 89 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2012
- 91 Points Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer 2013
- 90 Points Stoan 2008

- 90 Points Stoan 2010
- 88 Points Stoan 2012
- 90 Points Stoan 2013
- 90 Points Stoan 2015
- 91 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2012 DOC
- 95 Points Terminum Gewürztraminer 2013 DOC
- 89 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2010
- 90 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2011
- 88 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2012
- 89 Points Unterebner Pinot Grigio 2015
- 92 Epokale Gewürztraminer Spatlele 2009

Lauded as Best Cooperative Cellar in Italy by the publication Weinwirtschaft, 2011 and 2012.

Gewürztraminer Terminum 2007 - the only Italian wine that received the highest marks in all Italian wine guides in 2010

Named Best Co-op of the Year by the Guida ai migliori vini d'Italia 2006.

Gambero Rosso chose Willi Stürz as best cellar master in Italy for the year 2004.

Terminum 2001 is the 'Best Sweet Wine in Italy' and Willi Stürz is the 'Best Oenologist' (cellar master of the year), chosen by Bibenda (Associazione Italiana Sommelier) in 2003.

The title Best Oenologist is given every year to the three best cellar masters in Italy

## **Voices of the Press**

### Unterebner boasts more complexity

"The 2012 Alto Adige Pinot Grigio Unterebner delivers far and away beyond your standard Pinot Grigio...it boasts more complexity that you might expect."

**Robert Parker, March 2015**

### Nussbaumer is the Best

'The only Gewürztraminers that can keep up with those from Alsace are the ones from the Alto Adige, and out of these, Nussbaumer is the best.'

**Jan D'Agata, Decanter, January 2015**

### Unterebner 2013

"For the same price as some PGs from a blend of vineyards, you can have this single-vineyard version that's way more delicious; different fermentation techniques and lees-stirring give it real character."

**Chicago Tribune, January 2015**

### Enchanting Wines

'There are wines that are indeed simply enchanting – the word comes from fairy tales, but can certainly turn up in one's mind when tasting wine.'

**Michael Allmaier, Die Zeit, September 2015**

### 93 Points for Pinot Grigio 2013 Unterebner

"This is a wine that touches so many of your taste buds. Goes on for minutes. One of the best Pinot Grigios in Italy."

**James Suckling, July 2014**

### Italy's greatest wines

"I've admired this wine for years and believe it to be one of Italy's greatest wines – white or red."

**Tom Hyland, April 2014**

### One of the World's Best

"Gewürztraminer Nussbaumer from the outstanding cooperative producer, Cantina Tramin, is my favorite and among the finest whites of Italy."

**Tom Hyland, February 2013**

### Stoan

US-journalist Tom Hyland has selected the 500 most distinctive wines of Italy. His book "Beyond Barolo and Brunello: Italy's Most Distinctive Wines" describes Stoan as "truly one of Italy's finest and most distinctive white wines".

**Tom Hyland, 2013**

### Unterebner

'Pinot Grigio doesn't get better than this.'

**Wine Enthusiast, 2013**

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