

Press Release on 6 November 2018 from Weingut Heymann-Löwenstein

Protected Denominations of Origin have been approved!

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## TIMELINE

2000 Weingut Heymann-Löwenstein sorts grapes for vinification based on its 3 distinct sub-appellations.

2003 After complaints by the Weinkontrolle, the state government's wine analysis agency, its label were changed to read Uhlen B, Uhlen L and Uhlen R. These sub-site names were then supplemented in a smaller typeface by the prefixed "Schieferformation" or "Terroir" as a — legal — "reference to the soil formation."

2011 Application for registration of the sub-appellations as geschützte Ursprungsbezeichnungen (Protected Denominations of Origin) by the following Winningen estates: Weingut Freiherr von Heddesdorff, Weingut Fries, Weingut Heymann-Löwenstein, Weingut Knebel, Weingut Rüdiger Kröber, Weingut Richard Richter

2013 Application is approved by the German oversight authorities.

2014 Lawsuit by one winegrower dismissed by Higher Administrative Court of Cologne.

2015 Application is passed to the EU oversight agencies for final approval.

2018 Approval.

## IN A WINEGROWING CONTEXT

90s: Ecology, terroir... The cultural alternatives begin to take shape

2000s: The VDP puts a strong focus on vineyard classification

2006 Arrival of classification model from the Romance countries to the wider EU. Massive resistance by the German wine industry against the introduction of classification laws based on origins and production regulations.

2014 The state governments give way to pressure from winemakers and allow the use of the classic cadastre names on the label. Some critics wondered if this was a populist countermeasure against the complicated path to registration for protected designations of origin. Yet while the newly delineated cadastre sites suggest a sense of distinction and singularity, they are in fact not tied to any geological or enological criteria whatsoever.

## PRAISE WHERE PRAISE IS DUE!

First and foremost, for the real assistance from the state geological survey agency. It's hard to imagine that Germany has ever seen that level of dedication applied to surveying its vineyards, with a huge number of soil probes and GPS measurement data.

Also to the state government, state chamber of commerce, the agricultural association and the winegrowers association. Where we expected resistance there was in fact help, fairness and tolerance. Even when things ran contrary to political interests, the message was clear: 'Give it a try so we see how it works. And maybe we can find a way to use it.'

And finally to the representatives of the federal government. They were more than a bit taken aback when the wine industry initially tried tooth and nail to fight off the new regulations from Brussels. And now the German winemakers, as members of the EU, are demanding equal treatment with their French colleagues! The staff of the BLE (German Federal Agency for Food and Agriculture) very quickly grasped that the applications made good sense. Their very strong personal dedication made a huge difference in seeing this application through.

## STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND

Forms? Weren't even drafted yet. The functionaries in Brussels initially accepted the applications, then returned them with problems; redone but improperly translated; then the department in Brussels was restructured and the whole process put on ice; then formally rejected, reapplied, rejected on content grounds, revised, again wrongly translated, appealed, reworked, put into the stack for processing... the High Commissioner promised a quick decision several times over, but of course the Commission is understaffed and buried under its work. And then, finally...

## THE FIRST "APPELLATION CONTRÔLÉE" FOR GERMAN SINGLE SITES!

The Protected Denominations of Origin are based on

- precise geological delineation by the State Geological Survey Office
- strict regulations in the vineyard (Riesling only, vines planted at a density of at least 7000 vines/ha)
- yields limited to 70 hl/ha on cadastral land (in reality corresponds to 50 hl/ha given the existing gradient of over 100%)
- ambitious ripening parameters (at least 88 degree Öchsle or max 7,5 % acidity)
- traditional vinification (ban on new enological processes)
- binding regulation of taste profiles (only dry/off-dry or nobly sweet)
- clear communication (no Kabinett, no Spätlese)

## PRECISE LAND SURVEY DEFINING THE VINEYARD SITES

The path has been cleared. The German wine industry is now responsible for establishing clear guidelines to hone the profile of its high-end sites. And because g.U. sites are to be registered through the member states themselves, this should move significantly more quickly in the future.

## OUTLOOK

Uhlen, flagship for the Terrassenmosel and a jewel of the landscape.... The registration as Protected Denominations of Origin is an important step toward the retention of our unique cultural landscape, as well as sustainable development of a regional identity and the establishment of a tourism industry based on ecology, culture and culinary excellence.

## SOURCES

This info sheet and its figures, map and exposé can be found here:

<https://www.hlweb.de/GU>

The application document for the Protected Denominations of Origin (with a few small editorial flubs still included) can be found here:

<https://www.ble.de/DE/Themen/Ernaehrung-Lebensmittel/EU-Qualitaetskennzeichen/Geschuetzte-Ursprungsbezeichnung/Antraege.html>

and hi-res press photos can be downloaded here:

<http://www.hlweb.de/Bilder/pressebilder/>

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