



The Alte Wache in Freiburg – the “gateway to Baden wine”

It doesn't matter if you are from Freiburg, a wine connoisseur from the local region or a guest from further afield: thanks to its variety of wines and a stunning location on Münsterplatz square in central Freiburg, the Alte Wache draws in lots of visitors each year. Since it first opened back in 1997, it has become an institution for Baden wines and a popular place to meet in the centre of Freiburg.

Meticulous yearly wine tastings to guarantee the very best quality

In order to showcase the full range of wines from the Baden region, the Alte Wache stocks wines from 35 different local producers, from winegrowing estates to cooperatives of winegrowers. These winemakers come from five winegrowing regions in Baden: the Kaiserstuhl, Markgräflerland, Breisgau, Tuniberg and Ortenau. Each year, the very best-quality wines are chosen from each vintage – from both the standard wines and the premium offerings. The wine specialists and wine tasters at the Alte Wache take their time when it comes to searching out and sampling the wines, testing each vintage, with the preferences of their customers in mind. They have extremely high standards when it comes to the quality and the result is a diverse range of wines. The high quality standards also serve to drive on the winegrowers and winemakers to always present the best possible wines to the Alte Wache team.

From the simple enjoyment of wine on the ground floor, to a discerning selection above

Since the renovations in 2020, the Alte Wache has been utilising both floors of the historical building on the Münsterplatz to display and sell wines. The shop has been designed to serve the needs of its customers.

The ground floor, complete with terrace, provides a range of wines that are easy to drink and suitable for everyday enjoyment from the mid-range pricing segment, with grape varieties clearly displayed for guidance. There are 15 different wines available, from Gutedel to Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), as well as four to five

sparkling wines. They can all be enjoyed from the bar or bought as bottles. The six most popular wines of each season are also available in smaller “Viertel” bottles. A large, open stairway leads visitors up to the first floor, where the Alte Wache has created a more modern and relaxing atmosphere; the perfect place to taste special wines from the Baden region. Visitors can browse around 70 high-quality, select wines from the Kaiserstuhl, Markgräflerland, Breisgau, Tuniberg and Ortenau winegrowing regions. The Alte Wache has developed its own “aroma and order” system, which uses coloured dots to guide customers to wines that suit their palate. In addition, a sommelier is on hand to offer advice on the wines that can be sampled and purchased here. The first floor also hosts regular wine-tasting events based around different wine and seasonal themes.

According to Alixe Winter, who has spent the past 26 years guiding the Alte Wache in her role as CEO, “the Alte Wache is an ambassador sharing its enthusiasm and passion with our customers and bringing the wonderful wines of the Baden region to life in a unique atmosphere.”

The bottles with the W – a guide and exclusive label for customers

The Alte Wache’s standard wines are easy to identify thanks to the white W on a red circle. They represent typical and popular grape varieties from the Baden region, including Gutedel (Chasselas), Müller-Thurgau, Weißburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Spätburgunder (Pinot noir), Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris), Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. The wines are distinguished by their high quality and excellent value and are served from the ground floor bar as well as on the terrace. This concept is extremely popular: over 40,000 own-brand Alte Wache bottles are sold every year.

The historical W incorporates the colours of Freiburg’s coat of arms, while the slogan “Kostbar badisch” (“Excellence from Baden”) underlines the high quality standards that the Alte Wache places on its wines. The W on the bottles not only helps to guide customers but also serves as a seal of quality.

Own-brand products setting the trend

Two of the Alte Wache’s own products have become real cult drinks: the “Winter Marie”, a hot drink for the cold season; and the “Kalte Sofie”, an iced wine drink for

the summer months. Both drinks spent a very long time in development – testament to the high quality demands of CEO Alixe Winter.

The premium hot drink “Winter Marie” is made using the finest red, white and rosé wines from the Baden region and an alcohol-free version is now also available. Two things set apart the red “Winter Marie”: the quality and flavour of the red wine, which are considered from when the grapes are being cultivated right through to the harvesting, and the fact that the hot red wine drink also contains a small amount of barrique flavour from the barrel.

This quality is rewarded by the ever-increasing sales figures: almost twice as many bottles of “Winter Marie” were sold during the 2021 winter season as in the previous year. The name is inspired by the hit German song “Schwarzwaldmarie” and the Marienmünster cathedral – the Alte Wache’s famous neighbour.

The white and red wines in the “Kalte Sofie” drink are made to the Alte Wache’s own recipe. The drink features an extraordinary consistency, somewhere between a sorbet and a wine, and has a unique taste and sensory experience. While the recipe for the “summer love in a glass” is a well-kept secret, the fact that the Alte Wache uses only local Baden wines and doesn’t add any additional aromas or flavourings is no secret at all. The sweetness is solely due to the addition of grape juice.

The Alte Wache at a glance

The Alte Wache Freiburg – Haus der badischen Weine GmbH has 35 shareholders, including 23 winegrowing cooperatives, 11 winegrowing estates and the City of Freiburg. The winegrowers are from the Kaiserstuhl, Tuniberg, Markgräflerland, Breisgau and Ortenau winegrowing regions. The Alte Wache offers around 100 wine specialities from the Baden region for sampling and purchasing.

When it was founded by winegrowing cooperatives, wineries and the City of Freiburg back in 1996, the Alte Wache was intended to serve as a shop window for Baden wines. In 1997, following extensive renovations, it opened its doors on Münsterplatz in central Freiburg.

During the past 25 years since its opening, the Alte Wache has developed into a “gateway to Baden wine”, bringing wine lovers closer to the many different high-quality wines from the Baden region in a simple and unique atmosphere. Freiburg has more vineyards per square metre than any other German city and, as such, is undoubtedly a city of wine.

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