

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 24 (1997)
Heft: 1

Artikel: Swiss wine is often underestimated : an unknown gem
Autor: Zenklusen, Stefan
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-906462>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 23.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

completely international phenomenon. This is not so much a contradiction as an enormous element of strength. There is no other country in the world in which so many and such diverse influences have worked on its cuisine and the customs of its valleys as Switzerland. The Basle gastronomic authority, Hanns U. Christen, concludes that until recently it was practically impossible to eat badly in any Swiss restaurant.

The same ingredients

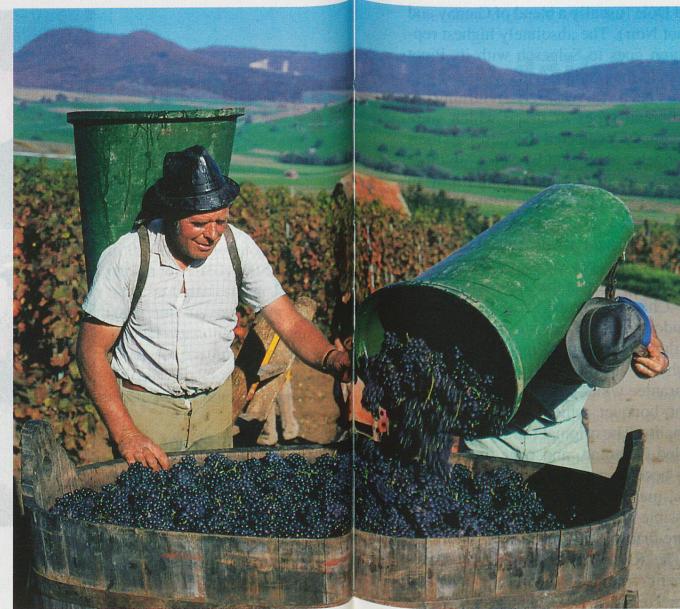
The food tastes good perhaps because the recipes have developed in a country which was once impoverished. All the sparse and meagre food had to be used in order to survive – with only the bare minimum thrown away as rubbish: potatoes again and again, fresh and dried fruit, milk, cheese, chestnuts, barley and innards (in the famous "kuttelsuppe" or tripe soup). The "räbepappe" (a parsnip mash), either with or without bacon, was until comparatively recently the nightmare of the children seated round the family table.

In eating, poverty was the mother of invention. The most had to be made of the little you possessed in order to

create at least some variety. This concept pervades many Swiss cookbooks. They are less interested in maintaining the gastronomic heritage and original specialities than in providing instructions for keeping house in a prudent, thrifty and careful manner. The main features of Swiss cuisine are not specific dishes and blends but are defined by adjectives such as homely, durable, reasonable and healthy.

Identity through cheese

The few really national dishes first arose from a latter-day necessity: the fact that surpluses from an over-efficient agricultural industry had to be exploited. As the cheese mountain grew, marketing strategists made the Neuchâtel speciality, fondue, a staple for the Swiss of all cantons. Following a highly successful advertising campaign, there is now a fondue pot and warmer in practically every household. The slogan was typically Swiss: "Figueggl – fondue is good and brings good cheer".



Grape-pickers at work: "Wümmet" (vintage) in Klettgau. (Photo: Max Baumann)

A recipe from German-speaking Switzerland

"Chnöiblätze": Carnival biscuits, Moospinte, Münchenbuchsee

400 g flour
3 eggs
20 g sugar
60 g clarified butter
13 g kirsch
20 g cream
Icing sugar to dust
Makes about 16 biscuits



In a bowl, shape flour into a well. Mix the remaining ingredients thoroughly and place them in the middle of the well. Mix the whole into a smooth dough, pack into a plastic wrap and let rest for about an hour in the refrigerator. Then mould the dough into a sausage-shaped roll 3 cm thick and cut into about 16 equal lengths. Roll these out into very thin rounds (0.75 mm). Deep-fry them in oil (e.g. peanut oil) at 170°. Drain them onto kitchen paper. Dust them with icing sugar.

Oskar Marti, also known as "Chrüter Oski", with his carnival biscuits and the sweet white wine he recommends: Grain de Malice, Provins Valais. (Photo: Jean-Jacques Ruchti)



Oskar Marti's "Chnöiblätze" recipe suits the time of year, as do all the menus in his restaurant. Visitors to the "Moospinte" in Münchenbuchsee in the Berne countryside get to know a cuisine which combines the fresh vegetables, fruit and herbs available on the day. Driven by fantasy and curiosity, the 50-year old host and head chef creates such crazy dishes as carrot and orange soup with gingerbread spices, monkfish ragout in aniseed sauce and apricots in basil. So he is simply known as "Chrüter Oski" (Herb Oski), in spite of his many honours, publications and TV programmes.

A recipe from Ticino

Braised beef with Ticino Merlot, La Palma au Lac, Locarno

Ingredients for 10 servings
2.5 kg shoulder of beef, larded
0.5 dl peanut oil
250 g blanched celery stalk
250 g leeks
250 g onions
600 g carrots
120 g tomato purée
1 litre Ticino
Merlot wine
1.5 litres water
1.5 litres brown gravy
20 g dried boletus mushrooms
80 g beef bouillon cubes
Salt, pepper, a little paprika

Spice the meat with the salt, pepper and paprika, and brown it thoroughly in the peanut oil. Remove it from the pan and lightly brown the chopped vegetables in the same pan (do the leeks

last since they burn easily and may become bitter). Add the tomato purée. The vegetables will take on the beautiful dark colour of the sauce and at the same time absorb both sweet and sour from the purée. Be careful not to let the vegetables burn as they will then taste bitter. Next, add the red wine and, together with the water and the gravy, cook until the mixture thickens. Add the bouillon cubes. Put in the meat and the mushrooms, and cover. Braise slowly for two to three hours. When the meat is cooked, remove, then purée the vegetables in a mixer. To test whether the meat is ready, stick a long fork into it, lift it and shake it lightly. If the meat falls easily from the fork, it is done. If the sauce is too thin, continue cooking it

Swiss wine is often underestimated

An unknown gem

As if it were not enough that overseas Switzerland and Sweden are often confused, our wines are also largely unknown. And quite wrongly.

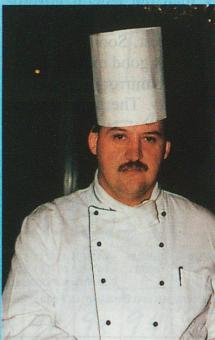
The first extensive book on Swiss viticulture, "The Surprising Wines of Switzerland" by Canadian diplomat John C. Sloan, was published in 1996. This work – available only in English – carries the appropriate subtitle "Switzerland's Best Kept Secret".

It is true that with 15,000 hectares of vineyards (as against 900,000 in France) and an export ratio of about 1%, Swiss wine has a very low profile internationally. The fact that the Chasselas grape, widely disregarded as neutral in flavour, takes up 40% of Swiss vineyards contributes to the general underestimation of Switzerland's potential to produce quality wine.

since the emphasis on quality on the part of Swiss wine-growers (at the expense of higher yield) is now well-known.

But the wine lakes of the 1970s and 1980s are still present in the minds of consumers, and the memory frequently results in a conviction that Italian or Australian products give you more for your money.

*Stefan Zenklusen is an editor with the international wine magazine "Vimum".



Chef F. Müller.
(Photos: zvg)



to the desired consistency. Caution: first test whether the sauce is too salty, and if it is bind it with cornflour. This dish is best served with polenta or mashed potatoes and a Merlot from the Delea vineyard in Losone.

