



Organic Winery Staffelter Hof Oldest Winery in the World

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862 - THE FIRST DOCUMENTARY MENTION

In the year 862, King Lothar II transferred the Peterskapelle (Chapel of St. Peter), located in his “fiscus crovia” on the Moselle, along with its wine tributes, to the Abbey of Stavelot. The abbey was in need of wine: “ob exiguitatem vini” (due to the scarcity of wine). The name of the winery later derived from the name of the abbey: Stablo (Latin) – Stav’leu (Walloon = Wolf’s Den) – Stavelot. This is where the name and the emblem of the Staffelter Hof originate.

In 2012, the winery celebrated its 1150th anniversary, based on the documented deed from the year 862 (see below), making it the oldest still-operating business in Germany and the [oldest winery in the world](#).

874 - VINEYARDS, FIELDS, AND MEADOWS OF THE ABBEY

Lothar II died young and without heirs. As a result, his two uncles divided his kingdom in 870. Louis the German received the eastern part. In 874, he granted the Abbey of Stavelot “a mansus of land,” several buildings, and the people living there from his *Kröver Reich* in the region. To this day, the estate stands on the site of a Roman *villa rustica* (3rd/4th century).

At the time, a steward managed the Staffelter Hof. The wine and other produce from the estate were transported by tenant farmers from the Ardennes. Using their carts, they carried these goods over 140 kilometers from the Moselle to the monastery.

1754 - 40,000 VINE STOCKS OFFICIALLY DOCUMENTED

A record from 1754 documents that the Staffelter Hof owned numerous fields and meadows in Kinderbeuern and Bengel, as well as 40,000 vine stocks in Kröv. The document was signed in 1754 by Johann Peter Christoffel, who was the steward at the time and the father-in-law of Peter Nikolaus Schneiders, the last steward (1805).

1765 - THE RIESLING VARIETY

The cultivation of Riesling vines in Kröv was encouraged and even mandated very early on. The "Grey Sisters" of Koblenz required their steward in Croeff, Johann Jacob Cravanto, to ensure that "he shall cultivate the vineyards properly with Riesling cuttings" (*frz. provin* = cuttings).



1805 - THE BEGINNING OF A FAMILY TRADITION SPANNING OVER 200 YEARS

After the French Revolution, the left-bank territories of the German Reich became part of France. In 1803, Napoleon ordered the confiscation and dissolution of monasteries and abbeys.

On the 12th *Pluviôse XIII* of the French Revolutionary Calendar (February 1, 1805), the last steward, Peter Nikolaus Schneiders, purchased the Staffelter Hof winery from the French state for 6,650 francs or 1,773 Prussian thalers. Subsequent generations divided the property, repurchased parts of it, and divided it again. Over time, the estate itself became smaller.

1894 – THE FAMILY STAYS, THE NAME CHANGES: KLEIN

Anna Maria Schneiders, the great-great-granddaughter of the last steward, Peter Nikolaus Schneiders, married winemaker and cooper Kilian Klein ("de aale Jaan") in 1894. She brought the Staffelter Hof into the marriage and was proudly aware of its significance.

It is also noteworthy that the last three stewards (Johann Trossen, Johann Peter Christoffel, and Peter Nikolaus Schneiders) all succeeded their fathers-in-law in the role. Between 1895 and 1918, Anna Maria gave birth to 13 children, only one of whom died in infancy.

1927 – THE STAFFELTER HOF WINERY BECOMES SMALLER

Eleven surviving children (six sons and five daughters) inherited 2.6 hectares of vineyards, numerous fields and meadows, and some forest in 1927. For that time, this was a fairly large estate.

The parents retained 10% of the vineyard yield as a so-called *Aushalt* (retirement provision). Kilian passed away in 1945, and Anna Maria followed 15 years later.

1947 – A NEW BEGINNING AFTER THE WAR

Paul Klein, the youngest son of Anna Maria and Kilian Klein, returned home in the spring of 1947 after being held as a prisoner of war in England. During his years in Canada and Wales (1942–1947), he also used the time to expand his knowledge of viticulture, receiving the necessary books from home.



On Friday, November 13, 1947, Paul Klein married Rosina Römer. They began with just half a hectare of vineyard land. In 1949, Paul purchased the house and estate grounds from his mother for 20,000 DM. The small distillery associated with the estate was then put back into operation and became an important source of income.

Today, due to changes in taxation and declining demand for fine spirits, the economic significance of the distillery is no longer substantial. Nevertheless, Paul's son Gerhard ("Gerd," born in 1949) continues to distill fine fruit brandies more as a hobby and ages pomace and wine yeast brandies in barrique barrels. He has a sister, Brunhild ("Bruni," born in 1950), and a brother, Eugen (born in 1952).

1962 – MODERNIZATION AND EXPANSION

After the land consolidation of the agricultural valley areas was completed, these lands were planted with grapevines starting in 1962. New farmland was purchased or leased. Following the 1961 harvest, Paul and Rosina began renovating and modernizing the buildings. The goals were to ease the workload, improve conditions for the animals in the barn, and expand the wine cellar.

Through new plantings, the vineyard area had grown to 2.2 hectares. With the installation of central heating, the house now had both hot and cold running water, and the first two guest rooms were made available for rent. "I'll use the income to pay off the construction loan!" Rosina claimed—and she wasn't entirely wrong!

1972 – THE NEXT GENERATION

By early 1972, after just 10 years, farming came to an end. The last young bull was slaughtered, and in March, the barn and stable were demolished. The self-marketing of bottled wine, which had started in 1963, and the growing demands of viticulture took up more and more time, and additional guest rooms needed to be built.

For Easter 1974, the new guest rooms were rented out for the first time, and in June, Rosina and Paul moved into their apartment in the new house. A large breakfast and lounge area made it easier for Rosina to take care of the guests.

The old building was then renovated by its future residents according to their preferences. After their wedding in August 1974, Gerd, Paul and Rosina Klein's son, and his wife Hildegund ("Gundi"), daughter of Peter and Klothilde Kohl from Niederemmel (now Piesport), moved into their completed apartment. The young couple had both passed their master exams and were hopeful for a successful life together.



After the 1977 harvest, Gerd and Gundi took over the vineyards in Piesport and Dhron from Gundi's parents. The vineyards in Kröv and Piesport (4.2 hectares) are now jointly managed from Kröv. Gundi and Gerd had three sons: Jan Matthias (1977), Ernst Daniel (1979), and Finn Douglas (1981).

2005 – JAN MATTHIAS: THE 7TH GENERATION OF THE KLEIN FAMILY

In 1983, Paul reached retirement age but continued to work at the winery, while his wife Rosina continued to care for the holiday guests until 2002. All the vineyards were jointly managed by Gerd and Gundi.

After completing his high school diploma, a winemaker apprenticeship, and earning a degree from the University of Applied Sciences in Heilbronn, as well as gaining practical experience at the "Ratskeller Bremen" and wineries in Provence, New Zealand, and Australia, their eldest son, Jan Matthias, returned to Kröv. In 2005, his parents, together with him, founded the family partnership *Familien-GbR Staffelter Hof*.

Together, they expanded the business to 9 hectares by 2012: 78% Riesling, 12% Rivaner (Müller-Thurgau), and 10% red varieties. Notable vineyard sites include Steffensberg, Letterlay, and Paradies in Kröv, as well as Hofberger in Dhron.

2012 – THE BIRTH OF THE *KULTURSCHEUNE*

Cultural events have played an important role at Staffelter Hof since the first wine festival in 1987. Bands and performers from various music genres have found a stage at the winery, and theater productions have also captivated audiences.

The "[KultUrScheune](#)," completed in 2012, serves both as a venue for celebrations and as a club that regularly organizes events. For years, the popular *SommerSause* has attracted guests from near and far to Staffelter Hof. With live music and great wine, visitors enjoy life and the Mediterranean atmosphere along the Moselle. The annual profits are invested in charity projects and in youth work for local associations.



2014 – ORGANIC WINEMAKING & NATURAL WINE: THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA

Since the beginning of organic viticulture in the Moselle in the 1980s, ecological thinking and actions have become increasingly important for the Klein family. In 2011, Jan Matthias applied for membership in [EcoVin](#), the largest association of organic winemakers in Germany.

With the completion of the transition to organic farming, Jan Matthias took over the winery as managing director and owner in 2014. His parents, Gundi and Gerd, continue to work in many areas of the winery and hope that 2023, the 10th year of organic cultivation, will bring a good harvest.

An old yet emerging winemaking style caught Jan Matthias' interest. In 2014, he created *Madcap*, a natural wine (vin nature) without added sulfur and unfiltered. Over time, [*Little Bastard*](#), [*Papa Panda's Rising*](#), [*Orange-Utan*](#), as well as several PetNats and, of course, [*Little Red Riding Wolf*](#)—with their distinctive wolf and panda labels—have become popular and in demand, not just within the natural wine scene.

2020- NOT ONLY A NEW WINE LINE, BUT ALSO NEW GRAPE VARIETIES

As part of a "second land consolidation" to separate the many abandoned vineyard areas, new opportunities for the winery's development arose. The purchase and exchange of vineyards were simplified, allowing several plots to be merged into larger ones. Jan Matthias took advantage of the acquired land to plant newly bred disease-resistant grape varieties (PIWIs), ensuring the future-oriented growth of the family winery.

Today, on approximately 13 hectares, in addition to 60% Riesling, 10% Müller-Thurgau, and 7% Pinot Noir, the winery also cultivates Sauvignon Blanc, Frühburgunder, Gamay, Gelber Muskateller, Arinto, Fernão Pires, and the PIWI varieties Muscaris, Sauvignier Gris, Sauvitage, Satin Noir, Sauvignac, and Donauriesling. The latter varieties rarely require plant protection, and in some years, none is needed.

An agroforestry project is planned on several hectares, involving the multi-use of land with livestock and the alternating planting of PIWI vines, fruit trees, and other shrubs and bushes. This will create an ecologically and economically sensible system: increased plant diversity, flowers (which attract insects and provide their food), small animals and birds, and, not least, grapes that secure the family's income.



2023 – THE STAFFELTER HOF WINERY IN THE *VINUM WEINGUIDE*

Jan Matthias Klein and his team are very pleased with the 3.5-star rating from the Vinum Wine Guide in 2023, as well as the positive review of their wines. Their hard work has paid off, and this motivates everyone to continue giving their best for Staffelter Hof.

What's beautiful about the family business is the sense of togetherness. Every day, the team gathers for lunch at Gundi's table. Over meals with fresh vegetables and fruit from their own garden, they chat about current events and business matters. Jan Matthias' daughters, Elsa and Rosa, also enjoy being at Staffelter Hof and bring fresh energy from primary school and kindergarten, keeping the team lively. It's never boring: the two of them play in the natural pond or sometimes even sit with their father on the forklift.

The people of Staffelter Hof are excited about an eventful future and are looking forward to sharing their passion for nature, fine wine, long-standing traditions, and culture with as many people as possible.

2025 – GROWTH & INNOVATION

In 2025, Staffelter Hof reflects on an eventful journey and continues to move forward with great strides. As part of our Vitiforst project, we have already carried out two tree planting initiatives, promoting not only the environment but also biodiversity around the estate. This project helps us make an important contribution to sustainable agriculture and the creation of a healthy ecosystem.

Culturally, Staffelter Hof remains a vibrant place. Numerous events and gatherings continue to take place here, and guests not only enjoy our wines but also the lively atmosphere. We are also back on the road attending trade fairs, presenting our wines to a wider audience, and building new connections.

Last year, we successfully launched new natural wines, including Pink Panda, Red Panda, and MüllerTime Smells Like Mean Spirit. With their distinctive labels and unique flavor profiles, these wines have already sparked significant interest. Currently, we are working on our new SuperNatural wine line, which will consist exclusively of PIWI varieties (disease-resistant grape varieties). The first wines from this line are expected to hit the market later this year, promising to be another highlight for the natural wine scene.

Staffelter Hof continues to be a place of tradition while also pioneering new and sustainable paths in winemaking. We look forward to continuing our journey and embarking on an even more exciting future with all our guests and partners.

