

## **PRESS INFORMATION**

With a total production for 2009 of 500 000 bottles and an area under cultivation of 50 hectares in Austria the Hillinger Winery is among the largest wine producers in Austria in the top quality segment.

After taking over a small wine trade from his father in 1990, Leo Hillinger turned it into a model Austrian concern by re-structuring the business and buying additional, well-situated land around Jois and Rust.

In 2004, a new production site and the adjoining tasting and seminar centre were built at a cost of 6 million euros, combining state-of-the-art cellar technology with sophisticated architecture and magnificent design.

In 2005 Hillinger was the first wine grower in the world to open a flagship store, selling exclusively his own wines.

In 2006 and 2007 Leo Hillinger worked extensively in the construction of the international network, he conquered 18 countries with his wines.

In 2008 Leo Hillinger started a social project – The Pink Ribbon action, for the breast cancer care.

In 2009 opened Hillinger his “Hill Lounge” in Salzburg, ajar at the Parndorfer flagship store.

The wines – especially the top cuvées Hill 1, Hill 2, and Hill 3 – regularly receive awards, in Austria and abroad (Falstaff, Gault Millau, Parker, Mundus Vini, Wine Spectator, Decanter, Wine and Spirits etc.). Generally speaking the wines make an impression because they are fruity, full-bodied and have a high ageing potential.

Around 50 percent of the total production (and the figure is increasing) will be exported to 18 different countries, especially to Switzerland, the USA, and to the Far East, but also to Poland and Russia and other eastern European countries. Hillinger also sees great potential in the Indian market.

The wines are only available in specialised stores and in the top-level catering trade.

The concern is located in a foundation, which is wholly owned by the Leo Hillinger Family.

## **LEO HILLINGER - BIOGRAPHY**

Leo Hillinger was born in 1967 in Eisenstadt in the Austrian state of Burgenland into a traditional wine trading family. As a child he developed a profound interest in what went on his grandfather's vineyard. After studying wine cultivation at a number of different colleges, he concluded several periods of practical experience abroad, starting off in Germany's Palatinate, where he became familiar with the subtleties of wine. At the age of 19 and with a grant from the Austrian Wine Marketing Company, Hillinger moved to California where he learned more about the vinification of quality wines. It was during this period that he began to concentrate on the most natural cultivation of the vineyards, which has become a trademark of Hillinger's work.

He never lost touch with his roots and it was during his visits to his father's business that Hillinger was able early on to put his innovative talent to the test. In 1990, at the age of 23, Hillinger took over his father's business and began to reform grape production according to his own ideas. Within a relatively short space of time he was able to mark up considerable improvements in quality and increases in turnover. New insights harvested on trips to South Africa, Australia and New Zealand provided constant input. But respect for the specific characteristics of his wines remained Hillinger's top priority.

Hillinger repeatedly departed from traditional methods to test creative innovations. In 1992, for example, he designed and had built a mobile bottling apparatus, which was used by wine growers in the region. In his "Heurigen" wine tavern in Jois he organised Jazz Brunch events, classical concerts, or poetry readings during traditional dinners of roast goose, and established a widespread network based on culture, wine and business.

One of the high points of his career is without doubt the opening in 2004 of his winery in Jois, an architecturally and technically ambitious project, built according to Hillinger's design.

Leo Hillinger and his wife Eveline have two children: Vivienne, born in 2004 and Leo Thaddäus born in 2002.

## **WINERY**

The new winery was completed in 2004 after a year of construction. It was a particularly challenging project for the planners because of its sensitive situation in the midst of the vineyards of Jois. Copying the style of traditional rural wine cellars dug into the earth, the architects gerner°gerner made use of the climatic advantages of soil: Most of the L-shaped production buildings were dug deep into the slope and buried again so that vines could be planted on the surface. 24,000 m<sup>3</sup> of earth were moved in the process of construction work. Eight pyramid-shaped north-facing cupolas provide natural light for the underground production hall, which is one of the most modern in Europe. The aboveground section, including the cubic tasting lounge, floats on a slender, V-shaped support and at night its brightly lit window is visible from afar.

Inside, walls of glass allow the visitor to take a peek at the different stages in the trade of the wine maker. The tasting lounge is connected to a multifunctional seminar room by a bridge, which provides a view of the barrique cellar below. The building comprises a surface area of 1750 m<sup>2</sup>.

With all it`s seminar and event spaces, the winery is often rented by companies and private groups for individual events. In addition one can select between various accompanying event-packages.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

“When the grapes are top quality, less work is needed in the cellar. After years of experience and many experiments I know that the fruit must be perfect and should go into the bottle unaltered.”

Leo Hillinger’s methods are characterised by a profound respect for the grape as well as for the particularities of the soil and climatic conditions. His wines stand out for their fullness and mellow quality and reflect the particular characteristics of their origins. “I’m not interested in producing the same international fashionable wines, I’d much rather create typically Austrian top quality”, says Hillinger. And: “Happiness is making wine. In my case, my hobby is my job. I can’t imagine anything better.”

## **WINES & PRODUCTION**

The synthesis of a natural approach to cultivating the vines and state-of-the-art cellar technology ensures the high quality of the wines. Hillinger puts the emphasis on integrated plant protection, natural fertilisers, and biological nourishment for the vines. The high density of the wines stems from consistent thinning out. Only 35 to 40 hl of grapes are harvested per hectare, the equivalent of 1 – 3 kg of grapes per vine. Vineyards in a variety of different locations and soils – ranging from black earth, to brown earth, gravel and slate soil – produce multi-facetted wines.

The best locations are the 30 hectares near Rust, which produce the grapes for Hillinger's top wines, the award-winning Hill Series. Hillinger also owns 20 hectares near Jois.

The white wines cultivated are: Welschriesling, Grüner Veltliner, Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Gelber Muskateller; the red wines Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt, St. Laurent, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Shyra.

The cellar technology in the production plant in Jois, which was completed in 2004, is among the most modern in Europe. The selected grape material is vinified in computer-controlled stainless steel tanks, which allow, among others things, cold maceration periods. The barrique wines are matured in French oak.

Contact:

**Marina Müllner**

Marketing & Event Manager

Leo Hillinger GmbH, A-7093 Jois, Hill 1

Phone: +43(0)2160.83 17 14, Fax: +43(0)2160.83 17 17

Mobile: +43(0)664.512 24 11

Email: [m.muellner@leo-hillinger.com](mailto:m.muellner@leo-hillinger.com), Web: [www.leo-hillinger.com](http://www.leo-hillinger.com)