



Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, Zentrum Weiterbildung

THE ZÜRICH WINE REGION

AN ILLUSTRATION PROJECT

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INDEX

ABSTRACT	3
WHY WINE AND ILLUSTRATION?	4
The starting point	4
The development of the idea	4
WINE AS AN IDENTITY MARKER.	5
Wine production in Switzerland - not a new trend.....	5
The evolution of Swiss wine culture	8
The indigenous swiss vines	9
THE ZÜRICH WINE REGION	10
Wine, social scene and personal considerations.	11
THE PROJECT	11
THE WINE PRODUCERS IN THE AOC ZÜRICH	12
Weingut Familie Zahner	13
Schnorf Weine	14
Lüthi Weinbau.....	15
Erich Meier	16
Weingut Bachmann.....	17
Zweifel 1898	18
HerterWein.....	19
Weingut Pircher	20
THE ILLUSTRATIONS	21
Erich Meier	21
Weingut Bachmann.....	22
Herterwein.....	23
Weingut Pircher	24
Zweifel 1898	25
FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT	26
Final consideration	26
LITERATURVERZEICHNIS	27



ABSTRACT

This project was born around the idea of using illustration as a marketing tool. More precisely illustration can be used to describe certain features of a subject and enhance its characteristics by making them visually recognisable. In this case I focused on the winemakers in the Zürich wine region and more generally the wine culture in the Zürich wine region. I started from an analysis of what illustration can be used for and what complex realities such as an urban life scenario can offer to the case.

The project moves then onto a bigger scale to investigate the reasons behind the poor fame of Swiss wine in general and how its image can be changed embracing its unique characteristics. I visited some winemakers in the region and talked to them to understand their philosophy, what wine they produce and what their vision is. This information had been then translated into a single drawing for each one of them in an attempt to describe their unique features.

The final product for this project is a collection of five postcards showing different ways of understanding wine from different producers, all belonging to the same big wine region.

WHY WINE AND ILLUSTRATION?

Who has never taken a picture to remember a moment, to celebrate a friendship or an event?

Nowadays, taking pictures and sharing them has become a fundamental part of our lives. Although probably taking photos does not have the same meaning as before, since social media and the influencer business have somehow spoiled the meaning of spontaneous pictures, some of us still think of images as a vessel for our memory.

An illustration is a picture that is telling stories: the subject of the image seen through the eyes of the artist.

I started drawing the places I was in with my friends - or details of them - because I wanted to remember the moment I was living, not just by having it in a photo, but by infusing my emotions into it.

On another level I wanted to unravel a certain aspect of the Zürchers' life that I find fascinating: the drive towards the gourmet experience, the multicultural gastronomic scene, the emergence of new restaurants and of course, the widespread, but still newly arising, wine mass-fascination. My collection of quick drawings made in bars and restaurants started growing fast. Between May 2019 and January 2020 I had gathered more drawings than I could remember. Then, it struck me: I had been illustrating Zürich by barhopping and dining with friends.

The starting point

This project was born around the idea of giving a new reading key to understand Zürich's identity - or to be fair, just one aspect of it. I want to use illustration as a tool to characterize features that would otherwise be hidden or less visible.

Zürich today is a growing and densely populated city with a clear international character, whose growth is strongly influenced by the dominating financial sector. The city develops along the lake shores and the river banks, stretching through the valley between Uetliberg and Züriberg, embedding the hills of Hönnig and Irchel. Its urban fabric is heterogeneous and dense. Production sites and industries' headquarters are pushed outside of the city's perimeter while old industrial neighborhoods are converted into luxury residential areas and the city center empties to make room for the big insurance's and banks' headquarters.

This urban heterogeneity results also in an eclectic gastronomic scene that is scattered around town creating continuous flows and a very lively urban scene. The city is shaped by the people and their habits, choices and itineraries.



Some of the sketches I collected in bars and restaurants in Zürich.

Over the last decades the fast development and refurbishment of the residential areas and the taking over of the tertiary sector as the main source of income increased the need for services such as lunch or coffee options during the day. This has therefore enhanced the growth of the gastronomic offer resulting in a massive concentration of restaurants and food stands around major financial and commerce districts.

The development of the idea

Although the challenge of finding a structure and new reading key for mapping Zürich based on its gastronomic culture seemed very interesting, this idea took a hard turn when the COVID-19 pandemic started.

Bars and restaurants closed. Organizing spontaneous rendez-vous in bars to meet friends was suddenly not an option anymore.

People - me included - started dining more at home, often having a few friends over. We were all left with the only chance to dine at home with a limited choice of pairing in the fridge and in the cellar.

At that point I started asking myself: given that there is no wine menu to choose from, what wine do swiss people preferably buy and drink? Would it be possible to discover Zürich through its wines and people's preferences?

The parallel between wine and its relevance in this identity search is not immediate but seemed to me quite strong.

Wine is a product that is shaped by the terroir, the climate and the cultivation method, and therefore channels the very nature of the landscape into itself and gives a good picture of what "typical" of a region means.

But this is not all of it. Wine is also very much influenced by the character and preferences of the population. A grape which is not selling anymore could be replaced or moved to a more sunny hill to achieve the qualities that would then increase sales.

The influence of market preferences over cultivation methods determines a very clear profile, creating an identity that is proper for the land and its society.

Illustration is not that different. An image tells a story seen through the eyes of the illustrator. It is drawn with the technique that the illustrator chooses based on several factors such as market preferences, selling target, innovation, manual skills of the artist, personal preference and purpose of the image.

I found the parallel between a lively product such as wine, which is shaped by the land and society, and therefore defines an identity very clearly, and illustration as a tool to describe and represent a moment in time, a concept, a story or a character, particularly fitting.

WINE AS AN IDENTITY MARKER.

My roots are in Italy, a country well known for its wine production, food and pride of these two things. Italians prefer Italian food and drink almost only Italian wine - with very few exceptions - leading to a tendency that spirals up to the point of drinking only regional wines. Food and wine are so important that they are considered a fundamental part of our culture, so much that they define regional identities.

Italian wines tell the story of the land and the people: for instance, red sardinian wines are dry, heavy in alcohol and deeply tannic, while whites are flowery and salty. They are wines that have captured the Mediterranean breeze and the heat that dries the land and sweetens the grapes till harvest time. In these wines you can find the tenacity and the strength of the vine, the difficult waterless summers and a long tradition of simple but strong and cutting flavors. As Sardinians we have a jealous relationship with our roots and our culinary inheritance. Wines are no exception: they are shaped around our taste and remind us of our land. So it is for most Italian regions. Given my cultural background and my interest in the culture of wine making, the desire to investigate the identity of the city I lived in during the last 13 years comes natural to me. To do so I decided to study the production of wine in the Region of Zurich and most importantly the relationship that the inhabitants of Zurich have with its wines.

Wine production in Switzerland - not a new trend.

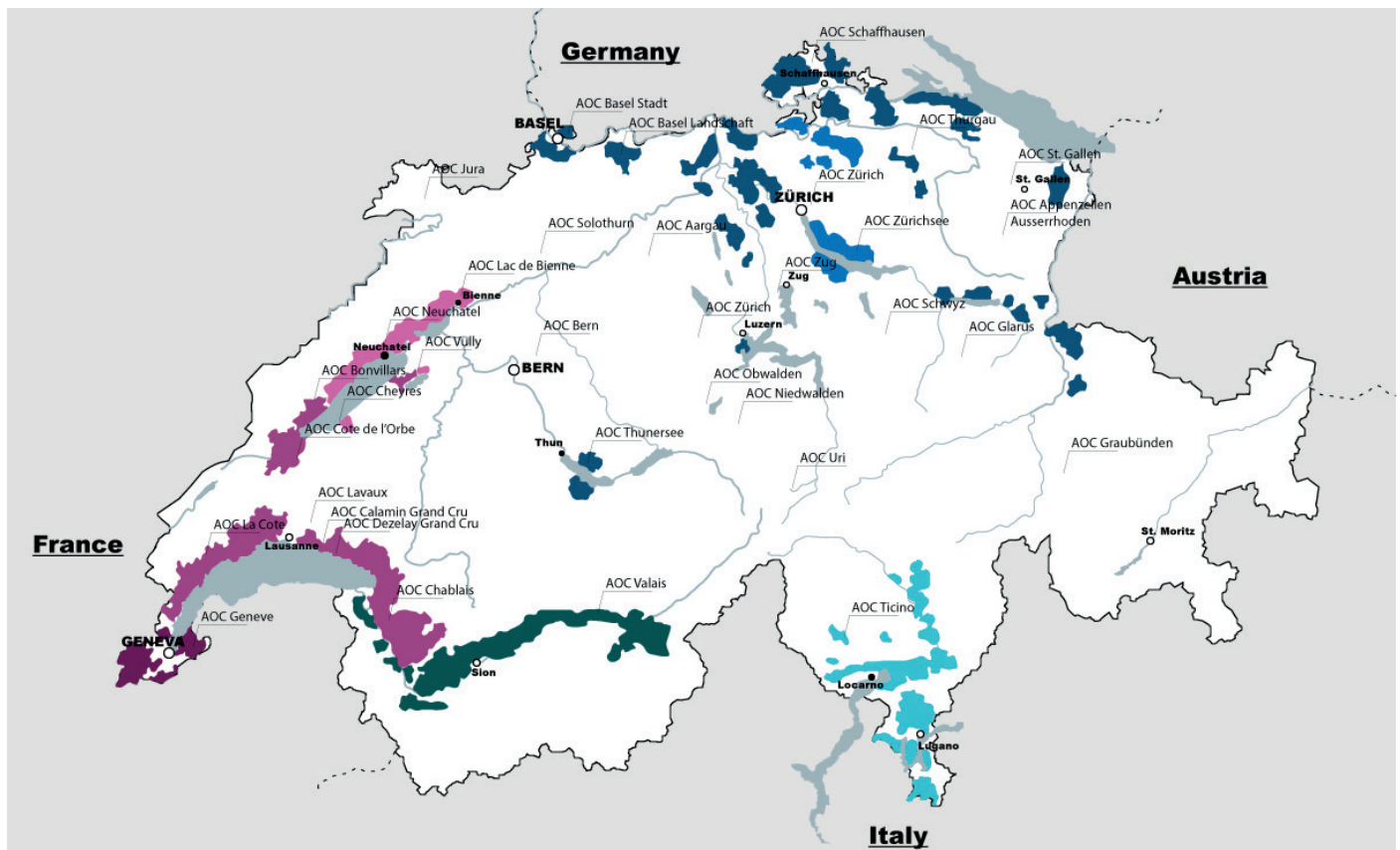
Although Switzerland is often neglected when talking about European wines (Johnson, Robinson, 2013), it has a long history of wine making and hosts important sites for viticulture in Europe. Officially it is believed that wine production in Switzerland started under the Roman Empire (Lüdi, 2014), even though there are proofs that in Tessin viticulture was already practiced before this territory was conquered by the Romans.

After the Roman Empire's dismantling, thanks to the Cistercian Monks, the art of growing vines in Switzerland survived till the 19th century, when it faced a profound crisis due to multiple factors such as the tragic arrival of Phylloxera¹ in Europe, urban expansion stealing soil to agriculture, adverse climate conditions and a diffuse belief

¹ The Grape phylloxera is an insect pest of commercial grapevines, originally native to eastern North America, that feeds on the roots and leaves of grapevines resulting in deformations on roots and fungal infections. The Phylloxera was introduced to Europe in the 1850s when English botanists collected specimens of American vines and imported them in Europe causing an epidemic that destroyed most of the vineyards for wine grapes in Europe. (Wikipedia, 2022)



The vineyards on Lake Lemann.



The wine regions of Switzerland (clockwise starting from the left): Geneva, Vaud, Three lakes, German speaking Region, Tessin and Valais.

that quantity was the key to export and success. (Style, 2019)

It is certainly remarkable that already at the end of the 19th century wine producers were organizing into cooperatives and professional schools specialized in viticulture were founded (Landwirtschaftliche Schule). One of those first ones was in Canton Zürich, precisely in Wädenswil, where it was founded in 1890 (Style, 2019).

From that moment on viticulture and winemaking declined all over the country and survived as one of the main agricultural products only in Valais, where the climate and the soil were particularly favorable.

The discontinuation of viticulture and the consequent abandonment of plots of land in favor of the expansion of the cities and the development of the tertiary sector led to the current image of viticulture and winemaking in Switzerland: unnoticeable and unnoticed to the point of being unknown to most of the population.

The lowest production was registered in 1964 with less than 12000 ha of vineyards in the whole country although luckily, from that moment on, the production increased slowly but steadily mostly thanks to the introduction of the AOC regulations. (Wohlgroth, 2004)

Nevertheless, the stigma upon swiss wines and the



The vineyards on Lake Lemann.

tendency to consider them less good compared to other wines in Europe, regardless of any factor, and therefore to ignore them when it comes to “Old World wines”², has ruined the name of Swiss wines to the point that they are considered almost as “not as worthy as” other products. Market globalization made it possible for anyone to find and buy every sort of product and spoiled the market by introducing mass production goods. If on one hand this phenomenon has proven itself to be beneficial, above all when it comes to health and technology, on the other hand

² As opposed to New World Wines, the wines produced in North / South America, Asia and in Australia / New Zealand

it has led to a market polarization.

In a country where cost of living and labor is higher than in the rest of Europe, the production of any good results in a higher final price on the market. The flood of cheaper products into the swiss market relegated swiss products to niche or sometimes luxury products. For the swiss wines, which at that point were not very appreciated, this meant being forgotten and labeled as not good.

Of course it is difficult, if not impossible, to compare a wine produced in southern Italy with a wine produced in the German speaking Region of Switzerland, as it would be difficult to compare a wine from the Loire region and a Spanish one. Wine is a product deeply connected to the land it is produced in, to the point the same grape tastes completely different if cultivated in South Africa or in California. Not to mention the production and winemaking methods that can add or take away certain features.

Swiss wines are therefore to be understood in the context of the Swiss economy, Swiss culture and Swiss territory/ climate. It is not possible to compare wines from different countries based on the selling price or production quantity, just like it would be quite unfair to compare a wine from a warm southern country to a wine from an alpine country without considering all factors.

Unfortunately such an unfair and quite useless comparison has influenced the wine market in Switzerland so much that also the swiss population do not particularly appreciate the swiss wine.

Luckily something is slowly changing.

With new advancements in winemaking and the (re) discovery of the typical features of the wine regions, the peculiarity of these wines are creating a market for it and the main focus is shifting from quantity to quality. The indigenous and rare vines, such as Cabernet Dora or Rauschling or the very less known Scheurebe, are nowadays experiencing a comeback on the tables of the country, for their down to earth characters but also for their uniqueness.

Being different from the big wine producing neighbor lands could in some cases be considered a very positive distinguishing feature. Emphasizing the story, the terroir, climate and the features of what defines Switzerland (and the Zürich region in this case) as a wine country can potentially be a winning strategy (Johnson, Robinson, 2013).

Indeed, until some years ago, lots of Swiss winemakers were looking at other countries, especially Italy and France, trying to produce wines as similar as possible to those in an effort to earn a place in the market.

But as you would not compare a french wine to an italian

wine, because of the major distinguishing features, you don't want to compare a swiss wine to any of the above mentioned ones.

The enormous differences in terms of land, soil, climate and altitude are all conditions that affect the cultivation and quality of vines - reflecting of course on the quality of the wine. To this we should add the enormous costs of winemaking in the swiss challenging landscape and the out of (European) scale costs of manpower and life in Switzerland which increase the production costs to a level where the same wines in terms of quality, have a difference of price up to four times more compared to the other European lands.



The vineyards in Jenins, Graubünden

Additionally, Switzerland might not produce much wine, but the Swiss drink it with pleasure, importing more than double of what is actually produced and drinking the whole swiss wine production, leaving basically nothing to the export.

Statistics from the ASVC 2021 Jahresbericht and Bundesamt für Landwirtschaft show how the consumption of wine in Switzerland has risen 2.8% since 2020, while the weather adversities such as climatologic frost during the nights in April and extremely heavy rains in summer caused the scarcest harvest since 1957 with 61 millions of liters, 36% less than the average harvest of 95 millions of liters.

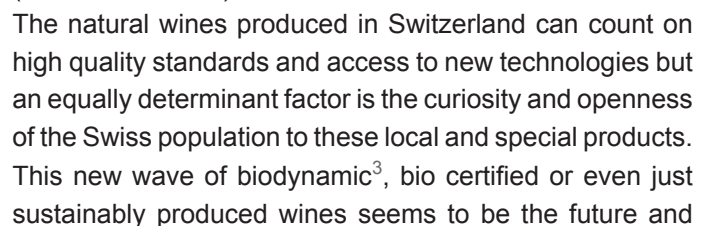
It becomes clear then, that the higher wine consumption in 2021 compared to 2020 results in a higher volume of imported wines from the foreign lands. (VSW, 2021)

The Swiss wine is definitely in a weak position internationally: not very well known, constantly battling with the confining lands and definitely overpriced if compared to the other countries.

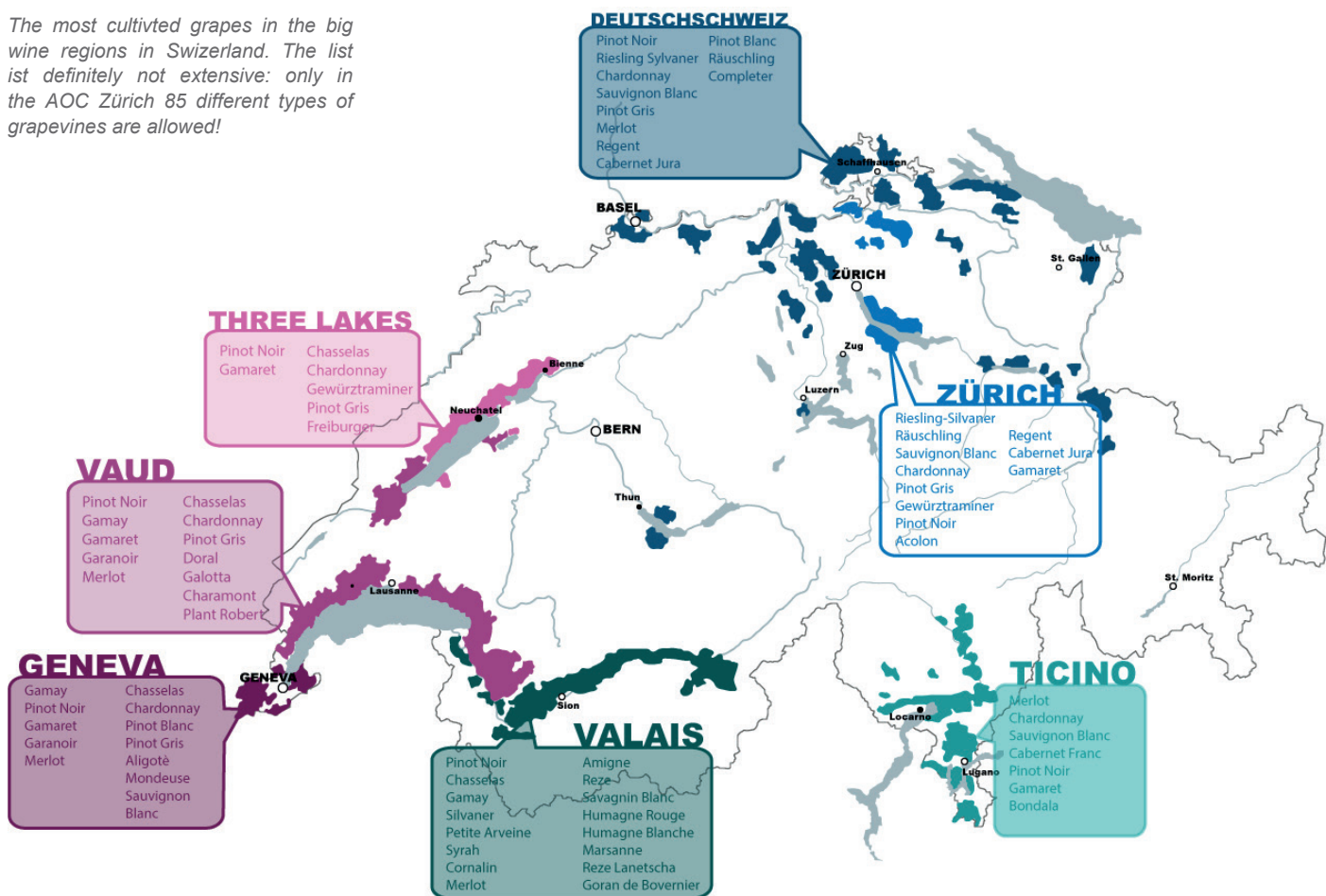
Most of the swiss people that drink wine, will prefer foreign

I was pleasantly surprised that everyone could name a favorite swiss wine, or sometimes a grape variety, but only some of the interviewed mentioned a wine produced in Zürich as their favorite. On the contrary, Italian or French grape varieties were very popular. Overall the attitude towards swiss wines seemed not positive and according to the results swiss wine is rarely ordered in a restaurant, if not meant to pair a traditional swiss recipes, such as cheese fondue. The entirety of the interviewed answered positively about buying Swiss wines but they all admitted buying them less often than foreign wines.

It goes without saying that the Swiss wine market is not immune to this phenomenon and has been greatly affected



The most cultivated grapes in the big wine regions in Switzerland. The list is definitely not extensive: only in the AOC Zürich 85 different types of grapevines are allowed!



the new identity of wine and in particular it seems to be getting the attention of that segment of the general public attentive to the climate change issue.

The need for a sustainable way of producing, the drive to rediscover authenticity and in some cases create new identities, is growing but can already count on a solid market basis. Facing climate change and the issues that originate from it became a need rather quickly in the last few years and it is the biggest challenge for the small producers, who own or rent only a small plot of land and whose harvest and production often depends on the weather conditions.

The indigenous swiss vines

What does “local wine production from indigenous vines” mean in Switzerland? What are these indigenous grapes and wines? The answer here is more extensive than one would believe it to be.

Swiss wines like Merlot from Ticino or the Chasselas from Wallis are widely known and can be found in the whole country, often produced and sponsored by big industries of cooperatives. These wines are also the ones representing Switzerland on an international level, although it is not easy to find Swiss wines on a wine menu outside Switzerland. Nevertheless, acknowledging only two grapes and their corresponding wines to identify the whole country's

production is not fair. In fact Switzerland boasts over 200 different types of locally cultivated grapes and wines that can only be found on Swiss territory (Johnson, Robinson, 2013). These are fundamentals to the culture and micro economy development of those regions and hosts several international competitions such as the “Mondial du Pinot Noir” (www.mondial-du-pinot-noir.com) in Sierre.

The most interesting and therefore most quoted indigenous grapes are certainly the Completer from Graubünden and the Valais specialties (Lafnetscha, Heida, Amigne, Cornalin, Diolinoir and so on) but if you happen to live in Zürich you do not need to drive so far to find uniqueness. As a matter of fact Swiss wine does not only come from Graubünden, Lavaux or Valais and not only from Ticino, that due to its proximity with Italy is believed to be the warmest canton in Switzerland and perfect spot for red wines such as Merlot.

Switzerland has four official languages and three macro wine producing areas: the French speaking region including the famous Canton Valais where the Chasselas dominates, the Italian speaking Canton Tessin and the German speaking region that includes the vast Canton Graubünden. This last macro region is the least known area but it is the region that consumes more liters per capita.

THE ZÜRICH WINE REGION

The Wine Region Zürich counts hundreds of small and medium wine houses scattered on its territory. With its 613 hectares of vineyards, it is the largest wine producer in the German part of the multilingual swiss country with a total amount of 6 Mio liters of the total 26 Mio liters produced in the Region. (BLW, 2021).

This region is divided into five subregions:

- **Zürichsee** - the winegrowing area on the outskirts of Zürich. This region is considered the birthplace of the Räuschling grape. The Zürichsee is an appellation named after Lake Zürich, whose shores it surrounds. It covers almost 30 communes and around 138 hectares, accounting for about 20% of the vineyard land of the wider Zürich canton. Here modern viticulture started around the mid 19th century and nowadays we can count 25 producers on both sides of the lake. Unfortunately the Zürich Lake region is one of the most urbanized regions in the whole country, leaving a very small percentage of the soil to agriculture and in particular to the vineyards.
- **Limmattal** - part of the Dietikon district and the smallest wine region in the canton.
- **Unterland** - it stretches from Kloten to Rafzerfeld. Its distinguishing features are the hills and the pretty wine growing villages.
- **Winterthur Weinland** - here is the oldest winemakers association in the Region (Weinbauerverein Winterthur)
- **Zürcher Weinland** - the Zürich Weinland is the largest wine-growing region in the whole canton.

Each sub-region is its own universe. The composition of the soil, the microclimate and the topography may even change from village to village. The predominant varieties in the Zürich Wine Region are Pinot Noir⁴ for the red grapes - which count almost two thirds of all plantings - Räuschling⁵ and Riesling x Sylvaner (the local name for



The wine Region Zürich and its four subregions: Zürichsee, Limmattal, Unterland, Winterthurer Weinland and Zürich Weinland.

Muller-Thurgau⁶) for the whites but also noticeable is the cultivation of the so-called Piwi grapes (fungus-resistant) which adapted to the climate and survived well.

In the region perhaps the most famous lakeside village is that of Wädenswil, on the south bank, which gives its name to a particularly disease-resistant, cool climate clone of Pinot Noir while the most famous village on the inland might be that of Eglisau, very close to Schaffhausen but still belonging to the Zürich Region.

The wines from the Zurich region are therefore not only typical in terms of their origin, but they are also made unique by the topography and microclimate distinguishing features. If the key to a successful wine is its uniqueness, historical tradition and a great presence in the territory

⁴ A historical variety from Burgundy in France, Pinot Noir has existed for centuries in the canton of Vaud under the old name of Servagnin and in the cantons of Vaud and Neuchâtel under the name Salvagnin. In Valais it is known as Petite Dole. This early and difficult variety is the most common in Switzerland and when grown in the right terroir with the right climate can give extraordinarily elegant and fine wines. (Vouillamoz, 2016. <https://swisswine.ch/en/grape/pinot-noir>)

⁵ Räuchling is a natural cross between Gouais and Savagnin and originally from the Landau region (Germany) that spread in the north of

Switzerland. Its name may derive from the verb rauschen, in reference to the sound of the wind passing through its dense foliage. Today Räuschling has almost disappeared from its region of origin and is practically only found in German-speaking Switzerland (Zürich, Saint-Gallen and Schwyz). (Vouillamoz, 2016. <https://swisswine.ch/en/grape/rauschling>)

⁶ For a long time wrongly considered to be an artificial cross between Riesling and Sylvaner created by the Swiss H. Müller in 1882 in Germany, DNA tests showed this heritage to be incorrect, and in 2000 revealed it was actually a cross of Riesling and Madeleine Royale. Despite everything, the name of Riesling x Sylvaner (or Riesling-Sylvaner) has been incorrectly retained in Switzerland, where this very early variety with abundant yields prone to fungal disease produces light, aromatic wines lacking in complexity. (Vouillamoz, 2016. <https://swisswine.ch/en/grape/muller-thurgau>)

then why is the wine from Zurich so underestimated and its features are mostly unknown also among swiss people? What makes Swiss wine so unattractive and how could the producers and the wines be representative of Zurich?

Wine, social scene and personal considerations.

Being the financial business heart of Switzerland, Zürich is a magnet that attracts thousands of young professionals in search of a good job position. The city has been profiting from this phenomenon and it has been growing a flourishing economy. Being able to use and canalize this abundance of highly educated working class immigrants to improve and shape its image had been the secret of the city's growth.

I have been living in Zurich since 2009 and I can remember how the city looked completely different only 10 years ago. There has been an increasing number of construction sites, cleaning and reshaping entire neighborhoods.

The multicultural Zurich is not a new reality. Nevertheless, in the last ten to fifteen years, I witnessed a change not only in the city structure but also in the perception of foreign cultures. The increasing numbers of secondos, the numerous foreign students that landed at ETH because of its prestige and then chose to stay, are now part of the local population. This multi-ethnicity of the population is also visible in the variety of food offered in restaurants and in the enthusiasm of the public towards new experiences from the Ethiopian injera to himalayan dumplings, passing through Moroccan fusion cuisine and Japanese soups.

This diversification in the gastronomic scene together with the increased awareness of the climate change issue gave impulse to a new fine dining category: a revisited traditional swiss and european cuisine that bases its philosophy on the use of local products.

As we have established before, the perception of swiss wines from the swiss population has improved in the last few years. Yet, the question remains: why is swiss wine not attractive? This is a complex question whose answer is still being discussed among experts and involves different areas. For instance Wohlgroth, 2004 analyzes the market presence of Swiss wine and the perception of the Swiss population share of the wine produced in Switzerland including various possible solutions based on a new form of advertisement and visual communication. With this work I focused my analysis on different aspects and tried to change the perspective and give an answer to this question from my point of view.



Vineyards inside the city: the Landolt's vines in Zürich Enge

THE PROJECT

Even more than the previously described diversification in terms of grape varieties, it is important to mention the growing number of young "Winzern" when talking about local wines. Most of the small and very local realities are steady established family businesses that have been operating for decades. Nevertheless, a growing part of the independent and local production is now represented by a new generation of winemakers that are seeking new ways of producing wine while facing climate change, by a fast changing market and by the need of bringing the local tastes back to the Swiss table.

As mentioned above, the focus of my project was to find the uniqueness in the wines from Zürich and fix that uniqueness in an illustration.

In order to do so, I decided to start by visiting some producers and getting to know them and their wines. My research's focus is their identities, their main features and how their wines are representative of their philosophy and sometimes of the entire area.

I could not engage in spontaneous visits during the pandemic. This turned out not to be a problem but an advantage. Having to book an appointment allowed me to already introduce myself and my project and anticipate the reason for my visiting. Most of the winemakers were very nice and collaborative, letting me plan my visits the way it would be best for me and spending a lot of time with me, but above all letting me taste their wine and sharing their stories.

After the visit I produced a sketch for each winemaker I visited and tried to capture the essence of their philosophy. My target for this CAS has never been an exhaustive mapping of the whole Zürich region but rather a first test of what an illustration project could bring and what

kind of information these drawings could deliver, that are otherwise not exposed or shared, if not by visiting the winemakers and talking to them.

The main idea behind this project is “conserving Zürich” as in putting it into a jar and storing it, the way it is done for food you want to preserve for the future. The enological identity of the city can be preserved by transforming the otherwise underestimated local wine culture into an added value to the citizens, making the wine experience available for the public even before buying the bottle. Ultimately I wanted to create a visual reference that could function as a memory-tool not only for me but for a broader public and help remembering and celebrating their region and its food culture. The final form of these illustrations is a collection of postcards that can be used as advertisements from the winemakers but also more generally as a “card from Zürich - the wine region”.

In the following chapter I describe each one of the producers I visited and what I could understand from them and their different values and philosophies. To produce a final illustration for each of them would have been ideal but because of time constraints, I have reduced the collection to five which are displayed afterwards.

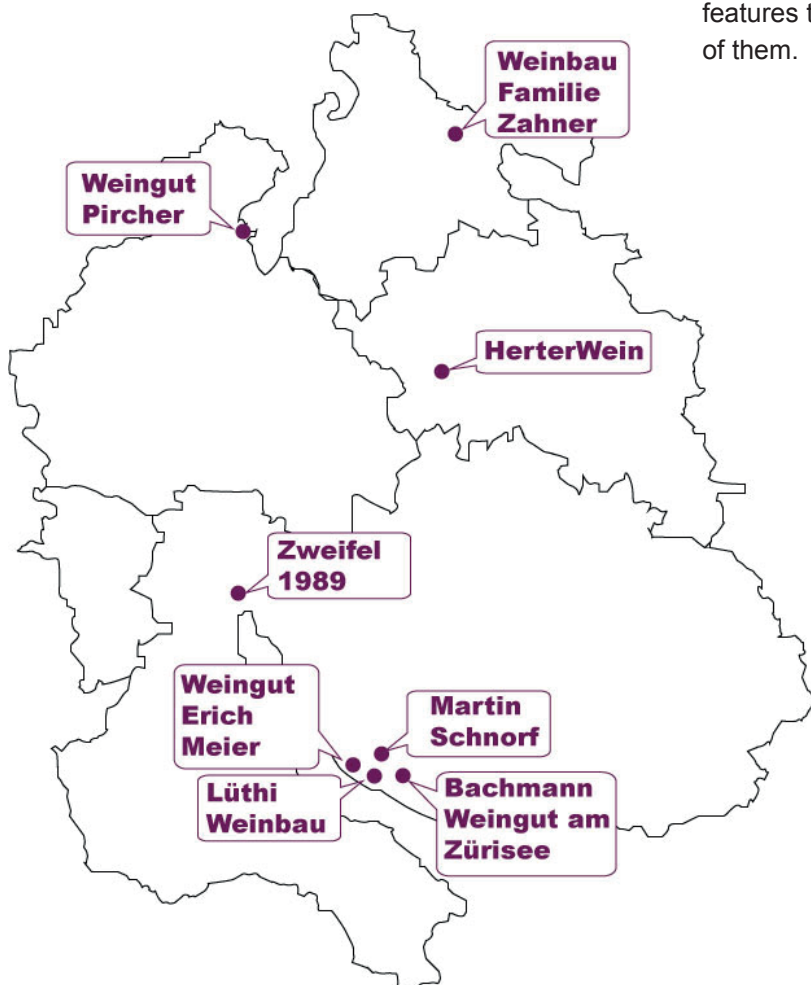
THE WINE PRODUCERS IN THE AOC ZÜRICH

The wine Region Zürich is home to numerous wine producers. Most of them are located along the lake shores but a lot of remarkable wineries are to be found scattered in the areas around Zürich.

Because of the pandemic I could not simply visit a winery and taste the wines. Most of the public tastings were suspended or reduced to small groups and had to be booked. Moreover I wanted to talk to the producers to understand their approach to wine, their philosophy, their story and to be able to give my illustration a bit of their character.

Being somehow overwhelmed by the number of producers, I tried to pick some wineries from every different subregion, so that not only the grapes but also the terroir and the conditions would change, even if in the same AOC. After the visits I sketched illustrations for all the producers. Of the entire sketches production I selected six and went on with the design of the illustration. For the final draft of the project I picked five out of ten final illustrations and proceeded with the digitalisation of the illustration and design of the postcard.

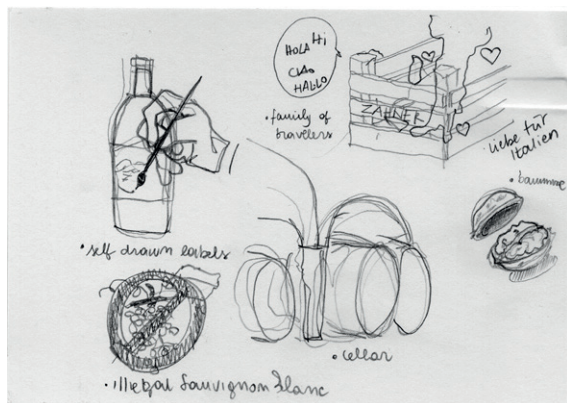
In the following chapter I will describe all the wineries I visited, pointing out their main characteristics and the features that allowed me to sketch a first illustration for all of them.



In this map the location of the winemakers I visited for this project. I tried to explore the different sub-regions in the wine region Zürich.

WEINGUT FAMILIE ZAHNER

The first winery I visited was the **Weingut der Familie Zahner**, where I have been welcomed by Niklaus Zahner, the owner since 1994. Having announced myself I had the chance to talk a long time with him and get to know him and his wines better. This winery was founded in 1963 by Niklaus' parents, Waldemar and Suzanne, who bought the land and moved to Switzerland from South America, where he worked for Nestlé. The first two hectares were planted with walnut trees and in the 80s they enlarged their business and planted some hectares with vines. This winery has a wide portfolio and it is renowned for its Pinot Noir (five times gold medal at Mondial du Pinot noir in Sierre, last in 2013), lately it has also been mentioned by Gault Milleau among the 150 best Schweizer Winzer.



1)

At Weingut Familie Zahner tradition and family are founding values. Their vinification is based on Richard Smart and Markus Keller's methods⁷ and every step of the production is done manually, including the pigeage⁸. Every detail is taken care of and shows the dedication and passion of Niklaus and his collaborators, including the graphics and the labels of the wines, which has been drawn by Niklaus, who also designed the logo of the winery. The familiar atmosphere was also shown to me during the visit and made me realize how important the personal connection to the customer is.

⁷ The vines should have as many leaves as possible that are directly exposed to the sun, while the grapes grow in semi-shade, but hanging freely in the air. The leaves form a lot of sugar, coloring and flavoring substances for the grapes, which then ripen better and more regularly. This means a lot of manual work to get every shoot and leaf in the right position. (Zahner, o.J.)

⁸ Pigeage: Also known as Punch-Down, the process of breaking up the thick layer of skins, stems and seeds that forms at the surface of fermenting red wine and submerging it during fermentation to extract color, tannins, flavor and aromas from the grape solids. (Winespectator, 2022)

1) A6 sketch and my notes on the visit at Weingut Familie Zahner.

2) "Tempus vulneribus saluti est -Time heals all the wounds". A sign in the cellar at Weingut Familie Zahner.

3) The first drawings on the Weingut Familie Zahner. The technique I used here is a mixed medias (Ink, watercolors, crayons) on paper.



2)



3)



1)

- 1) The view from the living room at Martin Schnorf's house
- 2) The two donkeys
- 3) Sketch of a postcard for Schnorf Weine
- 4) Some drafts of the illustration for Martin Schnorf Weingut



2)

SCHNORF WEINE

If the inland can be somehow dispersive and the wineries are scattered in the territory, on the Zürich lake shores there is an abundance of small and big wineries, often located in the same village.

The winery of **Martin Schnorf** belongs to the first group - a small winery with a small production that has its roots in Zürich.

I visited Mr. Schnorf in his own house, where he welcomed me and let introduced me to his wines. The house overlooks the lake of Zürich and it is built so that you can admire the outside while sitting in the living room, letting the eyes catch a gorgeous panorama.

While describing all his wines and his production methods he explained to me that his family has been bound to wine production for over 600 years. He himself is indeed a trained farmer and still keeps two donkeys in a small stable on a fenced area next to his family house.

His motto is *quality before quantity* and his production relies on his skilful management of the vines and care of the grapes. He started his wine business converting some of his plot of land, cultivated with cereals and forage, into vineyards.

Because of the small harvest and the high costs of production, Martin Schnorf did not buy or build any facility for the winemaking and is collaborating with another big wine producer in Meilen: Schwarzenbach. Martin Schnorf works with Schwarzenbach and helps with their wine production. This choice is also driven by the production philosophy: machine processing is only used when it makes sense otherwise, everything is done by hand.



3)

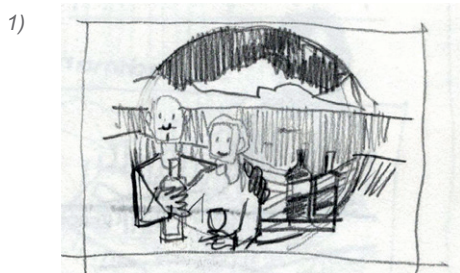


4)

LÜTHI WEINBAU

Not far away from Meilen, in Männendorf Rico Lüthi is producing wine with passion and respect for this ancient activity. I visited **Lüthi Weinbau** in summer, on a late afternoon and Mr. Lüthi welcomed me in his vineyards, where he let me taste all of his wines while chatting about Swiss wine, qualities and difficulties of this challenging work and the attitude of the public towards Swiss and specifically Zürich's Wines. Rico Lüthi started his business 25 years ago and has since then not only improved the quality of his wine but also succeeded in bringing almost forgotten grapes, such as Scheurebe⁹ or new ones such as Cabernet Cubin¹⁰, on the Swiss tables. His business philosophy is based on producing a small quantity of wine on a not so big plot of land (2 hectares) so that he can follow all the production steps very closely, reaching high standards of quality. He won't compromise: everything is done manually and with great attention to detail. His wines' strength lie in their character that is profoundly influenced by the terroir and the climate. For each glass of wine he poured there was a story, connected to the year or to his method or even to his vision. He wants people to be more connected to the wine they are drinking, understanding its complexity and the story behind each detail, starting from the label, the packaging and also the choice not to use cork anymore, to preserve the best aromas of its white wines.

Rico Lüthi's passion for wine production and stubbornness has paid out: his Pinot Noir won several prizes and he was mentioned by the 2023 Gault Milleau Book among the 150 best swiss winemakers.



9 An artificial cross of Riesling with an unknown variety created in 1916 at the Alzey Research Centre in Rheinhessen (D), Scheurebe was named after its creator Georg Scheu. This late-ripening variety, which is prone to powdery mildew, is grown in Geneva and German-speaking Switzerland, where it gives dry or sweet wines with naturally high acidity and the aroma of blackberries and blackcurrants. (Vouillamoz, 2016. <https://swisswine.ch/en/grape/scheurebe>)

10 A late-ripening and high-yield new red wine variety created in the 1970 by the Staatlichen Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt für Wein- und Obstbau in Weinsbergand (D). It is a crossing between Blaufränkisch and Levadoux, a Cabernet Sauvignon clone. The variety delivers very colour-intensive, tannin-heavy wines with a note of cassis. The wines need a longer time in the barrells to reach their optimal quality. (Wikipedia, Cabernet Cubin, 2022. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cabernet_Cubin)



2)

1) the first draft of the illustration for Lüthi Weingut. I did not produce an A6 sketch, instead I put immediately the informations in a drawing.

2) The first idea for the illustration for Lüthi

3) The vineyard in Männendorf where Rico Lüthi holds his wine tastings, at the sunset.



3)

ERICH MEIER

When it comes to successful winemakers in the Wine Region Zürich it is impossible not to mention **Erich Meier**. His Weingut is located in Uetikon am See, a small village, where he also has his shop and holds his open wine tastings in the front yard.

Like Martin Schnorf and Rico Lüthi, Erich Meier's passion for wine making is the reason why he started his business and like them he grows his vines on a small plot of land and produces a reduced amount of bottles with great regard for the quality over quantity principle.

His approach is different though. He stands for perfectly structured, multi-layered wines with great complexity and character and wants to achieve them with regard for sustainable and punctual methods. His search for the perfect combination between tradition and innovation results in high quality vintages, clearly recognizable.

His vision and philosophy reflect also in the architecture and the choice of materials for his wine cellar. He refurbished an old village house leaving the outside as it was while choosing modern highly functional materials for the interiors and curating the details so that it can be held clean and tidy.

The wine bottle label shows a minimal design, just a black bottle displayed upside down (his logo), his and the wine's name, suggesting that his wines don't need ornaments, their quality speaks for themselves.



1)

1) the logo on the Erich Meier labels

2) An image from his tidy and organised winery and cellar.

3) A6 sketch: Notes on the visit to Erich Meier Weingut

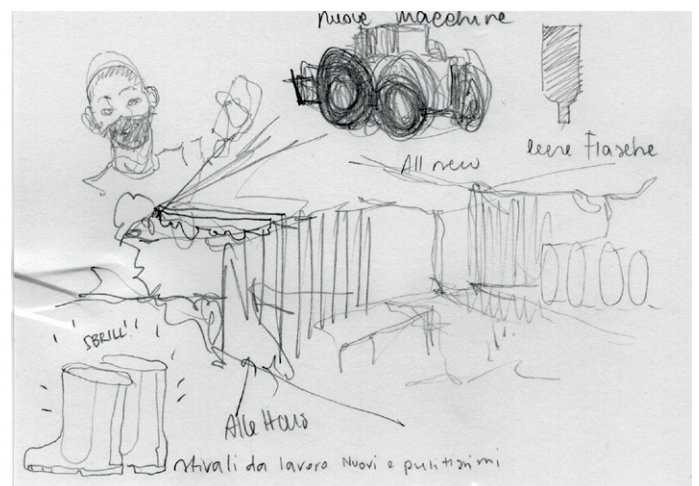
4) The first hand drawing of the final illustration for Erich Meier

When I visited Erich Meier's Weingut it was a sunny late spring afternoon and it took less than half an hour from the opening to see his terrace filled with people enjoying his wines. He explained to me that he had built his business alone and still works mostly alone, but wishes his daughter will take his place (although for now she is still a kid!).

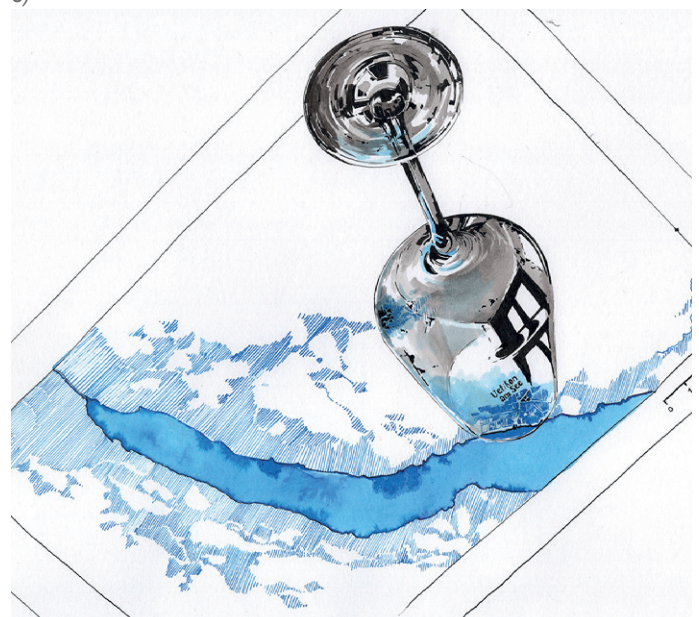
His passion's driven business has conquered several milestones and won many prizes, deservedly making his name one of the best known in the Zürich area.



2)



3)



4)

WEINGUT BACHMANN

On the same day I visited Erich Meier I also visited the **Weingut Bachmann**, where I had the chance to meet Theres Bachmann and her baby son Rico.

The Bachmann's are a family bound by their passion for wine making and they have been in the field for a long time guided by Martin Bachmann, founder of the wine cellar.

In 2018 Theres Bachmann took over and together with her husband Jonathan decided to renovate the image of their business through the development of new wines. This way they could be able to compete in the crowded wine market and meet the needs of the evolving public.

Together with this image-renewal action, the Bachmann family invested in the building of a new tasting room and tasting terrace, taking advantage of the extraordinary position their house is.



1)

1) The family House and its traditional architecture
2) Some cement tanks on a vineyard: during the renovation the construction site needed space!

3) Notes on the visit to Weingut Bachmann



2)

While always holding her son, Theres poured some white wines and explained their philosophy and strategy: lake wines opposed to mountain wines, the firsts being fresh, young, easy to drink, perfect for the summer on the lake and the seconds being more complex, structured and with the aim to a more sophisticated public.

The mountain wines, especially the reds were definitely a surprise to me. Not being immune to the prejudice on the light red swiss wines, I was not expecting structure and not only did I find that, but I also found great complexity and versatility.

Theres Bachmann showed me their vision for a new style of Bachmann's wine, telling me about the importance of the family as a value, the way they work together and how they want their values to show in their products.

Innovation meets tradition once again.

The big house where the family resides and the wine is done stands in the vineyard facing the lake and the new terrace's structure attaches to it. The whole wine cycle, from the harvest to the selling, the mountains, the lake and the city is captured in one gaze.



3)

The family name and the history of it, the tradition, the culture that is transmitted from father to daughter are very important factors for a lot of businesses in different fields but are sometimes key values in the wine making.

ZWEIFEL 1898

In places where wine production has its roots in ancient times, wine makers' families are famous and celebrated like founding fathers of big communities.

Zürich does not differ and the **Zweifel** family name is proof of this. Nowadays famous for their paprika chips, the Zweifel have been bound to the hill of Hönng in Zürich since 1342 where they bought their property in 1709 and established their business in 1898 with the production of must and juice out of their apple and grape harvesting. When in the 1960s the family started importing wines from all over the world and became one of the biggest importers in Switzerland the business was slowly transformed and it developed in different branches, scattering the production in different places but the wine making remained centered in Zürich, where it still thrives.

Their logo shows three hearts as a symbol for the three main products (grape, potatoes and apples) and a sickle, one of the most known farming tools.

Visiting the Zweifel wine cellar and museum is a very nice experience and gives you the chance to be confronted with a different scale of production and a different business model.

Also here the family is the heart of the whole business although its dimension has exceeded the familiar size to become a well oiled big structured factory modeled business.

Despite this, the Zweifel company still keeps traditions alive and holds on to its founding values.

The cellar and the museum are definitely worth a visit and the Zweifel family name is such an important part of Zürich's history and so well known, that it would be impossible to talk about wines in Zürich without mentioning it.



1) The Zweifel house in the hill of Hönng
2) Sketches based on the notes from the visit



2)

HERTERWEIN

Wine is a living product that matures with time, tells the story of one year, of a terroir, of the condition in which it was produced and of course about the producer. Not many products are bound with the territory and history and can be identified by year like wine, working like a blackbox and carrying so much information with them. Some winemakers are like storytellers, their wines shape their character in a unique way based on the environment, adapting and evolving.

Stephan Herter has his business **HerterWein** in Hettlingen (Taggenberg), where he lives and cultivates the vines planted 40 years ago by Hans Herzog.

I visited him on a clear winter afternoon. He welcomed me outside an old farmhouse - that he refurbished himself to be his own family house and place of work. He also built the whole winery from scratch, including the cellar where the wines mature. After completing his education as a cook and after having collected years of experience in the wine handling, he decided to turn his career and dedicate it to winemaking.

His approach is a rather radical one: he wants to create wines that express directly their environment and are less the product of the adjustment from the winemaker. His goal is to give the vines the best terroir and conditions, including being a winemaker that lets nature take its course. To do this, he needs peace and the right pace and rhythm of life. In Taggenberg he found a perfect spot and a very unique terroir composed of Jura limestone, the kind you find in Burgundy. This poor soil is perfect for his vines that he cultivates, refusing the use of pesticides and relying entirely on their natural cycle (Herzog, 2021.)

The way he chose to make wine is probably more unique than rare and it does not come easy. To produce wine the way he does he had to accept that the climate is changing and also that extreme meteorological phenomena are happening more often - more than once he lost his entire harvest because of the hail in summer or the early frosting. His personality and his peculiar philosophy of production are surely enough to make his wines special, but also the labels contribute as a distinguishing element.

His labels are designed by Michel Casarramona and show a modern illustration of a different imaginary character for every type of wine.

Stephan embodies the meaning of dedication and passion. His wine is a pure expression of the land where the vines grow and is to be sold only in Switzerland in order not to increase the carbon footprint of this production.



Unlike the other illustration, where the process started with some quick sketches on an A6 paper, for HerterWein the right idea was there from the start. This first drawing I did the day after the visit remained almost unchanged till its last version for the postcard.

WEINGUT PIRCHER

The last winery I visited is in Eglisau, famous for its position next to the border with Germany and located on the Rhein riverbanks. The location, the traditional architecture and the vineyards along the sunny side contribute to create a very romantic scenery to admire while crossing the bridge at the entrance of the small village. Eglisau is the last outpost of the Zürich wine region before entering the Schaffhausen region.

"If I were a grape ripening in Weingut Pircher's terraced vineyards in Eglisau in Canton Zürich, I think there is every chance I would give wonderful wine"

(Style, 2019, S. 141)



Vineyards on the steeps in the Eglisau Region.



It was only after visiting Pircher's Weingut that I fully understood the quotation above. The beauty of the landscape and the perfection of the position for wine production can only turn out into extraordinary wines. Here winemaking has shaped the hills all around the village and along the riverbanks since 891 AD but it was only in the 1950s that the steep slopes were re-shaped in order to simplify the work of winegrowing and improve production and quality of the wines. At the same time Rita and Joseph Pircher built the winery and started a business that is nowadays on its third generation of winemakers. After them was Urs Pircher who took the lead and started pushing to improve the quality and take advantage of the sun exposition and natural benefits of the morphology of the land. (Style, 2019)

My visit to the **Weingut Pircher** took place on a winter sunny morning and I was so lucky to be able to enjoy the wines on the terrace, while talking to Gianmarco Ofner, Urs's godson, who took over the lead of the winery in 2021. Gianmarco followed Urs' steps and reshaped the vines, reassigning the slopes to different grapes in order to benefit the most out of the Rhein microclimate and the long hours of sun exposition during summer.

Pircher's wines are the product of the perfect match between ideal climate conditions, good terroir, know-how and passion.

Weingut Pircher is famous for their Pinot Noir, a sharp but fresh berries' perfumed wine, complex and yet easy to drink, a wine that is designed to be the perfect company on a warm summer evening. Their viticulture is based on the organic cultivation principles combined with traditional methods but with a continuous push for quality and improvement. (Style, 2019)

While Pinot Noir is still their first wine, they produce a very elegant example of the Alsatian style Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris and a personal take on the more local Räuschling, that is different from the ones you could find on the lake shores, is sophisticated, complex and shows exactly what the perfect terroir, combined with experience and great intuition can make.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

With the information gathered in the visits I drafted the first sketches, one for each winery and then selected five of them and developed the final illustrations.

Erich Meier

After visiting his winery I could not shake off the feeling that if I wanted to represent this winery in its main features I should have included the sharp precision and the definite character of the wines, together with the winemaker's approach and the very distinguishing mix between Erich's surrounding, which he respects and provides him inspiration and the minimalist and modern character of the winery. I decided to use a similar idea he chose for his logo, turning an empty wine glass upside down and using it to pinpoint the place his wines are born on a map of the lake Zürich. The glass is a magnifying glass, it points and defines the terroir and works as a clear reference to the nature of the product. The image is clean, only two objects, black and white with one color to point down the location. It works as a picture and it wants to be as realistic as possible, detailed and yet simple in its geometry and composition.

I started with some pencil drawing to move afterwards to the ink technique, that gave me the chance to define lines and understand the right thickness and blackness of the lines. The final draft is done using digital tools - Photoshop as a software and a Huion tablet to draw freely. I chose this technique to allow precision but maintaining a certain amount of freedom in the wobbliness of some hand drawn lines.



Weingut Bachmann

This illustration is the one that had the most failed attempts and that took me the longest to develop in its final form.

I wanted it to be playful, to give the idea of a family business with a bright future and a new line of winemakers very attached and grateful to their land.

I started with some family portraits sketches (s. p. 17), and then moved on to a dry composition, the glass is again the focus of the whole illustration, the wine in it is the key element and is mirroring the elements surrounding it.

Not dynamic enough and with a *not easy to read* second level of information in it, this image was not very successful to me. The Zürich flag, hidden in the use of white and light blue, was not very representative without adding a more explicit link to the city. The name of the family written in the small cubes was also not too easy to understand, mixed with the uneven letters of the “*Ricoeur*” (the name of the new liqueur that Theres Bachmann is dedicating to her son Rico, mixing his name with the word heart in french.)



The pacifier has been replaced by baby construction toys, in the attempt to create a link to the newly born and the family values and at the same time give the idea of a work in progress. something evolving and changing.

Zürich appears in the background as built with wooden colorful blocks, the mountains and the lake - key elements for the Bachmann's wines - are represented as wooden toys that surround the almost stranger “adult” element - the glass - and on the front two blocks in the form of a house with a capital B engraved, referring to the old typical house of the Bachmann's family.

After the first sketches on paper I transferred the drawings on a digital software.

The technique I used for the final illustration is digital painting.

Herterwein

The illustration for Herterwein is the only exception in the whole collection of drawings. In this one there is no glass of wine on the foreground and the illustration gravitates all around the red handles of the shears. The geometry is easy: a triangle whose main points are the shears on the right, the trowel on the left and the bottle in the middle. This last one also appears to be in the background, guaranteeing the stability of the construction and symbolizing also the glue, the main purpose that is the fulcrum of Herterwein.

Stephan Herter has done all by himself in the pursuit of sustainability: the full bottle serves as motivation/main goal while his winemaker tool and the grape occupy the right half of the drawing. On the other side there is the trowel with cement and a screw, the construction works tools, symbolizing the effort of doing all by himself from scratch including the refurbishment of his house.

This drawing is also an exception in the technique. I refused to redraw everything digitally and used the digital tools only to add the red color while leaving the illustration as it is in its original form, with its imperfect gray tones and the roughness of the paper texture as a background.



Weingut Pircher

The sun shines on the vineyards on the terraced hills of Eglisau and if properly positioned, the vines can give extraordinary wines. The high quality of the Weingut Pircher's wines does not just happen; it is the result of many years of experience, planning, push for improvement and great intuition.

The wine is balanced and elegant, its qualities, the perfumes and tastes are defined clearly and make the product unique. The fruits, herbs and flowers are yellow, like the sunlight the vines have received, the wine shines of the same yellow color and is centered in the image to be the focus of your attention. A pair of glasses, a notebook and a pen are the objects placed in the back and foreground, the main ingredients to reach this quality and precision of taste.

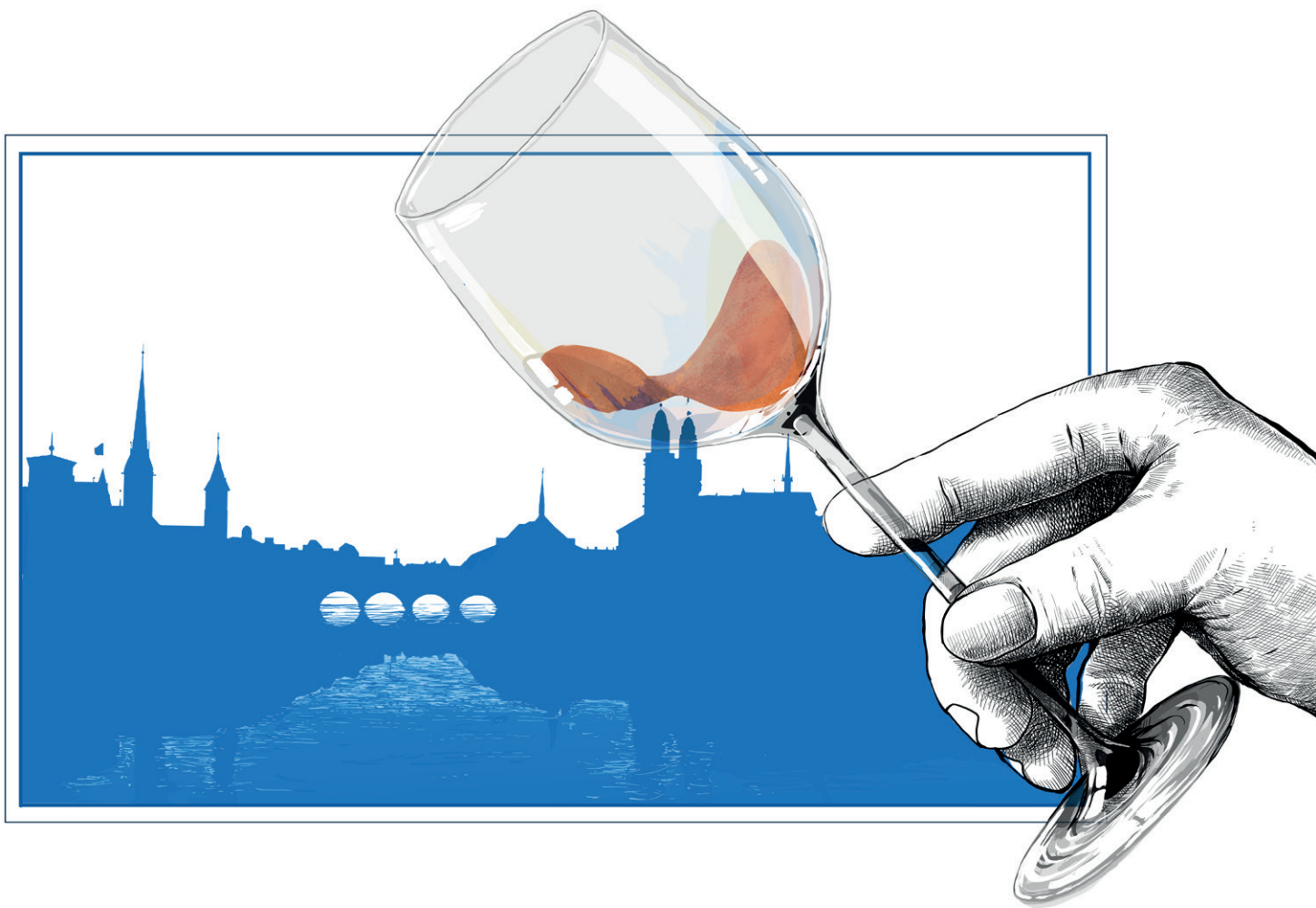
The technique I used here is again digital painting but as for Herterwein, the color is used only to emphasize the composition, catch and direct the viewer's gaze.



Zweifel 1898

The name Zweifel is bound to the city of Zürich and a Zürich blue city skyline in the background is there to remind it. The composition and colors of the background are an obvious but due reference to the canton's flag.

As if cheering to it, a hand with a glass is greeting the view over the city, in an act of tribute. The hand is drawn using a black and white shading technique, such as the one you could find in the illustrations in the early 1900s. The story of Zweifel goes in fact back to the end of the XIX century but the family is nowadays mostly known for their Paprika Chips by the new generations. This is why in the glass, instead of a swirling wine, a chip shows and catches the reflection of the city.



FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

The abundance of material collected while visiting the wineries and researching the topic of wine production in Switzerland, the great amount of information still available and the dynamism that characterizes the topic of wine made me realize how this project is potentially a perpetually growing project.

Only in the Zürich region there are almost 600 producers, each of them with different wine styles, philosophy and production scale. If the starting point of my project is a small collection of postcards with the aim of giving space to each individual winemaker and their reality, the project could be expanded to include every single winemaker in the region, and create an illustrated chart of this wine region. This inventory could focus on the geographical position of these vineyards categorizing them by location or differentiate the producers not only by postal code but also by terroir, or preferred grape or viticulture and production philosophy.

In order not to fall into the trap of merely creating a list of producers and in order to maintain the project on a approachable dimension - the visits, the creative process and the printing are time consuming and expensive - the final product could develop into:

- a publication, a booklet containing the illustration and the main information about the winemaker
- a website, mapping the Zürich region
- a more comprehensive collection of postcards grouped in themes or regions

or a combination of these options.

On the other hand, if a punctual analysis of the winemakers is not as interesting, the project could expand in the theoretical direction, deepening the research about the typical grapes, the cultivation of vines and the harvesting techniques, the terroir. The main aim of a project like this could be focusing the resources in explaining the traditional, local wines and the production trends and depict Zürich and its surroundings under the lens of wine production. In this case, the illustrations could become less centered on the single producers but more on the habits of the Zürich citizens, the possible pairings with the typical food, the culture around it and the way swiss wine could adapt to the international gastronomic scene of the city while maintaining a very precise character and identity.

FINAL CONSIDERATION

It is important to state that the aim of this project within the CAS frame has never been to provide an exhaustive answer to the questions: “why zürich’s wines are not famous” and neither to find an established solution to the problem “how to improve/change the perception of swiss wines among the swiss population”.

Beyond the obvious reasons - small production, high costs, unfair competition, difficult environment - there are numerous factors affecting these answers, whose detailed analysis would be very difficult if not almost impossible within the limit of this CAS.

However, my attempt was to provide a possible option to improve the visibility of the wine region with the purpose of changing the way this region is perceived and deepening the comprehension of its cultural heritage and food traditions going beyond the stereotyped Zürich city of banks, lake views, chocolate and cheese.

Depending on the direction I choose to expand the project, the character of the illustrations should adapt and develop. This first attempt has given me a glimpse on how complex the process of depicting the identity of a region could be and how many factors occur and influence the outcome.

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- <https://www.zahner.biz/>
- The photos of the vineyards a gentle gift from my friends Isabella Mori, Laura Maccioni, Antonios Garas and Andrea Orzati.

Selbstständigkeitserklärung

Titel der Arbeit:

The Zürich wine region - an illustration project

Titel des Moduls/Zertifikatsabschlusses, in dessen Rahmen die Arbeit verfasst wurde:

CAS Arts and Design in Practice

Name der Betreuerin / des Betreuers:

Roland Ryser

Hiermit erkläre ich ausdrücklich, dass es sich bei der vorliegenden schriftlichen Arbeit um eine von mir selbständig und ohne Mithilfe anderer Personen sowie in eigenen Worten verfasste Originalarbeit handelt. Ich bestätige zudem, dass ich keine anderen als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel verwendet, sowie alle wörtlich oder dem Sinn nach aus der Literatur zitierten Stellen entsprechend klar und korrekt gekennzeichnet habe.

Ich bestätige mit meiner Unterschrift die Richtigkeit dieser Angaben.

Vorname: Irene

Nachname: Asara

Matrikelnummer:

Datum: 31.01.2023

Unterschrift:

