

375 Years

WEINGUT Wwe. Dr. H. THANISCH

ERBEN THANISCH

1636 ~ 2011



375 Jahre Wine Estate Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch, Erben Thanisch



The Thanisch family has cultivated wine continuously since the year 1636. So the wine estate Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch, Erben Thanisch, can look back on a history covering 375 years.



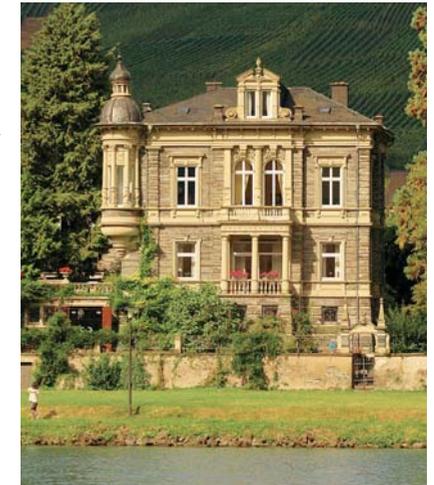
The vineyard "Berncasteler Doctor"

The owner of the estate was first mentioned by name in the parish records of Bernkastel of the year 1636, according to which Franz Taners and his wife Apollonia had their son christened with the name Helias. Franz Taners was listed in the tax records for 1654 as a vintner with assets of 776 Reichstaler and a yearly wine production of 3 "fuder" barrels (1fuder = 1000 litres) of wine.

Today the estate, which produces wine exclusively from the Riesling grape, is run as a family business in the 11th generation. The current owner, Sofia Thanisch, took over from her aunt Mechthild Thanisch in 1996.

The estate has its premises at Saarallee 31 in Bernkastel-Kues. The vineyards are located mostly in Bernkastel and Kues. Probably the most famous vineyard is the "Berncasteler Doctor" where the family acquired a parcel at the beginning of the 19th century.

The estate is one of the founding members of the "VDP" (Association of German Quality Wine Producers) in 1910.



Thanisch Villa in Kues

How it all began

The times were turbulent when the vintner Franz Taners had his son Helias christened in 1636. Godfather was a French quartermaster, Helias Beranger, or “general waggon master lieutenant“ as he is referred to in the birth certificate. He was quartered in Graach at the time because the lands of the Trier elector and archbishop were occupied by French troupes engaged in the Thirty Years’ War.

Franz Taners came from the village of Taners or Thanisch, which was situated above Bernkastel on the road to Traben-Trarbach. His son Helias also became a vintner as did all his descendants.

His great grandson, Jakob Thanisch (1737-1807), a vintner like all his ancestors, owned 14,500 vines, a remarkable possession for the time.

His property is precisely recorded in the estate ledgers of 1791, which have been carefully preserved by the family.



1791		1792		1793	
1	100	100	100	100	100
2	200	200	200	200	200
3	300	300	300	300	300
4	400	400	400	400	400
5	500	500	500	500	500
6	600	600	600	600	600
7	700	700	700	700	700
8	800	800	800	800	800
9	900	900	900	900	900
10	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000

Extract from the estate ledgers of Jakob Thanisch from 1791 listing his vineyards.

The French Revolution

After the French revolution and the occupation of the lands of the Trier elector by the French Revolutionary Army in 1794, there was an upheaval in



property ownership. The possessions of the elector, the church and the nobility were declared to belong to the French state and were auctioned off. Many wealthy businessmen and citizens, including the sons of Jakob Thanisch, took the opportunity to increase the size of their vineyards. The elder son, Jakob Thanisch (1773-1855) bought the vineyards in Kues of the monastery in Prüm and the imperial abbey St. Matthias in Zeltingen with 11,000 vines. His brother, Johann Anton Thanisch (1776-1844) purchased the vineyards of the same abbey in Bernkastel with 17,000 vines.

Napoleon Bonaparte 1792

Commercial Advancement

After the victory of the Prussians, the English and the Austrians over Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo, the Moselle valley came under Prussian rule. Johann Anton Thanisch survived the change from French to Prussian rule very



Inventory from Anton Thanisch, 1843

well. He was also active as a merchant and with his naturally produced wines from the best vineyards was able to profit from the rising demand from customers in all parts of the Prussian kingdom.

As early as 1837, the historian Christian von Stramberg wrote in his book „Das Moseltal zwischen Zell und Konz“ (“The Moselle valley between Zell and Konz“)

“Herr Thanisch produces noble wines and is the largest property owner in the municipality.“

When Johann Anton Thanisch died in 1844, he left behind six children and 148,000 vines, including a parcel in the “doctor“ vineyard. He had multiplied the number of vines he owned. His assets are listed in an inventory, which is in the family’s possession.

Moselle Wine – Fashionable

In the sixties of the nineteenth century came the breakthrough for wines from the Moselle region, which enjoyed increasing international acclaim following several exceptional vintages and successes at the world exhibitions in London (1862) and Paris (1867). Moselle wines became fashionable. The light, fruity and exhilarating Riesling wines from the Moselle matched the current taste trends of an indulged public.

It became common at this time to auction wines. An inventory of wines auctioned by the Thanisch family in 1864 has survived to this day. Johann Philipp Thanisch, a son of Anton Thanisch, and his two brothers and two sisters, presented their wines together.



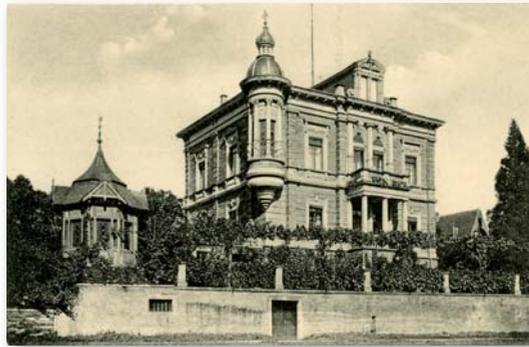
Wine Auction from 1864

Johann Philipp Thanisch died in 1873. His possessions are also listed in an inventory. He left a widow, three sons and a daughter. The eldest son, Peter Anton Thanisch (1859-1909) Landgerichtsrat (a post in the courthouse) in Trier and wine estate owner and the youngest Dr. Hugo Thanisch (1853-1895) were both elected as members of the Prussian parliament, an indication of the high esteem in which the family was held.



Erection of the "Villa Thanisch"

In 1884, Dr. Hugo Thanisch built the "Villa Thanisch" in neo-renaissance style for his family in the village of Cues as it was spelt at the time. It houses the wine estate to this day. The "Villa Thanisch" lies directly on the banks of the Moselle with a breathtaking view of the castle ruin "Landshut" and the "Doctor" vineyard, the family's "Grand Cru" site.



The Thanisch Villa with Chinese pavilion



Dr. Hugo Thanisch and his wife Katharina planted a sequoia, a giant redwood, which are indigenous to California, next to their house. In the garden there was a Chinese pavilion, which was in accordance with the style of the time. The flair of the great wide world was brought to the provinces.

Mosaic in the cellar of the Thanisch Villa

The Highest auction Revenue

The success of the Thanisch wines can be deduced from the results of the auctions, which were held in Trier twice yearly in the Grand Hall of the Catholic Clubhouse „Treveris“, which seated up to 2,500 people. Between 1893 and 1908, the wine estate of Dr. Hugo Thanisch achieved the highest auction results of any wine estate on the Moselle, Saar and Ruwer. During this time a total of 159 fuder of wine were produced and auctioned and fetched an average of 4,275 Gold Marks per fuder (about 1000 liter).



Dr. Hugo Thanisch

How can we relate the sale results of such a fuder to the currency of today?
A Gold Mark had a guaranteed value of 0.36 gram gold. A fuder which yielded 4,275 Gold Marks would be equivalent to 1,540 grams of gold. The current price of gold (in 2012), discounting the effect of speculation, is about 1,200 Euro or 1,500 Dollar per ounce (about 31 grams). So the fuder of Berncasteler Doctor wine, which fetched 4,275 Gold Marks around 1900 is equivalent to 60,000 Euro or 75,000 Dollars at today's prices.

The Berncasteler Doctor Vineyard

The financial base of the wine estate owners enabled them to produce noble wines, which they auctioned for increasingly higher sums.

In 1882, Dr. Hugo Thanisch had added a further parcel of nearly 6000 m² of the Berncasteler Doctor vineyard to the one which had been acquired by his grandfather. The price paid at the auction for the famous vineyard was more than 17 Gold Mark per vine. So the total price paid was 103,129 Gold Marks, a fortune of more than a million euro or dollars at today's prices. Eighteen years later, in 1900, another parcel of the "Doctor Vineyard" was sold for the even higher price of 100 Gold Marks per m². The vineyard was, however, worth the price.



In the Doctor vineyard

Riesling wine from the "Bernkastel Doctor" had not only cult status but carried enormous prestige and was a profitable investment.

This vineyard, facing to the South-southwest and with an inclination of 65 per cent possesses an ideal position to catch the sun all day long.

The considerable advantage of the microclimate in the Doctor vineyard can be seen from the fact that the snow in winter melts earlier here than on the neighbouring vineyards. The high slate content of the soil in the Doctor vineyard guarantees a unique wine, which excels due to its minerality, its eloquent bouquet and its abundance of foreign and local fruit nuances.

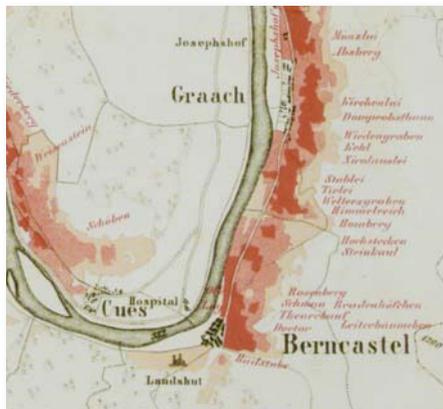


The Berncasteler Doctor vineyard in winter

Relief from the Doctor fountain in Bernkastel. It depicts the legend of the archbishop and elector of Trier, Boemund II, who, in 1367, was cured of a serious illness by enjoying the wine from the Doctor vineyard.



Our other vineyards



Section of the Royal Prussian vineyard map from 1868: The best vineyards with the highest quality are shown in dark red.

For 375 years the Wwe. Dr. Thanisch estate has produced Riesling wines in the traditional slate sites of the Moselle. Their excellent quality is attributable to three main factors: the special climatic situation in the Moselle valley, the minerality of the Devon slate soil and the old, mature and original non-grafted rootstock, which gives the wines their unique character: delicate fruit, elegance and lightness.

Long ago, in 1868, the Royal Prussian Administration in Trier developed the first systematic classification of vineyards that was undertaken for the purposes of land tax assesment. The vineyards were rated according to their quality: the

better the vineyard, the higher the tax the winemaker had to pay. This system of classification is quite similar to the Grand Cru-System in Burgundy, but it is older. Our vineyards, the Berncasteler Doctor, the Bernkasteler Badstube and the Bernkasteler Lay belong to the best rated in the Moselle region.

In addition to the "Doctor" the **Bernkasteler Badstube** is another important vineyard of the Thanisch estate. The name is derived from the habit in the late middle ages of bathing together in public bathing rooms. In the thirteenth century, the crusaders had discovered the art of bathing in the Islamic lands and had brought it back with them to Europe. One of the Badstube (bathing rooms) was located in Bernkastel, below the vineyard, which is now named after it. The Badstube-vineyards are located left and right of the "Doctor". The soil is fine slate, storing the water well. Fresh Rieslings grow here with a racy acidity and an high potential for development.



Scene from a bathing house, Valerius Maximus, 15th century

The **Bernkasteler Lay** is located on the downstream side of Bernkastel. The name "lay" is an old German word for slate. The slaty soil provides the exceptionally high minerality, which wines from this vineyard exhibit. From this fine weathered slate we harvest mostly ripe grapes with an elegant and complex profile.

Thanisch Wines at the English Court

One of the factors contributing to the success of the wines from the Thanisch estates was that they were esteemed just as much by royalty, the nobility and the army officers as by the common citizens, who tried to emulate them.

The son of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, King of Great Britain and Ireland and Emperor of India, who ruled from 1901 until 1910, and was descended from the house of Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha, drank wine from the "Berncastel Doctor" on the recommendation of his physician and also because he liked it. The English royal household had ordered wine from the Thanisch "Doctor" vineyard for the first time in 1892.



King Eduard VII

A glance in any wine card around 1900 would show how highly Moselle, and more particularly Thanisch wine, was valued. The light, elegant and racy Moselle wine was appreciated everywhere. "Berncasteler Doctor" wine from the estate of "Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch" was featured on the wine list of every leading restaurant in Germany, whether it was the Kaiser-Keller in Frankfurt, the Ratskeller in Bremen, the Auerbachkeller in Leipzig or the Adlon Hotel in Berlin.

The same was true of the top international hotels: The "Palace" and the "Savoy" in London, the "Ritz" in Paris, the "Grand Hotel Brunnen" in Switzerland, the "Navarre" in New York, the "Savoy" in Cairo, to name just a few, all featured "Doctor" wine from the Bernkastel wine estate of Wwe. Dr. Thanisch.

Moselle Wines more expensive than Bordeaux and Burgundy



Even more remarkable than this was the price comparison between the top international wines. The most expensive wines on the wine card of the top hotels were the Riesling wines from the steep slopes of the Moselle valley, which commanded higher prices than the Grands Crus Classés from Bordeaux, like for instance the "Chateau Yquem" or the "Chateau Haut Brion".

Label of Berncasteler Doctor Creszens Dr. Thanisch in 1880

A new Label

Dr. Hugo Thanisch died of a heart attack in 1895 at the early age of only 42. His widow, Katharina, took over the management of the estate and since then the estate has borne the name "Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch". (Wwe. = widow) Six years later, in 1901, a new label for the bottles was introduced. It is a historical document in two ways: it shows how important a role tradition plays in the house of Thanisch, since the label is still used unchanged to this day. The label is pure "art nouveau" which was the dominant style of the time.

The label was registered on the 12 March 1901 with the German patent office and was entered in the trademarks registry.



Label of the estate of Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch

The first Trockenbeerenauslese



Picture of the harvest of 1921 estate of Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch

the Moselle valley. With a value of 241 degree Oechsle, the wine had a sugar concentration higher than any wine previously produced.

The first ray of light after the end of the First World War and an economically bleak period came in 1921. That year brought forth a wine that would later be called quite correctly "the wine of the century". The estate Wwe. Dr. Thanisch wrote winemaking history by producing the first Trockenbeerenauslese (dried berry selection) in

Association of German Quality Wine Producers (VDP)

The success of the wine auctions led to the creation of the "Trier Association of Wine Estate Owners of the Moselle, Saar and Ruwer" after the Mayer of Trier, von Bruchhausen, had amalgamated the three existing auction rings. It was later referred to as the "Large Ring". In the statute the members committed themselves to "natural purity, vintage and location of the wines offered for auction, which must, without exception, be produced from grapes grown on their own vineyards."



Crest of the "Large Ring"

The foundation was a logical consequence of the perception, which had matured in wine circles, that difficult years and the competition from foreign winemakers could only be survived with wines of quality.

The foundation took place on the 12th May 1910 by the entry into the official central registry of associations. 54 wine estates banded together, including the wine estate of "Wwe. Dr. Hugo Thanisch".



Viktor Thanisch 1888 - 1952

Shortly afterwards, on the 3rd December 1910, the Trier Association joined the Association of German Natural Wine Auctioneers ("Verband Deutscher Naturweinversteigerer - VDNV"), which had been founded on the 26th November. This was the forerunner of the Association of German Quality Wine Producers, to which the wine estate "Wwe. Dr. Hugo Thanisch" has belonged as a founding member for more than 100 years. Viktor Thanisch, the son of Dr. Hugo Thanisch, was a member of the managing committee for more than two decades.

With its dedication to natural purity, the VDNV, later VDP, earned for its members an excellent reputation, not only in Germany, but throughout the world. The commitment of the wine estates to sell only wines from their own vineyards in their original, natural state is a guarantee for the customers that the wines are authentic.



The "Doctor" and the President of the United States

After the end of the Second World War, the 1945 vintage had exceptional quality but the yield was very low. The Moselle region produced only 42,000 hectoliter. The estate Wwe. Dr. Thanisch managed only 2 fuder.

The French had confiscated the estate house. It became the "Gendarmerie".

The first German chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer was a great admirer of Moselle wines and the "Berncasteler Doctor". He regularly took the wine with him as a present for his host when on state visits. He did so in 1953 when he paid his first visit to President Eisenhower in Washington. He presented his host with 50 bottles of the highly praised 1949 vintage. The news



Eisenhower and Adenauer 1953

was distributed by the German Press Office throughout the world. Eisenhower also received Wwe. Dr. Thanisch "Doctor" wine later from the German chancellor as a birthday present.



Report about Adenauer's Present

Doctor Wine in Moscow

Two years later, in 1955, Adenauer travelled to Moscow with a large delegation, where he was received by the minister president of the USSR, Nikolai Bulganin, the General Secretary of the communist party, Nikita Khrushchev and the foreign minister Molotov.

The chancellor was concerned about the release of the remaining 15,000 German prisoners of war. During the crucial negotiations, a 1950 Berncasteler Doctor Spätlese was served, which the German delegation had brought with them.

On the 14th of September 1955, Adenauer returned from the difficult mission, which was successful. Three weeks later the first 600 of the returning prisoners of war arrived in the reception camp in Friedland. The Doctor wine had contributed positively to the atmosphere of the talks.



Adenauer, Bulganin (left) and Khrushchev (right)

The Thanisch Doctor – Star of the Media

With the economic miracle in Germany, the demand for excellent wines increased and high prices were achieved in the annual wine auctions in Trier. On the 28th of October 1959, the title of a report in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" (a major German newspaper) read "Friedenswedler - the wine of the century". The report continued "... the highest sugar content ever recorded of 312 per cent Oechsle was measured in a 1959 Trockenbeereauslese from the Berncasteler Doctor vineyard of the wine estate Wwe. Dr. Thanisch."

1959 VINTAGE			
<i>White Burgundy</i>		<i>Red Burgundy</i>	
Chassagne Montrachet Les Ruchottes, 1959 (Claude Ramonet)	\$36.75	Grands Echezeaux, 1959 Louis (Gros)	\$48.00
Chassagne Montrachet Les Ruchottes, 1959 (Claude Ramonet) (24/10ths)	\$39.75	Chassagne Montrachet St. Jean, 1959 (Claude Ramonet)	\$30.75
Chablis "Les Clos", 1959 (Fèvre)	\$34.50	Chambertin Clos de Beze, 1959 (Damoy)	\$66.75
		Chambertin, 1959 (Marion)	\$68.25
<i>Red Bordeaux</i>		<i>Moselle</i>	
Château Lascombes, 1959 (Margaux)	\$34.75	Berncasteler Doktor Spätlese, 1959 (Orig. Abfg. Dr. Thanisch)	\$85.00
Château Prieuré Lichine, 1959 (Margaux)	\$31.50	Berncasteler Doktor, Auslese, 1959 (Orig. Abfg. Dr. Thanisch)	\$105.00
Château Calon Segur, 1959 (St. Estéphe)	\$36.75	Gracher Himmelreich Spätlese, 1959 (Orig. Abfg. Wwe. Dr. Thanisch)	\$57.75
Château Latour, 1959 (Pauillac)	\$59.50		
Château Mouton Rothschild, 1959 (Pauillac)	\$66.00		
Château Haut Brion, 1959 (Graves)	\$59.50		
Château Lafite Rothschild, 1959 (Pauillac)	\$66.00		
Château Margaux, 1959 (Margaux)	\$59.50	<i>Rhine</i>	
Château Beychevelle, 1959 (St. Julien)	\$42.00	Erbacher Marcobrunner Spätlese Cabinet, 1959 (Orig. Abfg. Langwerth von Simmern)	\$46.50

Wine Price List from California

Record Prices for Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Wine

The wines of the estate Wwe. Dr. Thanisch have achieved many records in the past. In 1978 and 1986 two more were added to the list. During an auction of rarities organised by the "VDP" in Wiesbaden a bottle of "1921 Berncasteler Doctor Trockenbeereauslese" achieved the record price of 7,200 Deutschmark, the highest price recorded to that date. Eight years later the estate Wwe. Dr. Thanisch broke its own record. Once again it was a bottle of "1921er Berncasteler Doctor Trockenbeereauslese". This time the price that the successful buyer was prepared to pay was 11,100 Deutschmark, equivalent to 7,000 \$.

The Wine Estate of the Women

Since more than a hundred years women have played a major role on the estate of Wwe. Dr. Thanisch. Clever marriages in nearly every generation over the last 375 years have led to the rise of the family Thanisch in the wine hierarchy – true to the motto "vine by vine".

After the early death of her husband Dr. Hugo Thanisch in 1895, his widow Katharina took over the management of the estate. At the time of his death she was only 30 years old and had three children aged nine, seven and four, which she raised alone. She gave the estate the name "Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch" (Wwe. = widow).



Katharina Thanisch



Sofie Thanisch

Viktor Thanisch, her son, married Sofie Thaprich in 1920. She also brought vineyards into the marriage and managed the estate together with her husband until his death in 1952. From then on she managed the estate together with her daughter Mechthild Thanisch.



Mechthild Thanisch

She, in her turn, passed the management to her niece Sofia, the daughter of her sister Helga Thanisch, in 1996, which underlines the dominance that women have played in the last hundred years of the history of the estate, especially as Sofia Thanisch has two daughters herself.



Sofia Thanisch

The twelfth Generation

Eleven generations of this family have devoted themselves to the continuous care of vineyards of the highest quality in the central Moselle region. Unperturbed by the continuous changes of the weather in the last four centuries, the changes in economic and political conditions, despite wars and times of need, they have applied expertise and enthusiasm to produce noble wines that were valued both at home and abroad, and still are. They are Riesling wines with low alcohol content, which recall the character of their origins with their delicate structure, their complex aromas and an exhilarating interplay of sweetness and acidity. Perhaps the twelfth generation is ready to take over the responsibility for the well-known wine estate that is so rich in tradition. Sofia Thanisch's two daughters, Juliane and Christina both found their own separate connection with wine, after completing their abitur (German A levels). Juliane has finished an apprenticeship as an industrial clerk in a sekt manufacturer in Trier. Christina is studying international wine economics at the university of Geisenheim. Perhaps they will achieve a successful combination of wine growing, economics and ecology as an answer to the challenges of tomorrow.

Whatever happens, the stage seems to be well set for the future.



Sofia Thanisch with her daughters Christina and Juliane (from left to right) at the wine harvest 2010

Stuart Pigott,

one of the most famous wine-journalists, wrote about the **375th Anniversary** of the estate Wwe. Dr. Thanisch, Erben Thanisch:

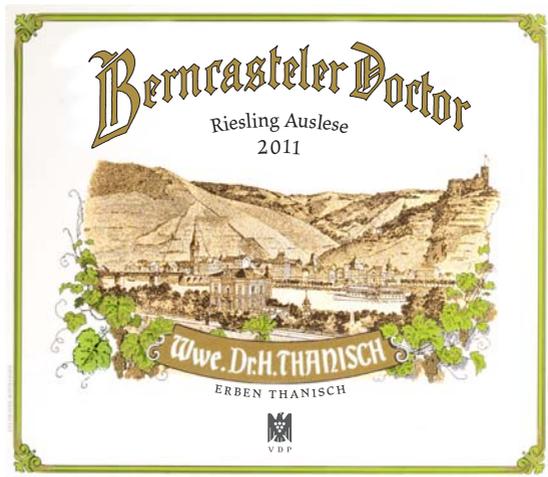


Stuart Pigott

"A few days ago the estate Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch in Bernkastel-Kues / Mosel was celebrating its 375th jubilee. As remarkable this long history is, the reputation of the house was actually founded only since 1895 by the name giving Katharina Thanisch, the widow of Dr. Hugo Thanisch.

Since then the management of the house has been exclusively in female hands; in the meantime it is by Sofia Thanisch. **Never has the quality of the house been more convincing than today – which is still a better reason to celebrate.**"

Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, 24. 6. 2012



Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch – Erben Thanisch

Saarallee 31 · D-54470 Bernkastel-Kues

Telefon 065 31 - 22 82 · Telefax 065 31 - 22 26

www.thanisch.com · sofia@thanisch.com

