

“Bei uns ist immer was los!” Feste im Herbst

SOMMER- und HERBSTWEINFESTE und IHRE GEBRÄUCHE / SUMMER and FALL WINE FESTIVALS and THEIR CUSTOMS

In the center is the Queen

Wine, women, and song – these have always been the ingredients for the joy of living. No wonder therefore that in the areas, where the wine grows, people really know how to celebrate. In the early fall months, there are hundreds of wine festivals. The bigger ones, e.g. the “Weinfest” in Rudesheim on the Rhine or in Bernkastel on the Moselle, every year attract tens of thousands of visitors, even from neighboring countries. The delicious juice from the grape flows by the barrel at the tasting stands. That is, cynics say, the main object of the event – there is wine in abundance in the European Community.



This view is not entirely wrong – if we did not have the wine festivals, which have been in existence for a very long time, they would have been invented in our time. Not only because of the additional turnover of wine. Each respectable wine growing community on this day crowns, with a tremendous ceremonial effort, a pretty girl from the town wine queen.



This wine queen assumes a very important “office” – wherever the winegrowers’ organization of the town offers its wine within the next 12 months, the smiling wine queen will be the charming center of the activity. She will represent her community at the election for queen of the whole wine growing region, maybe she rises to the status of German Wine Queen, which then is a full-time job for one year, entailing numerous trips and journeys in Germany and abroad. Advertising the wine is the objective – whether it is at the

“Grüne Woche” in Berlin, the biggest agricultural fair in the Federal Republic, or at a sales promotion show in Australia.

Still – the best marketing events for the German wine are the many small wine festivals themselves. This commercial background, of course, does not interest the visitor at all, neither do the lectures on the culture of wine and the art of growing wine, which are offered in some places on this day. The attractions are hardly different from those at any other “Volksfest” (public festival) – parades, music, dancing, tables and benches in the streets, fireworks – each town has here its own traditions. Nowhere, however, are the stands and stalls missing where food is served and drink – wine – naturally – wine and more wine.

Something special is the atmosphere, which is lively, as it should be. But also friendly and harmonic, completely without aggressions. That comes from the wine, it is said, which makes you drunk in a special, pleasant way. And it doesn’t take long to get there if you aren’t used to drinking it.

Real wine festivals are only found in the southern parts of the Federal Republic. If occasionally festivities like this appear in North-Germany, it is because clever winegrowers’ organizations from South-Germany are trying everything to increase their turnover and to convert the North-Germans into wine drinkers. Genuine wine festivals are celebrated in those areas, where for hundreds or even thousands of years grapes have been growing. On the Moselle, the Saar, and in the Ahr valley, along the Rhine south of Bonn, and in Württemberg, the harvesting

begins in September. A year of hard work in the vineyards comes to an end. The wine festival is a “thanksgiving”, which calls for appropriate celebration. You drink the wine from the year before, which has now reached its full maturity. The recently pressed harvest is still pure fruit juice, cloudy, and barely fermented.