

THE VINSON VIEW

Quality maniac Nick Vinson on the who, what, when, where and why



TYROLEAN TOP TIPS

1477 Reichhalter

This ground floor café-restaurant, with eight guest rooms upstairs, is located in a 15th century building renovated in 2018 by local architect Zeno Bampi. 1477reichhalter.com

Vigilius Mountain Resort

Find tranquility at this mountain retreat, built from local stone, wood and clay. vigilius.it

Alois Lageder

This winemaker takes a holistic approach, producing exceptional wines. Visit Vineria Paradeis and stay for lunch. aloslageder.eu

AlpiNN

Book a table by the window for extraordinary views. The 4 Hands Dinner is a culinary experience in which Niederkofler is joined in the kitchen by a renowned guest chef. alpinn.it

Lumen Museum of Mountain Photography

Next door to AlpiNN, this museum celebrates the work of mountain photographers from around the world. lumenmuseum.it

Cantina Tramin

Founded in 1898, this winery represents more than 300 local growers, with Gewürztraminer as its flagship wine. cantinatramin.it

01 Neighbourhood watch

Picky Nicky's got his eye on northern Italy's local heroes

It was architect Matteo Thun who first drew me to South Tyrol. It was September 2003 and I was visiting the new Thun-designed Vigilius Mountain Resort, which we were shooting (see W*64). Thun used only local materials to build Vigilius, and he also taught me about moon wood, cut when the moon is waning and the sap content is at its lowest, thus producing better quality lumber. A year or so later I returned for the Merano Wine Festival, where I met winemaker Alois Lageder, scion of the family business, which dates back to 1823. My visit to his estate in Magrè (where casks of wine rest in cellars piping out a Bach lullaby sound installation by artist Mario Airò) left a lasting impression, and we always keep cases of his wine at home.

Lageder told me then that grapes in the region would typically stay on the vines a little longer to get their required sweetness. Climate change means that today's challenge is how to maintain freshness and acidity. The 55-hectare Lageder estate is farmed biodynamically, and the family work with 80 local growers, who supply the estate with additional grapes. Lageder is also the president of Demeter Italy, which certifies biodynamic food producers. At the Lageder cellar door and restaurant Paradeis, you can taste and buy their wines, but I recommend going for lunch to sample the food, cooked

using produce from their own garden, as well as from local biodynamic partners. The little meat on the menu comes from livestock who graze among the vines.

The local terrain, which ranges from 200m to 3,900m, produces a diversity in grape varieties. Gewürztraminer is my particular favourite, and Lageder's Am Sand is regularly in my fridge. Today, thanks to Lageder and neighbouring producers like Cantina Tramin, a cooperative 8km up the road, wines from this part of Italy are now highly respected. It's hard to remember that, until the 1980s, this region was known for producing cheap plonk.

Obsessing about quality, taste and local sourcing is the cornerstone of AlpiNN, the restaurant perched 2,275m up Mount Kronplatz. Without a doubt, the (Vinson) view has never been better than from my table there, with a panorama that takes in both the Italian Alps and the Dolomites. The interiors are by Martino Gamper, who was born down the road in Merano and has a reputation for reusing and repurposing objects, and the food is by three-Michelin-starred chef Norbert Niederkofler. Dishes are prepared with ingredients sourced only from 50 local producers, so no hothouse-grown ingredients in the kitchen, and no olive oil.

I've got a real soft spot for this area where there are just so many fine examples of stewardship of local resources. ★



02

Bunker down

A 180m-deep WWII bunker in San Lorenzo di Sebato, which has been converted into a maturing cave for local cheeses, offers cheese and beer tastings. genussbunker.it



03

One vine stay

Designed by Peter Pichler Architecture and Martin Schgaguler, the Schgaguler is a modern 42-room hotel, serving local wines, in Castelrotto. schgaguler.com