

WINERY

3rd/4th cent. AD

During the course of a road improvement scheme at Lieser in 2005, a Roman double winery similar to that at Piesport was discovered at the foot of a steep, southfacing slope on the road to Kues. This brought the total number of wineries of the 3rd/4th cent. AD known on the Mosel to twelve. A few stone blocks in the retaining wall of the slope are all that is to be seen today. It is not known who ran the wineries at Piesport, Lieser and Brauneberg, but probably their construction is related to the establishment of the imperial residence at Trier – no later than AD 293/94. The wineries will have been able to cater for the demands of the imperial court and administration better than imports. Wine was known to the local Celts before the Roman conquest, but they imported it rather than producing it themselves. Only the upper classes could afford to procure wine from the wine-producing areas of the Mediterranean, but as the region became Romanised, so too wine-making was introduced to the Mosel.

According to Pliny there were 185 different kinds of wine available in the 1st cent. AD. In numerous hymns Roman poets sing its praise. Normally it was drunk mixed with water, but how heavily it was diluted depended on the time of day and the situation: it will have been different at breakfast or for a celebration.

Ancient writers on agriculture reveal a number of secrets from the cellar. To turn red wine into white bean flower and egg white were added to the must. The wine was already white the next day. Clay, lime, salt and ash were added to reduce the acidity. Wines could be stored just as long as they are today; written sources mention hundred year-old wines.