

Mosel bridge protest moves to Berlin

12 Apr 2010 by Jancis Robinson

Last night in Berlin the Hot Spot Chinese restaurant, a favourite haunt of the city's off-duty chefs, was even hotter than usual.

From before 5 pm when Hugh Johnson, Nick and I arrived, it was thronged with television cameras, microphones, top Mosel wine producers such as Erni Loosen and Katarina and Bettina (of J J J) Prüm, members of the International Riesling Rescue anti [Mosel bridge](#) campaign and Green politicians at various points in their careers, including ex foreign minister Joschka Fischer, who, it turns out, is an avid reader of the *Financial Times*.

English-born, Berlin-resident, tartan-suited, leading wine writer Stuart Pigott is seen here being interviewed for German TV. Hugh Johnson spoke rousingly of how the same ministry that is proposing to see through the long-superseded plan to build a bridge over the Mosel slap bang in the Middle Mosel's most beautiful and important stretch of vineyards at Urzig was responsible for ruining the reputation of German wine with the notorious German Wine Law of 1971.

Hugh has already made much of the attempts by the relevant minister, Hendrik Hering, to gag him from speaking about the bridge. Last night Stuart Pigott called for Hering, the minister responsible for both wine and, unfortunately, transport in the German state of Rhineland-Pfalz, to either recognise the constitutional right to free speech or resign.

In the last few days there has been considerable coverage of the issue in the British and, increasingly, German press. We hope that last night's meeting will inspire more awareness within Germany of the absurdity of continuing with the proposal to build this ugly and unnecessary Autobahn, superimposed on the landscape in an artist's impression below, over one of the most beautiful landscapes in Germany.



The bridge was proposed 40 years ago at the height of the Cold War and was supposed to provide American troops with a quick getaway to the northern coast should it be needed. Today, its proclaimed reason is to provide good communications for cargo operations at Hahn airport (a Ryanair hub). But Hahn was to be developed for cargo only in case cargo operations had to be shifted there from the main Frankfurt airport, which has in the event not proved necessary. And it is now much quicker to travel by already extant motorways from Frankfurt and Mainz to Ostend, Brussels, Antwerp, Rotterdam and Amsterdam than it would be to use this proposed new bridge.

The best concrete news of the night for me was that at last an anti-bridge statement has come from the VDP wine producers of the Mosel via president Egon Müller so that surely one from the national VDP organisation of top German wine producers cannot be far behind - even if more than a little late?

Wine lovers, please note: the Hot Spot just off the Kurfürstendamm south of Adenauerplatz may not be the most luxurious restaurant in Berlin but the food is excellent and the (mainly German) wine list outstanding.