



BOB TYRER ON THE BOTTLE

At this time last year I was enjoying the late-autumn sunshine in Germany, chewing on Bauernbrot thickly smeared with Leberwurst and listening to winemakers say that the globally warmed weather was perfect and the vintage would be wonderful, but "let's hope it doesn't get any hotter". If (when) it does, 2009 might be looked back on as the high point in the German wine renaissance when everything was just right.

Now that the 2009s are in the shops, I've been checking them out. What's particularly just right about them is the "trocken", or dry, white wine in which all the sugar is fermented into alcohol.

This style became a fad among Germans before the north European weather became warm enough to produce the flavours needed to make trocken palatable, and before the winemakers learnt that they had to change their techniques to make it memorable. Traditional German wines, in which fermentation is halted before the yeast can gobble up all the fruit sugar, glow on the palate; badly made trocken, with no syrup left to glide on, slashes and burns as it goes down.

Since about 2005, things have been getting much better. Good trocken, dry and racy but overflowing with intriguing, mouth-filling flavours — some from the warmer weather, some from wild yeasts and fermentation in old oak casks — now rivals white burgundy as the choice of the well-heeled. The problem, of course, lies in the price, which is also burgundian.

So what does a mortal do, without even child benefits to subsidise the weekly wine budget? Well, you can sell your children — not much point in keeping them if they don't bring in an income any more — and buy a case of Halenberg Riesling GG Emrich-Schönleber 2009 (£350 in bond, justerinis.com). Peaches and yellow plums are tossing around in its mineral streaks right now, and they will be blossoming in 10 years' time, when the kids return from the salt mines.

Or you can sell your house and move to Germany. The economy's much better than ours, property's cheaper, as is the wine — and the people who make it are delightful. Yes, I know you can buy decent, cheaper rieslings from Australia and New Zealand, but think of the air miles. Buy German and save the planet. There's a thought.

LIQUID HUNCHES

- ★ **Trossen Pyramide Riesling Spätlese Trocken** (£19.99) Great body and intensity from a small triangular vineyard high above the Mosel (thewineryuk.com).
- ★ **Hochheimer Hölle Riesling Kabinett Trocken 2009 Weingut Künstler** (£14.99) Flowers, fruit and freshness (Waitrose).
- ★ **Von Kesselstatt Riesling Dry 2009** (£8.95) Pretty and perky (thewinesociety.com).

What are you drinking? Tell me at wine@sunday-times.co.uk

