

The world's best wine magazine

August 2016 £4.50

# Decanter



## Wine in the family

Inspiring the next generation

**Burgundy:**  
Are family  
domaines  
under  
threat?

**Introducing  
wine to children**  
How, when and why

**Tasted and rated:** Chianti under £30  
• German dry Riesling • 92 UK sparkling wines





## German Riesling Trocken 2014

With a history dating back centuries, Germany's dry Rieslings are now recognised in their homeland as the benchmark style for quality, says Giles MacDonogh

THE INITIAL REFERENCE to the Riesling grape variety in Germany dates from 1435, in the small town of Rüsselheim on the River Main. However, the debate as to whether ancient Riesling was sweet or dry is a thorny one. The 'always dry' school says that wines were bottled late if bottled at all, leaving time for all or most of the sugar to ferment out. Lean years were always dry, but great years would have been a bit sweet, although not as sweet as wines became once it was possible to stop fermentation artificially. By 1971, the new 'Prädikat' classification system had come into force, whereby the best wines were deemed to be those at the sweet end of the scale. At that point everyone strove for sweetness.

Then by the 1980s, a reaction to the all-pervading sweetness of German wines had erupted. The Charta organisation was set up in the Rheingau in 1984, promoting dry and off-dry wines. The earliest examples were quite lean, but with time they began to put on some appealing fat while remaining true to their principles. In 1999, the Charta movement, having very largely achieved its aims, was merged into the VDP or Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter, the group that brings together almost all the top German wine estates.

### Seal of approval

Since then, the VDP has refined and developed the concept along Burgundian lines: placing the accent on the notion of 'cru' and dry wines. This process has caused some ructions with its members, particularly in the Mosel Valley where balance is often achieved by leaving some residual sugar. The top dry wine from any VDP recognised site is the *grosse lage*, formerly 'grosses gewächs' ('GG', or 'grand cru'). GG is also written on the label to avoid confusion. 'Erste lage' represents the 'premier cru'. Unlike Burgundy, however, these wines are verified on a yearly basis and cannot use the label unless the local committee gives the thumbs-up.

There has been a revival of off-sweet, *kabinett* styles throughout Germany recently, but these days most German Riesling is dry. The big exception is the Mosel Valley, where many wines are still made in sweeter styles and some celebrated estates, notably JJ Prüm and Egon Müller Scharzhof, make no dry wines on their own land. Estates that are not members of the VDP use the *einzellage* sites approved by the 1971 law, but when they bottle dry wines they stipulate 'trocken' on the label.

A year like 2014 is bound to advance the cause of dry German Riesling in Germany, as many estates were not in a position to make more than a smidgen of sweet wine. The exception was perhaps the Mosel Valley, but even there they picked in a scramble, and only a small amount of *kabinett*, *spätlese* and *auslese* was made.

*Giles MacDonogh is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Germany*



### German Riesling Trocken: know your vintages

Climatic conditions vary across the German wine regions. As a rule of thumb it is cooler in the north (Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, Ahr) and warmer in the south (Baden, Württemberg). There are some excellent dry Rieslings in south Germany, but most top exponents are in the Mosel, Rheingau, Nahe and Rheinhessen.

**2015** Very hot summer. Positive reports of quality but at the time of writing very few of the top wines have been bottled.

**2014** Bad weather put an early end to the summer sun, but in many areas the grapes had already achieved ripeness. Some excellent dry whites, but disappointing in some regions.

**2013** A year that had growers resorting to various tricks to deal with high acidity. Some top growers produced excellent wines.

**2012** Average in general for dry wines, and drinking well now.

**2011** Good year for German dry wines.

**2010** Average to good dry wines.

### Riesling Trocken: the facts

In 2013, there were 23,293ha of Riesling planted in Germany. The Rheingau is 79% Riesling, Mittelrhein 68% and Mosel 61.6%. The next largest is Nahe with 27.9%, followed by the Pfalz with 24.3%, Franconia 18.5%, Rheinhessen 16%, Baden-Württemberg 12% and the Ahr with 8.2%.

To be dry, German wines must have less than 4g residual sugar, or in the case of high acidity they can retain 9g. In practice, most can be released with 9g as Germans don't appreciate wines with low acidity. All areas produce some sweet wines too, when vintages allow it. ➤



## The results

Germany produces dry Riesling to an unrivalled standard, and it can go very well with food. The 2014 vintage is better than expected, as Christelle Guibert reports

LONG GONE ARE the days when German Riesling was all about bulk sweet hock on UK shelves: dry seems to be the trend. David Motion concurs: 'The consumer wants dry wines, and has done for several decades – and German dry Rieslings are some of the greatest, most compelling and exciting white wines on the planet.'

You might expect him to say this, perhaps, as Motion is the UK's biggest retailer of German wine, with a list of 47 growers. He went on: 'If there are any pockets of resistance toward the dry style, they would usually be among British drinkers, aged about 45-75. Anyone younger doesn't come with the baggage of Liebfraumilch, and they are the new drinkers and aren't used to Riesling.'

Giles MacDonogh agreed: 'It will be sad to lose the sweeter style, the proper spätlesen or kabinetts, but clearly the impetus in German wine is not for sweet wines now. In fact, the Germans stopped drinking them long ago, finding the sweeter wines unsophisticated.'

Matt Walls sees a great market potential: 'Sauvignon Blanc has been the big UK success story for the past five years, but we are seeing a Sauvignon fatigue, and I think aromatic and refreshing dry Rieslings would be a very natural place for people to move on to.'

Despite the fact that the 2014 harvest was affected by constant rain in late August, our panel was pleasantly surprised by the end result. 'There was enough heat in the spring and early summer to ensure the grapes were ripe at the time the weather broke,' said MacDonogh. 'So in certain regions, they were able to make really good wines if they made rigorous selections.' Having come to the tasting with low expectations, Walls found 'some really exceptional wines', but he cautioned: 'It was up and down. You can't tar 2014 with one brush, but must go on both a regional basis, and on the producer basis of who could afford to mobilise a large amount of pickers in a small amount of time.' MacDonogh added: 'Growers

*'Some of the greatest, most compelling white wines made on the planet'* David Motion

from small estates would have been less inclined to discard grapes, so their wines might not be so reliable.' Yet with 85% of the entries in this tasting achieving a Recommended rating or better, many producers clearly dealt admirably with the climatic conditions.

Regional differences were very clear for our three experts, with Mosel-Saar-Ruwer the top performer. MacDonogh explained: 'The Mosel ripens latest, so was less at risk from late summer rain.' Motion emphasised the point: 'The north – Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, Nahe, Rheingau and Rheinhessen – produced more glittering examples than those further east (Franken) and south (Pfalz, Baden and Baden-Württemberg). You could tell how hard some growers had worked, with the wines being generally harder, with strident acidity and not quite enough flesh and ripeness to balance.' The best examples had 'tension and excitement with a transparent expression of their terroir', said Motion.

The panel felt most of these wines are approachable now, and Motion felt 'the best would have no difficulty ageing 20 years or more'. MacDonogh added: 'Riesling with a bit of sugar is more or less indestructible; whether dry German Rieslings from a vintage like 2014 are going to survive forever is another matter.' Walls felt there was no reason to wait: 'The good wines are extremely good and they are ready to go.' All concluded the dry German Rieslings are largely versatile and can stand many types of food. Walls suggested not only Asian food but white meat, and Motion even added red meat to the list.

## The scores

87 wines tasted

**Exceptional**

0

**Outstanding**

7

**Highly Recommended**

38

**Recommended**

32

**Commended**

10

**Fair**

0

**Poor**

0

**Faulty**

0

**Entry criteria:** producers and UK agents were invited to submit dry Riesling wines (trocken by law in Germany) from the 2014 vintage, and from any region in Germany. Only one wine per producer was permitted

## The judges

### Giles MacDonogh



MacDonogh has been writing for various international newspapers and magazines, as well as broadcasting on radio and television, since 1985. He is the author of 14 books, which

have been translated into nine languages – four of these are about wine, and two specifically about Austrian wine. MacDonogh is currently writing a history of modern Germany.

### David Motion



Motion describes himself as wine merchant, composer, Riesling fellow, and dry Riesling evangelist. In 1996, after several years in the music business, firstly as a record producer and

then as composer, David bought The Winery, an independent wine shop in London's Maida Vale. The shelves of The Winery reflect David's gruelling buying trips around Germany, France, Italy, Spain and California.

### Matt Walls



Walls is an award-winning wine writer, author and blogger who regularly contributes to Decanter. He also helps restaurants to develop wine lists, judges in wine

competitions and is editor of The London Wine Guide iPhone app. He blogs at [www.mattwalls.co.uk](http://www.mattwalls.co.uk) and tweets @mattwallswine.



## Outstanding 95-97pts



### Dönnhoff, GG, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle, Nahe

Decanter average score: 97/100pts Individual judges' scores: Giles MacDonogh 98 David Motion 96 Matt Walls 96

£43.99-£45.99 Widely available via UK agent Awin Barratt Siegel

Nahe grower Dönnhoff would be in most people's top 10 in German dry Riesling. The estate dates back to 1750. Helmut Dönnhoff has recently ceded his place to his son Cornelius but he remains very much a part of the furniture. There are 25ha of vines grown on a mixture of slate, sandstone and the volcanic soils so typical of this part of the Nahe. The best wines are from sites such as Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle, Norheimer Dellchen and Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg.

**Giles MacDonogh** All pears and fresh apricots; lovely nose; the feminine side, beautiful fruit; blossoms; lovely soft power, all in softness.

**David Motion** Open, very expressive nose. Intense fruit and salty minerals. A massive ball of spicy fruit that can barely be contained in your mouth. Wonderful!

**Matt Walls** Appealing satsuma fruit. Full and generous in body and fruit on the palate, but very harmonious, and finishes with a fruity but mineral edge – saline and refreshing.

Drink 2020-2030 Alcohol 13%



### Fritz Haag, GG, Brauneberger Juffer, Mosel 96

GMD 96 DM 96 MW 96

£19.30-£24.50 Howard Ripley, Justerini & Brooks

The Dusemonder Hof – Fritz Haag winery's original name – in Brauneberg is one of the great names of the Mosel Valley. The Haags have been here since 1605 and have 17ha of vines, all Riesling. The current proprietor is Oliver Haag. This is the Mittelmosel, the best chunk, and the top wines will come from the Brauneberger Juffer (the 'Virgin') or the Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr, which, like other 'sundial' vineyards, is warmed by the sun throughout the day.

**GMD** Attractive, slightly green nose; some white peaches and limes; lots of fruit on the palate and cooling fruit too; nice powerful finish of white peaches and ripe acidity.

**DM** Classically late-picked Mosel nose. Tingly fruit acid in mouth. It's a thrilling ride.

**MW** Straight, mineral, flinty nose. Towards off-dry, but very convincing concentration, with a dry, mineral finish. Very straight, very long, very good. Real length and concentration of sappy fruit.

Drink 2018-2025 Alc 12.5%



### Barth, GG, Hallgarten Schönhell, Rheingau 96 GMD 96 DM 96 MW 95

N/A UK [www.weingut-barth.de](http://www.weingut-barth.de)

An 18ha Rheingau vineyard with its best loess and loam, clay, quartzite and slate slopes located in Hattenheim (Wisselbrunnen and Hassel) and Hallgarten (Schönhell and Jungfer). The wines are made by Norbert and Mark Barth, who have been attracting increased attention in recent years, not only for their fine, elegant dry hocks, but also for their sparkling wines.

**GMD** Nice peach and apricot nose; pretty, lovely fruity charm, but there is power too, and a hint of something like aniseed; beautiful balance, just a touch of heat on the close.

**DM** Very expressive. Ripe yellow fruits. Deep, dense and structured. A pleasure now and for the future.

**MW** A touch of sulphur is evident to begin with, but this blows off to reveal intense and lively stone fruit. Not the longest finish, but this is a powerful and balanced wine with a dry finish, despite the relatively high residual sugar.

Drink 2017-2021 Alc 12.5%



### Von Othegraven, GG, Ockfen Bockstein, Mosel 96

GMD 96 DM 96 MW 95

£37.99 The Winery

One of the top wines of the Saar Valley, which is included in the Mosel region, the 16ha, pure Riesling estate in Kanzem is owned by Günter Jauch whose grandmother was a von Othegraven. The estate dates back to the 16th century. The best vineyards are on the Devon slate soils of the Ockfener Bockstein, the Kanzemer Altenberg, the Wiltinger Kupp and the Wawerner Herrenberg. Most of the wines made here are traditional off-sweet and sweet kabinetts and spätlesen.

**GMD** Gold; yellow peach, quite soft and fruity like a sweet wine; nice acidity, white peaches, with some flesh to them; power and structure, seems a classic, if a dry wine can be that in the Mosel; lovely finish.

**DM** A riot of fruit salad in the nose. Deep and viscous mouthfeel. Beautifully integrated acidity. Powerful. Balanced. Long and showy.

**MW** Towards pale gold in colour. Heavy, heady, honeyed aromas. Rather full in body. Not the freshest or most finessed, but this attention-grabbing wine has sublime richness and length.

Drink 2018-2025 Alc 12% ➤



## Outstanding 95-97pts



### Grans-Fassian, GG, Trittenheimer Apotheke, Mosel 95

GMD 95 DM 95 MW 95

£22.50 GK Wine House

Gerhard Grans makes the wines here in his moderately sized (11ha) family estate, which dates back 1624. Grans Fassian is lucky enough to own chunks of the Goldtröpfchen in Piesport, the Laurentiuslay in Leiwen and of course the wine that impressed us so much here – the Apotheke in Trittenheim. Grans is a master of dry winemaking, though this does not prevent him from making some splendid traditional Mosels as well.

**GMD** Slightly earthy on the nose; soft, almost meaty palate with some merging fruits; peach pastilles, lots of acidity lurking; oranges; a very long and interesting wine.

**DM** Tropical, dried fruit nose. Figs and passion fruit. Direct. Powerful.

**MW** Intense, lime oil and mineral, petrol nose. Full-bodied and very intense. Deeply fruity on the mid-palate, but ends keen, dry and mineral. Very long, very concentrated. Almost slightly medicinal on the nose. Effortless. Saline finish, very moreish.

Drink 2020-2030 Alc 13%



### Heinrichshof, Schlossberg, Mosel 95

GMD 95 DM 95 MW 95

£16.99 Flint, Stannary St Wine Co

The rank outsider among our Outstanding producers, and for most of us a discovery, the Heinrichshof in Zeltingen is a small (6ha) family estate now run by Peter and Ulrich Griebeler, whose grapes are chiefly grown on the steep slopes of the Zeltinger Schlossberg and Sonnenuhr (sundial). The wines are Peter's domain. He trained with Armin Diel in the Nahe and Fritz Haag nearer home. The estate focuses on dry wines, and 2014 was its first vintage: bravo!

**GMD** Nose very mute; no off-notes; very clear fruit, some apple, seems undeveloped as yet, cooling but a nice structure is there; the fruit appears to trickle out; there is decent acidity. This one is leading from the back of the pack. Long finish.

**DM** A lovely transparency from nose to mouth to finish. Everything matches. Not showy, but integrated and very enjoyable.

**MW** Straight, pithy grapefruit on the nose. Very fruity on the palate, with real concentration of fruit and good length. This is very well balanced, with a good mineral finish.

Drink 2020-2025 Alc 12%



### Tesch, Laubenheimer Karthäuser, Nahe 95

GMD 96 DM 95 MW 95

N/A UK [www.weingut-tesch.de](http://www.weingut-tesch.de)

Martin Tesch is the wild man of the Nahe. On the family's 19ha estate, he produces wines that are wholly uncompromising in their masculine, mineral character. He is not a great believer in fruity charm. The

principal wines are the Laubenheimer Karthäuser and St Remigiusberg, and the Langenlonsheimer Königsschild and Löhrrer Berg, which are a mixture of red sandstone shale, clay, loam with red pebbles and loess.

**GMD** Limes, white peaches, pretty and lovely; developing fruit – white peaches; and yet there is immense power here. Very good.

**DM** Touch of wax in the nose. Fruit salad. Thrilling freshness and minerality. Intense and long.

**MW** Prettily fragrant, aromatic nose. Intense, sappy lemon and lime fruit on the palate, along with good cut and freshness.

Drink 2020-2028 Alc 13%

## Highly Recommended 90-94pts



### Bamberger, Monzinger Frühlingsplätzchen, Nahe 95

GMD 96 DM 95 MW 94

£14.95 Lea & Sandeman

Quite restrained on the nose. Slightly spritzy, powerful on the palate with flavours of juicy ripe pears. Lively, explosive, intense wine with an amazing freshness. Typical example of Monzingen. **Drink 2017-2025 Alc 12%**



### Clemens Busch, GG Fahrlay, Pündericher Marienburg, Mosel 93

GMD 90 DM 96 MW 94

£36.60 The Wine Barn

Very elegant and engaging nose with floral, orange blossom notes. This is mouthfilling and lively, boasting delicious ripe fruit and freshness, with hints of nuts, eucalyptus and a touch of salinity on the very long finish. **Drink 2020-2030 Alc 13%**



### Groebe, GG, Kirchspiel, Rheinhessen 93

GMD 93 DM 92 MW 94

N/A UK [www.weingut-k-f-groebe.de](http://www.weingut-k-f-groebe.de)

Delicate and elegant, light cherry blossom fragrance. This is a densely textured wine reminiscent of beeswax, with some nutty, almondy flavours, but also an amazing freshness keeping it all in check. A zingy, lively, delicious Wonnegau with great persistence. **Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%**



## Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



**Kühling-Gillot, GG, Nierstein Pettenthal, Rheinhessen 93**

GMD 91 DM 94 MW 93

N/A UK [www.kuehling-gillot.de](http://www.kuehling-gillot.de)

A racy nose with ripe citrus fruit and minerals. This is powerful and nicely balanced with lovely lime peel and grapefruit flavours and a sprinkling of spice, lingering beautifully. Fresh and zesty, with an amazing concentration.

Drink 2017-2022 Alc 12.5%



**Becker Landgraf, Gau-Odernheimer Herrgottspfad, Rheinhessen 92**

GMD 88 DM 94 MW 93  
£22.99 The Winery

A graceful nose with delicate satsuma and jasmine aromas. Richly textured and harmonious, showing ample concentration as well as lovely citrus and exotic fruit flavours. A powerful wine with a long and zesty finish.

Drink 2017-2022 Alc 12.5%



**Braunewell, Essenheimer Teufelspfad, Rheinhessen 92**

GMD 94 DM 91 MW 91

£21.95 Lea & Sandeman

A seductive nose with hints of lime and real richness to the fruit character. This is a wine with substance, confidently textured, with the concentrated fruit complemented by a refreshing tanginess. Opulent, with a powerful, intense finish. Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%



**Dr Loosen, GG Alte Reben, Ürziger Würzgarten, Mosel 92**

GMD 90 DM 92 MW 93

£27.99-£29.99 Awin Barratt Siegel, Bancroft, Bentley's, Hangingditch, Portland Wine Cellars, The Harrow Cellars, The Oxford Wine Co

Wonderful bouquet with passion fruit, mango, pineapple and herbal notes. Supple texture with a hint of toffee and a touch of spice.

Exciting, pure. Drink 2018-2025 Alc 12.5%



**FB Schönleber, GG, Winkel Jesuitengarten, Rheingau 92**

GMD 90 DM 95 MW 92

N/A UK [www.fb-schoenleber.de](http://www.fb-schoenleber.de)

A delightful wine: densely textured and beautifully balanced with lovely ripe fruit and a gently integrated acidity. Clean, pure, slightly leesy in character, the wine culminates in a long, lovely finish. A delicious example of Rheingau. Drink 2018-2023 Alc 13%



**Georg Müller, Hattenheimer Schützenhaus, Rheingau 92**

GMD 96 DM 91 MW 90

N/A UK [www.georg-mueller-stiftung.de](http://www.georg-mueller-stiftung.de)

A big, seductive, ripe nose with aromas of yellow peaches, apricot and orange blossom. Lovely intensity of fruit on the palate and great freshness. An opulent, powerful wine with a very long finish. Drink 2018 Alc 12.5%



**Knipser, GG, Laumersheimer Steinbuckel, Pfalz 92**

GMD 92 DM 89 MW 94

£29.50 Enotria

Delicate on the nose with lime jelly and mineral characters. Intense, lively and dynamic in style with fresh fruit and a pure, lengthy finish. This is a delightful, gastronomic wine which will continue surprising us with time.

Drink 2020-2025 Alc 12.5%



**Künstler, GG, Hochheim Kirchenstück, Rheingau 92**

GMD 88 DM 95 MW 94

N/A UK [www.weingut-kuenstler.de](http://www.weingut-kuenstler.de)

Incredibly intense and perfumed nose with hints of rhubarb. Seriously powerful, richly textured. Bags of fruits, a touch of tobacco and real zesty acidity leading to a long finish. An harmonious example of Rheingau from the eastern flank. Drink 2018-2023 Alc 12.5%



**Leitz, GG, Rudesheimer Berg Rottland, Rheingau 92**

GMD 95 DM 91 MW 90

£31.99 Awin Barratt Siegel

Wonderful, heady nose of ripe fruit, floral fragrance and a touch of honey. The delicious, lip-smacking palate is pure, with sappy orange peel and a hint of bitterness on the long finish, which only adds to the complexity. Drink 2018-2030 Alc 12.5%



**Nik Weis St Urbans-Hof, GG, Leiwener Laurentiuslay, Mosel 92**

GMD 91 DM 93 MW 92

£30.30 The Wine Barn

A graceful nose with ripe apricots and jasmine, as well as a touch of lychee and rose petal. This is full in body, rich, precise and dry, boasting delicious white peach and red apple fruit. Powerful, harmonious with a surprisingly savoury finish. Drink 2018-2025 Alc 12%



**Prinz von Hessen, GG, Johannberger Klaus, Rheingau 92**

GMD 95 DM 88 MW 92

N/A UK [www.prinz-von-hessen.de](http://www.prinz-von-hessen.de)

A wonderful bouquet of white peach, kiwi and pink grapefruit. On the palate, a lovely freshness with rhubarb overtones, leading to a crystalline mineral finish. Medium to full in body, pure, intense with a great presence. Drink 2018-2028 Alc 13%



**SA Prüm, GG Alte Reben, Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Mosel 92**

GMD 94 DM 90 MW 92

N/A UK [www.saprueem.com](http://www.saprueem.com)

Ripe, rich and very attractive floral nose, with orange blossom, rose and a touch of mango. This is mouthfilling, nicely balanced and very harmonious with a lovely structure. A delicious wine with good length that shows great potential. Drink 2017-2025 Alc 12.5%



## Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



**Wagner Stempel, GG,  
Siefersheimer Heerkretz,  
Rheinhessen 92**

GMD 90 DM 95 MW 92

£43.50 *Winetraders*

Extraordinarily forward fragrance with a delicate touch of truffle. Soft, lemony fruit complements intense spice and a creamy texture. Tightens up to finish dry. Serious concentration. **Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%**



**BattenfeldSpanier, GG,  
Nieder-Flörsheim Frauenberg,  
Rheinhessen 91**

GMD 90 DM 93 MW 91

N/A UK [www.battenfeld-spanier.de](http://www.battenfeld-spanier.de)

Wonderful heady nose of lime, sour cherry and a touch of toffee. Broad in the mouth, oily textured, tangy with pleasant citrus fruit. Nicely balanced with a sense of harmony and a long finish. **Drink 2017-2022 Alc 12.5%**



**Bischel, Appenheimer  
Hundertgulden, Rheinhessen 91**

GMD 89 DM 94 MW 90

£28.99 *The Winery*

An opulent, expressive nose with aromas of lime and aniseed. The palate is explosive with flavours of baked apples, pineapple as well as passion fruit and a hint of cinnamon. Richly textured, this is a serious and mouthwatering wine. **Drink 2016-2022 Alc 13%**



**Domdechant Werner, GG,  
Hochheimer Domdechane,  
Rheingau 91**

GMD 89 DM 92 MW 93

£33 *Tanners*

A wonderful bouquet with peach, grapefruit, passion fruit and lemongrass. Full, intense and powerful with sappy concentrated citrus juices, culminating in a long, dry saline finish. Serious and classy. **Drink 2020-2025 Alc 12.5%**



**Hans Lang, Hattenheimer  
Schützenhaus, Rheingau 91**

GMD 95 DM 90 MW 89

N/A UK [www.weingut-hans-lang.de](http://www.weingut-hans-lang.de)

Seductive nose, smoky aromas of hot stone and honeysuckle. Intense palate with delicious rhubarb and fruit pie flavours. Lovely, well integrated acidity. A serious dry wine, almost savoury: a perfect accompaniment to refined pork dishes. **Drink 2018-2028 Alc 12%**



**Louis Guntrum, GG, Nierstein  
Pettenthal, Rheinhessen 91**

GMD 86 DM 93 MW 93

£30.99 *Awin Barratt Siegel*

Beautifully floral and zesty nose, leading on to a very concentrated, harmonious and juicy palate, rich in texture but highly refreshing. Lovely depth and clarity of fruit and a long-lasting finish. **Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13%**



**Pauly, Lieserer Niederberg  
Helden, Mosel 91**

GMD 86 DM 95 MW 91

£14-£22.99 *Highbury Vintners, Le Vignoble, Liberty Wines*

Clean, pure quince and apricot aromas. The palate is concentrated, harmonious and nicely balanced with a searing acidity and a sense of salinity cutting through the sweet, buttery flavours of pastry and vanilla. A lovely wine with good length. **Drink 2016-2018 Alc 12%**



**Pfeffingen, Weilberg, Ungstein,  
Pfalz 91**

GMD 92 DM 90 MW 92

N/A UK [www.pfeffingen.de](http://www.pfeffingen.de)

The fairly discreet nose leads on to a more explosive palate, with ripe and juicy pineapple flavours. This is densely textured with a lovely sweet-sour balance and a good purity. Great persistence. This wine will continue surprising us with time. **Drink 2020-2025 Alc 13.5%**



**Riffel, Turm, Binger  
Scharlachberg, Rheinhessen 91**

GMD 89 DM 95 MW 90

N/A UK [www.weingut-riffel.de](http://www.weingut-riffel.de)

Deep, fleshy yellow fruit on the nose. Intense, zesty flavours on the palate, supporting some sweet peach overtones. Has a touch of white pepper and bitter almond on the long, spicy finish. A concentrated and mouthwatering wine. **Drink 2017-2023 Alc 13%**



**Thörle, Kalkstein Saulheimer,  
Rheinhessen 91**

GMD 89 DM 94 MW 89

£18.95 *Butlers Wine Cellar*

A graceful nose with attractive beeswax and white flowers. A good concentration of sappy fruits supported by lovely lime flavours on the palate, along with a touch of salinity on the lengthy finish, which brings a refreshing note. **Drink 2017-2022 Alc 12.5%**



**Winter, GG, Dittelsheim  
Kloppberg, Rheinhessen 91**

GMD 90 DM 93 MW 89

£14.99 *The Oxford Wine Co*

Delicate, ripe and fresh fragrances of fennel and aniseed. Creamy, almost oily textured with delicious fruit flavours enhanced by zesty, savoury notes, ending with a hint of spice and a refreshing salinity. A really appetising wine. **Drink 2018-2023 Alc 12.5%**



**August Kessler, Lorchhäuser  
Seligmacher, Rheingau 90**

GMD 93 DM 89 MW 87

£19.10 *Justerini & Brooks*

A complex bouquet composed of pineapple, apricots and musky notes. Intriguing on first taste, this is a multi-dimensional, rich and lively on the palate, with good depth of sweet fruit and rhubarb notes. Very pleasant, with a nice length. **Drink 2017-2025 Alc 12.5%** ➤



## Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



**Dr von Bassermann-Jordan, GG, Forster Jesuitengarten, Pfalz 90**

GMD 89 DM 90 MW 92

£44.10 The Wine Barn

Charming nose with pure jasmine fragrance and notes of peach. Full in body, with ample concentration yet a light velvety texture. Perfectly balanced, pure and lively with a peppery touch. **Drink 2018-2022 Alc 13%**



**Fürst, GG, Centgrafenberg, Franken 90**

GMD 93 DM 89 MW 87

£36.99-£38.99 Awin Barratt Siegel, Uncorked  
Lovely, vibrant nose with fresh scents of lime and mandarin peel. The palate expresses some sweet notes supported by very pleasant tangy, zesty fruit. A mouthwatering wine with a great persistence. **Drink 2017-2025 Alc 12%**



**Horst Sauer, GG, Escherndorf am Lumpen 1655, Franken 90**

GMD 94 DM 87 MW 89

N/A UK [www.weingut-horst-sauer.de](http://www.weingut-horst-sauer.de)

Lovely pure fragrance of jasmine with fresh scents of grapefruit jelly, lemon sorbet and a hint of aromatic herbs. Good intensity of lemon fruit on the palate, soft, smooth and tangy. A delicious example of Franconian Riesling. **Drink 2017-2022 Alc 13.5%**



**Kloster Eberbach, Hessische Staatsweingüter, Crescentia, Erbacher Siegelberg, Rheingau 90**

GMD 88 DM 92 MW 90

£22 Boutinot

Wonderful bouquet boasting passion fruit and spice. Richly textured, juicy peach, guava and rhubarb flavours as well as a hint of caramel and white pepper. Very long and robust with a slightly bitter finish. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 12.5%**



**Kruger-Rumpf, GG, Münsterer im Pittersberg, Nahe 90**

GMD 94 DM 86 MW 90

N/A UK [www.kruger-rumpf.de](http://www.kruger-rumpf.de)

Light floral and peppery nose with appetising aromas of apricot and a touch of oak. Full, with distinctly peachy fruit, finishing on a dry, mineral note. A charming wine with a good freshness. **Drink 2018-2025 Alc 12.5%**



**Max Ferd Richter, Uralte Wurzelechte Reben, Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Mosel 90**

GMD 90 DM 90 MW 89

£23 City Wine Collection, Montrachet

Heady aromas with attractive passion fruit, hints of beeswax and honey and a touch of botrytis. Powerful and racy with delicious, ripe white peach and lime, and a hint of salinity on the long finish. **Drink 2017-2020 Alc 11.5%**



**Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, GG, Kaseler Nies'chen, Mosel 90**

GMD 89 DM 93 MW 89

N/A UK Available soon via UK agent OW Loeb

Restrained on the nose with a touch of aromatic herbs. Explosive in the mouth, with soft and fruity flavours and a hint of pine tree. Shows a lovely balance of richness and savoury minerality. Lean finish with a slight bitter note. **Drink 2016-2018 Alc 12%**



**Schäfer-Fröhlich, GG, Bockenauer Felseneck, Nahe 90**

GMD 89 DM 94 MW 88

POA The Wine Barn

Spontaneous, wild yeast fermentation aromas; a bit stinky, but in a good way! A savoury and fresh palate, coiled and muscular. Difficult to fully appreciate right now, but it has good fruit lying underneath. **Drink 2020-2025 Alc 13%**



**Schloss Vollrads, GG, Schlossberg, Rheingau 90**

GMD 89 DM 93 MW 88

£29.99 Liberty Wines, Old Bridge

Very perfumed with pure, fresh fragrances of aniseed and elderflower. Dense, oily texture with intense fruit. Very harmonious and surprisingly intense, with a salty note on the long finish. Great potential: this wine will develop with time. **Drink 2016-2023 Alc 13%**



**Schlossgut Diel, GG, Dorsheim Goldloch, Nahe 90**

GMD 89 DM 91 MW 91

N/A UK [www.diel.eu](http://www.diel.eu)

Wonderful, ripe fruit nose that shows hints of aromatic herbs. A bracing and dry wine with an intense palate, mouthfilling. With its firm acidity and great persistence, this is a wine that will continue to surprise us with time. **Drink 2016-2020 Alc 12%**



**Walter, Pündericher Marienburg, Mosel 90**

GMD 89 DM 93 MW 87

£19.99 The Winery

With its delicate and restrained, floral nose of honeyed rose and heather, this wine is surprisingly full-bodied and dry on the palate. Shows a good concentration of fruit along with subtle botrytised touches and a hint of truffle complexity. **Drink 2018-2025 Alc 13%**

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## Recommended 86-89pts

Wine	Score	GMD	DM	MW	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
<b>Castell, GG, Schlossberg, Franken</b>	89	89	89	89	Discreet nose, aromas reminiscent of fresh undergrowth and a touch of lemon peel. Zesty, intense on the palate, with lovely fruit and a hot spicy finish.	13.5%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.castell.de
<b>Dreissigacker, Bechtheimer Geyersberg, Rheinhessen</b>	89	82	94	90	Powerful nose of bergamot and leaf tea. The palate is nicely textured and juicy, with flavours of roses and geranium jelly. Long, savoury finish.	13%	2016-2020	£14.50-£47.99	Highbury Vintners, Liberty Wines
<b>Eva Fricke, Kiedrich, Rheingau</b>	89	93	89	86	Very pale in colour and restrained on the nose. Opulent mouthfeel with lovely fruity flavours and refreshing acidity on the finish.	12%	2020-2030	£20	Berry Bros & Rudd, Highbury Vintners
<b>Graf von Kanitz, Alte Reben, Lorcher Krone, Rheingau</b>	89	89	91	88	Delicate floral scents on the nose. Concentrated, boasting intense orchard fruit on the palate, with a slightly bitter almond touch on the long finish.	13%	2017-2025	N/A UK	www.weingut-kanitz.de
<b>Gut Hermannsberg, GG, Niederhäuser H'berg, Nahe</b>	89	89	94	84	Concentrated, robust, quite a fiercely masculine wine. Lovely mineral character with a good length and a slight bitter touch.	12.5%	2018-2025	N/A UK	www.gut-hermannsberg.de
<b>Immich-Batterieberg, Enkircher Ellergrub, Mosel</b>	89	88	89	90	Expressive nose of tropical fruits, honeysuckle, lifted jasmine and ripe apricot. Refreshing apple, hints of eucalyptus and mint. Juicy, fresh, mouthwatering.	12%	2018-2022	N/A UK	www.batterieberg.com
<b>Jürgen Ellwanger, GG, Schnaiter Altenberg, Württemberg</b>	89	86	90	90	Attractive lemony nose. Nicely soft attack with delicate citrus flavours, notes of lavender and rosemary, leading to a quite big spicy finish. Very pure wine.	12.5%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.weingut-ellwanger.de
<b>Karl Haidle, GG, Stettener Pulvermächer, Württemberg</b>	89	85	93	88	Delicate floral and citrus aromas. Densely textured with flavours of tropical fruit, ginger, rose water and a touch of pepper. A lively and pure expression.	13%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.weingut-karl-haidle.de
<b>Karthäuserhof, GG, Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg, Mosel</b>	89	82	94	90	Fresh scents of mint, herbs, lemon and lime. This is nicely balanced with well integrated acidity and good concentration of fruit. Very long and pure finish.	12%	2017-2020	£17.50	Montrachet
<b>Schloss Johannisberg, Silberlack GG, Rheingau</b>	89	85	94	89	Fresh bouquet of eucalyptus, mint, kumquat and a touch of petrol. Open, oily and powerful, well-balanced with some apple and stone fruit on the finish.	12.5%	2017-2021	£45	The Wine Man, Wine Direct
<b>Weinreich, Rheinhessen</b>	89	90	90	86	Expressive, attractive nose with creamy lime fruit, spice. Broad in the mouth, lively, with some pineapple, citrus zest and ground white pepper. Nice length.	12%	2017-2022	£13.99	Averys
<b>Zur Schwane, GG, Escherndorf am Lumpen 1655, Franken</b>	89	93	86	89	Attractive and restrained nose with aromas of apricots, white pepper and sweet rose. Harmonious and balanced with good density of fruit.	13%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.schwane.de
<b>Heitlinger, GG, Tiefenbacher Schellenbrunnen, Baden</b>	88	87	87	91	Lovely ripe Riesling nose with waxy and lemony aromas. Very engaging, juicy, zesty and fresh. A harmonious, pleasant wine with great persistence.	12.5%	2017-2022	£21.99	Virgin Wines
<b>Laible, GG, Am Bühl, Durchbach Plauenrain, Baden-Ortenau</b>	88	86	89	89	Lovely aromas of stone fruit and warm treacle tart. Softly lemony on the palate with well-integrated acidity. Round and juicy, pleasant oily texture.	12.5%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.andreas-laible.com
<b>Schloss Neuweier, Robert Schätzle, Mauerwein, Baden</b>	88	94	85	86	Pleasant nose of dried red fruits and caramel. Full and silky, the rather charming palate has some notes of linden flowers, lime zest and lemon oil.	12%	2017-2022	£39.99	The Winery
<b>Studert Prüm, Wehlen, Mosel</b>	88	82	93	88	Very pale colour and discreet nose of durian fruit and classic blackberry leaf. This is nicely balanced, lively, with good purity and lovely freshness.	12%	2018-2020	£16.50	Peter Watts
<b>Weltner, GG, Hoheleite, Franken</b>	88	93	85	86	Attractive nose of stone fruit and white flowers. Zesty, long and tangy. Some intense lemon, peach and grapefruit marmalade, with an invigorating acidity.	13%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.weltnerwein.de
<b>Balthasar Röss, GG, Rudesheim Berg Rottland, Rheingau</b>	87	89	88	84	Appetising nose of baked apple and caramel. A refreshing acidity supports some very ripe fruit flavours. Very spicy in the mouth and nicely textured.	13%	2018-2025	£25	Berkmann, Le Vignoble
<b>Dr Heger, GG, Vorderer Winklerberg, Baden</b>	87	85	85	92	Very perfumed with delicate scents of vine peach and white flowers. Very pure, invigorating, this is a seductive wine with good intensity and length.	12%	2017-2022	£32.80	The Wine Barn
<b>Joh. Bapt. Schäfer, Burg Layer, Schlossberg, Nahe</b>	87	82	90	90	Soft, honeyed nose. Very concentrated, intense palate with a rich texture and some enticing flavours of pineapple and Turkish Delight. Long, zingy finish.	12.5%	2020-2025	N/A UK	www.jbs-wein.de
<b>Peter Jakob Kühn, Jacobus, Rheingau</b>	87	86	90	84	Fine, fragrant, discreetly aromatic. Nicely balanced, some powerful, intense flavours of peach and a hint of caramel supported by refreshing acidity.	11.5%	2018-2021	£12.40	Tanners
<b>Schätzel, ReinSchiefer, Nierstein, Rheinhessen</b>	87	88	90	84	Seductive nose, with lifted aromas of white flower, peach and lime. Palate is elegant and slightly spritzy, with crisp pineapple fruit. A mouthwatering wine.	11%	2017-2022	£24.50	Bottle Apostle, Compagnie des Vins Surnaturels, Top Selection
<b>Sybille Kuntz, Spätlese Trocken, Lieser Niederberg Helden, Mosel</b>	87	89	89	82	Expressive nose of herbs, honey and a touch of petrol. Some juicy peach with a touch of bitterness on the long finish, which adds to the complexity.	12.5%	2018-2021	£27.40	Prohibition Wines
<b>Dr H Thanisch, Sp Trkn, Erben Müller-Burggraef, Mosel</b>	86	85	86	86	Remarkably honeyed nose with elegant rose scents and a touch of botrytis. Crisp with some lime zest and a touch of saltiness. Lean and long.	10.5%	2016-2018	£22.50	Hedonism, Hermitage Cellars, The Dorset Wine Co, The Somerset Wine Co, The Oxford Wine Co
<b>Familie Rau, Delzemer, Mosel</b>	86	86	84	87	Very perfumed with floral and ripe fruit aromas. Clean and pleasant, with crunchy apples and a touch of salinity. Straight in style and well balanced.	11.5%	2016-2019	£11.50	Premier Wines & Spirits, Vinothentic



## Recommended (continued) 86-89pts

Wine	Score	GMD	DM	MW	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Markgraf von Baden, Kl'berger 1782, Durbacher, S'berg, Baden	86	86	87	86	Aromas of waxy lemon which are also present on the palate. Very full-bodied, an oily texture with nice vibrant fruit and an invigorating acidity.	13%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.markgraf-von-baden.de
Münzberg, Godramsteiner Kalkgrube, Pfalz	86	82	86	89	Expressive nose of rose and tropical fruit. Full in body, intense concentration with ripe melon flavours. Invigorating acidity and a long finish. Will develop.	13%	2018-2020	N/A UK	www.weingut-muenzberg.de
Siben, GG, Langenmorgen Deidesheim, Pfalz	86	82	87	90	Herbal and minty nose. Palate nicely textured and pleasant with overtones of blueberry and blackcurrant leaf, and intense spice. Good concentration.	13%	2018-2020	N/A UK	www.siben-weingut.de
St Antony, GG, Nierstein Pettenthal, Rheinhessen	86	82	88	87	Beautiful passion fruit aroma and a marked touch of oak. Very intense, with real fruit expression, leading to a refreshing minty finish. Full of character.	12.5%	2017-2022	N/A UK	www.st-antony.de
Von Winning, GG, Forster Ungeheuer, Pfalz	86	89	82	88	A pronounced touch of oak dominates the nose. Very powerful, with a good fruit expression. A little bit more time should integrate oak to perfection.	13%	2018-2025	£29	Humble Grape
Wegeler, GG, Geisenheim Rothenberg, Rheingau	86	92	84	83	Expressive nose of passion fruit enhanced by a touch of seasoned oak. The palate is smooth-textured with intense lemony flavours. Great persistence.	13%	2018-2025	N/A UK	www.wegeler.com
Weingut am Stein, GG, Stettener Stein, Franken	86	85	86	88	Delicate fragrance of grapefruit pith. The palate has a creamy texture and expresses intense lemon and lime zest, leading to a crisp and lifted finish.	13%	2017-2020	£40	Albion Wine Shippers

## Commended 83-85pts

■ **Burg Ravensburg, GG, Husarenkappe, Kraichgau, Baden 85**, 13.5%, 2016, N/A UK [www.weingut-burg-ravensburg.de](http://www.weingut-burg-ravensburg.de) ■ **Höfler, GG, Michelbacher Apostelgarten, Franken 85**, 12.5%, 2016-2018, N/A UK [www.weingut-hoefler.de](http://www.weingut-hoefler.de) ■ **Paulinshof, Spätlese Trocken, Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr, Mosel 85**, 12%, 2017-2020, £23.49 Carruthers & Kent, Le Vignoble ■ **Reichsrat von Buhl, GG, Forster Ungeheuer, Pfalz 85**, 13%, 2018-2025, £46.99 Handford, Harrods, Hedonism, Hennings, Jascots, The Sampler, Vagabond ■ **Richard Böcking, Devon, Mosel 85**, 9%, 2016-2017, £15.95 Swig

■ **Bürgerspital, Randersackerer Teufelskeller, Franken 84**, 12.5%, 2016-2018, £23.99 Aitken ■ **Dr Bürklin-Wolf, Wachenheimer, Pfalz 84**, 12.5%, 2018-2020, £13.95 Tanners ■ **Gunderloch, GG, Rothenberg, Rheinhessen 84**, 12.5%, 2017-2022, £43.99-£45.99 Awin Barratt Siegel ■ **Fürst Hohenlohe Oehringen, GG, Verrenberg, Württemberg 83**, 13%, 2017-2022, N/A UK [www.verrenberg.de](http://www.verrenberg.de) ■ **Müller-Catoir, Haardter Bürgergarten, Pfalz 83**, 13%, 2018-2020, N/A UK [www.mueller-catoir.de](http://www.mueller-catoir.de)

For full UK stockist details, see p101

**Next month's panel tastings**  
New Zealand Pinot Noir  
& Sancerre Blanc 2015

## My top three Giles MacDonogh

### ■ Dönnhoff, GG, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle, Nahe 2014

A simply lovely nose that was all apricots and ripe pears; quite lyrical, filling the palate; lovely soft, feminine power, indeed, softness and delicacy throughout. Should go on giving pleasure for a decade or two. **98 Drink** 2020-2030

■ **Fritz Haag, GG, Brauneberger Juffer, Mosel 2014** Classic flinty, mineral nose, with some aromas of white peaches and limes; palate is awash with cooling fruit – a great sign of nobility. Nice, powerful finish with echoes of those white peaches. Acidity is very ripe: should go on for years. **96 Drink** 2018-2025

■ **Prinz von Hessen, GG, Johannisberger Klaus, Rheingau 2014** The nose betrays that lovely rhubarb character so typical of top hock; the rhubarb also dominates the palate. Has a rapier-like cut and thrust, and finishes with a delightful arpeggio. Good for a decade or more. **95 Drink** 2018-2028

## My top three David Motion

### ■ Barth, GG, Hallgarten Schönhell, Rheingau 2014

The strike rate of this family winery based in Hattenheim seems to be ramping up annually. This is so Hallgarten; ripe yellow fruits, expressive, open, deep, dense and structured. A pleasure now and for the next two decades. **96 Drink** 2017-2021

■ **Heinrichshof Schlossberg, Mosel 2014** A delight from a grower in Zeltingen who I had never heard of. Lovely transparency, everything matches. Not shouty, but integrated and very enjoyable. **95 Drink** 2020-2025

■ **Wagner-Stempel, GG, Siefersheimer Heerkretz, Rheinhessen 2014** An excellent example of modern Rheinhessen Riesling. Concentrated, intense, with deep yellow fruit and very spicy. Turbo-charged and yet classy. **95 Drink** 2017-2022

## My top three Matt Walls

■ **Dönnhoff, GG, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle, Nahe 2014** One of the greatest vineyards in Germany, and this demonstrates why, combining surging power with supreme elegance and minerality. A consistently exceptional producer. **96 Drink** 2020-2030

■ **Fritz Haag, GG, Brauneberger Juffer, Mosel 2014** Family-owned for over 400 years, this superb Mosel estate has been run by Oliver Haag since 2005. This is a thrillingly intense wine of superb length and balance, but is still relatively affordable. **96 Drink** 2018-2025

■ **Clemens Busch, GG Fahrlay, Pündericher Marienburg, Mosel 2014** An excellent biodynamic estate established in 1986. The Fahrlay is grown on blue slate and the 2014 is beautifully fresh, floral and mineral. Generous and complete. **94 Drink** 2020-2030

**NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top-scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors**



## Expert summary: Giles MacDonogh

Despite adverse weather in 2014, many estates in Germany produced excellent dry Rieslings. As a rule of thumb, the more northerly regions produced the better wines



*Giles MacDonogh is the DWWA Regional Chair for Germany. A prolific writer and broadcaster, he is currently writing a history of Germany*

WHEN I TASTED my first 2014s in the Nahe last year, I was more than agreeably surprised. I was aware that the summer had stopped abruptly, and that by the end of August Germany was cold and wet. I expected the worst. It was explained to me, however, that the grapes were mostly ripe before the bad weather arrived, and that in most regions (most!), growers had been able to make really good dry wines, providing they had been rigorously selective. Obviously, the wealthier estates can afford to do this more than the little folk, who get less money for their wine.

Further north, in the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, the grapes were not ripe when the rot came, and their thick skins protected them. Growers harvested quickly when the better weather returned, making good dry wines, some old-style kabinetts, spätlesen and the odd auslese.

The results of this tasting confirm that the 2014 vintage is at its strongest the further north you go: the Mosel produced exemplary dry wines – indeed four of our seven Outstanding wines; the Rheingau returned to form after a disappointing 2013 vintage, and the Nahe and Rheinhessen made some splendid wines too. There was less quality in Baden, Württemberg or Franconia

(but then they don't lead on Riesling), and the only real disappointment was the Pfalz, which ripens early and suffered most from the bad weather at harvest time. Pfalz wines in 2014 can be uncharacteristically light and thin. It was notable that the great houses of Deidesheim – the so-called 'B's' (von Buhl, Bassermann-Jordan and Dr Bürklin-Wolf) – didn't achieve their usual high ratings. Similarly, in Franconia, the famous Würzburg institutions performed less well than their country cousins.

Looking down the list of participants, many of Germany's top estates sent in wines. A handful of small, famous, oversubscribed estates did not, but in the main these are places more famous for their traditional sweet and semi-sweet wines. The mood among the three of us on the panel was very positive, and the tasting proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that all regions of Germany can now produce world-beating dry Rieslings.

*'This proved that all regions of Germany can now produce world-beating dry Riesling'*



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