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# Riesling Dinner

## *at Hardy's* 24.07.13

Welcome! Our celebrations of the **31 Days of German Riesling** continue tonight with a three course dinner devised by Dominique and her team here at Hardy's accompanied by a procession of German Rieslings in a dizzying variety of styles. We will revel in Riesling's transparent expression of terroir – the steep, slate slopes of the Mosel, the varied, volcanic soil of the Nahe and the perfumed depth of historic Rheingau. While concentrating on the dry (*trocken*) styles, we will also taste a couple of fruity, sweeter wines.

### *On Arrival*

#### **Maximiner Cabinet Riesling Sekt Brut 2011, Studert-Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel)**

Wehlen is one of the most highly renowned wine villages in Germany. Its vineyards cling to the slope on the opposite bank of the Mosel, a slope of uninterrupted Grand Cru sites from Bernkastel through Graach and Wehlen up to Zeltingen, where the river starts another loop. Wehlen is best known for its Sonnenuhr (Sundial) vineyard. It is also inextricably linked with the family name of Prüm. There are several Prüms in the village. Gerd Studert's mother is one of the SA Prüms whose estate was divided between her and her sister. Gerd has five hectares of vines, which may not be much, but the fact remains that they are all in great vineyards in Wehlen, Graach and Bernkastel. We have been keeping an eye on Studert-Prüm for a long time. It was a bottle of Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese trocken 2009 which we drank at the Moselschild in Ürzig that brought us knocking. When we visited Gerd again last month, we tasted this Riesling Sekt. It spent 15 months on its lees and was disgorged 4 months ago. The nose is fresh and breezy. We love its core of ripeness, its density and intensity.



### *With your Starter*

#### **Riesling trocken 2012, Riffel (Bingen/Rheinhessen) ORGANIC**

Bingen is on a massive corner on the Rhine, opposite Rudesheim. It is at the north-western edge of the region where four wine-growing regions meet. Rheinhessen, Nahe, Mittelrhein and the Rheingau. Carolin and Erik Riffel have vines in the full south-facing Bingen Scharlachberg vineyard. Millions of years ago the Rhine looped below it, which explains why the wines have an almost Rheingau-like opulence. The Riffels make electric, dry, modern Riesling which express the steep, quartz-infused, fossil-laden slate it is grown on and the very late October harvesting which extracts maximum ripeness. We owe thanks to the German Food Writer Ursula Heinzelmann for tipping us off about Riffel. She was researching a piece about the wines Goethe drank and heard about the Scharlachberg. Thanks Ursula!

*With your Starter (cont)*

**vom grauen Schiefer Riesling trocken 2011, Clemens Busch (Pünderich/Mosel) BIO**

Until 2009 this wine was called Pündericher Marienburg Riesling Spätlese trocken two star. “From the grey slate” seems a bit less wordy.

Clemens Busch, the man who looks like Jesus, is something of a guru to his disciples, the New Wave German winemakers. He was the first to show that, with meticulous work in the vineyards, 100% organic viticulture, and if you pick late enough, you can make amazing dry Riesling on a river best known for its sweeter styles. Recently elevated to the VDP (the official Premier League of German growers) brings with it added recognition and status from the Old Guard, but it also means Clemens now has to play the politics game. Tinkering with labels and classification - fiddling with skis, in our opinion.

It's easy to forget the bureaucracy as you stand outside Clemens and Rita's 17<sup>th</sup> Century house on the riverside in Pünderich, looking up at the overwhelming wall of vines on the opposite bank. As usual, Clemens picked this late from grey slate parcels dotted around the Marienburg and allowed them to ferment out dry. Bursting with tightly-packed flavours, the late-picked ripeness of the fruit surges with electricity and savoury minerals.

*With Main Course*

**Briedeler Riesling Spätlese trocken 2011, Walter (Briedel/Mosel)**

Gerrit Walter was an intern with us at The Winery in the summer of 2009 and went back home to help with the harvest before heading back for his final year at Geisenheim, the top wine college in the country. He also spent a year working at Jochen Dreissigacker's winery in Rheinhessen. Jochen is one of the new stars in German wine. Gerrit has clearly been doing his homework - one sip and it's easy to understand why his Dad is giving him free rein in the family cellar. The boy shows promise! Modern Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from the perilously steep, slate vineyards of the small village of Briedel between Pünderich and Zell.



**Raenthaler Steinmächer Riesling Spätlese 1976, JB Becker (Walluf/Rheingau)**

This is what Rheingau Riesling becomes after decades of ageing. Golden, graceful – regal, even. Like something out of Laurel and Hardy, Maria Becker sloshed some Riesling out of the window anointing a surprised postman - and so the crazy world of the Beckers continued to unfold around us. Complete with an excitable dog, Maria and her moustachioed 68 year-old brother Hans-Josef (a winemaker who looks suspiciously like a circus ringmaster) make one of the most memorable double-acts we have encountered anywhere.

The Beckers are a wonderful mixture of ancient and modern. Despite being the first winery in the world to use a cutting-edge glass closure, the wines continue to be made in the traditional way, in huge old creaking Fuders with long, slow fermentation. Their wines are unreconstructed - gloriously traditional. The brother and sister are a great team, and Maria frequently manages to dig out some of this mature fruity Steinmächer 1976 from the darkest recesses of their damp cellar for us.

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*With Cheese or Dessert*

**Kieselstein Riesling trocken 2011, von Racknitz (Odernheim/Nahe)**

Top Mosel growers Clemens and Rita Busch had asked two times running “have you tasted at von Racknitz recently?” No, not recently. “You have to go there, the wines are getting really good!” So we looped through the Nahe to check them out. Formerly belonging to a historic cloister, the estate has a long history traceable back to Hildegard of Bingen (the Saint, Composer and Mystic) back in the 1100s. There have been ups and downs through the centuries to the point where the winery was on the brink of collapse in 2002. Enter Matthias Adams, former CFO of tech company Infineon Germany. Then in his late 30s he decided he wanted a career change, jacked-in his high-powered job and spent a year walking around the Black Forest. A friend at a large consultancy firm phoned him up and said, “there’s a job come in, it’s too small for us. Can you take a look at this winery, see if there’s anything you can salvage?” What no-one could have foreseen was that Matthias and Luise von Racknitz would fall in love and that together they would turn the estate’s fortunes around.

“Kieselstein” is a new bottling joining their "stone wine" series from a slate vineyard with a covering of pebbles (Kieselstein). Bright lemon yellow colour, a succulent, salty-peachy texture, rammed with minerality. Fresh, dry finish. Stone oil.

**Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2006, Studert-Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel)**

Although we specialise in dry Riesling at The Winery, the charms of sweet Riesling are not wasted on us.

2006 was a great vintage for sweet wines on the Mosel: moisture was high and botrytis (Noble Rot) spread through the vineyards like wildfire - quicker than anyone had seen since 1976. If you are trying to make dessert wines it's a godsend, as it shrivels the grapes, concentrating the sugars and adding the hedonistic honied, coconut, dried exotic fruit notes. Lush, succulent and yet always with that piercing Riesling freshness which stops a wine from becoming cloying.



**LUNAR CALENDAR OBSERVERS** – today is a **Flower Day**.

We have **one more event** in our **July programme** celebrating the **31 Days Of German Riesling**. On **Tuesday 30th July** we will be holding one of our **Wine Course Modules on Riesling** in the recently expanded back room at Kandoo, the friendly Persian Restaurant around the corner from us in Edgware Road. We are delighted that Gerrit Walter, young winemaker and rising star, will be joining us from the Mosel. We just heard that Berlin based Food and Wine Writer Ursula Heinzlmann is also hoping to join us for the evening. Tickets are £40.

Join us for our **Monthly Tastings**  
The Winery, 4 Clifton Road, London W9

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