

T H E
W I N E R Y

WINE COURSE **30.07.13**
GERMAN RIESLING MODULE
featuring **GERRIT WALTER**

Welcome to The Winery Wine Course. We hold occasional one-off modules on a variety of themes; so far we have covered Biodynamic Wine, Champagne, Burgundy and German Riesling (several times).

Each Module opens with a short introduction to wine-tasting technique to help everyone impress even the most snooty sommelier. Although we might add that our wine course will be run in inimitable Winery style; guaranteed no snootiness.

Tonight is the final event in our programme celebrating the “31 Days of German Riesling”. We are here to revel in Riesling, marvel at its minerality and be dazzled by its diversity. Delicate and powerful. Refined and rugged. Complex yet approachable. The glories of German Riesling!

We are delighted to be joined tonight by Gerrit Walter, the young winemaker from the Mosel. In addition to featuring Gerrit’s wines from the steep slate slopes overlooking the river at Briedel, we will be exploring variations and nuances of different regions such as the Rheingau, Rheinhessen and Nahe. While concentrating on the dry styles, we will also taste a couple of fruity wines.

You will be greeted with Zum Krug Sekt on arrival. There will be some Persian bread during the tasting and a round of starters as we close.

SPARKLING

Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut 2011, Josef Laufer (Hattenheim/Rheingau)

Hotel Zum Krug in Hattenheim, is a magical place. The sort of place that may have existed in mediaeval Germany, atmospheric twists and turns in a wooden interior straight out of a fantasy grotto from ancient legend. Josef Laufer, owner and font of Rheingau knowledge, always gives us a warm welcome and we start with a glass of his brilliant dry Sekt made from top class Rheingau fruit just outside the village - a wake-up call to the senses in all its petrolly splendour.

A note about German wine labelling

A classical German label will usually show the grower, the vintage and the bit that some find intimidating: Name of the village, name of the vineyard, the grape, the Prädikat level (Kabinett/Spätlese/Auslese etc) and whether it is vinified dry or fruity. **Trocken** means **dry**. (Alcohol levels are also a clue – the lower the number, the more likely it is to be a sweet/fruity wine)



RHEINHESSEN

A region with new direction

Rheinhessen, fertile and almost entirely flat, was the source of oceans of watery, sugary Liebfraumilch in the 60s, 70s and 80s. Today there is real energy, a real movement taking hold as the new generation of growers have taken over. Sons and daughters coming out of wine college determined to make great wine in this previously unfashionable region.

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 Heinzemann for tipping us off about Riffel. She was researching a piece about the wines Goethe drank and heard about the Scharlachberg. Thanks Ursula!



Riesling trocken 2012, Becker-Landgraf (Gau-Odernheim/Rheinhessen)

From the ashes of Rheinhessen rises the twin-headed phoenix of modern dry Riesling and Pinot Noir. A local grower threw a party early last decade, hoping his daughter would catch Johannes Landgraf's eye. Johannes made a bee-line for another winery's daughter, Julia Becker, and so in 2004, Becker-Landgraf was born. Among other things (Pinot Blanc, Rivaner, Dornfelder and so on) they determined to make top-class, cool-climate, dry Riesling and silky Pinot Noir, slap bang in the rural centre of the region. This is their limey, almost oily, mineral-driven dry Riesling.

Although Julia's family can trace its roots in the village of Gau-Odernheim back to the 1700s, Julia's great grandfather (a teacher in Mainz) was the one who started making wine as a hobby. He was a prisoner of war and his son, Julia's father, was the one who had to provide for the family after the war and was encouraged to make a go of farming and winemaking. Her father had studied engineering and started making his own steel tanks for their winery. Neighbours asked to buy some too and her Dad has had a thriving business since the 1980s. Net effect - although they live on the same parcel of land as the in-laws, Johannes and Julia can do whatever they like with their wine. They have already outgrown the basement below their house where they scuttle around with bended heads, checking their gleaming tanks and a handful of barrels. When we first rolled-up at their door during the 2009 harvest, they were pressing and fermenting their harvest in a tent.

RHEINGAU

Classical and perfumed.

Long-lived, fragrant Riesling. Often floral or evocative of perfume on the nose (some writers talk of blackcurrant leaf), with wonderful body, structure and precision.

Schönhell Riesling Kabinett trocken 2011, Fred Prinz (Hallgarten/Rheingau)

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The south-facing slope on the north bank between the two is the Rheingau, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. This is the classical home of Riesling. Evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim - the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. In contrast to wine made in historic castles and convents, until recently Fred Prinz made his wine in the garage of the flats where he and his family live in the small village of Hallgarten. Having started as a hobby, demand was so great he had to give up his day job. Fred must be going through some kind of life change at the moment: he recently bought a Harley.

There is an increasing trend to make Kabinett trockens that are equivalent to the fruity Kabinetts – fresh acidity, slightly lower alcohol, elegant, delicate and racy.



Nonnberg Riesling trocken 2012, Flick (Wicker/Rheingau)

Reiner, his wife Kirsten and their family live in a renovated 13th Century mill in the village of Wicker. It is part of the east end of the Rheingau next to Hochheim where the River Main meets the Rhine and from whose slopes you can watch the planes on final approach to Frankfurt airport. Although wine has been in the Flick family since 1775, it is only now, through the rising fortune of Reiner and his wife Kirsten, that Wicker is being put on the map. Their vines are scattered across over 100 separate parcels in two villages. Jewels in their crown, the Wickerer Nonnberg, Mönchsgewann and Hochheimer Hölle have been recently joined by Hochheimer Königin Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine. Reiner spends much of his time working with the soil, bringing it alive. Their wines have blasted their way onto the German wine scene over the past decade. We find modern and stately wines here, always clearly expressing the vineyard, its soil and terroir.

Reiner and Kirsten have unfathomable energy - running the winery, making wine, running events in their venue down the road, barbecuing and cooking for 300 guests, hunting in the forests near Frankfurt, making wild boar sausages, experimenting with new grape varieties (Cabernet Blanc?!), making barrels from wood felled from their own land, building a new cellar with a vaulted ceiling, putting in a light display to demonstrate the effect of different coloured light on the taste of wine - and so on. Oh and then there's the family, complete with assorted animals: horses, dogs and we think we spotted chickens too.

MOSEL

Minerality and piercing purity.

We seem to spend much of our time on the Mosel. Not so strange. Known for its lightness of touch, ethereal delicacy, raciness and terroir definition.

Gerrit Walter was an intern with us for twelve weeks in the summer of 2009 and went back home to help with the harvest before heading back to Geisenheim, the top wine college in the country. Many of you are already familiar with his basic Riesling trocken - a Winery staple - crisp, racy Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from the perilously steep, slate vineyards of the small village of Briedel.

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. Tonight we will be comparing the same wine in two vintages.



Briedeler Riesling Spätlese trocken 2010, Walter (Briedel/Mosel)

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

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

This could be labelled Pündericher Marienburg Riesling Spätlese Feinherb. Clearly "from the red 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 17th 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 red slate parcels dotted around the Marienburg and allowed them to ferment until almost dry. Bursting with tightly-packed flavours, the late-picked ripeness of the fruit surges with electricity and exotic, spicy minerals from the red, iron oxide slate.

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NAHE

Spicy and plump.

Considered to be plump, rich and firm, some people say earthy. Classic, fine, age-worthy wines from historic vineyards.

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 Oberhäuser Kieselberg, 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.

FRUITY/SWEET

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

Briedeler Riesling Kabinett 2010, Walter (Briedel/Mosel)

Gerrit’s basic Riesling trocken is a Winery staple - crisp, racy Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from the perilously steep, slate vineyards of the small village of Briedel. We also bring in smaller volumes of his old-style sweet Kabinett which he says he makes for his Grandmother. Writers such as Hugh Johnson and Michael Broadbent often advocate a classical Mosel Kabinett for a summer garden or as an aperitif before any dinner. Intense pressure from all our staff shows that a fruity Kabinett isn’t just for Grannies or for summer or for a curry! Delicate, racy and invigorating.

Wallufer Walkenberg Riesling Spätlese 1989, 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 Walkenberg 1989 from the darkest recesses of their damp cellar for us.



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The Prädikat system – the ladder of quality

Determined entirely by the ripeness of the grapes at picking, measured in Oechsle.

QbA (Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbaugebiete) –
can be dry (trocken) or sweet or between (halb-trocken/feinherb)

QmP (Qualitätswein mit Prädikat):

Kabinett - can be dry (trocken) or sweet or between (halb-trocken/feinherb)

Spätlese - can be dry (trocken) or sweet or between (halb-trocken/feinherb)

Auslese – usually sweet, but can be dry (trocken) or half-dry (halb-trocken/feinherb)

Beerenauslese – always sweet

Trockenbeerenauslese – always sweet

Eiswein – always sweet

New Term: Grosses Gewächs (labelled Erstes Gewächs in the Rheingau). Highest level in dry wines, equivalent to Grand Cru. Always bears the name of the vineyard .

Wine labelling

A classical German label will usually show the grower, the vintage and the bit that some find intimidating:

Name of the village, name of the vineyard, the grape, the Prädikat level (Kabinett/Spätlese etc) and whether it is vinified dry (**trocken**) or fruity.



WHAT IS BIODYNAMISM?

Biodynamism is the extreme end of organic viticulture, where decisions are made according to the Lunar Calendar. Biodynamic viticulture is based on the teachings of Maria Thun who died recently, shortly before her 90th birthday, and who was a disciple of Rudolf Steiner, the Austrian philosopher who laid out his mission statement for an alternative agriculture in the 1920s. Steiner's teachings can be traced back through Nicolas Culpeper, the English Herbalist, to Hildegard of Bingen, the 12th Century Nun, Composer and Christian Mystic. An increasing number of winemakers are switching to biodynamism.

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

Our following tasting will be at **The Winery** on **Wednesday 21st August**.

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

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ORDER FORM

If you'd like to order any of tonight's wines (while stocks last), please pass this form to any member of The Winery team and we'll make the arrangements.

NAME

PHONE NUMBER(S)

EMAIL ADDRESS

BILLING ADDRESS

DELIVERY ADDRESS
(IF DIFFERENT)

NO:	WINE	PRICE	TOTAL
	Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut 2011, Josef Laufer	12.99	
	Riesling trocken 2012, Riffel	12.99	
	Riesling trocken 2012, Becker-Landgraf	12.99	
	Schönhell Riesling Kabinett trocken 2011, Fred Prinz	16.99	
	Nonnberg Riesling trocken 2012, Flick	15.99	
	Briedeler Riesling Spätlese trocken 2010, Walter	15.99	
	Briedeler Riesling Spätlese trocken 2011, Walter	15.99	
	vom roten Schiefer Riesling trocken 2011, Clemens Busch	19.99	
	Kieselstein Riesling trocken 2011, von Racknitz	18.99	
	Briedeler Riesling Kabinett 2010, Walter	13.99	
	Wallufer Walkenberg Riesling Spätlese 1989, JB Becker	27.99	
	Delivery Free Locally/ £12 per case England, Scotland & Wales cases may be mixed		
		TOTAL	

CARD NO

CREDIT/DEBIT

EXP

START (IF APPLICABLE)

SEC NO