

T H E
W I N E R Y

31 Days Of German Riesling

01.07.14

July is the “31 Days Of German Riesling”, an initiative by Wines of Germany. As many of you know, we at The Winery are fairly strict observers of “365 Days Of German Riesling” and, as someone pointed out, 366 every Leap Year.

Instead of just one event, we are holding two this month and will be involved in a further two.

Join us on **Wednesday 30th July** when we are holding one of our **Wine Course Modules on Riesling** in the back room of Kandoo, our friendly local Persian restaurant in Edgware Road. Tickets are £40.

On **Saturday 26th July** from 16.00-18.00h **The Winery Riesling Tasting at The Remedy**, Cleveland Street W1 - Tickets £25. Please contact The Remedy for more details and tickets - 020 3489 3800 info@theremedylondon.com

The Winery’s David Motion will be guesting at **Noble Fine Liquor’s Riesling Tasting on Thursday 31st July**. Noble are at 27 Broadway Market, London E8 4PH. Please contact Noble to find out more - 020 7254 9737 shop@wearenoble.co.uk

Tonight’s tasting kicks off our celebrations of the glories of German Riesling and features 4 of our 9 winning entries in the UK German Top 50.



SPARKLING

Zum Krug Riesling Sekt Brut 2012, Josef Laufer (Hattenheim/Rheingau) 12.99

The Rhine takes a sharp turn west at Mainz before turning north again at Rudesheim. The Rheingau is the south-facing slope on the north bank between the two plus its two flanks (the northwestern flank around the corner as far as Lorch and the eastern flank at Hochheim and Wicker). Thick with castles, convents and vineyards, this is the classical home of Riesling with evocative names like Steinberg, Marcobrunn, Johannisberg, Hochheim.

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.

WHITE

Riesling trocken 2012, Walter (Briedel/Mosel) 9.99

One of the winners of the UK German Top 50, Gerrit Walter’s Riesling trocken has long been a winner on our shelves.

Gerrit 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), to finish his studies. 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 has given him free rein in the family cellar. Modern Mosel Riesling, packed with minerals drawn from the perilously steep, slate vineyards of the small village of Briedel between Punderich and Zell. Here’s what the Top 50 judges said: “Clean, modern, lively and vibrant with great fruit and balance.”

WHITE (cont)

Riesling trocken 2013, Fred Prinz (Hallgarten/Rheingau) ORGANIC 13.99

Back to the Rheingau, the north bank of the Rhine, thick with castles, convents and vineyards. In contrast to wine made in historic castles and convents, 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 and rent some more cellar space nearby. Fred must be going through some kind of life change at the moment - he recently bought a Harley. Fred's Riesling trocken 2012 was another of the Top 50 winners and tonight we are showing his newly released 2013 which we picked up recently and is the first vintage after full organic conversion.

Bernkasteler Graben Riesling Kabinett trocken 2012, Studert-Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel) 16.99

This was another of the Top 50 winners – a beautiful example of high-toned, slate-driven, dry Riesling from the heart of the Middle 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 and his brother Stephan have 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.

The style is lean and focused. Restrained and elegant. The wines can be shy when first opened and reveal their beauty and class with air and time in the glass.

Jacobus Riesling trocken 2012, Peter-Jakob Kühn (Oestrich/Rheingau) BIODYNAMIC 14.99

Despite seeming (at first) quite shy, Peter-Jakob Kühn is a high-visibility figure on the German biodynamic wine scene. Peter-Jakob, his wife Angela and their burgeoning family are from Oestrich in the heart of the Rheingau - the magnificent south-facing slope overlooking the Rhine near Wiesbaden, west of Frankfurt.

Peter-Jakob had a complete change of direction in 1999, was certified organic in 2004 and then went the whole way to biodynamism.

What is Biodynamism? Organic viticulture taken to the extreme, ruled by the lunar calendar - man, moon and earth in perfect harmony. Based on a series of lectures given by the Austrian Philosopher Rudolf Steiner to a group of German farmers in 1924 in which he proposed a holistic, spiritual approach to farming, emphasising the interconnectedness of the universe with soil, plants and animals. It's a self-sustaining, self-nourishing system, in which decisions are synchronised with the Lunar Calendar. Gnarly German guru, Maria Thun (who died in 2012) and her son Matthias have been publishing the annual calendar in which, depending on the position of the moon and planets, the lunar month is divided into four types of days. Fruit, Flower, Leaf and Root. Biodynamics captures the imagination with its strange-sounding rituals, such as dynamising rainwater or burying a cow horn filled with cow manure through the winter, and its widespread use of Yarrow, Nettle, Dandelion and parts of animals.



On one visit Peter-Jakob was keen to show us his biodynamic compost heaps up above the vines, below the woods. A very special, peaceful place, where some of the biodynamic magic happens. And when we visited a month ago Angela showed us their dandelion and camomile on a drying frame ready for use in biodynamic preparations.

So, how are the Kühns' wines? Their style is utterly distinctive - standing quite apart from other Rheingau. They can challenge our idea of how Riesling should taste. The aromas can invoke incense, orange peel and hedgerows. There's an oiliness without ever being cloying. There's sometimes a sense of tannin that you expect in red wine but not in white. We often recommend putting their top Rieslings in a decanter several hours before serving. 10 hours isn't too much!

We were delighted that Jacobus was chosen as another Top 50 winner.

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Hölle Riesling trocken 2012, Flick (Wicker/Rheingau)

18.99

Reiner Flick, his wife Kirsten and their family live in a renovated 13th Century mill in the village of Wicker, next to Hochheim, on the eastern flank of the Rheingau, where the River Main meets the Rhine and from whose slopes you can watch the planes on final approach to Frankfurt airport.

Hochheim, the home of Queen Victoria's "Hock", back when German wines were the most expensive in the world. The British struggled to pronounce Hochheim and eventually referred to all Rhine wine as Hock.

Reiner Flick is well-known here at The Winery as the grower who produces Königin Victoriaberg, Queen Victoria's favourite wine – the one with the flamboyant Victorian label.

This is Reiner's Hochheimer Hölle, the epitome of classic Rheingau - opulent, perfumed and oily. A beautiful balance between floral and savoury, with almost herbal notes. It has recently been named as one of the UK's Top 50 German wines. Here's what the judging panel said: "Gorgeous nose of jasmine and satsuma. Fresh, weighty and complex."

RED

You may be surprised to see a red wine in the line-up. Don't be alarmed – Pinot Meunier is called Schwarzriesling in Germany. Black Riesling.

Schwarzriesling (Pinot Meunier) 2005, von Racknitz (Nahe/Germany)

7.99

"What's in those big old barrels Matthias?"

"Er, nothing."

"Are they empty?"

"Er, no."

"Are they filled with water, to keep them in condition?"

"Er, not exactly."

"So, what's in them?"

We had been visiting von Racknitz in the Nahe region, a recommendation from top Mosel growers Clemens and Rita Busch. After an exciting Riesling tasting Matthias was showing us the old cellar with gleaming new stainless steel tanks, when we spotted a row of big old fuders, the classic old oak barrels that you see in Germany.

"So, what's in them?"

"OK, it's an old red wine of my father-in-law's. It's Schwarzriesling (Black Riesling) – Pinot Meunier."

Intriguing. Pinot Meunier is used in France as one of the main three grapes in Champagne. You don't often find it bottled separately and, even more rarely, as a still red wine. Would you like to taste it? Yes please. Fascinating to find Pinot Meunier in the Nahe, also to find a very mature, very drinkable stash. After a bit of to-ing and fro-ing Matthias and Luise agreed to bottle a fuder for us and let us choose the labels. Mature Pinot Meunier from the Nahe? Oh yes.



Formerly belonging to a historic cloister, the von Racknitz 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, "A job has 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. Matthias and Luise's dry Rieslings are delicious - packed with intense minerality and texture.

OLIVE OIL

Il Mercante di Delizie Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Paladin (Veneto/Italy)

500ml - 13.99

Extra Virgin Olive Oil from the Paladin family north of Venice.

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

Join us for our Monthly Tastings

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