

T H E  
W I N E R Y

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FLASH TASTING 04.07.17

*with* Christine Huff

We simply *had* to put on a FLASH TASTING to take advantage of Christine Huff & her husband Jeremy Bird's 24 hours in London! Tonight we are opening three of her top dry Rieslings and her silky Spätburgunder.

We had been on the lookout for a great Nierstein ever since our beloved St Antony winery changed hands in 2005. A dinner in 2011 at the excellent Schloss Sörgenloch restaurant deep in the Rheinhessen countryside ended in intense conversation with the owner, Thomas. Nierstein? Try this Fritz Ekkehard Huff. Yum. When we phoned shortly afterwards, the daughter Christine said, "that's amazing, I only dropped a single sample bottle off at Sörgenloch!" Fate. Christine was fresh out of Geisenheim, the top German wine college and was already making bright, minerally, dry Riesling from the red cliffs around Nierstein.

She has had a busy decade; increasingly taking control of the winery; meeting and marrying Kiwi Jeremy Bird (who came to help with the 2009 harvest and never left); having two babies; working tirelessly in the vines and cellar to create wonderful, finely-judged dry Rieslings from the red cliffs (*der Roter Hang*) around the town.

*Der Roter Hang* – the red slate and sandstone cliffs: red from iron oxide, which can often infuse Riesling with some marked spicy and tropical notes.

The town of Nierstein overlooks the Rhine on the strip between Mainz and Worms and historically has always been considered to be in the very top bracket in the hierarchy of Rheinhessen's vineyards.

#### WHITE

##### **Pettenthal Riesling trocken 2012**

31.99

Some precious small parcels have been discreetly added to the family's vineyard holdings including Niersteiner Pettenthal. Winding back in time to the St Antony estate in Dr Alex Michalsky's day, Pettenthal was always our favourite of their single vineyards. Is it possible that this small 0.25 hectare parcel of 32 year-old vines came from St Antony? Christine suddenly becomes uncharacteristically taciturn and refuses to be drawn. "I can't say!" Whatever the origin, Christine's Pettenthal is exquisite.



##### **Rabenturm Riesling trocken 2013**

28.99

Cliffs run from Nackenheim, south of Mainz and south as far as Oppenheim. From Nackenheim to Nierstein the cliffs are red. Many of the Grand Cru vineyards directly overlook the Rhine eastwards until the town of Nierstein itself, at which point the ridge curves inland, above the town and westwards to Schwabsburg, the picturesque suburb where the Huff family have lived for generations. This extended slope is full south-facing, enjoying the shelter of a valley and full exposure to the sun.

##### **Rabenturm Riesling trocken 2010**

29.99

It is probably fair to say that, difficult as it is to choose, Rabenturm (*Ravens' Tower*) is Christine's favourite vineyard. It is a parcel, the so-called Filetstück (the *fillet piece* or *best part*) within the Schloss Schwabsburg vineyard at the base of old castle ruins. Many of the vines are 50 years old and produce small berries with intense aromas. As you can tell, the wines age beautifully.

#### RED

##### **Vom Kalkstein Spätburgunder 2012**

17.99

Spätburgunder = Pinot Noir. Christine and her family, in common with many growers in Rheinhessen, make a wide range of wines including; Sylvaner, Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc), Grauburgunder (Pinot Grigio) and Scheurebe. They also make this smoky, velvety Spätburgunder, which is grown on limestone (*Kalkstein*) in the Paterberg vineyard on the ridge above the cliffs south of Nierstein. Chocolate, black cherries, bracken, autumn.

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

Our following full monthly tasting will be on **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July** when we will be joined by **Christoph Graf** of top Rheingau Sekt producer **Schloss Vaux** and by **Chris Cardon** and his wife **Caroline** of **Chateau La Haye** in St-Estèphe, Bordeaux.