

Riesling Report

The voice of Riesling

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2000



Bidding on excellence

Germany's annual high-end auctions (mostly) deliver the goods.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Estate Reviews:

Georg Breuer
Heymann-Löwenstein

Dry Riesling in Germany

www.rieslingreport.com

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Tanks for the memories

"WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS?" you may well ask, about these German auctions we keep talking about. Wine auctions are going on all the time, live and on the Internet. What's so special about these? Are these wines really all that rare?

Well, take a look at the stainless steel tanks in the photo above. Housed in the cellar at the Robert Weil estate in Rheingau, these special small vessels are used to vinify the incredible dessert wines on which the Weil reputation is based. The smallest, in front on the right, holds just 30 liters. Thirty! Liters! And even that was too big for Weil's record-price 1999 TBA Goldkapsel, which clocked in at just 20 liters of total production. After providing samples for auction pre-tastings, that left just six full bottles and six half bottles to be auctioned. That is an unforgettable rarity.

Fortunately, not all of the auction wines are so limited in quantity and so high in price. There actually are some bargains, and you have the opportunity to bid on them. The trick is knowing who's who and what's what at the auctions. So pour yourself a glass of Riesling, put your feet up and let us show you the ropes.

—Kirk Wille, editor & publisher

Riesling Report navigation

- The table of contents is linked to the pages within this magazine. Click on a title and away you go.
- Web sites and email addresses mentioned in this publication are linked to their Internet addresses. If you click on one, your default browser or email software will be activated.

It usually works best if you first download the magazine to your hard drive and then open it from the free Adobe Acrobat Reader application. If your browser has the PDF Viewer plug-in installed, you can read the magazine online, without downloading it, but it is often much slower. You are free to print the magazine locally, but reading it on screen will help save our forests.

Pass it on

We encourage you to share our magazine with other wine lovers. All we ask is that you then encourage them to support the Riesling cause and subscribe. Hey, it's only 24 bucks!

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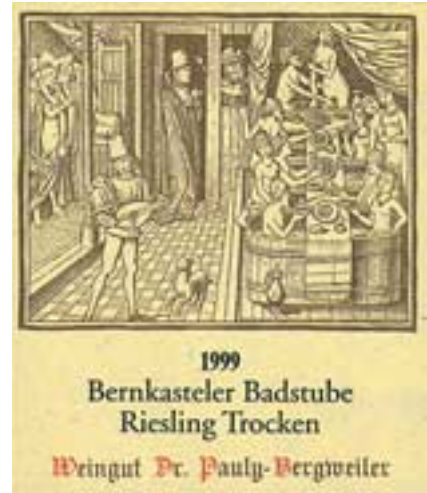
Germany's crazy trocken craze

IT SEEMS THAT THE THIRST FOR DRY WINES in the German domestic market has become insatiable, yet the reputation of German dry wines outside of Germany is somewhat less positive. The very word 'trocken' can evoke pained expressions amongst wine-savvy English-speakers, occasionally accompanied by a string of expletives. Often when we visit producers, they are a little surprised that we Americans would want to taste their dry wines, saying almost apologetically that they are intended mainly for German consumers. Yet, contrary to what many Americans believe, not all German dry wines are undrinkable. And contrary to what many Germans seem to believe, a lot of German dry wines *are* undrinkable. It is a minefield that must be picked through very carefully if one is to realize any success.

Tasting the myriad of German trocken wines that we encounter, I find a disturbing trend toward Dryness at All Costs, ignoring elements of balance, completeness, or even just plain fruit, for heaven's sake! Apparently after installing the euphemism of "fruity" for "sweet," some have decided that "dry" wines cannot have any fruit at all, and feel compelled to create these teratisms that more resemble the sharp end of a razor blade than a palatable beverage. What is even more disturbing is that, as these wines are regarded as increasingly more fashionable, consumers are actually developing a taste for them, which encourages more winemakers to produce them.

It seems that more and more producers who have made positively brilliant "sweet" wines in the past are devoting their top sites to the production of straitjacketed, unexpressive mediocrity, which is ultimately a waste of both their skills and their vineyards. (Most of these people would dismiss my ranting as simply my "American palate," in which case I would refer them to the vicious cycle that I spoke of two sentences back.) Having said that, let it be clear that I am not against trocken wines, nor do I even necessarily prefer German wines that contain residual sugar. I simply believe that one of the fundamental components of a wine is balance, and in the search for dryness über alles, often the sense of balance is lost.

One excellent point brought up by Bernhard Breuer of Weingut Georg Breuer is that many trocken wines are being made "exactly the same as the sweet wines without the sweetness, which makes a very poor drink." It seems self-evident that dry wines and sweet wines behave differently, and that they would require different techniques in production. Breuer and other top winemakers cite lower yields, naturally, as a crucial factor in creating quality dry wines, but techniques in the winery often play a role as well, including extended skin contact, longer and cooler fermentations, and bâtonnage (stirring of the lees). Simply taking sugar out of the equation is not enough — in fact, doing this usually results in complete imbalance, rather like pulling a leg out from under a table.



The wine in its entirety must be addressed, and a new equation written, one that resolves the issue of completeness without sugar. As Breuer puts it, “Since, with a dry wine, you cannot mask any holes with sweetness, you’d better make sure it can do that by itself.” After all, some of the greatest and most complex wines in the world are dry white wines — Austrian Riesling and Grüner Veltliner, the top wines of the Côte de Beaune, the dry wines of Alsace and the Chenin Blanc of the Loire Valley are a few examples. Germany could easily be added to the list if more producers would follow the lead of Breuer and other top trocken producers, and be encouraged to view dry wine as an entity apart and distinct from their ‘lieblich’ wines.



The Winger Uhlen vineyard on the Lower Mosel is one of Germany’s better sites for dry Riesling, especially from Heymann-Löwenstein.

A few top producers of dry German wines

The following are some producers who consistently create complete wines — not merely German wines that have the sugar fermented out, but complex, compelling wines that merit celebration for their own sake.

Georg Breuer

Bernhard Breuer is one of the most outspoken advocates of the dry style in the Rheingau, arguing that these were actually the wines traditionally made in the past. Breuer’s wines, especially from the top sites of Rauenthaler Nonnenberg, Rüdesheimer Berg Schlossberg and Rüdesheimer Berg Röttland, are capable of explosive complexity and finesse, and are consistently worth seeking out. For more on the dynamic Breuer estate, see our Estate Review on [page 24](#).

Dönnhoff

Dönnhoff is best known for his sweet wines, and rightly so, as these are consistently some of the most magnificent wines in the world. However, he also demonstrates a mastery of the dry style, achieving a balance, depth and harmony that have become the hallmarks of this estate. I have a particular preference for the exquisite Hermannshöhle, from 60-year-old vines, but really, you can’t go wrong with anything that says Dönnhoff on the label.

Heymann-Löwenstein

Reinhard Löwenstein has established a cult following for his magnificent dry wines from the Lower Mosel, specifically those from the top sites of Uhlen and Röttgen. These are no ordinary Mosel trocken wines. They are simply made differently, and they taste like it. “Most of my ideas of winemaking I learned from tasting the wines of [the Austrian producer] Emmerich Knoll,” says Löwenstein, and indeed, the two share a similar sense of refinement, delicacy and balance. See our Estate Review on [page 28](#) for more about this excellent producer.

Karthäuserhof

The Ruwer valley might not be the first place one thinks of when it comes to dry wines, but Christoph Tyrell has established a well-deserved reputation for his trocken wines from the great Karthäuserhofberg, especially from the warm vintages of 1997 and 1999.

Müller-Catoir

Given the lushness of his style, it is not surprising that Hans-Günter Schwarz is able to fashion dry wines that exhibit as much balance, depth and breed as his fantastic sweet ones. Although the demand for these wines is so high that they are often difficult to procure, it shouldn’t deter you from seeking them out.

Germany's high-end wine auctions

WHAT IS IT ABOUT AUCTIONS? Whether it's for fine wine, masterpieces of art or repossessed furniture, people just love the thrill of live bidding — even when they know that they'll probably spend more at an auction than if they just sought out a comparable item on the open market. Ah, but there's the nub of my gist — sometimes there *isn't* anything comparable, much less available, outside of the auction hall. That, at least, is the thinking behind the annual high-end wine auctions in Germany.

Every September, wine lovers, collectors, merchants and dealers from all over the world crowd into the hotels and privatzimmer of the German wine country just to get a shot at the next amazing auction wine from Egon Müller or Robert Weil. Today's auctions are a vestige of the time, up until the middle of the 20th century, when most winegrowers sold all of their wines in barrel at auction. Nowadays, the auctions are primarily a showcase event for the participating wineries. It's a chance to show off the best and rarest wines they can possibly make, sell them for a good price, and take advantage of the PR opportunities that come from a showy auction event.

These auctions are the best of the best, la crème de la crème, das Beste vom Besten of the wines made in each vintage. The problem, alas, is that one man's cream is often another man's bucket of swill. Each auction's governing body does its best to screen out the poor wines, but that, again, is a subjective matter. Who screens the screeners? Why, you do! In good old capitalist fashion, it's the auction price from year to year that tells the real story of what's a smash and what's trash. Weil and Müller don't set record prices with their TBAs just because they're nice guys — the wines simply kick ass. Consistently.

So good information is the key to smart, successful bidding, and that's what we hope to help you with. We'll start with a bit of background on the four major auctions and how they work. Then our tasting director, Peter Liem, has tasting notes for you on nearly all of the wines auctioned this year. The most important thing for you to know is that you also have a real shot at getting some of these wines. You just have to make the right connections, and we're here to help you with that, too.

The Fab Four

There are four major auctions in Germany each year: two on the Mosel, one in Rheingau, and a combined auction for the Nahe and the Ahr. It all starts on the third Tuesday of September in the Middle Mosel wine town of Bernkastel.



Auctioneer Hans-Jürgen Podzen takes another bid at the combined VDP-Nahe/Ahr auction in Bad Kreuznach.

German auctions coming in 2001

Bernkasteler Ring

Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2001

Hotel Moselpark, Bernkastel

"Kleiner Ring" auction of non-VDP Mosel estates.

DM60 for pre-tasting & auction.

www.bernkasteler-ring.com

VDP-Mosel

Wednesday, Sept. 19, 2001

Europahalle, Trier

"Grosser Ring" auction of

Mosel-Saar-Ruwer VDP estates.

DM120 for pre-tasting & auction.

www.vdp.de

VDP-Rheingau

Saturday, Sept. 22, 2001

Kloster Eberbach

DM110 for pre-tasting & auction.

VDP Ahr & Nahe

Sunday, Sept. 23, 2001

Museum Römerhalle,

Bad Kreuznach

DM50 for pre-tasting & auction.

The Bernkasteler Ring

Also known as the Kleiner Ring (to differentiate it from the VDP-Mosel's "Grosser Ring" auction), the Bernkasteler Ring is made up of 35 Riesling producers from the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer region, and a couple of recent additions from the Upper Mosel in Luxembourg. This is a very active group that sponsors a lot of promotional activities for Riesling involving art, music, literature and local culture. They've also produced a few Riesling lifestyle events in an apparent effort to attract new, presumably younger, customers. One such promotion was called "Spitzenwein & Spitzenwäsche," an event that paired fine wine and fine underwear!



The Bernkasteler Ring auction.

Gimmicky promotions aside, the Bernkasteler Ring is a hard-working and earnest bunch of winemakers. Unfortunately, even with a stringent selection process, many poor or average wines make it to the auction. Out of 520 wines submitted this year, only 54 were selected. And of those, only 37 received an above-average rating or better from Peter. That wouldn't be so bad for the regular wines from these estates, but these are auction wines. They're supposed to be extraordinary, and many of them were just plain ordinary.

Now, that's not to say there aren't some real gems in this auction. Among the standouts are two of our perennial favorites, Kees-Kieren and Kerpen. Rising star Markus Molitor and venerable Pauly-Bergweiler produce big, intense wines in a decidedly modern, international style. Johann Peter Reinert on the Saar makes superb wines in good vintages, and the wines of Reinhard and Beate Knebel from the Lower Mosel have impressed me more and more since I first tasted them in 1996.

The Bernkasteler Ring is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and its members are optimistic about the future. Dr. Peter Pauly, owner of Pauly-Bergweiler and president of the Ring, sees the auction as first and foremost a marketing event. The winemakers do make some money, but the primary goal is to create a PR spectacle. That may not be the best approach to improving quality. Let's hope that before another 100 years have passed, the underachieving winemakers will start to wonder why they never get record-setting prices.

Grosser Ring

While the Bernkasteler Ring is an auction of mostly average wines with a few highlights, the VDP-Mosel (Grosser Ring) auction is just the reverse. The overall level of quality here is quite high, with only a few underperforming wines muddying the waters. Even here, however, quality is very much affected by vintage. This is especially true for those indefatiga-

More auctions**Hessischen Staatsweingüter
Friday, Sept. 21, 2001
Kloster Eberbach**

A separate auction for the state-owned wine domaine in Rheingau, which is sole owner of the famous Steinberg vineyard. Quality seems to be on the rise here.

Tel: (+49) 6123-9230-0

Fax: (+49) 6123-9230-90

**Weingut Gunderloch
Nackenheim, near Mainz**

There is no collective auction in Rheinhessen, but the region's top estate has occasionally run its own. They plan to do it again this year, probably sometime in September around all of the other auctions. We'll give you the details in the July/August 2000 issue, when we preview the upcoming auctions.

www.gunderloch.de

ble wine warriors on the Saar and Ruwer, where it's a nerve-wracking struggle to get full ripeness in any but the very best years. Wilhelm Haag, owner of Fritz Haag and president of the VDP-Mosel, runs a pretty tight ship, however, so you can usually count on an impressive offering of limited-production wines that can truly be called "auction wines."

The Grosser Ring auction takes place at the Europahalle convention center in Trier on the third Wednesday of September, the day after the Bernkasteler Ring. As with all of the auctions, there is a pretasting in the morning, followed by a lunch break and then the auction in the afternoon. For DM120 (about \$50) you can attend both, which means you get to taste Egon Müller Beerenauslese and J.J. Prüm Eiswein twice! Even if you're not bidding, these auction events are fun to attend just for the chance to experience so many top-drawer wines.

This auction boasts the highest concentration of superstar estates, including revered luminaries Egon Müller, Fritz Haag, Joh. Jos. Prüm and Karthäuserhof, as well as brilliant new-generation estates such as Schloss Saarstein, Zilliken, von Hövel, Schloss Lieser, Joh. Jos. Christoffel, Willi Schaefer, Reinhold Haart and Heymann-Löwenstein.

VDP-Rheingau

There is a curious tradition at the VDP-Rheingau auction, held at the famous Kloster Eberbach monastery. When the bidding reaches a significant point — DM500, say — the crowd erupts in cacophonous whistling and applause, punctuated by vigorous bag popping. They sell bottled water and rolls at the auction, which I think people snap up just to get the paper bags that the bread comes in. Ammunition.

This tradition was evoked several times during this year's auction, but the most enthusiastic came during the ongoing gentlemen's competition between Rheingau's Robert Weil and the Saar's Egon Müller for the highest-priced TBA. This year the advantage went back to the Rheingau with the record price of DM5,000 (\$2,270 per bottle!) for the Robert Weil 1999 Kiedricher Gräfenberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Goldkapsel.

Weil's wines are usually the high point of the auction, but several other producers also shine consistently, and the overall level of quality seems to be improving. August Kessler always makes wonderful, elegant wines, and Domdechant Werner had another solid showing. One of the most pleasant surprises was the exceptional wines from Schloss Johannisberg. This legendary estate was one of many in the region that suffered a serious downturn in quality during the '70s and '80s. Now it looks like they're getting back on form, which is exciting because the Schloss Johannisberg vineyard is one of the very best.

A promising newcomer to the auction was Josef Spreitzer, who received a very respectable DM165 for his 1999 Oestrich Lenchen Riesling Auslese. Other producers with standout wines included Schloss Reinhartshausen, Prinz von Hessen, Franz Künstler and Hans Lang.



Each wine at the auction is poured twice — once at the pretasting and then again just before it is auctioned.



The VDP-Rheingau auction is held in the 12th century Cistercian monastery, Kloster Eberbach.

VDP-Nahe/Ahr

With just 14 participating wineries, this is the smallest of the four auctions. The smaller number of wines means that the pretasting and auction can both be finished before lunch. That is a welcome way to end the week after the three lengthier auctions that come before.

The main attraction here is the Nahe's quiet Riesling master, Helmut Dönnhoff. His 1998 Oberhäuser Brücke Riesling Eiswein "Montag" was the nearest thing to perfection we tasted this year. It sold for DM1,200 (\$545) per bottle. The other top gun is Schlossgut Diel, owned by VDP-Nahe/Ahr president Armin Diel. "I thought 500 marks was quite a fine price for our Eiswein," he said, chuckling, "But when Helmut sold his for twelve hundred, I realized ours was really quite a bargain!"

Among the more reliable Nahe Riesling producers are Dr. Crusius, Kruger-Rumpf and Tesch. Here you will also find the only red wines at any of the auctions. Paradoxically, the Ahr valley is the northernmost wine region in Germany, but it specializes in Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and its early-ripening relative, Frühburgunder. In the past, these wines were mostly thin and acidic, having been made essentially in the same way as German white wines. These days, however, younger winemakers have overcome their innate Francophobia and have discovered the wonders of barrique aging. Now the wines — especially from Meyer-Näkel — show much better depth and concentration.

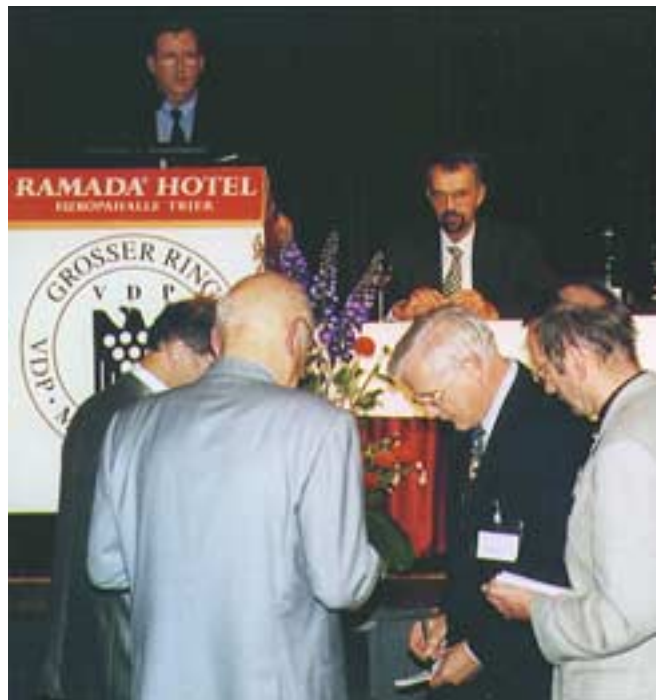
The auction process

Bidding at the auctions is in German marks per 750ml bottle. Individuals do not bid — you must go through one of the wine merchants who are official Weinkommissionäre. How your bid gets to a commissioner — and how the wine gets back to you — depends on where you live and your local import regulations. Members of the import trade can go directly to a commissioner, and retailers can go through their preferred importer.

Individual wine collectors in Europe also can go directly to a commissioner, but outside of Europe, the path for individuals is a little more circuitous. Of course, if you attend an auction personally, you can bid directly through a commissioner. And if you're only buying a few bottles, you can simply carry them home with you on the plane.

Making connections

The best place for non-European individuals to start is with your favorite wine retailer. It may require some gentle prodding to get him properly connected to the bidding chain, but once he's done it, he'll be hooked. The retailer takes your bids (number of bottles and maximum price for each wine) and passes them on to the participating importer, who combines them with other bids and gives them to his commissioner. The commissioner then merges all of the bids he receives and does his best to see that everyone gets what he wants.



As the bidding proceeds, commissioners gather before the podium to work out the distribution of Willi Schaefer's 1999 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese. Eberhard von Kunow, of the von Hövel estate on the Saar, is the auctioneer.

At the auction, the commissioners continue bidding until enough maximum bids have been exceeded so that the remaining bidders get all the wine they wanted at or below their maximum bids. The commissioner who made the final bid has control of the Verteilung, or distribution, of the various bottle formats. This is probably going to change, at least for the Grosser Ring auction, because it causes the bidding to drag on and on as commissioners fight to get those magnums of Auslese and full bottles of Eiswein. Wilhelm Haag wants to change it so that the different formats are auctioned separately. That makes a lot of sense, especially with the current high demand for large formats.

Bidding decisions

Peter's tasting notes will give you some idea about the various producers in these auctions with whom you may not already be familiar, and the prices give you a general indication of quality and demand. But for next year's auctions, you'll need some advance information to plan your bids. This can be obtained from a commissioner or an importer who is already in the loop. Every year there is a pre-tasting of the wines in June, which the commissioners and many importers attend.

By the way, even if you missed this year's auction, it's still possible to get some of the wines from importers and retailers who buy auction wines for resale. The commissioners also buy for their own stocks. See the boxes to the right, and on the next page, for some contact information. For a complete list of the commissioners for each auction, please visit the Library of the Riesling Report Web site.

The future of Germany's auctions

The blossoming of the Internet poses an obvious question about the future of Germany's traditional wine auctions. In 1998, the Bernkasteler Ring tried a limited Internet effort with a Webcam sending the proceedings to, and accepting bids from, a roomful of bidders in England. It had moderate success, and they want to pursue it further. (It didn't happen in the last two years simply because the staff member who had the requisite expertise took another job.)

This year, Ernst Loosen (Dr. Loosen) locked horns with the VDP-Mosel commissioners who run the selection process. Frustrated with what he sees as bureaucratic bungling and small-town politicking, Ernst withdrew his wines and put them up for auction on the Web. Because many of his best customers were unfamiliar with, or even a bit frightened by, the Web auction process, the results were good, but somewhat disappointing.

But these were just the first two brave attempts to venture into uncharted Web waters. You can be sure that the Internet will become more and more a part of these auctions. Most of the auction organizations want to preserve the traditional feeling of the auctions for PR purposes, and most believe that the live auction atmosphere yields better prices, but market pressure will force them eventually to open up the bidding to the World Wide Web of wine lovers.

In the meantime, jump through whatever hoops you must to get plugged into the German auction scene. And we encourage you to make the trip to see the auction action for yourself — and taste it, too!

HOW TO GET GERMAN AUCTION WINES

Non-European Riesling fans usually have to traverse several layers of international trade regulations to get their hands on some auction wines.

Retail

Start with your favorite wine shop. Ask them to talk to their German wine supplier about submitting bids for you.

If you run into a brick wall, you can contact **Dee Vine Wines** in San Francisco, a committed auction wine retailer.

Phone: (415) 398-3838
www.dvw.com

Import/Wholesale

If the distributor that supplies your local wineshop doesn't have a clue about auction wines, have them contact an importer who does, such as **Ewald Moseler Selections**.

Phone: (503) 236-9370
www.moseler.com

Commissioner

Your last resort will be to contact one of the commissioners directly and see if they can help you work backwards to get the wines to you legally.

The one we know best is Hans Selbach at **J&H Selbach**, the shipping and négociant family that also owns the excellent Selbach-Oster estate.

Phone: (+49) 6532-2081
selbach.zeltingen@t-online.de

European Riesling lovers have it easier. They can contact one of the auction commissioners directly to submit their bids.

For a complete list of commissioners, please visit the Library of our Web site.

German auction wines 2000

Bernkasteler Ring (Kleiner Ring)

19 September 2000

The Bernkasteler Ring contains a number of highly-regarded producers, but the overall quality here was disappointingly variable. A recurring syndrome I often find in auction wines is the overwhelming drive toward Bigness, at the expense of finer details such as balance and completeness, and this seemed to be particularly problematic in this auction.

However, notable standouts included the top-end wines from Markus Molitor and Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler, and the two from Reinhard and Beate Knebel in the Lower Mosel — especially the Auslese from the great Uhlen vineyard in Winingen. Albert Gessinger and Erben von Beulwitz (Hotel-Weinhaus Weis) also had good wines. The Bernkasteler Ring as a whole, however, has a long way to go if it aspires to qualitatively challenge its VDP counterpart.

The wines are listed here in the order in which they were auctioned. Normally we only include wines that received an above-average rating or better, but for the sake of completeness, we have included all of the auction wines here. Prices are in German marks (DM), and do not include taxes, duty or dealer markup.

1. **E. Reverchon Filzener Urbelt Riesling Kabinett trocken 1999 [DM16]**

AP 16. Racy acidity, with fresh aromas of apple, apple skins and a hint of cassis. A bit skinny, without a lot of real depth. (480 – 750ml) **82**

2. **Filzener Herrenberg Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM21]**

AP 20. Pronounced tone of blackberries, nice ripeness and mid-palate weight, remaining a bit high-toned throughout the finish. (480 – 750ml) **83**

3. **Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM17.50]**

AP 4. A whip-like backbone of acidity supports harmonious cassis notes, with just enough depth of fruit to balance this nicely. (600 – 750ml) **84**

4. **A. Schömann-Kanzler Pölicher Held Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM14.10]**

AP 14. Slightly candied tangerine perfume and near-spicy minerality. A bit unharmonious, not quite folding together right now on the palate. (480 – 750ml) **80?**

5. **Lehnert-Veit Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM17]**

AP 12. Big, stony profile, rigid in build, with dark cassis, plum and apricot tones. There is a slight grassiness about this, but there is also a reasonably good depth of fruit. (120 – 750ml) **84**

6. **Markus Molitor Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese** trocken 1999 [DM57]**

AP 48. A bit aggressive and very stony, without quite enough depth of fruit to match the rasping acidity. (240 – 750ml) **80**

7. **E. Reverchon Konzer Karthäuser Klosterberg Riesling Spätlese halbtrocken 1999 [DM22]**

AP 21. Aromas of fennel and green pear, with piercing acidity that is tamed somewhat by the slight presence of sugar. (480 – 750ml) **82**

HOW TO GET GERMAN AUCTION WINES (AFTER THE AUCTION)

Retail

Contact **Dee Vine Wines** in San Francisco. They buy heavily every year for their own retail inventory. They have a fine selection from some of the best producers, and they have a beautiful catalog.

Phone: (415) 398-3838

www.dvw.com

On the Web

You can't bid at the auctions through the Web yet, but you can bid on wines that a Web auction site has procured for resale. A good place to start is **Brentwood Wine Company**. They work a lot with high-end German wines and they were active bidders at the auctions this year.

www.brentwoodwine.com

Commissioners

Finally, you can contact the commissioners directly to see what auction wines they have in their own stocks. With list in hand, you can work with your local retail/import team to get the wines through the tricky waters of international trade. See the complete list of auction commissioners in the Library of our Web site.

8. Paulinshof Brauneberger Kammer Riesling Auslese halbtrocken 1999 [DM52]

AP 13. Blood orange, nectarine skins, black licorice. Nicely round richness, with stony undertones and good nerves, especially on the fragrant finish. (120 – 750ml) **86**

9. Reinhold Franzen Bremmer Calmont Riesling Auslese halbtrocken 1999 [DM30]

AP 5. A slightly savory, brothy tone underneath orange-peachy fruitiness, well-balanced and pleasantly fragrant. (120 – 750ml) **85**

10. Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese halbtrocken 1999 [DM38]

AP 7. Sharp-toned and pointed, with a nice play of pear- and currant-like flavors and reasonable depth. (240 – 750ml) **85**

11. Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler Ürziger Goldwingert Riesling Auslese feinherb 1999 [DM35]

AP 62. Stylish, with round dimension and a nice inner richness. Fragrantly stony, well-balanced save for a slight bit of heat on the back end. (90 – 750ml) **86(+?)**

12. Carl Schmitt-Wagner Longuicher Maximiner Herrenberg Riesling Kabinett 1999 [DM14.10]

AP 3. Quite muted, with some red berry fruitiness appearing on the palate. Blurred. (360 – 750ml) **82**

13. Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM21]

AP 9. Softly fragrant, plump and pretty, with pleasant aromas of black currant. (240 – 750ml) **85**

14. Carl Schmitt-Wagner Longuicher Maximiner Herrenberg Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM14.10]

AP 2. Soft red berry perfume, a little bit diffuse in its ripeness, with a round, billowy feel. Remains high-toned, never developing real middle, but the flavors are nice. (360 – 750ml) **84**

15. A. Schömann-Kanzler Mehringer Blattenberg Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM15]

AP 8. Softly sweet, with nicely aromatic fruitiness and a slatey fragrance that compensates for an initially overpowering herbalness. (240 – 750ml) **83**

16. Lehnert-Veit Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM16.50]

AP 9. Stony and dark, with good acidity, but there is little depth or development of flavor. (240 – 750ml) **82?**

17. Kees-Kieren Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM32]**

AP 22. Perfumed red berry, pear and apricot flavors, pretty and floral, with just enough acidity to hold this all together. Well-extracted depth yet retains a fragrant delicacy. (240 – 750ml) **87**

18. Heribert Kerpen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese* 1999 [DM17]

AP 13. Asian pear, grapefruit and a hint of cured meat. Nicely aromatic, turning just a bit diffuse on the finish. (360 – 750ml) **84**

19. Markus Molitor Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM45]

AP 23. Tropical mango and mandarin orange aromas, big-boned but harmonious, in a lush style that's just this side of top-heavy. (300 – 750ml) **85**

20. Johann Peter Reinert Kanzemer Altenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM40]

AP 23. A slightly herbal note, grapefruit and a hint of red berry. Nicely balanced acidity, with good length and grace. (120 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **86**

21. Johann Peter Reinert Wawerner Ritterpfad Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM45]

AP 24. Soft pear and melon-like flavors, fragrant and pretty in tone. (120 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **85**

22. Johann Peter Reinert Ayler Kupp Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM52]

AP 25. This has a tension that was missing in the Ritterpfad, with firm acidity supporting fragrances of poached pear, red berries and fresh peaches. Good length and fragrance on the finish. (120 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **89**



"Bernkastel, Kues and the Landshut" painted by J.M.W. Turner after his third visit to the Rhine and Mosel in 1838. The Bernkasteler Ring put together a group of sponsors to purchase one of Turner's Mosel paintings for the local wine museum.

23. E. Reverchon Filzener Herrenberg Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM40]

AP 19. Aggressively herbal, with a pervasively grassy tone. There is an appealing plentitude of acidity, but the flavors are less than pleasant. (120 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **79**

24. Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM47]**

AP 11. Creamy red plum, peach and orange richness, pretty but high-toned, missing internal depth and tension. (240 – 750ml) **84**

25. Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese* 1999 [DM68]**

AP 12. Rich depth of orange and strawberry fruit, darker in tone than the two-star and with a better build, although this still seems a bit feeble in the middle. Nicely fragrant length. (120 – 750ml) **86**

26. Carl Schmitt-Wagner Longuicher Maximiner Herrenberg Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM26.50]

AP 1. Perfumed tangerine and red plum, delicately fragrant, with sneaky length. (180 – 750ml) **85**

27. O. Werner & Sohn Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM45]

AP 8. Concentrated and botrytised, with confectionary flavors of orange and red berry. A slight bit of heat on the finish, but there is good length and appeal. (120 – 500ml) **88**

28. O. Werner & Sohn Schweicher Annaberg Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM53]

AP 7. High-impact, very extracted, without real conviction. Beerenauslese-like intensity upfront, but the finish is diffuse and rather short. (120 – 500ml) **83**

29. Clüsserath-Eifel Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM58]

AP 11. Big-boned and quite sweet, in fact a bit overly so for the acidity level, but there are nice flavors of raspberry, apricot and grapefruit, finishing with presence and length. (120 – 750ml; 36 – 375ml) **86**

30. Clüsserath-Eifel Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese* 1999 [DM100]**

AP 16. Very big, definitely showing BA-level must weights here. Girthy yet well-made, with just a hint of bitter botrytis but a long, resonant finish. (120 – 375ml) **89**

31. Heike & Ernst Clüsserath Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM43]

AP 9. Large and slightly top-heavy, with a focus on power. Bursting at the seams, without real stuffing to balance. (120 – 500ml) **85?**

32. Michael Goerg Neumagener Rosengärtchen Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM26]

AP 6. Perfumed apple-orchard of a nose. Good acidity and a nicely supple texture, well-built, but more Spätlese-like than Auslese, without much resonance. (240 – 750ml) **86**

33. Karp-Schreiber Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM70]

AP 9. Built for power, showing piercingly intense flavors of guava, mandarin orange and snakefruit. Botrytis turns rather bitter on the finish. (120 – 750ml) **85**

34. Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler Bernkasteler alte Badstube am Doctorberg Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM70]

AP 48. Fragrant and delicately slatey, very pretty aromas of white peach, lime and fresh flowers. Just a bit too easy-going, but this is nice. (120 – 750ml) **89**

35. Kees-Kieren Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese* 1999 [DM80]**

AP 23. Perfumed stoniness, with a hint of bitterness from botrytis, but there is a nice balance of acidity and the finish is long and fragrant. (120 – 750ml) **88**

36. Heribert Kerpen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese* 1999 [DM61]**

AP 19. An herbal, leafy element, with a hint of caramel lurking in the background. This appears slightly hollow and incomplete, and diffuse on the finish. (24 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **84**

37. Markus Molitor Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM182]**

AP 28. Aromas of canned pear, lime, mint and honeydew, big and extracted but missing a tension (present in Molitor's '98s) that would allow the flavors to really develop and express themselves. Impressive power, but ultimately incomplete. (90 – 750ml; 48 – 375ml) **87**





38. Markus Molitor Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese* 1999 [DM350]**

AP 29. Even bigger than the two-star, but this also has more expression and depth. Intense and mouth-filling. (48 – 750ml; 48 – 375ml) **90**

39. Albert Gessinger Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese* 1999 [DM34]**

AP 11. Beautifully slatey nose, very delicately expressive. Not as successful in the mouth, a bit disjointed in feel, showing a slightly top-heavy, apriccoty fruitiness. (90 – 750ml; 36 – 375ml) **86**

40. Alfred Merkelbach Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM30]

AP 15. Slightly musty, 'old-fashioned' nose, red berry and currant, and a touch of leafy-herbalness. Well-built. (180 – 750ml) **85**

41. Erben Hubert Schmitges Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM30]

AP 6. Fragrant red berry perfume, a bit soft and not terribly complex, but very expressive of its terroir. The finish is a bit thin. (180 – 750ml) **85**

42. Reinhold Franzen Bremmer Calmont Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM37]

AP 6. Big upfront, but the mid-palate reveals a hollowness, showing it to be a little forced. Aromas of pear, orange peel and rice pudding. (90 – 750ml) **83**

43. Reinhard & Beate Knebel Winninger Röttgen Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM50]

AP 11. Slatey, red fruit fragrance. Very large in build and a bit monotone in feel, but there is good length and fragrance. (120 – 500ml) **86**

44. Reinhard & Beate Knebel Winninger Uhlen Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM90]

AP 12. Dark plum, stone fruits and lime, perfumed and expansive, carrying its mass with refinement and a delicate grace. Long, persistent complexity, very appealing. (78 – 500ml) **93**

45. Heribert Kerpen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese 1995 [DM160]**

AP 22. Quite Sauternes-like in profile, with its floral-citrus aromas and slightly plastic botrytis. Good length and a racy finesse under a core of fruity intensity that persists nicely in a fleshy frame. (36 – 375ml) **92**

46. Markus Molitor Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese* 1998 [DM650]

AP 4. Buttery, coconutty botrytis, powerfully built but balanced by racy acidity, expanding on the palate with bass-driven intensity. Nicely finished, long and resonant. (36 – 750ml; 36 – 375ml) **93(+?)**

47. Johann Peter Reinert Wiltinger Schlangengraben Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM400]

AP 21. Fruit cocktail and canned pineapple, backed by incredibly high acidity. Piercing intensity, lean and razor-like. (36 – 500ml; 48 – 375ml) **86**

48. E. Reverchon Filzener Herrenberg Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM500]

AP 18. Slightly caramelized botrytis, big-boned, with plenty of acidity. Nicely harmonious as it expands in perfumes of orange peel, pineapple and lime. (60 – 750ml) **90**

49. Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM910]

AP 13. Toasted walnut, orange candy, canned pineapple and a hint of smoky caramel, kept taut by piercing acidity. Good length on the finish, quite tropical. (48 – 375ml) **88(+?)**

50. O. Werner & Sohn Leiwener Klostergarten Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM300]

AP 18. Apricot jam, almond, nut oils. Huge girth and intensity, with a flash of fruit cocktail in the mouth. Not a lot of development, but decent length and build. (60 – 375ml) **87**

51. Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler Bernkasteler Lay Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM550]

AP 48. Very harmonious, with all the components fitting together in an impressively balanced fashion. Tautly built yet supple and complex, finishing with a whiff of coconutty botrytis and a cloud of intense perfume. (24 – 750ml; 24 – 375ml) **92**

52. Albert Gessinger Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM300]

AP 7. Pineapple intensity, very sleek and focused, with vibrant, tautly wound harmony. Finishes with subtle expansion and complexity, well-defined, well-balanced. Impressive. (48 – 375ml) **92**

53. Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1994 [DM2,500]

AP 52. Pretty nose of dried apricot, caramel and tangerine peel. The palate carries a deep intensity and a focused, marmalade-like perfume, gripping, staining, sticky. Long and intense finish, bright and clear despite its weight. (10 – 750ml) **94**

54. Markus Molitor Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1997 [DM2,500]

AP 6. Slightly pastry-like tone, almond, brown butter, white raisin and caramel. Nicely harmonious and complex, with a luscious, undulating texture, velvety and disarmingly sexy. Finishes with a bite of acidity, very polished and stylish. (12 – 750ml; 12 – 375ml) **94**

VDP-Mosel-Saar-Ruwer**20 September 2000**

With the illustrious group of winemakers assembled in this organization, one expects the quality level to be very high, and this year's auction did not disappoint. The top wines from 1999 took advantage of positive aspects of the vintage: high ripeness, healthy botrytis and high extract, combining these with a sense of poise and a delicate focus. The quality here was perhaps the most consistent of the auctions that we attended; among the most impressive were wines from Zilliken, Karthäuserhof, Willi Schaefer and Reinhold Haart, as well as high-end offerings from Egon Müller, Joh. Jos. Prüm and Fritz Haag. A number of Eisweins from the superb 1998 vintage were auctioned as well, including a stunning Joh. Jos. Prüm and excellent examples from Zilliken and Joh. Jos. Christoffel-Erben.

This auction may have taken a little more time than expected, but those who stayed to the end were rewarded by a pair of incredible Beerenauslesen — an aristocratic '97 by Karthäuserhof and an absolutely humbling '94 by Egon Müller. Truly an embarrassment of riches, reinforcing the notion that if you're going to pick one auction to attend, this is it.

**1. von Othegraven Kanzemer Altenberg Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM30.50]**

Bright and pungent aromas of red berry, lime and orange rind. Nicely racy for the vintage, lingering in delicately refined perfume. (360 – 750ml) **90**

2. von Othegraven Kanzemer Altenberg Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM46]

Fragrant and deep up front, with a hint of aniseed, but a bit less convincing on the finish – has breed but lacks depth. (240 – 750ml) **87**

3. von Othegraven Kanzemer Altenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM85]

Very nicely perfumed, plum and currant aromas marked by a biscuity botrytis. Quite rich in the mid-palate, with a finely elegant tone, stylish if just a bit short. (80 – 750ml; 80 – 375ml) **89**

4. Hubert Schmitz Wiltinger Kupp Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM30]

Bright and friendly flavors of peach and poached pears. Nicely framed, with juicy ripeness. (180 – 750ml; 180 – 500ml) **88**

5. Schloss Saarstein Serriger Schloss Saarsteiner Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM123]

The sample at our table was corked, alas. (72 – 750ml; 90 – 375ml)

6. Bert Simon Serrig Würzburg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM50]

Good intensity, with well-balanced botrytis. A little soft, especially for the Saar, but pretty raspberry and sweet grapefruit tones, finishing with some length. (120 – 750ml; 240 – 375ml) **89**

7. Le Gallais Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM35]

Dark in tone, with a slightly dried, herbal funk. Boldly presented, but ultimately I'm not quite sure what to make of this. (480 – 750ml) ??



8. Le Gallais Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM75]

Marmalade, baked apple and apricot confiture intensity in a softly rounded package, perhaps a bit easy-going, but it's pretty, finishing with a lingering core of fruity perfume. (240 – 750ml) **89(+?)**

9. Le Gallais Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM210]

A step up in both intensity and finesse over the previous two wines, a little plump, with a lot of dominant sweetness right now, but this is well-packaged. Deeply-toned finish, with sneaky length. (80 – 750ml; 80 – 375ml) **91**

10. Dr. Fischer Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM61]

Slightly herbal earthiness, nearly minty, even behind rich extract. Good acid balance, but this comes off as a little flat, with a hollow spot on the back end. (480 – 375ml) **85**

11. Forstmeister Geltz-Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM30]

Racy red currant and tangerine aromas, quite forward and soft, but the persistently aromatic finish clings together without becoming overly broad. (480 – 750ml; 12 – 1.5L) **90**

12. Forstmeister Geltz-Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM70]

Lovely balance of botrytis, with sleekly wound citrus, red berry and floral aromas that open on the back end with grace and length, very pretty. (150 – 750ml; 300 – 375ml; 12 – 1.5L) **92**

13. Forstmeister Geltz-Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM140]

Repeats the tones of the former wine with an amped-up intensity and more pronounced botrytis. Smoky mineral-slatiness mingles with taut, darkly-toned aromas on a lingering back end, showing more acidity than the initial profile lets on. Very finely-wound. (90 – 750ml; 180 – 375ml; 6 – 1.5L) **92**

14. Forstmeister Geltz-Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM200]

Sticky and high-octane, with a creamy and confectionary opulence yet plenty of finely racy acidity to keep this focused. Subtle aromas of white peach and fresh pear linger in intensely perfumed presence. The components will take some time to marry, but this will be superb. (48 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml; 6 – 1.5L) **94**

15. von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM100]

Tropical papaya, melon and overripe orange tones, underlined by a hint of pancetta. Nicely round core of juiciness, and good acidity for the vintage. (120 – 750ml; 240 – 375ml) **90**

16. von Hövel Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM170]

Grapefruit pith, meat broth, white raisin and lime sorbet. A nice balance of acidity allows the flavors here to really sparkle, finishing with good length and presence. (300 – 375ml) **92**

17. Vereinigte Hospitien Wiltinger Hölle Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM50]

Harmonious richness, maintaining a nice clarity despite weight and obvious botrytis. Not a lot of complexity, but well-built and appealing. (480 – 375ml) **88**

18. Claus Piedmont Filzener Pulchen Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM45]

Aromas of lime, gooseberry and nectarine. Darkly-toned, with good length and presence. (240 – 750ml) **89**

19. Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Kabinett 1999 [DM65]

Sharp and rather disjointed right now, showing intensely bitter botrytis in the mouth. (600 – 750ml) **81?**

20. Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM103]

Clear and slatey, altogether finer than the Kabinett and very pure, with incisive presence and a finely elegant tone. (900 – 750ml) **88**

21. Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM255]

Nectarine, mango sorbet and Key lime, harmonious and finely-toned with a wonderfully penetrating core of fruit that lingers quietly in subtle presence. Very, very fine. (300 – 750ml) **93**

22. Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM600]

The Müller wines not only increase in richness the higher up you go, but also seem to become finer, more pure, and more tightly structured. Tropical intensity here is encased in a taut, sleekly elegant package. Expands in lovely density on a superb finish, effortlessly and aristocratically carried in a vibrant, kinetic build. (150 – 750ml; 180 – 375ml) **95**



23. Dr. Wagner Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM75]

Lively gooseberry and apple aromas, backed by a slight herbalness. Excellent acidity for the vintage, paired with a good depth of fruit. (240 – 750ml) **88**

24. Karthäuserhof Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Auslese #21 Goldkapsel 1999 [DM110]

Finely elegant white peach, mandarin orange and red currant aromas, building quietly with playful grace and nuanced perfume. Retains a gentle bite of acidity on the back end that sets off the aromas in a terrific way, lingering with grace and complexity. (180 – 750ml; 240 – 375ml) **93(+?)**

25. Karthäuserhof Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Auslese #25 lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM200]

Big and intense, showing a slightly buttery oiliness, yet maintains balance and poise. It's just a bit pushed to the front, missing some development in the mid-palate, but this carries itself with a lot of breed, with pretty flavors of creamy red berry and mandarin orange. (120 – 750ml; 150 – 375ml) **91**

Rarität. Joh. Jos. Prüm Wehlener-Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Beerenauslese 1950 [DM6,500]

Not offered for tasting, unfortunately. Only one bottle sold.

26. Geheimrat J. Wegeler Erben Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM24]

Nicely harmonious acidity, backing pretty floral tones. Well-built and appealing. (360 – 750ml) **89**

27. Geheimrat J. Wegeler Erben Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM40]

Slightly pastry-like botrytis and flavors of orange sherbet. Good depth, if a little one-dimensional. (240 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **87(+?)**

28. Geheimrat J. Wegeler Erben Bernkasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM150]

BA-like intensity, a bit candied in tone, though there is a firm underlying structure holding this together nicely. Pleasant in its flavors, but remains a bit high-toned, missing depth on the back end. **88**

29. Schloss Lieser Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM34]

Round and perfumed, but a bit top-heavy, and carrying a slightly bitter note. This seems somewhat forced. (360 – 750ml) **84**

30. Robert Eymael Erdener Prälat Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM250]

Buttery, nearly caramel tone, very rich but also very well-carried. Decadent in feel, very seductive right now, though I'm not sure where it's going to go. (160 – 375ml) **91?**

31. Joh. Jos. Christoffel-Erben Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM255]

Fine in tone, intense depth but not at all weighty. White peach, canned pear, raisin and a lime-like citrus, very balanced and very complete. (60 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **93**

32. Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM60]

A bit of greenness about this. Nice finesse, but there seems to be a problem here, coming off as simple and a bit tart. (450 – 750ml; 24 – 1.5L) **84**

33. Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM300]

Absolutely breathtaking wine. A vibrant array of lime, flower blossoms and fresh pear scents are carried with perfectly harmonious balance and a superb elegance, held in finely aromatic tension. This continues to resonate in subtly expressive, focused depth for an incredibly long time, unfolding unhurriedly in scintillating nuance and complexity. (60 – 750ml bottles; 60 – 375 ml bottles) **95**

34. Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch-Erben Thanisch Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM55]

Bright tangerine aromas, very fruit-driven. Nice richness upfront but seems to be missing a little depth in the middle. (360 – 750ml) **84**

35. Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch-Erben Thanisch Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM80]

Fine, delicately slatey tone, with a flowery hint of mandarin orange and a slight smokiness, classic Doctor in profile. The botrytis leans towards a touch of bitterness on the back end, but overall this is very pretty and very well-built, finishing with plenty of aroma and finesse. (240 – 750ml; 60 – 375ml) **90**

36. Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch-Erben Thanisch Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM180]

Increase in concentration over the Auslese, but not so much in weight, retaining an appealing delicacy and harmony. The botrytis is just a little bitter right now, but this seems like it has a lot to give in the future, finishing with long, incisive presence and penetrating depth. (56 – 750ml; 48 – 375ml) **90(+?)**



37. Reinhold Haart Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM80]

Girthy, swarthy aromas of black raisin, cured meat and lemon rind. Rich and powerful in build, but allied with a delicate clarity and superb balance that carries this through a long, finely-knit finish. Pure breed here, and a really excellent wine. (90 – 750ml; 90 – 375ml) **93**

38. Dr. Weins-Prüm Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM40]

Surprisingly racy for the vintage, sparkling with flavors of lemon chiffon and tangerine. Quite fine, with sleek dimension and firm depth. (60 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **90**

39. S.A. Prüm Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese #26 1999 [DM50]

Big-boned, with plenty of power and good acidity, but it thrives on impact upfront, without really developing or balancing the flavors, and the finish suffers because of it. (360 – 750ml) **87**

40. Willi Schaefer Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM50]

Pure, racy harmony, with finely-toned aromas of white peach, red berries and Meyer lemon. The finish could use a touch more length, but overall this is very refined and very compelling. (360 – 750ml) **91**

41. Willi Schaefer Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM110]

Packs a lot of depth into a superbly elegant frame, resonating with a deeply stony *gout de terroir*. Repeats the profile of the Spätlese at a finer and more intense level, also feeling more complete. (180 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **93**

42. Heymann-Löwenstein Winger Röttgen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM76]

Beautiful intensity and concentration that is held in a taut and focused build. On the back end there is a bit of hollowness that mars an otherwise lovely finish – long and darkly fragrant, with a pervasive stoniness. (120 – 750ml) **89**

43. Joh. Jos. Prüm Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM63]

A little skunky, showing good ripeness but carrying a sharp and troubling herbalness about it. I am willing to concede that Prüm wines often show awkwardly in their youth, but this is odd, even taking that into consideration. (240 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml; 24 – 1.5L) ??

44. Joh. Jos. Prüm Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM200; DM235 for 1.5l]

Nice intensity and mid-palate weight, unfolding in an array of white raisin, nectarine and dried apricot flavors. A bit skinny on the finish, but subtle flavors linger for a long time. Relatively forward for Prüm, but very fine. (36 – 750ml; 90 – 375ml) **90(+?)**

45. Joh. Jos. Prüm Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 1999 [DM360]

Confectionary raisin, butter and caramel aromas mingle with orange-flowery perfume. Fine depth and a brilliant elegance, demonstrating a completeness on the back end that was missing in the previous two wines. Intense and quite sticky, but remains balanced and kinetic, finishing with racy elegance and complex length. (36 – 750ml; 90 – 375ml) **93(+?)**

46. Schloss Saarstein Serriger Schloss Saarsteiner Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM420]

Pineapple, grapefruit, fresh apricot. Piercing, nearly electric acidity brightens and expands the flavors, but may ultimately be a bit too dominating. Still, this fills the mouth in long, fragrantly citrusy length, and shows a lot of class. (120 – 375ml) **90?**

47. Bert Simon Serrig Würtzberg Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM300]

A lot of depth here, but there is a slightly plastic, appley tone that is off-putting. Good aroma and balance of acidity. (60 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **86**

48. Forstmeister Geltz-Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM450]

Sleekly-carried intensity, packing quite a bit of weight but still coming off as incredibly delicate and refined. Continues to expand on a dense, complex finish, gloriously tropical and creamy, and very, very long. Stunning. (60 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml; 3 – 1.5L) **96**

49. Milz-Laurentiushof Trittenheimer Felsenkopf Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM300]

Fresh and pineappley, quite thickly textured, with a decadently creamy richness. Maintains a nice focus throughout, composed in a very lush style. (120 – 375ml) **91**

50. Joh. Jos. Christoffel-Erben Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM370]

Scintillatingly intense, vibrantly arrayed in a panoply of tropical mango, pineapple and mandarin orange aromas. Maintains a lovely tension through a very long and intense finish, very pure and very fine, effortlessly carrying tremendous depth. (120 – 375ml) **95**

51. S.A. Prüm Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Eiswein #28 1998 [DM400]

Quite pretty, balancing its pastry-like botrytis very well, integrating it into deep, marmalade-like fruit. Good length and depth on the finish, underlined by a firm bass tone. (180 – 375ml) **90**

52. Joh. Jos. Prüm Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Eiswein 1998 [DM850]

Amazing balance and harmony, botrytised but ultra-pure, with an aristocratic decadence. Very long and refined, lots of nuance and complexity layered in fragrant and incredibly fine textures. Simply glorious wine. (18 – 750ml; 36 – 375ml) **98**

53. Vereinigte Hospitien Scharzhofberger Riesling Beerenauslese 1994 [DM250]

Creamy, nearly coconutty botrytis, with good balance and fine acidity, but despite its stylish raciness, this seems to be lacking a bit of intensity in the mid-palate. Considering its vintage, it could just be closed for the moment, and other components certainly point towards a promising development. (120 – 375ml) **89(+?)**

54. Karthäuserhof Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Beerenauslese 1997 [DM420]

Pretty nose, red plum and ripe orange, backed by a hint of aniseed. Very clear and incisive on the palate, expanding with terrific presence and delicately citrusy perfume. Long, harmonious and aristocratic. (60 – 750ml; 120 – 375ml) **94**

55. Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Beerenauslese 1994 [DM2,300]

Intense concentration yet brilliant clarity, showing multi-dimensional aromas of peach, apricot jam, marmalade, white raisin and toffee. Absolutely lovely, clinging to the palate in delicately refined, penetrating presence that refuses to let go, continuing to build in quietly sleek complexity for a long, long time. (24 – 750ml; 24 – 375ml) **96(+?)**

VDP-Rheingau**23 September 2000**

This auction was certainly the most raucous, with people seemingly unable to control themselves in the obnoxious popping of paper bags every time a significant monetary amount was attained. I don't mean to bash the Rheingau, but the quality of wine here was terribly inconsistent. I hear a lot of talk about a renaissance here, and I'm waiting to see it happen, outside of a handful of top-notch producers who could probably make great wines no matter where in the world you dropped them. But I'll keep tasting, and I hope you do, too, as the more informed everyone is, the greater the benefit to the region, and the more stimulating the discussions.

Robert Weil was, of course, one of the superstars, setting a new record of 5,000DM per bottle for his '99 Kiedrich Gräfenberg TBA Goldkapsel, of which less than 20 liters were produced. August Kessler presented two of the most exciting wines here, and the venerable Schloss Johannisberg also had very impressive offerings. There were some good older wines auctioned too, which were nice to taste after a week of youthful stickies.

1. August Eser Oestrich Lenchen Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM19.50]

Pink grapefruit flavors dominate, nicely round and elegant, with lingering minerality. (180 – 750ml) **89**

2. Jakob Jung Erbacher Hohenrain Riesling Spätlese trocken Goldkapsel 1999 [DM19.50]

Rich depth of aroma, well-textured, with lime-like acidity. Broad and well-built. (120 – 750ml) **88**





3. Hans Barth Hattenheimer Schützenhaus Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM19.50]
Slightly earthy aromas of citrus, vanilla and lime-leaf. Good balance on the palate, with lively aromas on the finish. (240 – 750ml) **87**
4. Prinz von Hessen Johannisberger Klaus Riesling Spätlese trocken Goldkapsel 1999 [DM30]
Surprisingly racy, with a nice depth of round and lemony fruitiness. Good presence and intensity on a long, aromatic finish. (240 – 750ml) **89**
5. Franz Künstler Hochheimer Kirchenstück Riesling Spätlese 1997 [DM23]
Quite rich and broad, thickly flavored, with a slightly candied tone and a minerally earthiness. A dried citrus peel component appears on the palate. (60 – 750ml) **88**
6. Fritz Allendorf Winkeler Jesuitengarten Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM30]
Powerful in profile, a little creamy, with bright fruity aromas of candied pear and lemon. (120 – 750ml) **87**
7. Balthasar Ress Hattenheimer Engelmansberg Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM30]
A bit flat and unclear, in a drier profile. (180 – 750ml) **79**
8. Diefenhardt'sches Weingut Martinthaler Langenberg Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM24]
Honeyed and rich, without a lot of complexity, but it's appealing in a big, late-picked style. (120 – 750ml) **86**
9. Schloss Schönborn 'Lothar Franz' Hattenheimer Pfaffenberg Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM25]
Big-boned and honeyed, with a glassy, late-picked texture. Fine in tone, and a nice twist of acidity on the back end to balance this. (240 – 750ml) **89(+?)**
10. Freiherr zu Knyphausen Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM25]
Nicely fine in tone, round and softly pretty, late-picked aromas of apple and poached pear. (120 – 750ml) **88**
11. Schloss Vollrads Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM43]
Dusty and stony, a bit lazy in its sweetness, but reasonably appealing in its honeyed, peachy profile. (240 – 750ml) **86**
12. Hans Barth Hattenheimer Hassel Riesling Spätlese 1971 [DM59]
Not offered for tasting. (12 – 700ml)
13. Johannishof Johannisberger Vogelsang Riesling Auslese 1995 [DM40]
Canned litchi and grapefruit syrup, quite large, but maintains a clear, cleanly sweet tone. Seems just slightly fat, but it's appealing. (48 – 375ml) **87**
14. Langwerth von Simmern Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Riesling Auslese 1997 [DM110]
Nutty, nearly caramelized nose, with aromas of apple and clover honey. Botrytis on the palate is a little bitter, above large, fairly monotonous girth. (12 – 750ml) **84**
15. Dr. Heinrich Nägler Rüdesheimer Berg Roseneck Riesling Auslese 1998 [DM32]
Odd flavors of canned pear and cured meat. Lots of finesse, and obviously from very stony soils. Well-made, and pleasant in its fashion. (60 – 500ml) **87**
16. Fritz Allendorf Winkeler Jesuitengarten Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM32]
Floral pear and green apple aromas, nearly Mosel-like in its profile except that it carries much more weight. The nose is more interesting than the palate, which comes off as slightly heavy and ponderous. (60 – 375ml) **84**
17. Jakob Jung Erbacher Michelmark Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM60]
Slightly cidery and a bit hot. There's little compelling about this. (120 – 750ml) **77**
18. Freiherr zu Knyphausen Erbacher Michelmark Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM44]
Oddly cidery, like poiré, with a curious mintiness. Cloying. (30 – 750ml; 60 – 375ml) **78**
19. Hans Lang Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM39]
A bit volatile and alcoholic. Appley and cloying. (120 – 500ml) **79**
20. Graf von Kanitz Lorcher Kapellenberg Riesling Auslese 1999 [DM45]
Honeyed and a bit glassy in tone. Apple cider aromas and not a lot of acidity. (60 – 500ml) **80**



21. **Schloss Schönborn Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM65]**
Heavily botrytised, girthy and slightly unclear. This is kind of like watching the bodybuilders at Manhattan Beach. (90 – 500ml) **83**
22. **Josef Spreitzer Oestrich Lenchen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM165]**
Big and botrytised, but there is some nice acidity to carry the mass here. Tasty in a lush dessert style – this might even be good with foie gras. (30 – 375ml) **86**
23. **Schloss Johannisberg Riesling Rosalack Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM160]**
Nicely sleek, with pretty floral and pear aromas. Delicate balance and a lively finish. (48 – 1.5L; 120 – 375ml) **89(+?)**
24. **Schloss Reinhartshausen Erbacher Siegelsberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM130]**
Lively pear and guava notes, sleekly botrytised, balancing its weight well. Good acidity on the finish carries the flavors with grace and length. (24 – 750ml; 24 – 375ml) **90**
25. **Prinz von Hessen Winkeler Hasensprung Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM100]**
Dried peach, apricot jam and cured meat aromas, cleanly botrytised and sleekly finished. Well-made wine, balanced and aromatic. (48 – 375ml) **91**
26. **August Kessler Rüdeshheimer Berg Schlossberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM440]**
Honeyed apricot, poached pear and fig aromas, beautifully clean intensity, very focused, with good length and supple finesse. (24 – 750ml; 18 – 375ml) **93**
27. **Robert Weil Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM550]**
Thickly honeyed and sticky, but carried extremely well, showing aromas of poached pear and confectionary peach. Very pretty on the finish, nuanced and long, with deeply penetrating subtlety. (24 – 750ml; 48 – 375ml) **94**
28. **Domdechant Werner Hochheimer Domdechane Riesling Auslese 1976 [DM105]**
Pale greenish-yellow in color. Clean, delicately fragrant and quite light in body. Well-balanced and aromatic, very elegant. (48 – 750ml) **90**
29. **Diefenhardt'sches Weingut Rauenthaler Rothenberg Riesling Auslese 1971 [DM130]**
Deep apricot and marmalade aromas, more advanced on the palate than on the nose, showing a slight smokiness. Good length and balance. (12 – 750ml) **88**
30. **Fritz Allendorf Winkeler Gutenberg Riesling Auslese 1959 [DM160]**
Fairly pale golden in color. Terrific aromas on the nose, caramel, toffee, hazelnut, butter-cream. Subtly delicate and finely fragrant, almost reminiscent of a fine oloroso without the steely oxidation. Nicely lively and youthful on the palate, picking up notes of orange, coffee and toasted nuts. Finishes with grace and length. (12 – 350ml) **91**
31. **Freiherr zu Knyphausen Erbacher Steinmorgen Riesling Beerenauslese 1999 [DM140]**
Not offered for tasting. (6 – 750ml; 12 – 375ml)
32. **Hans Barth Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM50]**
Honey, apricot, candied orange and jasmine tea; good depth and intensity. (60 – 250ml) **88**
33. **Joachim Flick Wickerer Stein Riesling Beerenauslese 1999 [DM125]**
Thickly rich and heady, but there is good acidity to keep this moving. Toffee and cherry tones, nicely built, with clean length and subtle persistence. (6 – 1.5L; 24 – 500ml) **90**
34. **Hans Lang Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM180]**
Not offered for tasting. (12 – 500ml)
35. **Balthasar Röss Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM320]**
Thick, almost explosive with peachy, tropical ripeness. Penetrating acidity carries the great mass, pushing this through your palate with long, sticky length. This has a good deal of class, quite impressive. (30 – 750ml; 30 – 375ml) **93**
36. **Toni Jost Wallufer Walkenberg Riesling Beerenauslese 1999 [DM200]**
Tropical ripeness and impressive richness, but this feels a bit disjointed in the mouth, with high alcohol and bitter botrytis. Decent finish, has length but lacks depth. (36 – 500ml) **85**

**37. Schloss Johannisberg Riesling Rosa-Goldlack Beerenauslese 1999 [DM510]**

Creamy tone, beautiful in its delicacy, unfolding in subtle layers of elegant richness. Perfectly balanced, and really nicely finished, long and finely-toned. Thrives on purity and elegance rather than power, and loses absolutely nothing by doing so. If only more auction wines were like this. (24 – 1.5L) **94**

38. August Kessler Rüdeshheimer Bischofsberg Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM740]

Finely-wound, very elegant and very, very beautiful. Ripe pear, peach and nectarine aromas, with a hint of cocoa, thick yet taut and nicely vibrant on the finish. (24 – 750ml; 24 – 375ml) **94**

39. Robert Weil Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM1,500]

Not offered for tasting. (6 – 750ml; 12 – 375ml)

40. Geheimrat J. Wegeler Erben Oestricher Doosberg Riesling Beerenauslese 1976 [DM420]

Not offered for tasting. (3 – 750ml)

41. Hans Lang Hattenheimer Hassel Riesling Eiswein 1991 [DM230]

A little pineapple, along with aromas of apricot and mandarin orange. Good depth, with penetrating intensity and a delicately fragrant finish. (12 – 750ml; 24 – 375ml) **92(+?)**

42. Franz Künstler Hochheimer Kirchenstück Riesling Eiswein 1997 [DM220]

Intriguing aromas of Chinese spices, meat broth and cream. Velvety texture, nicely taut, with a subtle play of aromas on a long, dense yet delicate finish. Impressive. (18 – 750ml; 30 – 375ml) **93(+?)**

43. Fritz Allendorf Winkeler Hasensprung Riesling Eiswein 1999 [DM165]

Delicate nectarine and pineapple flavors, but seems to lack depth and inner strength. (60 – 375ml) **86?**

44. Schloss Johannisberg Riesling Blaulack Eiswein 1999 [DM500]

Lovely elegance, taut and fine, with great tension and purity. Complex and smoky interplay of pear, tangerine and floral notes, finishing with terrific presence and long, delicately fragrant length. (6 – 1.5L) **94(+?)**

45. Graf von Kanitz Lorcher Krone Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM200]

Not offered for tasting. (12 – 500ml)

46. Hans Lang Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM230]

Not offered for tasting. (6 – 500ml)

47. Langwerth von Simmern Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM560]

Not offered for tasting. (6 – 750ml)

48. Domdechant Werner Hochheimer Kirchenstück Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM200]

Not offered for tasting. (6 – 500ml)

49. Schloss Johannisberg Riesling Goldlack Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM1,050]

Not offered for tasting. (6 – 1.5L)

50. Robert Weil Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM5,000]

Not offered for tasting. (6 – 750ml; 6 – 375ml)

VDP-Nahe/Ahr**24 September 2000**

Somehow, this auction seemed to be the most fun. Maybe it was the high overall quality of the wines presented, or the casual, jovial atmosphere created by the auctioneer, Hans-Jürgen Podzun. It could just be that it was the shortest of the four that we attended. But there was plenty to be excited about here.

Naturally, the Nahe-Ahr auction cannot be discussed without mentioning the by-now-legendary “Montag” Eiswein from Helmut Dönnhoff, the last in a triptych of monuments to an incredible weekend in 1998 spent by one of the world’s greatest winemakers. Even his stunning ’99 Spätlese from the Brücke, one of the best wines offered for auction this year in all of Germany, seemed to be overlooked as everyone madly tripped over each other in the heady rush toward Der Montag.





Schlossgut Diel also had a couple of beauties, filigreed and delicately seductive, and Martin Tesch sold a wonderful Trockenbeerenauslese. There was excellent Spätburgunder from the Ahr as well, lest it be thought that the Nahe was overly dominating. Meyer-Näkel was the predictable standout, but I also found merits in the wines from Deutzerhof and J. J. Adeneuer. The ubiquity (or the excess) of new wood, of course, presents itself in the Ahr, as in any other place, but as winemakers learn to control it better, perhaps they can improve on an already high standard of quality.

1. J. J. Adeneuer Ahrweiler Rosenthal Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 1999 [DM70]

Pretty nose of sour cherry and darkly red raspberry, nice depth and ripeness backed by a dusty earthiness. Medium-light in body, with pronounced wood tones, but this has appealing fragrance and length. (300 – 750ml) **88**

2. H. J. Kreuzberg Frühburgunder Auslese trocken 1999 [DM50]

Tart strawberry and red cherry, reasonable depth but it's all upfront, remaining light and high-toned on a thin finish. (240 – 750ml) **82**

3. Deutzerhof Mayschusser Mönchberg Spätburgunder trocken 1999 [DM100]

A bit of volatile acidity, but there is a nice depth of fruit and a supple, elegant feel. Red cherry and berry aromas are balanced by a nutmeg-like spiciness, delicately carried and quite appealing. (300 – 750ml) **87**

4. Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Marienthal Marienthaler Klostersgarten Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 1999 [DM50]

Some pastry-like volatile acidity, darkly plummy fruit with good depth but slightly astringent tannins. (300 – 750ml) **82**

5. Nelles Spätburgunder trocken 1998 [DM36]

Herbal stemminess and a slight toast, medium-light depth, with a profile not unlike that of a lot of Oregon Pinot Noir. Light red fruitiness, remaining a bit high-toned. (300 – 750ml) **81**

6. Meyer-Näkel Walporzheimer Kräuterberg Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 1999 [DM120]

Pretty nose, darkly meaty plum and berry fruit nicely framed by toasty wood. Impressive subtlety and surprising length, with a lingering and delicate aroma. (300 – 750ml) **90**

7. Kruger-Rumpf Münsterer Dautenpflänzer Riesling Spätlese trocken Goldkapsel 1999 [DM38]

Intense and taut, with terrific thrust and kinetics. Flavors of apple and Meyer lemon intertwine with a strongly mineral goût de terroir, lingering on a delicately flowery-stony finish. (300 – 750ml) **89**

8. Kruger-Rumpf Münsterer Kapellenberg Riesling Kabinett Goldkapsel 1999 [DM50]

Racy, stony nose, lively interplay of lime, apple and mineral aromas. Delicately vibrant and refreshing on the palate, but the finish is light and dissipates quickly. (300 – 750ml) **84**

9. Prinz zu Salm-Dalberg Wallhäuser Felseneck Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM37]

Our sample was corked, unfortunately. (300 – 750ml)

10. Prinz zu Salm-Dalberg Schloss Wallhausen Riesling Eiswein Goldkapsel 1999 [DM40]

Intense passionfruit, guava and orange citrus aromas. Delicate in the mouth, with creamy lemon curd and confectionary tones, but overall quite light, missing real presence in the middle. (20 – 375ml) **84**

11. Tesch Laubenheimer St. Remigiusberg Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 [DM17]

Packed with fragrance, jumping out of the glass with power and intensity. Rich presence of nectarine, orange peel, and wet stone fragrances, backed by taut acidity and finishing with nice length and aroma. (540 – 750ml) **90(+?)**

12. Tesch Laubenheimer Löhler Berg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM170]

Intense and creamy, with penetrating presence. Superb richness yet also superbly elegant in profile, showing racy aromas of baked peach, orange syrup and mango. Excellent balance, very graceful and fine. (12 – 375ml) **93**



13. Schlossgut Diel Dorsheimer Goldloch Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1998
[DM210 for 375ml; DM820 for 1.5l; DM1,000 for 3l]

Boldly tropical, with a creamy richness and round, mouthfilling depth. Well-built, lingering in juicy presence. (120 – 375ml; 3 – 1.5L; 1 – 3L) **91(+?)**

14. Schlossgut Diel Dorsheimer Burgberg Riesling Eiswein Goldkapsel 1998
[DM500 for 750ml; DM1,200 for 1.5l]

Slightly brothy, concealing richly peachy, tropical fruitiness. Tremendously sleek thanks to racy acidity, building in intensity the further back it moves. Finely-toned fragrance and length, very compelling. (72 – 375ml; 48 – 750ml; 1 – 1.5L) **93**

15. Schlossgut Diel Dorsheimer Goldloch Riesling Beerenauslese 1971 [DM2,050]

Not offered for tasting. (1 – 750ml)

16. Dr. Crusius Norheimer Kirschheck Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM43]

Stony, geological nose, with nice depth and a fine complexity. There is an underlying thread of tension below roundly applied fruitiness that holds this all together. Finishes with nice length, quite stylish. (60 – 750ml) **92**

17. Dr. Crusius Traiser Rotenfels Riesling Eiswein 1999 [DM130]

Taut and minerally, rather light in body and a bit easygoing, but there is nice presence on the back end and a good baritone note pinning this down, anchoring the citrusy-floral perfume on the finish. (24 – 750ml) **89**

18. Gutsverwaltung Niederhausen-Schlossböckelheim Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 [DM300]

Softly perfumed pear, apricot and fresh honey aromas. Delicately creamy weight in the mouth, pretty forward and easy, but tasty. (24 – 375ml; 30 – 750ml) **90**

19. Gutsverwaltung Niederhausen-Schlossböckelheim Niederhäuser Hermannsberg Riesling Eiswein 1983 [DM410]

Medium greenish-golden color. Mature, slightly musty or toasty aromas, underlined by apricot jam, fresh butter, pastry cream, orange and stone-fruit coulis. Rather soft in the mouth, though there is a characteristic Eiswein bite on the back end. Velvety and quite confectionary, drinking very well now. (36 – 750ml) **92**

20. Gutsverwaltung Niederhausen-Schlossböckelheim Rotenfelser Bastei Riesling 1941 [DM760]

Not offered for tasting. (1 – 750ml)

21. Emrich-Schönleber Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 [DM52]

Spicy, apricot botrytis and a smoky stoniness. Tropical ripeness, pretty but a bit shallow and lacking internal depth, especially through the back end. (60 – 500ml) **86(+?)**

22. Emrich-Schönleber Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Beerenauslese 1999 [DM159]

Delicate in depth, with appealing tangerine-citrus flavors. High-toned but not incomplete, very elegant and finely-wound, showing a hint of toffee on the back end. (48 – 375ml; 24 – 750ml) **92**

23. Emrich-Schönleber Monzinger Frühlingsplätzchen Riesling Auslese 1976 [DM450]

Not offered for tasting. (1 – 750ml)

24. Dönnhoff Oberhäuser Brücke Riesling Spätlese 1999 [DM53]

Superb tension and a tautly mineral structure, showing incredible richness and depth of lime and fresh pear fruitiness, yet here I feel that the fruit is merely a vehicle for the expression of terroir. Superb balance, racy and intense, finishing with expansive fragrance and nuanced length, thoroughly grand cru in its breeding. Simply terrific wine. (360 – 750ml) **95**

25. Dönnhoff Oberhäuser Brücke Riesling Eiswein 'Montag' 1999 [DM1,200]

Incredible intensity, leaping out of the glass with force and magnificent authority. Tropical aromas of pineapple, caramel, crystallized mango and mango syrup, packed with concentrated depth and an ultra-velvety texture, but somehow tautly-wound, with a finely-tuned, silky balance of power and finesse. Opulent and creamy yet crystal-clear, incredibly pure, virtually unending. Stunning. (48 – 375ml; 24 – 750ml) **99**

Rheingau's natural winemaker

"THE REVIVAL OF AN OLD IDEA is often the answer to many questions," says Bernhard Breuer. The questions he's referring to have been swirling around the German wine industry for several decades — questions such as, "Why have German wines become so unpopular?" and, more specifically, "What the heck happened to the great reputation of the Rheingau?"

For Bernhard, the answer to these questions is simple: after World War II, winemakers in Germany were seduced by science and technology. He also dispels the notion that it was the post-war American soldiers who were to blame for the "sweet and cheap" boom in Germany, laying the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the winemakers themselves. "In 1946, it was not possible to make sweet wines without botrytis because sterile filtration and other technological interventions to stop fermentation weren't invented until the '50s," says Bernhard. "These were truly great sweet wines that the GIs could buy very inexpensively, and this led to a market for ersatz sweet wine."

Unfortunately, it was a market built on the misperception that sweetness was all that mattered. But even a rough and tumble platoon of infantrymen can tell the difference between a ripe, concentrated, complex botrytis wine and dull, characterless, over-cropped sugar water. Still, these boring sweet wines became very popular in the '60s and '70s, even in Germany. It was only a matter of time before the market matured and moved on to more interesting (meaning dry) wines.

So then everybody in Germany jumped on the "trocken" bandwagon and started pumping out cheap, blisteringly acidic dry wines. The problem was, they had forgotten how to make great dry Rieslings in the traditional way. They tried to make dry wines from their early-ripening, high-yield vineyards by doing the same things they had always done, just fermenting out the sugar. But without the depth and concentration of fully ripe and mature grapes, the wines were harsh and unbalanced. Someone needed to lead the way back, and leadership comes naturally to Bernhard Breuer.

The Charta connection

Bernhard's Riesling revival began in 1983, shortly after he and his brother, Heinrich, took over the estate. Bernhard was a major force in the development of the Charta program. For him, it was an attempt to redefine the unique character of Rheingau Riesling and refocus winemaking in the region. Charta looked back to the winemaking traditions of the Rheingau's long history, which stretches back to the time of Charlemagne. It's a winemaking tradition based on what Bernhard calls "natural wine," because it is naturally fermented. This means that, as in the glorious past,



Bernhard Breuer.

Georg Breuer

Total vineyard area
23 hectares/58 acres

Average yield
25 – 45 hl/ha

Varieties
88% Riesling
Small parcels of Pinot Noir,
Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc

Top vineyards
Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg
Rüdesheim Berg Rottland
Rauenthal Nonnenberg

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Charta wines were dry wines meant to accompany food.

Sadly, the Charta concept has now been diluted and, in Bernhard's view, rendered meaningless by the conscription of its Romanesque arch logo into the VDP's "Erstes Gewächs" vineyard classification program, which includes sweet as well as dry wines. (Bernhard has also worked hard for 20 years to classify top sites in the Rheingau, but has recently broken ranks with the VDP and will not use the Erstes Gewächs designation on his wines. We'll bring you more on this broiling brouhaha in the next issue of *Riesling Report*.)

Natural winemaking

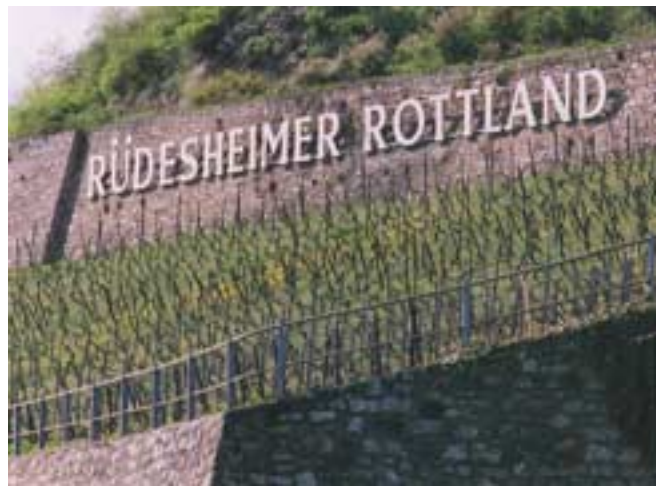
"At Georg Breuer, low-tech is the theme in both the vineyard and the cellar," says Bernhard. Except for the true botrytis dessert wines, everything at Breuer (90 to 95 percent of production) is made dry through natural fermentation. Bernhard prefers the term "natural" to "dry" wine. "A grown-up wine doesn't need residual sugar figures on the label," he says. "You never see it on a Montrachet." The overriding goal is to create intense, concentrated wines that express their terroir and recapture a profound respect for the gifts of nature.

Rather than dumping a bunch of synthetic chemicals into the wine, Bernhard prefers to use what nature already provides. By gently breaking the grapes open and leaving the juice in contact with the skins for 10 to 12 hours, not only does he extract a lot of nutrients from the grapes, he also activates a natural enzyme that later promotes settling of the wine. "If the grapes have this already, I feel a responsibility to honor nature," he says. "Modern winemaking takes all of these things out of the grapes and then adds them again later — from a bag."

After a light pressing, about half of the wines are vinified in large wooden barrels. The rest go into stainless steel, but still without any cooling equipment. Bernhard thinks it's a mistake to keep the fermentation at a constant temperature. "Wines get more complexity when they're not fermented all at the same temperature," he says. To add even more complexity, the wines are left on the lees as long as possible. Contact with the dead yeast has two other benefits: it aids in the positive assimilation of acidity and it has a reductive effect that counters the oxidation that occurs in wooden barrels.

Breuer's "Montosa" Riesling, a pre-selection from the estate's top sites in Rudesheim and Rauenthal, spends around 10 months in the barrel. The top single-vineyard wines (Berg Schlossberg, Berg Rottland and Nonnenberg) go 18 months before they are released. "With our wines, primary flavors are not the idea," says Bernhard. "We want mature flavors to come out over five to 10 years and make a dense wine."

But, naturally, the cellar work is only half of the story (some would say even less). It's what you do in the vineyards that makes all the difference. Even in the two decades after the war, average yields in the region were half of what they mushroomed to in the '70s and '80s. Winemakers led



The legendary Rottland vineyard on the Rudesheimer Berg. The Breuer estate owns just half a hectare here, but the wines are stunning in their power and intensity.

"A great naturally fermented wine is in itself a demonstration of the pedigree of its source."

— Bernhard Breuer

themselves to believe that they could mask the lack of concentration by increasing the sweetness in the wine. It was a smoke-and-mirrors trick full of nothing, signifying nothing.

Bernhard wants to make wines that don't have any holes. Wines that are a mouthful from beginning to end. So, while 100 hectoliters per hectare is the legal maximum yield in Rheingau (75 hl/ha for VDP wines), the average yield at Breuer is between 25 and 45 hl/ha. He strongly believes that yields in Germany should be lowered by at least one third to improve overall quality and to reduce quantity, thus increasing demand. A lot of winemakers, including a majority of VDP members, don't agree and Bernhard has decided to follow his own path to top-quality, naturally produced wines. "Making naturally fermented wines is much more difficult," says Bernhard. "It requires patience and a completely different philosophy."

A question of taste

For Bernhard, the real question is about individuality. "The future of wine is in the differences — at least at the high quality level," he says. "An agricultural product should reflect the natural environment — like cheeses from different areas. They *should* taste different." He deplores the homogenization of German wine that is occurring because of misguided efforts to compete in the global market. And he is especially appalled by the German wine industry's recent decision to allow the use of concentration machines. "In our northern region, every little bit of difference in vineyard climate, soil and winegrowing practice contributes to the individuality of the wines," he says. Concentration machines obliterate these subtle differences.

In their rather panicked pursuit of "international-style" winemaking, the German wine industry has forsaken the very qualities of purity, subtlety and distinctiveness that made their wines of the past — especially in Rheingau — so treasured by wine lovers everywhere. Fortunately, while the rank and file — making rank, defiling wines — plods along after global trends, a few visionary souls like Bernhard Breuer remain on the leading edge of top-quality Riesling made in a traditional, time-honored style.

After 20 years of battling mediocrity in the industry, Bernhard is now content to go his own way. He is confident that, because his wines are so lovingly made, so respectful of nature, so *individual*, he will always have a market for them. Once you read Peter's tasting notes, and then try some of the wines for yourself, I think you will agree. But don't forget to try the wines with a meal — that's what they're designed for. "The real thing is to drink wine with food," says Bernhard. It's a pleasure of the natural world that he enjoys immensely.



The Breuer estate house in the famous and tourist-filled village of Rudesheim.

*"The future of wine is in the differences — like cheeses from different areas. They **should** taste different."*

—Bernhard Breuer

Georg Breuer

These wines were tasted at the Breuer estate in the village of Rüdesheim in September, 2000.

Rüdesheim Estate Riesling 1999

AP 4. This comes from 11 different plots in Rüdesheim, and also contains declassified wine from the Rüdeshheimer Berg. Very aromatic and superbly balanced, with floral, pear-like perfume and fruity ripeness underlined by intensely slaty minerality. Wonderful mouthfeel, supple and velvety all the way through a fragrant and classy finish. **88**

Rauenthal Estate Riesling 1999

AP 6. Heavier and earthier than the Rüdeshheimer, as befits the terroir. Dark in tone, and piercingly geological, in a sleekly restrained and racy package. Superbly kinetic on a pungent and powerful finish. **90(+?)**

Montosa Riesling 1999

This is composed entirely of wine declassified from the three Rüdeshheimer Berg vineyards and the Rauenthaler Nonnenberg. Intensely perfumed and very floral, it reveals its grand cru origins in its subtlety and fineness of tone, filling the mouth in detailed, deep-toned nuance. Very classy. **92**

Rauenthal Nonnenberg Riesling 1999

AP 3. Citrusy perfume and a smoky mineral tone, really beautiful depth of aroma, intertwining multiple layers of fragrance in a sleekly rounded yet pervasively geological profile. Tremendously finished, fragrant, expansively complex and intensely stony, riveting in its glory and grip. Terrific wine, one of the greatest I have ever tasted from Breuer. **94**

Rüdeshheimer Berg Rottland 1999

AP 5. Gloriously trumpets its grand cru breeding, marvelous definition and intensity, showing an array of pear, peach skin, citrus and violet fruitiness above penetrating aromas of wet stone and slate. Aristocratic, nearly haughty in its brilliance. The finish on the Nonnenberg is longer, but this really expresses the breed of this classic site. **93(+?)**

Rüdeshheimer Berg Schlossberg Riesling 1999

AP 1. Bigger and more backwards than the previous two wines, and hasn't quite got the cut of the other two, coming off as less dimensional, less expressive. Still, it's well-built and classy, with an earthy, deep-toned presence. **89**

Rauenthal Nonnenberg Riesling Auslese 1999

AP 13. Very clear and clean in profile, with unctuous flavors of kumquat and mandarin orange. Thickly textured, but remains racy and lively, retaining a sleek delicacy. **90**

Rüdeshheimer Berg Rottland Auslese Goldkapsel 1999

AP 14. Gorgeously velvety, sparkling with pear and white peach richness. Really penetrates to the back of the palate with a deep-toned presence, finishing with nice length. A little bit blurry compared to the awesome dry wines, but this is very good. **91**



A close-up look at the soil of the Rüdeshheimer Berg. Chunks of slate and quartzite are mixed in with the reddish dirt, giving the wines a vibrant minerality along with their power and depth.

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The Mosel's natural philosopher

"I DON'T SELL GERMAN WINE, I SELL RIESLING that has a certain cultural aspect," says Reinhard Löwenstein, owner and resident philosopher of Weingut Heymann-Löwenstein. With that one statement he very concisely sums up his whole approach to winemaking and his deep connection to the land and its cultural history. For Reinhard, wine is more than just a pleasant drink, it's also a historical and cultural record of the civilization, the geology and the incredible wonder of nature that produce it. He recognizes that wine is an "ancient symbolic beverage, since the dawn of human consciousness," and treats the winemaking process with uncommon care and consideration.

On the other hand, Reinhard's primary goal is to simply make wines that provide great pleasure, and that he does with tremendous success. Whether or not the cultural backdrop is perceptible is, as in the fine arts, up to the individual tasting the wine. You probably won't, for example, be able to taste all the hard work that's gone into restoring the terrace walls in the insanely steep vineyards around Winnigen. But recovering the forgotten art of dry-fitted stonework was important to Reinhard, because not only are the the new walls more durable than those built with the shoddy stone-and-mortar work of the past century, they also provide better drainage, offer habitat for many small creatures, and are immensely pleasing to the eye. Reinhard spent some DM50,000 (about \$25,000) to rebuild one terrace wall in Röttgen that supports a mere 100 vines. He does it because he feels a deep personal responsibility to preserve the culture, ecology and taste of the vineyards entrusted to his care.

Authentic wine

The objective at Heymann-Löwenstein is to make "authentic" wine, as opposed to mass-produced "fast food" wine. For Reinhard, it's all about taste. If a wine has a discernable taste, from year to year, that says "this is Riesling from the steep, south-facing, red slate terraces of the Uhlen vineyard on the Lower Mosel," then it's an authentic wine. Yet, while he wants to preserve the cultural heritage of his vineyards, Reinhard is not trying to relive the past. "Wine has always been a child of its time," he says. Now, because he, too, is part of the local culture, it's the time for his style of full-bodied, highly aromatic, dry Rieslings.

After some years away from the estate as a student, and after extended stays abroad, Reinhard and his wife took over the family estate 20 years ago. With no formal training as a winemaker, he has relied upon his innate intelligence and voracious appetite for learning to guide him. He has tried many unorthodox techniques to achieve the style of wine he seeks: an



Reinhard Löwenstein

Heymann-Löwenstein

Total vineyard area

7.5 hectares/18 acres

Average production

50,000 bottles

Varieties

Riesling 95%

Top vineyards

Winniger Uhlen
Winniger Röttgen
Hatzenporter Kirchberg

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intense, dry style of Riesling that first struck a chord with him during a visit to Emmerich Knoll in Austria's Wachau district.

Over the years, Reinhard has had many people — especially by-the-numbers wine-school and government “experts” — tell him what he's doing will never work. Undaunted, he forges on, learning from his own mistakes, constantly improving and refining his winemaking style. “Just as in music or art, there's not just one style, one truth, in winemaking,” he says. “Because of my many interests and my varied educational background, it's easier for me to break away from the norm and try something new. Failure is not something that worries me.”

From the vineyard to the womb

Over the past 20 years, Reinhard has been gradually increasing and consolidating his holdings in the two great vineyards of Winningen: Röttgen and Uhlen. Recently, he also added a third top-quality site to his repertoire: the Kirchberg vineyard in the neighboring village of Hatzenport. Early on, he reasoned that these sunny Lower Mosel vineyards were more suitable for dry Riesling than their cooler counterparts upstream in the Middle Mosel. It took years of experimentation, but now we can confidently say that his instincts were right on.

Those years also taught him that winemaking is more than a philosophical concept. It takes skill and knowledge and manpower and, yes, technology. “It's rather absurd to say simply that winemaking is an art,” says Reinhard. “Of course it's an art, but it's also craft and industry.”

With his finger, he draws a triangle in the condensation on one of his stainless steel tanks. Each point of the triangle represents one of these three aspects of winemaking. One point is the artistry that can express the ecology and cultural history of the wine's origins, as well as the personality of the winemaker; another is the pure craft of fermenting the juice of grapes into an alcoholic beverage. And finally, there's the industrial aspect that involves the physical logistics of harvesting, vinifying, bottling, shipping and marketing the wine. Heymann-Löwenstein, naturally, falls more toward the art and craft points of the triangle, but it could not produce commercially viable wine without the industrial element.

In the vineyard, Reinhard relies heavily on art and craft to make harvest decisions. He is more interested in aroma and taste than analytical figures. He looks for the golden color of mature, thoroughly ripened grapes and a taste that he recognizes as authentic.

When harvest time comes, crews pick everything together from a particular plot and take it back to the winery to be sorted. After pressing,



The terraces of Winninger Röttgen. In the center you can see a section of terrace wall that has been restored by Reinhard Löwenstein. At the bottom right is the rickety little car that rides the monorail up and brings the harvested grapes down the steep hillside.

“It's rather absurd to say simply that winemaking is an art. Of course it's an art, but it's also craft and industry.”

— Reinhard Löwenstein

the wines go into stainless steel tanks in Reinhard's cellar, which he describes as a "womb" for the developing wines. "The idea in here is not to destroy what good things happened in the vineyard," he says, adding that "winemaking is not so much making, as waiting." They do nothing to the wine as it gestates in the cellar, which can be quite worrisome because the fermentation often stops in the cold of winter. All they can do is hold their breath until it starts again in spring. "It's a little bit like a game of poker," says Reinhard. Fortunately, he is on quite a winning streak.

The wines of Heymann-Löwenstein

Schieferterrassen

Heymann-Löwenstein's "basic" wine, Schieferterrassen (slate terraces) is made from fruit that shows the slate soil of the terraced vineyards, but not the unique terroir of either Röttgen or Uhlen.

Vom Blauen Schiefer

A special wine with cooler aromatics from a section of blue slate vineyard adjacent to the upstream end of Uhlen. Not quite a grand cru like Röttgen or Uhlen, but it is distinctive enough that Reinhard likes to bottle it separately in years when the blue slate character comes through.

Hatzenporter Kirchberg

Reinhard's newest vineyard has red slate soil that's rougher than Uhlen and contains a lot of silicates. It has a fruitier mineral aroma that reminds him more of the Middle Mosel.

Winninger Röttgen

"Röttgen is always a flower-power wine when it's young," says Reinhard, referring to the forward fruit and sheer generosity of this wine in its youth. In some years, wines from this extremely steep terraced vineyard just downstream of Winnigen can equal the great Uhlen, but they are generally quicker to develop.

Winninger Uhlen

Clearly the top dog on the Lower Mosel, the Uhlen vineyard forms a grand amphitheater as the Mosel makes a broad bend from northeast to southeast. The terraces here get sun nearly all day long, making for exceptional ripeness. In fact, Uhlen holds the record for the highest must weight ever measured on the Mosel. "But this neither makes it the best Mosel wine, nor is it reason for me to play along with the ridiculous German wine law," says Reinhard, referring to the fact that he doesn't play the Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese game. Aside from a little botrytized dessert wine, everything is made dry and labeled simply as "Qualitätswein."

In a class of his own

In the past, Reinhard worked for an official vineyard classification based on historical records, but now he's moved on without it. For him it's a fait accompli — the best wines from his historically documented top sites have the vineyard name on the label. His customers quickly comprehend this de facto classification and, like us, they come back every year for more of these extraordinary wines from an extraordinary man.



Elemental connections

The cellar at Heymann-Löwenstein contains an enormous panpipe that sticks up through the earth and into the open air above. The deeply resonant chord that is produced by the wind provides, as Reinhard describes it, "a symbolic connection to the natural element of air."

In addition, a small trickle of water is pumped through the cellar to maintain a symbolic bond with the Mosel. The element of earth envelops the cellar, and we can only assume that the fourth elemental symbol is the fire in Reinhard Löwenstein's spirit.

Heymann-Löwenstein

Tasted at the Heymann-Löwenstein estate in September, 2000.

Riesling Schieferterrassen QbA trocken 1999

AP 15. Sleek and pointed, with a nearly Grüner Veltliner-like brothiness. There is a really nice richness on the palate, bursting with peach pit, apple and pear skin flavors, all held together by a driving minerality that frames everything in an elegantly refined manner. An excellent balance of acidity carries the aromas on a lingering finish, very pretty and discreet. **88**

Riesling von blauem Schiefer QbA trocken 1999

AP 6.99. Rounder and more fruit-driven than the Schieferterrassen, with a pronounced smoky-slatey richness. Big, high-toned impact upfront – hasn't got the intensity on the finish of the previous wine, but it's well-made. **87**

Hatzenporter Kirchberg Riesling QbA trocken 1999

AP 8. This is the first vintage from this newly-acquired red slate plot. Noticeably richer and bigger than the wines from Löwenstein's Winningen sites, with lovely mineral dimension and a berry candy fragrance lurking in the background. A lot of tension and energy on the palate, very expressive and subtle, showing a beautiful harmony of fruit, acidity and earthy minerality. Of this wine, Löwenstein says, "I am very happy with this because it brings a completely new taste to my range." **90(+?)**

Winner Röttgen Riesling QbA trocken 1999

AP 9. Electric in its energy, vibrantly racing across the palate in focused, stony splendor. Aromas of tangerine rind, lime and crushed rock are tautly intertwined, concealing a lot of depth in a super-sleek frame. Beautifully built on a long, baritone-driven finish, insistently minerally and resonating with uncommon clarity and harmony. **91**

Winner Uhlen Riesling QbA trocken 1999

AP 10. Very fine in tone, with grand cru dimension and intensity. Immediately more complex than the Röttgen, unfolding in subtle aromas of litchi, kiwi, nectarine and spicy stoniness, yet firmly encased in a backwards structure, taut like a violin string. Superbly expansive richness and expression on a fine finish. **93**

Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling QbA 1999

AP 7. These grapes were acquired in a trade with Selbach, in Löwenstein's relentless exploration of terroir. Löwenstein allowed this wine to finish at 20 g/l of residual sugar, saying, "Once again, this proves to me that the Mittel Mosel is better for making sweet wines, and our area for dry wines." High-toned and filigree, with perfumed slate and lime-floral aromatics, this nicely expresses the profile of this great site, but ultimately hasn't got the length or grip of the previous three wines. But it is tremendously instructive to taste in this lineup, being a superb demonstration of terroir and how terroir is fitted to a winemaker's style. **87**

Winner Uhlen Riesling Auslese 1999

AP 11. Very fine and delicate aromas of poached pear, mango and Meyer lemon. Superb balance and precision, finely-tuned grace and breed, building with subtle depth to a penetrating and aromatic finish. Löwenstein's focus may be on dry wines, but this is proof that his philosophy and stylistic ideas can be expressed in wines that contain residual sugar as well. **92**



The steep, terraced vineyards of Heymann-Löwenstein overlook the meandering Mosel as it nears its confluence with the Rhine just a few kilometers downstream at Koblenz.

Rating the wines

WINES ARE ASSESSED BASED ON THEIR perceived total potential lifespan. In an ideal world, prose would be the only language required, but of course we humans have a penchant for categorization and qualitative organization. Therefore, despite its flaws, we have chosen to include a numerical score in our notes, based on a hundred-point scale. We stress that the text of the tasting notes is the matter of importance, and that the score apart from the text is divested of meaning. A (+?) indicates the potential for an increased score.

Tasting notes are by individual tasters, and not composites of a panel. We document who is tasting the wine, where, and when the wine is being tasted, as all three of these elements are crucial to the contextual understanding of the notes. In addition, lot numbers are provided whenever possible, and especially AP numbers for German wines. In general, unless otherwise noted, all tasting notes are Peter's.

Because of extreme variability around the world, we have decided not to include prices, except for the auction wines.

Next Issue

Germany's 1999 vintage

IN OUR JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2001 ISSUE, we complete the first full year of Riesling Report with our annual review of the currently available vintage. We'll have lots of tasting notes for you from our travels and from big tasting events like the German Wine Information Bureau's annual vintage presentation.

In addition, we'll report on the achievements — and shortcomings — of Germany's association of top winegrowers, the VDP. And we'll have Estate Reviews of the two Wilhelms of the VDP: Wilhelm Haag, owner of the Fritz Haag estate and president of the VDP-Mosel; and Wilhelm Weil, of Robert Weil, president of the VDP-Rheingau.

Special thanks

We want to express our sincere gratitude to **Bernhard Breuer** and **Reinhard Löwenstein** for their sincerity and frankness — as well as their generous hospitality — during our visits. Our heartfelt thanks also go to **Hans Selbach** for being our guide to the auctions year after year.

THE RIESLING REPORT RATING SCALE

- 95–100 Classic.** A perfect example of its type. The holy grail of all wine lovers, these are wines that stop time and transport you to a higher plane of existence.
- 90–94 Exceptional.** A superbly crafted wine with extraordinary attributes.
- 85–89 Above average.** Wines showing character, distinction and interest.
- 80–84 Average.** A drinkable wine, but without any special distinction.
- 75–79 Below average.** An underachiever.
- 75 or less Poor or flawed.**

Only wines rated 85 or better will appear in this magazine. These are our personal recommendations. More tasting notes can be found in Library within the **Members Only** area of the Riesling Report Web site: www.rieslingreport.com

