



Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

Maturing Mosel: An update on the 1960s and the 1990s

We continue the process started in the first issue of the newsletter to provide a full update on maturing Mosel wines. This includes an overall introductory section on when Mosel wines are best to drink followed by a review of the vintages of the past 50 years and how bottles from these vintages are faring today.

For ease of reading, we have structured the review of the vintages by decades with a description of the main vintages of the decade as well as tasting notes from these decades, ranked by vintage.

This issue of the Newsletter will focus on the 1960s and the 1990s. We will cover the remaining two decades (the 1970s and 1980s) in forthcoming issues of the Newsletter.

As we have done before, we have put all the tasting notes at the end of this newsletter by Estate for additional ease of access.

Mosel from the 1960s

The 1960s were characterized by a string of good vintages but are less well considered than other decades because they do not contain any so-called "vintage of the century". Nonetheless, it generated two outstanding vintages: 1964 and 1969. 1964 produced many very good wines characterized by low acidity yet outstanding balance. Its wines are still very enjoyable today. Wines from the 1969 vintage on the other hand were said to be quite hard and acidic in their youth and they took a long time to develop and overcome their lack of immediate charm. The story is a totally different one today as wines from this vintage have been consistently good and show a remarkable freshness and zest for their age. The vintage is not that well known and hence some comparative bargains can still be made on the auction market. In both 1964 and 1969, the Middle Moselle was favored although some outstanding wines were made in 1964 in the Saar and Ruwer.

Wines from two other vintages in the 1960s can be quite enjoyable, namely those from 1962 and 1966. Both vintages share a similar pattern: they led to rather austere wines marked by high acidity. The additional ripeness reached in the Middle Mosel helped to create somewhat better balanced wines than in the Saar and Ruwer.

The 1967 vintage was characterized by a widespread outbreak of botrytis but, unlike the 2006 vintage, the weather did not turn for the better and rain affected the harvest. Wines from this vintage can still be quite drinkable but are often of a rustic nature with a dark color (due to botrytis) and heavy smoky flavors on the nose.

The other vintages in the 1960s are either solid (1961) or outright disasters (1960, 1963, 1965 and 1968) and are seldom worth trying. There are some notable exceptions: Egon Müller and Joh. Jos. Prüm made some Auslese-Eiswein in 1961 that are still well regarded by Mosel wine lovers.

1964er	Huesgen-Böcking	Geierslayer Ohligsberg feinste Auslese	89
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I was looking forward to this bottle as it comes from one of the historically great Estates in the region. The wine has a great yellow color but is unfortunately already quite advanced in age. It retains the typical flavors of fruit and herbs with still nice sweetness on the palate. This is nice and not too acidic but did not really shine (probably because of less than optimal conservation). Now-2010 (Feb 08)

1964er	Karthäuserhof	Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Kronenberg Auslese Nr. 35	91
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This is an old friend by now and I have never been disappointed. Also this bottle shows great flavors of orange peel and some decent apricot flavors. The wine is well balanced with low acidity and an off-dry finish. This overall impression of balance and easiness is really what makes this wine so irresistible: it makes winemaking look so easy and obvious. Now-2010+ (Jan 08)

1964er	Max Keller	Ockfener Bockstein feinste Auslese	92
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This bottle from a former VDP Estate (1964 was its last vintage) was quite a treat. It has a superb color, with good smoky flavors playing with citrus peel on the nose. The wine is very intense, balanced and perfectly integrated on the palate. It is remarkably fresh and easy to drink. Now-2015 (Mar 08)

1964er	Joh. Jos. Prüm	Bernkasteler Badstube Auslese	92
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This is quite muted at first but then opens up with the telltale flavors of Bernkastel: ripe yellow peaches, some delicate spices and a touch of earth. After a while, the marzipan note recedes to give way to a nice feeling of freshness and excellent length. This is well balanced on the palate with a long finish and still remarkably fresh for a 1964. Now-2015 (Apr 08)



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1969er	Bischöfliches Priesterseminar Trier	Dhroner Hofberg Auslese	89
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This is nice but also somewhat more tired than I expected (probably storage had not been optimal). The wine shows some hints of spices with minerals and a touch of citrusy fruit on the nose. It is a good drink but more one to enjoy as an aperitif than with a meal: for that, it lacks sweetness and silkiness. Now-2010 (Feb 08)

1969er	Bischöfliches Priesterseminar Trier	Trittenheimer Apotheke Spätlese	87
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This is still quite nice with good flavors of marzipan and just a hint of toffee (a sign of aging). While being nearly fully dry, it retains good balance on the palate with the tell-tale freshness of the better 1969s. Now-2012 (Apr 08)

1969er	Joh. Jos. Prüm	Wehlener Sonnenuhr feine Auslese	94
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This shows a great dark yellow copper color and offers good flavors of marzipan and candied fruit on the nose. The wine is impeccably balanced with great play between acidity and sweetness. This is now fully mature but should offer great pleasure for years to come. Now-2015 (Sep 08)

Extract from Mosel Fine Wines Issue No 2 (December 2008) covering the 1960s and 1990s

The aim of Mosel Fine Wines is to provide a comprehensive and independent review of Riesling wines produced in the Mosel, Saar and Ruwer region.

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