



Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

Special Issue: Auction Guide – September 2009

Mosel Fine Wines

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.

Mosel Fine wines appears on a quarterly basis and covers:

- Reports on the current vintage (including the annual auctions held in Trier).
- An update on how Mosel wines are maturing.
- Perspectives on specific topics such as vineyards, Estates, vintages, etc.

All wines reviewed in the Mosel Fine Wines issues are exclusively tasted by us (at the Estates, trade shows or private tastings) under our sole responsibility.

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Principles

Drinking window

- The drinking window provided refers to the maturity period: Mosel Riesling has a long development cycle and can often be enjoyable for 20 years and more. Like great Bordeaux or Burgundy, top Mosel Riesling wines generally go through a muted phase before reaching its full maturity plateau. At the end of each tasting note, we provide a drinking window, which refers to our estimation of the maturity period for the wine. This maturity period consists of the 'fruit' and 'terroir' phases defined in our introduction on Maturing Mosel (which can be found [here](#)).
- Without further reference, all wines are assumed to have in addition a drinking window of 1-3 years after the vintage: Top Mosel Riesling is also extremely enjoyable in its primary fruit phase, which typically lasts 1-3 years after the vintage. This primary fruit drinking window always applies and is therefore not referred to in each individual tasting note.

Scoring Approach

The use of scores to evaluate a wine is often debated and has its advantages (communicating a perspective) and its disadvantages (in particular in reducing such a complex and fascinating matter as Riesling wine to a number). We believe that the advantages outweigh the drawbacks as long as a score is put in perspective of a tasting note and all our scores should be seen in that context.

We believe that great Mosel Riesling is not about "more is better" but rather a combination of the following elements:

- Intrinsically complex and balanced: Great Riesling should be complex and multi-layered, and offer a perfect balance between acidity, flavor intensity and alcohol as well as sweetness for wines with some residual sugar.
- Reflects its terroir: Mosel Wine should carry the signature of its unique terroir into the wine. An Ürziger Würzgarten should not taste like a Scharzhofberger or vice-versa.
- True to its wine style: German Riesling has the incredible richness of coming in different styles, which vary in terms of degrees of residual sugar or in terms of flavor profile and intensity (i.e. Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, etc.). Great Riesling should glorify its declared style.

A great Spätlese, which remains true to its style, can therefore get a higher score than, say, an average Auslese.

We rely on a 100 point scale with the following overall principles:

95-100	Classic : Is a true classic that sets standards. Only few wines make it into this "super-class" of Riesling and no stone should be left unturned to find them.
90-94	Outstanding : Stands out as distinctive. It will offer immense pleasure and should be actively looked out for.
85-89	Good to very good : Is a good to very good wine with special qualities. It will be delicious and is worthy of any cellar, especially if the price is right.
80-84	Solid to good : Is technically correctly made and will be enjoyable in a simple straightforward style. Price is the key driver for the buying decision.
Below 80	Not worth it : Does not show any distinction and may even have some flaws. Given the currently still quite reasonable price level for Mosel Riesling, there is no reason to bother.

Mosel Riesling is an aromatic grape that rarely goes through malolactic fermentation. Therefore, bottling generally occurs five to nine months after the harvest, which allows us to generally taste bottled wines. Some wines may however not yet be bottled at the moment of our visit to Estates for our reports. In such an instance, we provide a tasting note based on a cask sample and only a score range (instead of a firm one).

Nomenclature

Nomenclature: please note that we are using the following simplifying principles in any wine description:

- No Prädikat in the name of a wine means that it is bottled as QbA.
- GG stands Grosses Gewächs.



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An introduction to the auctions held in Bernkastel and Trier

Every year, two winemaker associations in the Mosel, the Bernkasteler Ring and the Grosser Ring / VDP, each hold an auction at which the supposedly best casks of its members are auctioned off. These are always proposed in minute quantities.

We regularly get many questions about these auctions: What are these auctions? Which wines are being offered? Are they the same as those available in the shops? How can one participate? Etc.

We provide here some background information on these auctions including on their origins, how they work and what are the best buying strategies.

How did these auctions come about?

The auctions were set up at the turn of the 20th century by grower associations to secure the traceability of their wines.

In order to understand the annual auctions, one needs to go back to the 19th century and have a look at how the wines were sold at the time. The wine trade in Germany was very much dominated by wealthy and powerful merchant houses. They went to the Estates, purchased wines in casks and had these transferred to their own cellars for bottling and delivery to their customers in Europe and worldwide. The demand for top German wines was immense, the prices very high and the inevitable happened: some merchant houses could not resist the temptation and started to 'fiddle around' (blending wines, adding sweetening products, etc.). To address this problem, leading growers in different parts of the Mosel started to organize themselves into grower associations and committed themselves to some stringent practices to ensure the quality of their wines:

- Produce only *Naturein* wines, i.e. wines without any addition of sugar (be it as sweetener or for chaptalization).
- Sell their wines only through the auctions organized by their grower association.
- Bottle the wines at the Estate with an original Estate cork to ensure the traceability of the product.

Commercial considerations most certainly also played a role in setting up these grower associations, be it only to improve their bargaining power with respect to the mighty merchants.

For much of the first half of the 20th century, auctions were to be the standard approach for selling wines, with commissioners as middlemen.

Until the 1930s, all casks produced by a member of such a grower association were exclusively sold at auctions and this meant that such auctions were organized several times per year. Estates sold only full casks at auction. While this is not an issue for lesser wines, it proved more problematic for top casks of Auslese because the price and demand were often too much to handle for a single buyer. Here, 'commissioners' came into play as middlemen. They would buy the casks on behalf of several buyers and organized the orders between them. For instance, a famous cask of 1911er Aylor Kupp feinste Auslese auctioned off in the 1920s went to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, another part to a prince in Sweden and the remainder to private English customers.

With the development of direct sales, the auctions became an annual event dedicated to selling off selected high quality wines only.

As of the 1930s, leading Estates started to market their wines directly and to use the auctions only to sell their finest casks. With time, the smaller quantities on offer led the grower associations to reduce the number of auctions to one per year. The fact that better casks were supposed to be sold off at the auction required makers to introduce some differentiations between casks sold directly (via merchants) and those sold via the auction. Consequently, a sticker with the year and location of the auction was added on all auction bottles to distinct them from regular ones (more on how to recognize auction bottles in the last part of this introduction).

Two annual auctions take place today in the Mosel.

Many grower associations were operating at the turn of the 20th century, each holding its own auctions. These were gradually to merge to leave only two such grower associations today:

- The Bernkasteler Ring: It was set up by five growers as *Vereinigung der Weingutsbesitzer der Mittelmosel* in 1899 and was holding its biannual auctions in the casino in Bernkastel. In 1978, it merged with the *Trierer Ring* (another small grower association set up in 1911) and subsequently took its current name. It is sometimes referred to as the *Kleiner Ring*, i.e. the 'Small Ring', in opposition to the Grosser Ring here below.
- The Grosser Ring / VDP: This grower association, originally called *Triererverein der Weingutsbesitzer Mosel-Saar-Ruwer*, was set up in 1908. It merged three grower associations (one in the Middle Mosel, one in the Saar and the association of catholic Estates in Trier). Given that it had 56 members at its inception, it was referred to as *Grosser Ring*.

Today, each of these two grower associations organizes one auction per year. The one of the Grosser Ring / VDP is held at the Europahalle in Trier and the one of the Bernkasteler Ring at the Kloster Machern in Bernkastel-Wehlen.



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How are the auctions working today?

Auctions are held annually in September.

They are held once a year on two consecutive days in the second half of September. The Bernkasteler Ring traditionally holds its auction on a Thursday and the Grosser Ring / VDP on the subsequent Friday. In 2009, these auctions take place on September 24 resp. 25.

Auctions are open to the public and professionals.

Both auctions are open to the public with the possibility to taste the wines in the morning. The wines are then auctioned off in the afternoon in a so-called 'wet auction', i.e. the wines are served again while they are being auctioned off (this is not the case of course for some rare old bottles such as the 1976 Wwe Dr. H. Thanisch Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Beerenauslese auctioned off last year or, most likely, the 1959er Clüsserath-Eifel Trittenheimer Laurentiusberg Riesling Spätlese on offer at the Bernkasteler Ring auction this year).

In general, only special casks of the finest wines (not sold via traditional sales channels) are brought to the auctions.

Still today, the wines that are being sold off remain a major source of confusion, even to the most experienced Mosel wine lovers. In principle, each Estate has the freedom to decide which wine(s) to auction off: a young wine, a mature one, a special cask, etc. The only restriction is that any BA, TBA or Eiswein has to have seen at least two winters (i.e. 2 years old) before going to auction. For the rest, every winemaker has a free hand. In practice however, growers want to bring their best wines to the auctions and the following rules of thumb generally hold true for the Mosel auctions:

- Only special wines from special casks (i.e. with a distinct AP number) are brought to the auctions. These wines are therefore not available via traditional sales channels (although some Estates may offer them ex-cellar at the hammer price after the auction). On an exceptional basis, some Estates may bring unique mature rarities to the auctions (such as the bottle of 1976er Berncasteler Doctor Riesling BA sold by the Wwe Thanisch – Erben Thanisch Estate in September 2008) that could have been sold via regular channels upon release.
- Any Kabinett, Spätlese or Auslese brought to the auctions is likely to be from the latest vintage (i.e. from the 2008 vintage for the auctions to be held in September 2009).
- The practice varies more widely what concerns BA, TBA or Eiswein bottlings. Some Estates tend to bring them to the auctions immediately after the minimum two years period (such as S.A. Prüm). Other Estates prefer to let them mature somewhat in their cellars before bringing them to the auctions. For instance, Egon Müller brought the 1997er Scharzhofberger Riesling TBA and Joh. Jos. Prüm the 1994er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling BA only at the auction held in September last year.
- Most wines are fruity-styled even though some producers from the Bernkasteler Ring now also propose some off-dry (Feinherb) or dry wines.

Private individuals as well as professionals can bid at these auctions.

Technically speaking, only the accredited commissioners are actually allowed to bid at these auctions. However, anyone who wishes to acquire some bottles at these auctions can do so by placing bids with their wine merchant / importer (if they offer this service) or by contacting directly one of the accredited commissioners. Bids are put in the form of 'I want X bottles of wine so-and-so for up to €Y hammer price per bottle'. After the auctions, the commissioners will contact the successful bidders for payment and shipment.

As far as we know, commissioners can ship directly to any resident within the European Union (wine lovers may still choose for easiness to work via a wine merchant / importer to avoid the logistics hassle). For bidders from outside the EU (and in particular in the United States and Canada), particular shipping / importing restrictions may apply and it is advisable to contact a commissioner or your wine merchant / importer to check how this is best organized. We provide here below the links to the lists of accredited commissioners for the two auctions (note that there are some differences between the two lists):

List of commissioners for the [Bernkasteler Ring auction](#)

List of commissioners for the [Grosser Ring auction](#)

The end price paid for the wines will be composed of the hammer price, to which one needs to add a commission fee (a few percentage of the hammer price) for the accredited commissioners, shipping costs as well as any import duties and VAT (or sales tax).

What is the best buying strategy? Should one buy auction wines?

Auction wines represent the pinnacle of Mosel Riesling.

We have been personally avid buyers of auction wines for many years as these bottlings represent the essence of Mosel Riesling greatness. Simply put: not all auction wines are magical but our greatest Mosel wine memories from Estate members of the two grower associations have all come from auction wines.

Auction wines are not cheap and often sell at a significant premium.

The quantities of wines brought to the auctions are minute. They can go up to a few hundreds bottles for some Spätlese bottlings but sometimes not exceed 24-36 bottles for rare TBA ones. It is therefore not surprising that these wines can be very, very expensive. The price of a Spätlese or Auslese auction bottling can sometimes be three times that of an equivalent regular bottling. Prices paid for rare TBA can easily reach €500-1,000 per bottle (before taxes, commissions, etc.)!



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Some relative bargains can however be made, which allow one to get the 'best of Mosel' at reasonable prices.

While auction wines are hardly cheap, some of these wines can be relative bargains. There is no wine that represents a systematic bargain every year, but each year, some bottlings sell for hardly more than regular wines. This was for instance the case in 2008 for the great 2007er Geltz-Zilliken Saarburger Rausch Auslese. In particular, such relative bargains can be made at the Bernkasteler Ring auction, which seems to get less international exposure and very often offers the opportunity to acquire great wines at very reasonable prices. For instance, the delicious 2007er Merkelbach Ürziger Würzgarten Spätlese * went for only €9 (hammer price) at last year's auction.

The question of whether the premium and effort of buying at auctions is worth it is therefore a very personal one.

Someone 'only' wanting good Mosel wines for everyday drinking is probably best off buying regular (non-auction) wines from his favorites Estates. However, anyone seriously interested in Mosel Riesling should make the effort to get hold of some of these auction gems. In addition, lovers of BA, TBA and Eiswein often have no choice but to go through the auctions to be able to get their hands on some of the finest examples by say Joh. Jos. Prüm, Egon Müller or Knebel as these Estates generally only sell such wines through auctions.

Auction bottles do not necessarily need to be acquired at the auction itself: some Estates and wine merchants / importers offer them also later.

While being made in minute quantities, auction wines can be found on the open market. Our experience is that many leading merchants / importers specialized in German wines throughout the world often acquire some auction wines to enhance their catalogue (either immediately or for release after some years). Also, some Estates offer the possibility to acquire their auction wines at the Estate after the auction, usually at or close to the hammer price. Going for this secondary market can therefore be an alternative option to acquire some of these auction wines, and one that does not require the hassle of putting bids and importing wines.

How do I recognize auction bottlings on the open market?

In principle, all auction bottles carry a round sticker to distinguish them from regular ones.

In order to differentiate them from regular wines, auction bottlings do carry a round sticker, usually stuck to a corner of the label with the indication "auctioned off at the auction held on date [so-and-so]". As an image speaks more than a thousand words, we have attached pictures of recent auction bottles.

Auction Sticker – Bernkasteler Ring



Auction Sticker – Grosser Ring / VDP



In practice, not all auction bottles do carry a sticker and then only the AP number can help out.

In principle, these wines are therefore easy to identify. In practice though, things may not necessarily be as easy as some Estates offer these wines ex-cellar after the auction (of course at auction prices or higher). Over the years, our experience has been that these auction bottlings do generally not carry the 'auction sticker'. In that case, the only way to know whether a bottle is an auction one is to check the AP numbers.

AP numbers may be not very consumer friendly but a little effort may allow one to make some bargains.

While this may not be very consumer friendly (who keeps scores of AP numbers?), it may be worth the effort and can reward one with some nice bargains. Indeed, auction wines do appear now and then on the secondary market. However, as these wines are not widely distributed, their singular value is often not recognized and these wines sell for not much more than their regular equivalent. Savvy Riesling lovers can therefore make some nice bargains... if they can recognize these wines on the open market.



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Auctions 2009 : Bernkasteler Ring Wines Guide

Overview

We provide here a review of wines that will be auctioned off by the Bernkasteler Ring on September 24, 2009 and that we can recommend on quality grounds. This includes wines from the following Estates (presented in alphabetic order):

Bastgen	<i>Monzel</i>
Von Beulwitz	<i>Mertesdorf</i>
Ernst Clüsserath	<i>Trittenheim</i>
Clüsserath-Eifel	<i>Trittenheim</i>
Albert Gessinger	<i>Zeltingen</i>
Kanzlerhof	<i>Pölich</i>
Karp-Schreiber	<i>Brauneberg</i>
Kees-Kieren	<i>Graach</i>
Heribert Kerpen	<i>Wehlen</i>
Knebel	<i>Winningen</i>
Alfred Merkelbach	<i>Ürzig</i>
Markus Molitor	<i>Wehlen</i>
Peter Neu Erben	<i>Wiltigen</i>
Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler	<i>Bernkastel</i>
Rebenhof	<i>Ürzig</i>
Johann Peter Reinert	<i>Kanzem</i>
Andreas Schmitges	<i>Erden</i>
St. Nikolaus-Hospital	<i>Bernkastel</i>





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Tasting Notes by Estates

Weingut Bastgen

2008er	Bastgen	Kestener Paulinshofberg Riesling Spätlese "Auf den Felsen"	09 09	Auction	91
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Made from 100 year old vines in the parcel "Auf den Felsen", this is very impressive. It offers great flavors of white peaches in a very cool and under-toned style. The wine is sappy and racy on the palate with well integrated acidity and a yoghurt-zesty touch reminiscent of classical Fritz Haag wines. The finish is nicely playful, fresh and moderately long. This is a nice Spätlese made in a light clean and joyful style. 2014-2023

NB: This wine is bottled under Stelvin screw cap.

Weingut Erben von Beulwitz

1999er	Erben von Beulwitz	Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese **	11 00	Auction	89
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Racy on the nose with citrus, herbs and a touch of petrol, this wine comes over as nicely creamy and powerful on the palate with ripe notes of melon. The finish is long, slightly salty and surprisingly racy for a wine from this vintage. This could actually benefit from further aging in order to develop its aromatic. 2011-2024

2008er	Erben von Beulwitz	Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese "Alte Reben"	04 09	Auction	92
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This is superbly precise and intense on the nose with white fruits, strawberry and a hint of mint and smoke. The sense of balance on the palate is remarkable with a touch of herbs nicely framing the fruit. The finish is very long, powerful and zesty with a delicate sense of creaminess. It is a gorgeous Auslese. 2015-2033

2007er	Erben von Beulwitz	Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Eiswein	03 08	Auction	91
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Sappy and balanced on the nose, it boasts nice white peach, red fruits and minerals on the palate without excessive acidity. There is a touch of botrytis which adds some liqueur, creaminess and notes of tangerine. The finish is long and rather smooth. It is well made in an Auslese-Eiswein style. 2012-2022

Weingut Ernst Clüsserath

2008er	Ernst Clüsserath	Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese	13 09	Auction	91
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This is a very nice and zesty-styled Auslese made in the Auslese-Eiswein style of the old days. A real white fruit basket on the nose, it is zesty, fresh and nicely balanced on the palate and maintains great presence and aromatic intensity in the finish. This is very precise and clean in style. 2016-2033

Weingut Clüsserath-Eifel

1998er	Clüsserath-Eifel	Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese ***	06 99	Auction	90
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This boasts some attractive intense flavors of yellow fruits, butter and some subtle notes of herbs on the nose, with just a slight touch of petrol. Delicately creamy, it is well balanced and ripe with a delicious sense of fine botrytis (showing a light honeyed touch) as well as zest cleaning the palate in the finish. This is a lovely matured wine. Now-2018

2006er	Clüsserath-Eifel	Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese **	09 07	Auction	89
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Creamy and powerful, this wine comes over as quite weighty on the palate with slightly candied flavors of yellow fruits. The intensity is remarkable and the finish is quite intense. 2014-2026



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Weingut Albert Gessinger

2008er	Albert Gessinger	Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese ***	12 09	Auction	90
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This is quite sappy and fresh on the nose with great Eiswein-styled cassis-driven fruit precision, some gooseberry and lime. The wine is intense, zesty and powerful on the palate and offers a nice long finish. The aromatic freshness is really lovely and gives a joyful side to this wine. 2014-2028

Weingut Kanzlerhof

2008er	Kanzlerhof	Pölicher Held Riesling Spätlese	09 09	Auction	90
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This is a great success in the vintage and a superb wine. The nose is fresh with great flavors of yellow peach, fine apricot, flowers and a hint of herbs. The wine is sappy and balanced on the palate and the finish is clean, fresh and long. This is very nice and elegant in a sappy easy style. 2013-2023

Weingut Karp-Schreiber

1994er	Karp-Schreiber	Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeereauslese	18 95	Auction	94
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This is already quite dark golden in color and offers a huge thick nose of dried fruits, candy, cherry and licorice. The wine retains great zest and power on the palate and offers a nice long sweet finish. It is made in a quite oxidative style which may not be to the liking of lovers of reduced fresh wines. However, it is a fascinating TBA that will be simply irresistible next to a nice fire on a cold winter day. Now-2029+

Weingut Kees-Kieren

2008er	Kees-Kieren	Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett **	22 09	Auction	89
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Racy, floral and cassis-driven on the nose, this is a gorgeous wine that is nicely balanced and long on the palate. It has the intensity of a Spätlese with a good residual sugar for long-term evolution. This is joyful and quite irresistible in its style. 2013-2028

2008er	Kees-Kieren	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese ***	26 09	Auction	92
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This is an impressive wine offering loads of yellow fruits on the nose. The wine has a BA-styled intensity on the palate yet retains a sense of lightness thanks to the zesty acidity. The finish is very long, smooth and rich. This is both delicious and impressive. 2014-2028

Weingut Heribert Kerpen

2008er	Heribert Kerpen	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese *	22 09	Auction	88
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This is still quite reduced on the nose before opening up to ripe and impressively concentrated notes of yellow fruits, citrus and smoke. The wine is surprisingly powerful, zesty and very intense on the palate. The finish also conveys a sense of power and intensity. 2014-2023

Weingut Knebel

2007er	Knebel	Winniger Röttgen Riesling Trockenbeereauslese	19 09	Auction	97
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Wow, this is quite an impressive TBA! It offers a fascinating balance between raisins and pure fresh fruits on the nose. Intense and precise on the palate, it is remarkably rich with well-integrated flavors of infused yellow fruits, smoke and some herbs. The balance on the palate is superb and smooth. The finish seems endless and also conveys this impression of light and precise fruitiness. This is a great mighty TBA with breathtaking aromatic purity. 2017-2050+



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Weingut Alfred Merkelbach

2008er	Alfred Merkelbach	Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese	18 09	Auction	88+
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Nearly white in color, this comes over at this stage as slightly overripe on the nose (with, among others, yellow melon). It offers however the typical racy and delicate style of the Merkelbach house on the palate. This will need time and could warrant a higher score if it gains in presence. 2014-2023

Weingut Markus Molitor

2008er	Markus Molitor	Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese	23 09	Auction	(91-93)
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This offers a huge nose mixing ripe sappy pear, citrus with some hints of vanilla. The wine is superbly balanced and playful on the palate and the finish is very long and refined. There is a great sense of precision, ripeness and purity. This is gorgeous stuff and a great wine. 2014-2023

2007er	Markus Molitor	Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese ***	28 09	Auction	(93-95)
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This Auslese from the 2007 vintage is quite impressive: it bowls one over with a huge, very precise nose of pear and other white and yellow fruits. It offers great pure creamy intensity on the palate and, in that sense, is really a sort of 'essence of Zeltingen' in the form of a very pure BA-styled wine without any disturbing notes of botrytis. This is a fascinating wine to sip and meditate. 2015-2040

2006er	Markus Molitor	Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Beerenauslese *	65 09	Auction	(92-95)
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This BA from the rich 2006 vintage offers a great nose made of intense ripe fruits as well as a most expressive touch of white pepper. The wine is extremely thick and mouth coating and offers the most stunning length. It is a rich, powerful and ripe style of BA made in an uncompromising way. This is a fascinating wine that will require patience for the elements to blend together. 2020-2050

Weingut Peter Neu Erben

2007er	Peter Neu Erben	Wiltinger Braunfels Riesling Spätlese	03 08	Auction	88
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Nearly white in color, this Spätlese from the 2007 vintage is slatey and smoky on the nose with notes of white flowers, pepper and a touch of vanilla. It is racy and delicate on the palate with at the same time good grip and length. The finish is delicately spicy and salty. This is very enjoyable in a direct and precise way. 2013-2022

Weingut Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler

2008er	Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler	Bernkasteler alte Badstube am Doctorberg Riesling Spätlese	21 09	Auction	90
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Yellow in color, this offers some intense flavors of honeyed yellow fruits (as if marked by botrytis). The wine is powerful on the palate and offers attractive multilayered complexity. The weight is really that of an Auslese and as such, it is impressive and enjoyable. 2015-2028

2008er	Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler	Bernkasteler alte Badstube am Doctorberg Riesling Auslese	24 09	Auction	91
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Quite yellow in color, this offers a slightly oxidative-styled nose mixing smoke, yellow fruits, plum and some herbs (sage). The wine is very creamy and rich on the palate with still some yeasty bitterness that need still to integrate. It is an impressive wine that will require patience for all the elements to blend together. 2018-2033

Weingut Rebenhof

2007er	Rebenhof	Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Beerenauslese	19 08	Auction	92
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Mixing honey with ripe fruits on the nose, this is really a TBA. It comes over as powerful and intense on the palate with however a lovely zesty and spicy side to the finish. This is quite impressive and should age very nicely. 2020-2040



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Weingut Johann Peter Reinert

2008er	Johann Peter Reinert	Ayler Kupp Riesling Spätlese "Alte Reben"	23 09	Auction	90
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Quite backward in style with smoke, minerals and light citrus on the nose, it is nicely playful and light as mineral water on the palate. This is not hugely powerful or intense but bowls one over with its simple, delicate and yet multi-layered style. It is a very nice expression of Saar-styled restrained opulence. The acidity is nicely integrated and adds to the joyful side of the wine. The finish exhibits fine spices and offers great length. This is just so easy to drink. 2014-2023

Weingut Andreas Schmitges

2007er	Andreas Schmitges	Erdener Prälat Riesling Beerenauslese	18 08	Auction	96
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This is a great wine. It coats the palate with creamy powerful flavors of honeyed white fruits yet remains quite elegant and fresh (with a hint of herbs coming through in the aromatics). The wine is incredibly intense yet manages to stay racy thanks to a most lovely zesty acidity. The combination of refinement and power is breathtaking. This is a stunner in its style. 2017-2047

Weingut Stiftung St. Nikolaus-Hospital

2007er	St. Nikolaus Hospital	Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Beerenauslese	20 09	Auction	92
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This is a lovely BA made in a comparatively light, balanced and fresh style. Offering pure sappy flavors of pear on the nose, it is quite intense yet fresh and zesty on the palate. The finish is moderately long and very precise. This is nice and quite captivating. 2015-2032



Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

Auction 2009 : Grosser Ring / VDP Wines Guide

Overview

Following a marathon auction session last year, the number of wines auctioned off this year is limited (many Estates preferred not to bring wines to the auction in order to reinforce their regular portfolio).

We provide here a review of wines that will be auctioned off by the Grosser Ring / VDP on September 25, 2009 and that we can recommend on quality grounds. This includes wines from the following Estates (presented in alphabetic order):

Clemens Busch

Geltz-Zilliken

Fritz Haag

Reinhold Haart

Karthäuserhof

von Kesselstatt

Schloss Lieser

Dr. Loosen

Egon Müller / Le Gallais

von Othegraven

Joh. Jos. Prüm

Willi Schaefer

St. Urbans-Hof

Pünderich

Saarburg

Brauneberg

Piesport

Trier-Eitelsbach

Morscheid

Lieser

Bernkastel

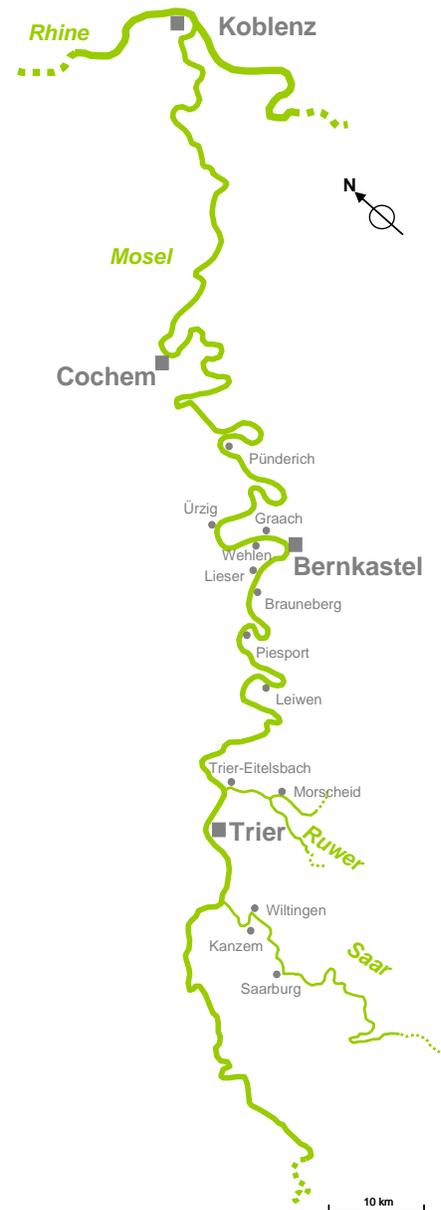
Wiltingen / Kanzem

Kanzem

Wehlen

Graach

Leiwen





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Tasting Notes by Estates

Weingut Clemens Busch

2008er	Clemens Busch	Pündericher Marienburg Riesling Spätlese Fahrlay	Auction	(90-92)
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The Fahrlay is a parcel in the Marienburg with a high blue slate content. The grapes were harvested from old vines with almost no botrytis late in November. The wine is quite refined with notes of tangerine, spicy peach, citronella, slate and fresh mineral water. In contrast, the palate comes over as quite creamy and rich with plenty of yellow fruits. The finish impresses through citrus acidity which provides great freshness and a sense of crystal clear purity. 2015-2028

2008er	Clemens Busch	Pündericher Marienburg Riesling Auslese GK	Auction	(92-94)
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This Auslese GK was produced from a selection in different parcels of the Marienburg. The grapes were slightly botrytized and exhibited 115° Oechsle. The wine offers a pure nose of mango, fine raisin, honey and raspberry with, in addition, some *crème brûlée* botrytis and granita sorbet freshness. The wine is impressively concentrated, creamy and expressive, yet remains very clear and clean on the palate. The finish is full of fresh citrus fruit with superb finesse and length. This is a great irresistible Auslese. 2018-2038

Weingut Geltz-Zilliken

2008er	Geltz-Zilliken	Saarburger Rausch Riesling Spätlese	02 09	Auction	91
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This was made from the first harvest from a parcel planted with three-year-old vines. The nose exhibits glorious flavors mixing peaches, apricot flowers and chamomile. The wine is all about refined lightness with great sappiness and inner concentration, and a textbook example of 'power without weight' unique to great Mosel (Saar in this case!) wines. The finish shows striking purity and is impressively long. It is a hard-to-resist Spätlese to drink by the bottle. 2015-2028

1989er	Geltz-Zilliken	Saarburger Rausch Riesling Eiswein	10 90	Auction	96
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Two different Eiswein were harvested in 1989, both of them in November. One was blended into the stunning Auslese lange Goldkapsel (AP 9, auctioned off in its youth), and the other one is this bottling. This Eiswein exhibits a nice golden color and offers stunning aromatic presence and complexity mixing apricot, mango, very fine toffee, raspberry and sour cherry. Despite being 20 years old, the wine comes over as incredibly fresh and vibrant. The palate shows quite some dry extract and concentration and the finish is refined. This is a truly great nectar! Now-2039

Weingut Fritz Haag

2008er	Fritz Haag	Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese	14 09	Auction	94
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Made, as in most vintages, from the Falkenberg parcel in the heart of the Juffer-Sonnenuhr, this is a real stunner. The wine is long and powerful with an Auslese type of intensity but great fresh Spätlese aromatics. It offers a huge nose of sappy, complex yellow peaches and elegant white floral notes. This feeling of intensity and complexity is nicely underlined by a delicate creamy touch on the palate. As delicious as it may be at the moment, the wine still has quite some sulfur (which is normal at this stage as Oliver Haag adds intentionally some more sulfur to his auction wines to improve their aging abilities) and will require extensive cellaring. 2016-2033

2008er	Fritz Haag	Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese GK	13 09	Auction	94+
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Harvested at 120° Oechsle, this is a delicate, refined and multi-layered type of Auslese. The wine offers superb flavor precision with white and yellow peaches and just a touch of apricot and pineapple in the finish. It comes over as intense and concentrated without being over-powering. The finish is fresh and zesty, with more of this weightless sense of intensity. The acidity is superbly integrated and adds to the overall sharpness of the aromatics. Still somewhat closed, this is a stunning jewel in the making. 2016-2038



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Weingut Reinhold Haart

2008er	Reinhold Haart	Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese GK	Auction	(91-93)
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This Auslese GK was produced in minute quantities out of a strict selection of ripe berries. The wine offers smoked apricot, yellow peach, lead pencil, cassis, licorice and gooseberry with the botrytis adding an exotic touch. It is full-bodied with flavors of apricot, fig and toffee and good underlying zest on the palate. The creaminess is impressive but slightly over-powering at this stage and patience will be required for it to integrate. 2018-2030

Weingut Karthäuserhof

2008er	Karthäuserhof	Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Spätlese Nr. 48	Auction	92+
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The grapes for this auction Spätlese were harvested in the Sang, at the border to the Kronenberg, i.e. in the central and best parcels (and former single vineyards) in the Karthäuserhofberg. Despite having been harvested late, the grapes 'only' had 88° Oechsle but were perfectly ripe. The wine has a very bright almost white color. Initially restrained, the nose offers the telltale nose of the Karthäuserhofberg, with gooseberry, red currant, cassis, fine smokiness as well as lily flower. It is irresistibly playful on the palate, with just a touch of cream and citronella for good measure. There is a great feeling of lightness and elegance, and the finish is ethereal. This is a stunning expression of Karthäuserhofberg and a must have for any lover of this vineyard! We would not be surprised if this wine would even gain in body and length in a few years and warrant a higher rating. 2016-2033

Weingut von Kesselstatt

2008er	von Kesselstatt	Josephshöfer Riesling Kabinett	39 09	Auction	91
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Harvested at around 85° Oechsle, this Kabinett was exclusively fermented with indigenous yeasts in stainless steel and this shows on the first nose, which is marked by reduction with an almost bacon like smokiness. Once you give time to the wine to open up, it delivers a lovely bouquet of apricot flower, mint, pencil, vanilla and some bakery notes. It is crystal clear on the palate with superb concentration, zest and great length. The earthy smoke on the mid-palate adds to the sense of concentration and weight. The wine has a high level of dry extracts and really behaves more like a rich Spätlese on the palate. But the finish is very sappy and light. This is a very impressive wine! 2014-2028

2007er	von Kesselstatt	Scharzhofberger Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese lange GK #10	Auction	95
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Only a mere 35 liters of this elixir were produced from grapes harvested at 180° Oechsle and fermented to 6% of alcohol. It shows an intense and captivating nose of dried and ripe berries, strawberry ice, kirsch, biscuit and raisin. The wine offers great oily concentration on the palate with pure botrytis, raisin, ripe apricot, honey and yellow plums. Despite the concentration, it never gives the feeling of being overly powerful or heavy, and remains quite playful on the palate. The finish is fresh, pure and very long and begging one to go for another sip. This is a very impressive TBA and one that will prove irresistible as a meditation wine during winter months in a decade or two. 2017-2047+

Weingut Schloss Lieser

2008er	Schloss Lieser	Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese	13 09	Auction	93+
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Made out of a parcel in the central part of the vineyard, this is bright white in color and offers amazing flavors of freshly grated citrus, mint, mango and acacia honey. It is superbly racy on the palate, with quite some CO2 and nearly painful aromatic intensity. The finish is also very racy and beautifully long. This is well into Auslese intensity but retains Spätlese character. This is an amazing success. 2016-2033

2008er	Schloss Lieser	Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese GK	14 09	Auction	94
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With over 135° Oechsle, this is an impressive wine with great flavors of exotic fruits, a hint of raisin, peach and apricot mingled with great smoky notes. It has the creaminess and intensity of a Beerenauslese palate yet retains great freshness in the finish thanks to super-racy acidity. This is a stunning effort with powerful intensity, zest and never-ending length. 2016-2038



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Weingut Dr. Loosen

2008er	Dr. Loosen	Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese GK	Auction	93
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This wine is produced from a strict selection of small perfectly ripe berries in different parcels situated in the red volcanic part of the Ürziger Würzgarten. This offers an irresistible nose mixing yellow infused peach with some smokiness, spices, and cashew nut. The palate is wonderfully creamy, powerful, with the intensity of an Auslese and yet the freshness of a Spätlese. The finish is very long with more yellow peach and fine oriental spices. This is really impressive and a clear return to the great past successes of this bottling at this Estate and easily our favorite since the gorgeous 2002! 2015-2033

Weingut Egon Müller / Weingut Le Gallais

2008er	Egon Müller	Scharzhofberger Riesling Kabinett	07 09	Auction	90+
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Smoky on the nose, this requires some time to develop some great precise and complex flavors of peaches, apples and white flowers. The wine is racy on the palate and the finish is clean, balanced and quite long. This could easily gain in stature over the coming years. 2014-2028+

2008er	Egon Müller	Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese GK	Auction	(94-96)
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This transcends the vintage with a rare and incredible flavor precision and creaminess. The wine comes over as highly botrytized on the nose with flavors of apricots, some exotic fruits, honey, yellow peach and dried spices. The richness and creaminess on the palate is harnessed by striking acidity. The whole thing is impressive and hard to resist. This is a huge success and a worthy successor to the incredible string of Auslese GK from this Estate over the last decade. 2018-2038

NB: The 2008er Le Gallais Wiltinger braune Kupp Auslese GK was not tasted.

Weingut von Othegraven

2008er	Von Othegraven	Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Spätlese	16 09	Auction	91
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The von Othegraven team decided to offer a Bockstein Spätlese bottling at this year's auction, instead of one from the Altenberg. The grapes come from the central and historical south-facing part of the vineyard located just below the Bockstein cross and planted in 1965. The wine is crystal clear, and exhibits great finesse, flint, peach (more reminiscent of a Middle Mosel scent), violet, mint, and an herbaceous touch. It however offers true Auslese concentration on the palate, with good extract and juicy peach. The finish stays clean and long. This should age gracefully. 2016-2028

Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm

2008er	Joh. Jos. Prüm	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese	Auction	94
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This auction Spätlese was harvested quite late out of a strict vineyard selection with some botrytis. It is still quite restrained and primary with fine smokiness, lily flower and apricot as well as yellow peach and notes of botrytis. Papaya kicks in with further airing. The touch of botrytis adds a light and subtle creaminess on the palate, yet the wine is as fresh as water and as light as air on the palate. The finish is very long with some zesty notes. This wine conveys a surreal sense of complexity and finesse and will be a stunner at maturity. However, more than recent vintages, patience will be required for the pieces to melt together. 2018-2038

2008er	Joh. Jos. Prüm	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese GK	Auction	96
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The nose is simply breathtaking and one could spend hours just trying to get all the nuances. It combines the freshness and purity of white peach, mint and locust tree, with the ripeness from apricot, honey, spiced apple and pineapple. The vineyard signature comes through on the palate with some smoky and peaty notes. The finish is nearly endless. The wine is just so light on the palate yet intense. This is not a loud botrytized Auslese GK but rather the modern version of delicate feine Auslese of past days. What a great success! 2018-2048



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2008er	Joh. Jos. Prüm	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese lange GK		Auction	95+
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This is quite open with a great nose mixing yellow fruits: mirabelle, pineapple and citrus and a very pure and subtle expression of botrytis. The wine offers a nice sense of liqueur on the palate with intense and concentrated flavors of mango and other exotic fruits as well as honey, white truffle, quince and fruit jellies. The wine is powerful, intense yet retains great balance and even a playful side in the finish. Patience will be required, but patience will be rewarded! This is a great expression of 'concentrated lightness'. 2018-2048+

Weingut Willi Schaefer

2008er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	06 09	Auction	93+
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This is a great Spätlese in the making with, at this stage, ripe yellow peaches and a touch of pineapple for good measure on the nose. Obviously marked by botrytis, the wine is superbly balanced and remarkably intense on the palate with a creaminess making the finish seem endless. This looks like a real smasher! 2015-2033

2008er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese	11 09	Auction	93+
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A typical 'feine Auslese' of the old days, it offers stunning aromatic precision and great flavors blending yellow and white fruit including apricot and passion fruit, a touch of spices and a hint of raisins with great texture. The mouth feel is multi-layered, intense and focused. This should have a great future but will require time to integrate the different pieces. 2016-2033+

Weingut Wwe Dr. H. Thanisch – Erben Thanisch

2008er	Wwe Dr. H. Thanisch – Erben Thanisch	Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Spätlese	07 09	Auction	91+
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This requires quite some airing (up to a day!) to shed the notes of reduction and sulfur at this stage of its development. It opens up with precise and complex flavors of smoke, white peach, barley, pineapple and laurel. This is a wine of balance and freshness. It is lively and energetic on the palate, with good extraction, yet retains the lightness of a Spätlese in the finish. This is a great Doctor Spätlese in the making but, as so often with Doctor wines from this Estate, one that will require patience to show its full potential. 2016-2033

Weingut St-Urbans-Hof

2008er	St. Urbans-Hof	Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese	18 09	Auction	91
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Harvested in the mid-hill holdings where the Estate owns old un-grafted vines, the auction Spätlese is quite racy on the nose, with some lime and green herbs. It reveals true Goldtröpfchen character and charm with some airing, offering fine orchard fruits and apricot. This is punchy and intense on the palate but the finish remains quite stylish. 2015-2028



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Vintage Report 2008

PART I of the comprehensive 2008 Vintage Report is out!

June Issue

- Detailed report on the **2008 vintage in the Mosel!**
 - Vintage conditions & growing season
 - What to expect as wines in 2008
- Detailed Review **for over 20 leading Estates!**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Joh. Jos. Christoffel Erben▪ Geltz-Zilliken▪ Fritz Haag▪ Reinhold Haart▪ von Hövel▪ Karthäuserhof▪ von Kesselstatt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Schloss Lieser▪ Dr. Loosen▪ Mönchhof▪ Egon Müller / Le Gallais▪ von Othegraven▪ Joh. Jos. Prüm▪ Schloss Saarstein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Willi Schaefer▪ von Schubert▪ Wwe Dr. H. Thanisch – Erben Thanisch▪ Vollenweider▪ Dr. Wagner▪ Dr. F. Weins-Prüm▪ Weiser-Künstler
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PART II will include further detailed reviews of leading Estates!

October Issue

- Over further **15 detailed Estate Reviews** including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ A.J. Adam▪ Erben von Beulwitz▪ Clemens Busch▪ Jos. Christoffel jr.▪ Karl Erbes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Knebel▪ Dr. Hermann▪ Herrenberg▪ Heymann-Löwenstein▪ Karlsruhle	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Peter Lauer▪ Markus Molitor▪ Max Ferd. Richter▪ Josef Rosch▪ St-Urbans-Hof
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
- In addition, more than **50 recommended wines from other Estates** (incl. great bargains).

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