

Riesling Report

The voice of Riesling

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2002

The 2002 Auctions in Germany

Our complete report from the four annual showcase events

Kloster Eberbach, site of the annual
VDP Rheingau auction each September.

www.rieslingreport.com

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What's Next?

The People's Riesling Report

THIS IS THE FINAL ISSUE of the bi-monthly Riesling Report subscription magazine. We've had to discontinue publication simply because we haven't been able to find enough subscribers. Even the most fervent wine lover has to allocate his time carefully, especially in this age of information overload. Taking the time to read in depth about the intricacies of Riesling and its finest progenitors is becoming a more and more difficult task. And one that many wine lovers aren't interested in paying for, either.

Still, we've gotten very good response from you true Riesling fans who have supported us in our endeavor. Plus we know that many more are out there who have an interest, but need their information in smaller chunks. Therefore, we are going to maintain the Web site and post shorter reports as tastings and our travels allow. Each report will be like a single article from the Riesling Report magazine, and will be free for all visitors to the site to download and print. Thank you for your enlightened spirits. Please help us keep the Riesling Resurgence moving forward. See you on the Web.

Riesling Report is published electronically by Kirk Wille and Peter Liem. For more information, please visit the Riesling Report Web site: www.rieslingreport.com

We welcome letters, comments and suggestions. Interesting and thoughtful letters will be published in future reports. Unproductive ranting will be disregarded. Useful suggestions will be adopted.

If you would like to tell us about a particularly thrilling Riesling experience you've had, or would like to ask us some questions, please direct your correspondence to:

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Transitions

ALL GOOD THINGS must come to an end. It's a weary cliché, but it does seem to have some truth in it. Fortunately, it's all a matter of perspective. When a good thing ends, it doesn't necessarily mean that all good things have ended. Indeed, one thing ending usually means that something else is beginning. So it is with Riesling Report.

We had this grand idea that the wine world was ready for an electronic magazine dedicated to the peerless precision and versatility of Riesling. While we were not entirely wrong – there is quite a lot of interest in Riesling around the world – we have not been able to attract a sufficient number of paying customers to make it a sustainable venture.

Our own time constraints, too, have conspired against us. It has become increasingly difficult to put in the research and travel hours necessary to bring you regular, bi-monthly reports with the depth and richness of detail that we believe are the defining characteristics of our publication.

So we are going to bring you in-depth, richly detailed reports on an irregular basis. And free! These reports will be smaller in scale but (hopefully) more frequent, and available to all on our Web site. It's not an ending, but an evolution.

Here's to the next thing.

—Kirk Wille, editor & publisher

A new Finger Lakes winery association

The Finger Lakes Wine Guild

Editor's note: This is a lightly edited press release from the newly formed Finger Lakes Wine Guild. This new association has good potential to further the quality revolution that is occurring in the Finger Lakes, especially with Riesling. The Guild includes most of the top Riesling growers in the area, most notably Dr. Frank's, a tireless promoter of the region's wines, and the devout individualist Hermann Wiemer, who almost never joins these types of collective organizations. For a complete report on the Finger Lakes region, see the July/August 2002 issue of Riesling Report.

SEVEN OF THE MOST RESPECTED wineries in New York's Finger Lakes viticultural area have joined to form the Finger Lakes Wine Guild. The Guild's mission is to promote the production of food-oriented wines from the classic European grape varieties in the Eastern United States' largest wine district.

The Finger Lakes area has been producing wine for almost a century and a half, and yet it is just now taking its place on the world wine state because a new generation of winemakers has revolutionized Finger Lakes wines. On the front lines of that revolution are the founding members of the Finger Lakes Wine guild:

- Dr. Konstantin Frank Vinifera Wine Cellars
- Hermann J. Wiemer Vineyard
- Standing Stone Vineyards
- Shalestone Vineyards
- Silver Thread Vineyard
- Lamoreaux Landing Wine Cellars
- Sheldrake Point Vineyard

Guild winemakers focus their efforts on the European varieties best suited to this cool-climate district, including Riesling, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris, Cabernet, Merlot and Gamay. Production is driven by estate vineyards, where these winegrowers explore the distinctive voice that the glacial lakesides give to classic wine types. The seven founding-member wineries are located on all three of the major grape growing lakes: Seneca, Keuka and Cayuga. More wineries are expected to join.

A new brochure describes the Guild and features a detailed map with connecting roads between the lakes and member wineries. Season wine lovers and visitors to the area looking for food-oriented, Euro-variety wines now have a handy, focused reference.

The Finger Lakes Wine Guild is making plans for various promotional activities in the future. For a brochure and more information, contact the Guild by mail, or visit their Web site: www.fingerlakeswineguild.com.



Contact Information

Finger Lakes Wine Guild
PO Box 162
Hector NY 14841

Contact: Mark Wagner
Tel: 607-582-6011

www.fingerlakeswineguild.com

Germany's Auctions of 2002

ONCE AGAIN THIS SEPTEMBER, we packed our notebooks and headed to Germany for the annual round of high-end wine auctions. Every year, wine lovers from around the globe gather for the four major auctions: the Mosel's Bernkasteler Ring of non-VDP estates, the VDP Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, the VDP Rheingau and a combined auction for VDP estates in the Nahe and Ahr regions. These auctions are for serious collectors and high-end wine merchants, and the winemakers set aside their rarest, most special creations for these showcase events. Most of the wines are from the current vintage, but a few rarities are usually included and upper-Prädikat dessert wines are normally auctioned after a few years of maturation.

The auctions are essentially promotional events for the winegrowers, though they do stand a chance to make some decent money. These are not charity events, however. They are a reminder of days past when all of the wine these estates produced was sold at auction. Today, most of their wines are sold through normal distribution channels. Only a few limited-production wines are reserved for the auctions.

Not every great estate in Germany participates in the auctions. Conversely, not every participating estate is a top-quality producer. The growers' organizations have relatively high quality standards, but there are always some who don't seem to understand what it takes to make a great wine. Overall, however, the quality of the wines is quite good at all of the auctions and we are here to help you sift the golden wheat from the dismal chaff.

The auctions are a fun and inexpensive way to taste a lot of high-end wines. Each auction is preceded by a pre-tasting, where you have the chance to meet and talk to the winemakers. Each wine is poured again as it's being auctioned (the logistical feat of serving one-ounce pours to 300 people in just a couple of minutes alone is worth the trip to Germany).

The auction process

Bidding at the auctions is in Euros per 750ml bottle, except where noted otherwise. Also note that at the VDP Mosel-Saar-Ruwer auction the different bottle sizes are sold as separate lots. 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, though you'll still need to work out import arrangements. If you're only buying a few bottles, you can simply carry them home with you on the plane.



At the pre-tasting of the Bernkasteler Ring auction in Bernkastel. The pre-tasting is your chance to meet the winemakers and taste all of the wines before the auction begins.

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 bids from other customers 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.

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 price. The commissioner who made the final bid has control of the Verteilung, or distribution, of the various bottle formats.

Bidding decisions

Our 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 box on page 7 for some contact information. For a complete list of the commissioners for each auction, please visit the Library of the Riesling Report Web site.

Bernkasteler Ring

24 September 2002

Considering the highly vaunted quality of the 2001 vintage, our expectations were quite high for this year's crop of auction wines. The average level of quality was much better, certainly, than from the disastrous 2000 vintage, but it's still amazing to me that some estates seem to have no clue as to what constitutes a worthy auction wine. These should be astounding, amazing, awesome wines that are simply the finest, most rare thing each estate can produce. In many cases, at this auction in particular, the wines are simply uninspired, sometimes even downright poor in quality. Still, there are enough gems here to make it worth sitting through. It's kind of like having just enough good shots in a round of golf to keep you hooked on the game.

The wines are listed in the order they were auctioned.

Erben von Beulwitz (Mertesdorf/Ruwer)**1. Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Kabinett trocken 2001 – 6.90**

A dry, simple wine with a warm, rounded nose. Pleasant but not exciting. (360–750ml) ★★

2. Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Spätlese trocken 2001 – €8.80

A nice wine. There's a good expression of Nies'chen minerality, decent body and a lemony finish. (480–750ml) ★★★

Lehnert-Veit (Piesport/Mosel)**3. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese trocken 2001 – €9.60**

Tight and dry even in the nose, this is a light wine with a woody aroma. Good acid grip keeps it somewhat interesting. (240–750ml) ★★

RATING THE GERMAN AUCTION WINES

In lieu of the false precision of numerical scores on a 100-point scale, I have chosen to use a five-star rating system. This, I believe, gives you a clear picture of relative quality without the misleading inference that an 89-point wine is markedly inferior to a 92-point wine.

★★★★★

A glorious wine that is poised, balanced, and whose sheer beauty brings a tear to your eye.

★★★★

A superbly crafted wine that expresses its origins clearly and brings a smile to your lips.

★★★

A well-made wine of style and substance.

★★

A good wine that is pleasing to drink.

★

A wine whose lifelessness overshadows any hint of character.

No Stars

Do not drink this wine.

Karp-Schreiber (Brauneberg/Mosel)**4. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese trocken 2001 – €10.00**

A closed aroma, hard palate and very high acidity add up to a wine that's not very fun to drink. There's a bit of nice lemon flavor, but the finish is quite tart. (300–750ml) ★

5. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese trocken 2001 – €17.50

This has an odd, meaty smell with a hard, chemical taste on the palate. (120–750ml)

Erben von Beulwitz (Mertesdorf/Ruwer)**6. Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese feinherb 2001 – €19.80**

A strange wine that smells of artichoke. The palate is flaccid and sweet. (240–750ml)

Kanzlerhof (Pölich/Mosel)**7. Pölicher Held Riesling Auslese feinherb 2001 – €12.00**

There's a bit of sweet fruit in the nose, but it's overpowered by a sourness. However, there's a decent mineral core and good acid grip that make the palate more rewarding. (300–750ml) ★

Reverchon (Konz-Filzen/Saar)**8. Filzener Herrenberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €11.50**

The aroma is broad and complex with prominent citrus element and the yeastiness of youth. It has a very delicate texture with fine acidity, a clean and juicy mid-palate, and a gentle finish. (120–750ml) ★★★

Johann Peter Reinert (Kanzem/Saar)**9. Wiltinger Klosterberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €9.50**

There's a somewhat interesting Saar nose, but it's a light wine that's slightly unclean and has too much bitterness on the finish. (240–750ml) ★★

Erben von Beulwitz (Mertesdorf/Ruwer)**10. Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Spätlese*** 2001 – €12.00**

The aroma has an unattractive sourness to it, but the wine shows pretty well on the palate. There's good body and crisp acidity leading to a medium-long finish. (480–750ml) ★★

Carl Schmitt-Wagner (Longuich/Mosel)**11. Longuicher Maximiner Herrenberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €8.50**

The aroma has a high-toned mineral and citrus character to it and there's a good acid edge on the tongue, but the wine is not clean and that's what lingers on the palate. (120–750ml) ★

Kanzlerhof (Pölich/Mosel)**12. Pölicher Held Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €8.00**

The nose is rather hard, showing a Ruwer-like lime aroma with a bit of celery. It's quite clean on the palate however, with a nicely defined mineral structure. (300–750ml) ★★

Ernst Clüsserath (Trittenheim/Mosel)**13. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Spätlese (No. 23) 2001 – €9.50**

A clean, pure Mosel Riesling aroma invites you in and the finely focused vertical dimension holds your attention through the crisp mineral finish. This is quite good – deep, full and lemony, yet racy and fine-boned. (120–750ml) ★★★

Clüsserath-Eifel (Trittenheim/Mosel)**14. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Spätlese** 2001 – €13.00**

Clean and juicy with a pleasing citrus minerality in the aroma, this disappoints on the palate, with lackluster fruit that's thick and soft. (120–750ml) ★★

Matheus-Lehnert (Neumagen-Dhron/Mosel)**15. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €7.80**

Hard and sour. (360–750ml)

Michael Goerg (Neumagen-Dhron/Mosel)**16. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €8.20**

This has a very interesting lime/mineral aroma that draws you in, but it lets you down by going unpleasantly sour on the palate. (240–750ml) ★★

HOW TO BID ON 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.

Talk to your retailer

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

Auction 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.

Bastgen (Kesten/Mosel)**17. Kestener Paulinhofberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €9.00**

Bastgen was my discovery of the year at the Bernkasteler Ring. This was the first year at the auction for this small estate in the village of Kesten, just upstream from the vineyards of Brauneberg. This Spätlese was a bit closed, but you expect that of good Rieslings at this stage. It has a very engaging citrus aroma with a firm mineral edge underneath. The structure is fine and focused. Really a very pretty wine. (120–750ml) ★★★★★

18. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €10.00

This is also quite nice. It is deeper and riper than the Kestener Spätlese above, though not as tightly focused. It has an intense lime character, but finishes a bit short. (120–750ml) ★★★

Dr. Paul-Bergweiler (Bernkastel/Mosel)**19. Bernkasteler alte Badstube am Doctorberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €15.00**

A bit tight in the nose, this is a big, rich Spätlese with depth and elegance. It has a dryish finish of medium length. (120–750ml) ★★★

Kees-Kieren (Graach/Mosel)**20. Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese** 2001 – €9.00**

Getting into some botrytis here, with deep, peachy fruit and a sweet, juicy core. Always one of our favorite producers in the Bernkasteler Ring, this is on form with its full-flavored texture and long, silky finish. (360–750ml) ★★★

Heribert Kerpen (Wehlen/Mosel)**21. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese* 2001 – €9.10**

This has a completely closed aroma, with that stinky yeast smell that reminds you of young J.J. Prüm Rieslings. It shows its Wehlen pedigree on the palate with a fine, elegant mineral structure and superb length. (360–750ml) ★★★

Markus Molitor (Zeltingen/Mosel)**22. Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €23.50**

Molitor is always a heavy hitter at the Bernkasteler Ring auction, and this wine shows you why. The nose is tight and yeasty, a portent of long life. But this positively explodes on the palate. A bold, lively wine with bright citrus flavors and impressive length. It's dense and concentrated, yet retains the taut mineral structure of Zeltingen's great sundial vineyard. (120–750ml) ★★★★★

Erben Hubert Schmitges (Erden/Mosel)**23. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €7.00**

A light, softish wine with a botrytis-inflected aroma of peach and apricot. (300–750ml) ★

Johann Peter Reinert (Kanzem/Saar)**24. Wiltinger Schlossberg Riesling Auslese** 2001 – €21.00**

This is a pretty and elegant wine that's cleanly made but turns a bit sour on the palate. (240–750ml; 60–375ml) ★★

25. Wiltinger Schlangengraben Riesling Auslese* 2001 – €33.00**

One of the top three wines of the auction, this shone like a life-saving beacon in a sea of mediocrity. Excellently structured with a powerful mineral grip on the palate, this three-star Auslese has the stuffing and build to develop for generations to come. Finely layered fruit flavors sparkle on the tongue through a long, complex finish. A superb wine. (69–750ml; 36–375ml) ★★★★★

Erben von Beulwitz (Mertesdorf/Ruwer)**26. Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Auslese***** 2001 – €50.00 (500ml)**

Light of body and quite sweet. A drinkable Auslese, but not really deserving of five stars (neither on the label nor in this report). (120–500ml) ★★

Carl Schmitt-Wagner (Longuich/Mosel)**27. Longuicher Maximiner Herrenberg Riesling Auslese 2001 – €14.00 (500ml)**

Longuich is a village on the cooler upper Mosel near Trier and this wine shows it with a high-pitched Saar-like aroma and bright minerality. An interesting wine that's pretty well made. (120–500ml) ★★★

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.

O. Werner & Sohn (Leiwen/Mosel)

28. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese 2001 – €20.00
This is a cleanly made wine, but it's soft and bland. (300–750ml) ★★

29. Schweicher Annaberg Riesling Auslese 2001 – €25.00 (500ml)

This is not good. It has a very hard, bitter botrytis aroma with an unpleasant plastic taste. (120–500ml)

Ernst Clüsserath (Trittenheim/Mosel)

30. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese (No. 22) 2001 – €22.00 (500ml)

This is big and juicy when it hits your palate, but even though it's cleanly made, it's simple, straightforward and, ultimately, just a bit boring. (120–500ml) ★

Lehnert-Veit (Piesport/Mosel)

31. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese 2001 – €15.00
A moderately interesting wine with some nice lemon/citrus flavors and a medium finish. (120–750ml) ★★

Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler (Bernkastel/Mosel)

32. Erdener Prälat Riesling Auslese 2001 – €25.00

A disappointing wine from a producer that is usually another of the heavy hitters at the Bernkasteler Ring. Heavy is the correct word here, however. This wine has richness, but it is heavy, soft and dull, with the bitter patina of unclean botrytis. (60–750ml) ★

Kees-Kieren (Graach/Mosel)

33. Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese* 2001 – €50.00**

A big, beautiful wine, this is densely honeyed and deeply expressive of the powerful Domprobst terroir. Rich as it is, however, there is a fine acid balance that keeps it lively and sophisticated. Excellent. (84–750ml; 60–375ml) ★★★★★

Albert Gessinger (Zeltinger/Mosel)

34. Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese* 2001 – €22.50**

Bitter of taste from unclean botrytis and soft of texture from a lack of acidity, there is not much to recommend this wine. (60–750ml; 24–375ml)

Markus Molitor (Zeltingen/Mosel)

35. Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 2001 – €25.00**

Surprisingly unsuccessful for such an excellent producer. This is a dense, concentrated Auslese that is marred by unclean botrytis and too much sweetness, resulting in a soft, fleshy texture. (42–750ml; 36–375ml) ★★

36. Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese* 2001 – €210.00**

Much cleaner than the two-star Auslese, this is deep and sweet with a fine citrus finish. The aroma is rather tight now, but this is much more the kind of wine we have come to expect from Molitor. (24–750ml; 36–375ml) ★★

Alfred Merkelbach (Ürzig/Mosel)

37. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Auslese 2001 – €12.20

Sour, hard and unripe. (120–750ml)

Sanitätsrat Dr. Hermann (Ürzig/Mosel)

38. Erdener Treppchen Riesling Auslese 2001 – €15.00

Light for an Auslese, but with good, cleansing acidity, this lacks cleanliness. (140–750ml) ★

Erben Hubert Schmitges (Erden/Mosel)

39. Erdener Treppchen Riesling Auslese 2001- €10.00

This has an odd, bready nose, followed by a light, thin texture. (200–750ml)



The village of Zeltingen, with its top-quality Sonnenuhr vineyard, is the source for some of the Bernkasteler Ring's best wines – from the estate of Markus Molitor.

Reinhard & Beate Knebel (Winningen/Mosel)**40. Winner Röttgen Riesling Auslese 2001 – €32.00 (375ml)**

An excellent wine from the insanely steep, terraced slopes of the Lower Mosel, almost to the Rhine at Koblenz. It is fine and racy with juicy mineral extract and a gracefully balanced structure. This was my favorite wine of the entire auction. (300–375ml) ★★★★★

41. Winner Uhlen Riesling Auslese 2001 – €87.00 (375ml)

Uhlen is the big brother vineyard to Röttgen and you can see it in this wine. It is deeper and riper than the Röttgen Auslese, with an extremely pure palette of fruits on the palate. The balance is quite good, despite its massive thickness. It's an impressive wine, but I still prefer the graceful elegance of the Röttgen. (120–375ml) ★★★

Erben von Beulwitz (Mertesdorf/Ruwer)**42. Kaseler Nieschen Riesling Eiswein 2000 – €200**

Hard and tart with an aroma of pineapple. (48–750ml)

Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler (Bernkastel/Mosel)**43. Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Eiswein 2000 – €230 (375ml)**

High-toned with an appealing aroma of orange, there is a heaviness to the texture that the raging acidity cannot overcome. (60–375ml) ★★

Clüsserath-Eifel (Trittenheim/Mosel)**44. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Beerenauslese 2000 – €235 (375ml)**

A heavy wine, with bitter botrytis and a soft texture. (24–375ml) ★

Markus Molitor (Zeltingen/Mosel)**45. Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese* 2000 – €600**

Dense and viscous, this is a thick and sweet Beerenauslese with pure, honeyed fruit. It has good balance through the mid-palate, but is a bit heavy on the finish. (12–750ml; 12–375ml) ★★★

Sanitätsrat Dr. Hermann**46. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1996 – €200 (375ml)**

This is showing a nice touch of maturity in the nose, but it is thin and acidic on the palate, and generally unclean. (60–375ml) ★

Heribert Kerpen (Wehlen/Mosel)**47. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 2000 – €155 (375ml)**

Big and sweet with a slightly raw nose, this turns sour on the tongue. Another disappointment from a producer we usually love, but this shows the difficulty of the 2000 vintage. (24–375ml) ★

Château de Schengen (Grevenmacher/Luxembourg)**48. Schengen Markusberg Riesling Vendange Tardive 1999 – 250 (375ml)**

From the small section of the Mosel that flows along the border of France and Luxembourg, this is a fine, elegant botrytis Riesling harvested as a Trockenbeerenauslese. There is a high-toned fruitiness playing a treble line, with basso botrytis below. There is also a touch of youthful bitterness, as you often find in the big dessert wines of Alsace, but this will develop superbly. (30–375ml) ★★★

Markus Molitor (Zeltingen/Mosel)**49. Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 – €1700**

An astonishing TBA, this is fine and complex with many layers of fruit and a balanced, elegant structure. A massive, captivating wine. (12–750ml; 12–375ml) ★★★

Dr. Pauly-Bergweiler (Bernkastel/Mosel)**50. Ürziger-Würzgarten Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 2000 – €1750**

This has quite heavy botrytis and a bitterness that is apparent even in the aroma. Not as captivating as the Molitor, it is nevertheless a very interesting wine with a good acid core and a long life ahead of it. (24–375ml) ★★★



VDP Mosel-Saar-Ruwer (“Grosser Ring”)*25 September 2002*

The excellent group of producers that makes up the VDP Mosel-Saar-Ruwer can always be counted on to deliver the highest overall quality of all the auctions. With only a couple of underachieving estates, this is the high point of the annual auction tour. It’s an embarrassment of riches, that actually becomes a bit tiresome as the auction drags on into its fourth and fifth hours. But the big wines at the end are worth the wait.

The 2001 vintage was particularly successful in the Middle Mosel, and that is reflected auction prices, which saw a substantial increase over previous years. Of particular note are the absolutely gorgeous wines from Schloss Lieser, Fritz Haag, Willi Schaefer and Dr. Loosen. Excellent wines also came from Zilliken on the Saar, Karthäuserhof on the Ruwer and a blockbuster from Heymann-Löwenstein on the Lower Mosel. Now these are true auction wines!



Vineyards in the Middle Mosel, such as these in Graach and Wehlen beyond, produced an abundance of great wines in the 2001 vintage. As always, the best of the best are from fastidious producers like Willi Schaefer.

Forstmeister-Geltz Zilliken (Saarburg/Saar)**1. Saarburger Rausch Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €25**

Quite ripe and juicy, this has a beautiful, rounded aroma with a crisp citrus edge underneath. The complex layers of fruit are very fine, fresh and pure. A delicious, satisfying Spätlese, even though it is a bit soft. (360–750ml) ★★★★★

2. Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €48 (750ml)**3. Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €26.50 (375ml)****4. Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €93 (1.5l)**

Extremely pure flavors of peach and apricot, and an acid/mineral core that is gently insistent on the palate. A simply gorgeous wine that is incredibly concentrated, yet so fine and delicate that it defies gravity. (120–750ml; 120–375ml; 6–1.5l) ★★★★★

von Othegraven (Kanzem/Saar)**5. Kanzemer Altenberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €15.30**

Very racy, with a pungent mineral and lime aroma, and a delicate texture. (480–750ml) ★★★★★

Schloss Saarstein (Serrig/Saar)**6. Serriger Schloss Saarsteiner Riesling Auslese #12 2001 – €19.50**

A crisp, edgy Saar lime aroma leads to a fresh, juicy and very racy blast on the palate. On the light side for an auction Auslese, a bright minerality keeps lively and interesting. (240–750ml) ★★★★★

St. Urbans-Hof (Leiwen/Mosel)**7. Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €50 (750ml)****8. Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €26 (375ml)**

Quite nice. This is big and rounded with a fine, juicy center and a lovely velvet texture. It’s held aloft by a glorious vibrancy that leads to a very long finish. (42–750ml; 162–375ml) ★★★★★

Le Gallais (Kanzem/Saar)**9. Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €21.50**

Elegant and very fine, with a bright citrus character that deepens on the palate. There’s a touch of bitterness, though, and a finish that is rather too dry. (360–750ml) ★★★★★

10. Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €80 (750ml)

11. Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €39 (375ml)

12. Wiltinger braune Kupp Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €135 (1.5l)

There's a full, clear botrytis nose followed by a racy, mineral-driven palate. Dense and compact, this, much like the Spätlese, has a dry, tart finish. (48–750ml; 120–375ml; 6–1.5l)

★★★

von Hövel (Oberemmel/Saar)

13. Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese 2001 – €26.10

This is cleanly made, but soft and straightforward with a bready note in the aroma. (300–750ml) ★★

14. Oberemmeler Hütte Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €40 (375ml)

Bright apple in the aroma and a creamy, buttery texture. Fairly complex with a fine acidity that keeps it lively and bright. (100–375ml) ★★★

Egon Müller-Scharzhof

15. Scharzhofberger Riesling Kabinett 2001 – €17.30

Very bright and lively, with a delicate mineral edge on the palate. Very finely wrought and well focused. (1200–750ml) ★★★

16. Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €38

Deeply redolent of the lemon/lime citrus character of the Saar, with a full, softish texture that envelops the palate. Very long and very fine. (600–750ml) ★★★

17. Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese 2001 – €75

This Auslese does not come off as well as the Spätlese. It is round and soft in the nose, with a palate that is surprisingly straightforward and marred by bitterness. (360–750ml) ★★

18. Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €235 (750ml)

19. Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €115 (375ml)

20. Scharzhofberger Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €611 (1.5l)

The deep, honeyed lemon aroma of this wine is simply sublime and totally captivating. It is massively sweet and sticky, yet retains an excellent acid crackle. Beautiful wine. (108–750ml; 240–375ml; 6–1.5l) ★★★★★

Karthäuserhof (Eitelsbach/Ruwer)

21. Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Spätlese #45 2001 – €23.50

The pure, fruity juice of this Spätlese goes a bit horizontal as it broadens on the palate, but is held together by a fine-boned structure. (480–750ml) ★★★

22. Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel #43 2001 – €65 (750ml)

23. Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel #43 2001 – €40 (375ml)

A complex melange of tropical fruits with some apple, lemon and peach thrown in for good measure. It is intensely concentrated with a focused mineral edge that keeps it pure and racy. (150–750ml; 180–375ml) ★★★★★

Dr. Loosen (Bernkastel/Mosel)

24. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €29 (750ml)

25. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €18 (375ml)

26. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €88 (1.5l)

This has a weighty and very pure aroma, with a densely packed fleshiness and a crisp acid edge. It's holding back now, but you can sense the pent-up energy here that will burst forth as this develops. (260–750ml; 150–375ml; 12–1.5l) ★★★

27. Erdener Prälat Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €325 (750ml)

28. Erdener Prälat Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €190 (375ml)

A brilliant, dark gold in color, this is deep and wildly fruity in the nose. Richly concentrated with a silky, polished texture and a glittering, ripe and crisply acidic finish. Superb. (30–750ml; 100–375ml) ★★★★★



Reinhold Haart (Piesport/Mosel)

29. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €52 (750ml)
 30. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €38.50 (375ml)
 There is deep, bass-driven power here with earthy fruit flavors that are impressively broad and rounded. But overall, the wine is rather soft with dominating sweetness. (80–750ml; 80–375ml) ★★★

Grans-Fassian (Leiwen/Mosel)

31. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €15.50
 Very tight and yeasty in the nose. this has a fine and focused acidity, but is a little bitter and has a finish that is rough around the edges. (360–750ml) ★★
 32. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €40 (750ml)
 33. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €20 (375ml)
 This is nicely structured, with crisp and juicy citrus fruit. But it has an odd, funky aroma at the moment that may or may not clean up with time. (60–750ml; 144–375ml) ★★★

Willi Haag (Brauneberg/Mosel)

34. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 2001 – €20 (750ml)
 35. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 2001 – €10 (375ml)
 The aroma gives you a fine, peachy fruit, but this is jagged on the palate. It's marred further by bitter, dirty botrytis. (120–750ml; 300–375ml) ★

Schloss Lieser (Lieser/Mosel)

36. Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €18.50
 This has the tight, youthful yeastiness of a wine that you know is going to be great. You can tell it was fermented very slowly and carefully, and will age indefinitely. Any latent doubts are erased when it hits your palate with its gripping blast of pure mineral juice. This needs time for the fruit to emerge through the yeastiness, but it is a great, great wine. (360–750ml) ★★★★★
 37. Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €122 (750ml)
 38. Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €63 (375ml)
 So intensely focused that the brilliantly pure, peachy fruit aroma implodes to a microscopic point in the center of your brain. Dense and silky on the palate, this is for me the epitome of style and sophistication from the clearly exceptional 2001 vintage. A harmonic convergence of tear-rending beauty has occurred between the remarkable fastidiousness of winemaker Thomas Haag and the glorious purity of the vintage. (60–750ml; 120–375ml) ★★★★★

Milz-Laurentiushof (Trittenheim/Mosel)

39. Trittenheimer Apotheke Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €25
 Decent body, but an unremarkable wine, especially after the previous two glories. (240–500ml) ★

Willi Schaefer (Graach/Mosel)

40. Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €35
 There's lovely citrus peel aroma and a delicate texture that's racy and fine up front, followed by expansive depth on the palate. Very concentrated, very elegant. (540–750ml) ★★★★★
 41. Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €150 (750ml)
 42. Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €100 (375ml)
 This has a gorgeously complex aroma of tropical and citrus fruits, with a sappy texture from great concentration and high extract. It is juicy and deep, but incredibly nimble and elegant. Another of the greatest achievements of the Middle Mosel in 2001. (60–750ml; 120–375ml) ★★★★★

Mönchhof (Ürzig/Mosel)

43. Erdener Prälat Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €41 (375ml)
 Not good. It has a sharp aroma that reeks of unclean botrytis, which manifests itself as a drying bitterness on the broad, dirty palate. (240–375ml)



Hard-working Thomas Haag of Schloss Lieser was my personal hero for the 2001 vintage. His wines are a stunning convergence of meticulous winemaking and vintage quality.

Fritz Haag (Brauneberg/Mosel)

44. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €45 (750ml)

45. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €90 (1.5l)

Quite closed to the nose, but very clean, cool and pure on the palate. The earthy minerality of Brauneberg – as well as the hard-body style of Fritz Haag – are clearly delineated texturally. Muscular, but with a gentle weight on the palate. (450–750ml; 42–1.5l) ★★★★★

46. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €160 (750ml)

47. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €80 (375ml)

48. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €240 (1.5l)

A penetrating, high-toned aroma of slate and herbs, especially chive. Firm and forceful on the palate, with gripping acidity that is nevertheless extremely fine and pure, leading to a long, juicy finish. Excellent. (120–750ml; 120–375ml; 12–1.5l) ★★★★★

Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch-Erben Thanisch (Bernkastel/Mosel)

49. Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €21 (750ml)

50. Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €41 (1.5l)

High-pitched and sharp in the nose, this is not completely clean. It has good grip on the palate, but finishes bitter and dry. (360–750ml; 12–1.5l) ★★

51. Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €150 (750ml)

52. Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €55 (375ml)

A warm and interesting nose. It has good concentration and firm acidity, but lacks purity. (60–750ml; 60–375ml) ★★★

St. Urbans-Hof (Leiwen/Mosel)

53. Leiwener Laurentiuslay Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €20

An intensely yeasty nose, with a racy, tight structure. Finely made, but a bit woody on the palate. (420–750ml) ★★★

S.A. Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel)

54. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €23

A stinky, moldy nose and a boring, flat palate. Not clean, not interesting. (360–750ml)

55. Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel #45 2001 – €44 (375ml)

A broad, honeyed aroma, with a soft and sweet palate. It has decent length but ends up slightly bitter. (240–375ml) ★★

Joh. Jos. Christoffel (Ürzig/Mosel)

56. Ürziger Würzgarten Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €44 (375ml)

This has a complex, dual-level aroma that reminds you of a Bach two-part invention. Very nice, with lime, lemon and tropical fruits that expand on the palate. It's quite racy, with a spiciness on the finish that leaves a final impression of dryness. (240–375ml) ★★★

Joh. Jos. Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel)

57. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €41

The classic youthful yeastiness of J.J. Prüm that takes some experience to understand. These are wines that are meant to be aged for a minimum of 10 years. The supreme fineness of the wine becomes apparent on the palate – even at this young age – with the pure and delicate slate minerality that is so clearly from Wehlen. (360–750ml) ★★★

58. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 2001 – €45 (750ml)

59. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 2001 – €26 (375ml)

60. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese 2001 – €100 (1.5l)

That same pure and delicate Wehlen minerality is insistent and penetrating in this Auslese, but in a subtle way. Restrained in its richness, this shows the sophisticated style and grace for which J.J. Prüm is so justly renowned. A beautiful and beautifully balanced wine. (150–750ml; 120–375ml; 15–1.5l) ★★★★★



61. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €125 (750ml)

62. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €50 (375ml)

63. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €320 (1.5l)

High and bright with an aroma that is dominated by grapefruit. This is quite racy, and the delicacy is there, but it is less well balanced than the Auslese. (54–750ml; 120–375ml; 3–1.5l) ★★★

64. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €400 (750ml)

65. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €210 (375ml)

66. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €720 (1.5l)

An aroma of very clean apple juice is deepened with the complexity borne of botrytis. It is immensely concentrated, with a palate-coating texture and terrific length. A fine acid thread maintains the elegant Prüm style. (36–750ml; 84–375ml; 2–1.5l) ★★★★★



The great sundial vineyard of Wehlen (aka Wehlener Sonnenuhr) also produced brilliant Rieslings in 2001, including those from its most famous proponent, Joh. Jos. Prüm.

Heymann-Löwenstein (Winningen/Mosel)

67. Winger Uhlen Riesling Auslese lange Goldkapsel 2001 – €50 (375ml)

Wow! A huge, bass-driven wine, this attacks the back of the palate with its massive concentration and intensely searing acidity. A basso profundo tour de force from the only Lower Mosel producer in the Grosser Ring. A stunning wine that is of a completely different style than anything else in the auction. (160–375ml) ★★★★★

Geheimrat J. Wegeler Erben (Bernkastel/Mosel)

68. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €16

Light and pithy, with decent weight on the palate. A good wine, but not a great one. (360–750ml) ★★

69. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €52 (750ml)

70. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €23 (375ml)

This starts out cool and juicy on the palate, but turns bitter and unclean with a strangely furry texture followed by a totally dead finish. (90–750ml; 120–375ml) ★

71. Bernkasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €75 (750ml)

72. Bernkasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €53 (375ml)

A much better wine, with clean lemon fruit in the aroma, good depth on the palate and a pleasing mineral edge. The finish is of decent length, but overall the wine is a bit soft. (90–750ml; 120–375ml) ★★★

Dr. Wagner (Saarburg/Saar)

73. Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Eiswein 2000 – €170 (750ml)

74. Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Eiswein 2000 – €85 (375ml)

I think some people weren't impressed by this because it has a quiet finish that fades slowly, but I thought it was superb. It has excellent concentration, with a cool, juicy palate. It starts out racy as hell, with a firm grip, but then lets go gently. Not a raging bull of an Eiswein, but quite good for the vintage. (18–750ml; 36–375ml) ★★★★★

Karthäuserhof (Eitelsbach/Ruwer)

75. Eitelsbacher Karthäuserhofberg Riesling Eiswein #40 2000 – €240 (750ml)

Now this is an Eiswein that no one can quibble about. It's exceedingly pure and superbly balanced, with a solidly built, vertical frame that keeps it tightly focused. A more classic Eiswein style than the gentle Dr. Wagner. (90–750ml; 180–375ml) ★★★★★

Joh. Jos. Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel)

77. Bernkasteler Johannisbrünnchen Riesling Eiswein 1998 – €290 (750ml)

78. Bernkasteler Johannisbrünnchen Riesling Eiswein 1998 – €185 (375ml)

With a few years of age under its belt, this is developing a deeper, earthier aroma that shows a lot of fig. It is full, deep and rounded on the palate, with an extremely long finish that is actually quite gentle. Another great wine for the cellar. (18–750ml; 36–375ml) ★★★★★

Schloss Saarstein (Serrig/Saar)

79. Serriger Schloss Saarsteiner Riesling Beerenauslese 1990 – €200 (750ml)

80. Serriger Schloss Saarsteiner Riesling Beerenauslese 1990 – €100 (375ml)

This has a dense, engaging nose that is quite complex, but the acidity is totally out of control. (36–750ml; 72–375ml) ★★

Reinhold Haart (Piesport/Mosel)

81. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Beerenauslese 2000 – €200 (750ml)

82. Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Beerenauslese 2000 – €100 (375ml)

A deep, dark gold in color, this has an unusual aroma of peanut butter and apricot. It is very thick and sweet on the palate. A rather odd wine. (12–750ml; 48–375ml) ★★

Schloss Lieser (Lieser/Mosel)

83. Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Beerenauslese 2000 – €280 (750ml)

84. Lieser Niederberg Helden Riesling Beerenauslese 2000 – €140 (375ml)

This is proof that it was possible to make a great BA in the tricky 2000 vintage. It has a bright golden color, with a very deep, honeyed aroma that is beautifully layered with exotic fruits. Excellent balancing acidity leads to a long and racy finish. (24–750ml; 72–375ml) ★★★★★

S.A. Prüm (Wehlen/Mosel)

85. Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese 2000 – €140 (375ml)

A high, brightly honeyed aroma, with good concentration and a firm acid edge. A very good wine that ends with a slightly bitter finish. (68–375ml) ★★

Egon Müller-Scharzhof (Wiltingen/Saar)

86. Scharzhofberger Riesling Beerenauslese 1995 – €690 (750ml)

87. Scharzhofberger Riesling Beerenauslese 1995 – €380 (375ml)

The elegant, fine aroma of this seven-year-old BA is developing an herbal, earthy depth. The complex fruit flavors are quite delicious, but it is very sweet and lacking a bit in balance, with an overly soft finish. (18–750ml; 36–375ml) ★★★

Fritz Haag (Brauneberg/Mosel)

88. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1994 – €2000 (750ml)

89. Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1994 – €1500 (375ml)

The bright golden color surprises you because the wines of Fritz Haag seldom have any color at all. The nose is filled with a bright kaleidoscope of racy fruits, especially lime peel and orange blossom. It has shuddering intensity on the palate, with brilliant acidity and totally self-assured, muscular length that never even hints at heaviness. A grand wine for the ages. (24–750ml; 24–375ml) ★★★★★



VDP Rheingau*28 September 2002*

The VDP Rheingau auction is usually the least interesting of the four, which is rather disappointing considering the legendary renown of the region. The region still has a long way to go in rebuilding the reputation it used to have for the quality and expression of its best wines. A handful of estates is doing good work in that direction, but their less-deserving brethren are still holding the region back. Robert Weil is the perennial star here, with terrific wines this year also from Spreitzer, Josef Leitz, Johannishof and newcomer Joachim Flick. Schloss Schönborn, it seems, is alone among the famous aristocratic estates in its efforts to recapture the quality standards of earlier times.



The VDP Rheingau auction is held at the famous Kloster Eberbach monastery, which is now a state-run winery.

Hans Barth (Hattenheim)**1. BARTH Spätburgunder trocken barrique Goldkapsel 1999 – €28**

Not tasted. (120–1.5l)

August Eser (Oestrich-Winkel)**2. Oestricher Lenchen Riesling Spätlese trocken 1999 – €10**

Very spicy and dry, but not a very interesting wine. (96–750ml) ★

Baron zu Knyphausen (Erbach)**3. Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Erstes Gewächs 2001 – €13.50**

Good ripeness and some nice, rounded peach flavor, but a very straightforward and simple wine. (120–750ml; 120–375ml) ★

Diefenhardt'sches Weingut (Martinsthal)**4. Rauenthal Rothenberg Riesling Kabinett 2001 – €7**

Quite sweet, with some pretty fruit and fine acidity, but not well balanced. (120–750ml) ★★

Baron zu Knyphausen (Erbach)**5. Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Spätlese 2000 – €13.50**

A promising fruit aroma is undermined by a flat, dull palate and lack of purity. (90–750ml; 120–375ml) ★

Friedrich Fendel (Rüdesheim)**6. Rüdesheimer Berg Roseneck Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €11**

Sour, raw and unclean. (120–750ml)

Baron zu Knyphausen (Erbach)**7. Erbacher Steinmorgen Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €14**

Not bad. Nice and rounded with full, peachy flavor and a good acid crackle. Certainly better than the previous Knyphausen wines, but still decidedly not a “terroir” wine. Fine to drink, but too simple for an auction wine. (120–750ml) ★★

Balthasar Ress (Hattenheim)**8. Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €18**

The nose is heavy with overbearing, unclean botrytis. It has good length on the palate, but is rather bitter. (180–750ml) ★

Schloss Schönborn (Hattenheim)**9. Hattenheimer Pfaffenberg Riesling Spätlese “Lothar Franz” 2001 – €14.50**

A very pretty, evocative aroma of bright, edgy peach and apricot make this the first truly engaging wine of the auction. It is crisply balanced, with a medium-long finish. A very nice wine. (180–750ml) ★★★

Peter Jakob Kühn (Oestrich-Winkel)**10. Oestricher Lenchen Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel 2001 – €45**

Quite apart from anything tasted so far, this has the pungent mineral stamp of slate soil and an earthy, concentrated texture. A firm minerality gives it a strong impression of dryness on the palate. Very interesting wine. (120–750ml) ★★★★★

Weingüter Wegeler (Oestrich-Winkel)**11. Rudesheimer Berg Rottland Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel 2001 – €16.50**

A full, rounded nose and palate, with fine, sweet fruit and nice balance. Not a terroir-driven monster like the Kühn, but quite nice. (180–750ml) ★★★

Graf von Kanitz (Lorch)**12. Lorcher Krone Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €18**

A closed, yeasty aroma, this is light of body and clean, but straightforward. (180–750ml) ★★

Joachim Flick (Flörsheim-Wicker)**13. Wickerer Mönchsgewann Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €16.50**

My “discovery” at the Rheingau auction, all the wines of Joachim Flick were very well made, showing elegance, poise and great promise. This was only their second year in the auction. A charming, fruity nose and a delicately sweet palate made this Spätlese a very satisfying wine. It was very fine and pure in its fruity core, with an elegant finish of medium length. (120–750ml) ★★★

Schloss Vollrads (Oestrich-Winkel)**14. Schloss Vollrads Riesling Spätlese Goldkapsel 2001 – €30.50**

This wine proves that the big names in the Rheingau still wield some market power even though their wines are poorly made. It’s cool and juicy on the palate, which indicates that they managed to get the grapes nicely ripe, but there’s a moldy component that tells you they weren’t very careful about selection during the harvest. (180–750ml)

Baron zu Knyphausen (Erbach)**15. Erbacher Steinmorgen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 1999 – €30**

This one didn’t fool anybody. Harsh, chemical botrytis made it nearly undrinkable and it went to some merciful buyer for the offering price. (60–750ml)

Schloss Reinhartshausen (Erbach)**16. Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Auslese 2001 – €14**

Another disaster. It’s hard to imagine how such a wine was made in the exceptional 2001 vintage. Smokey and thick, with a very raw, unpleasant nose, this also required a mercy bid at the opening price to clear it off the books. (60–375ml)

Weingüter Wegeler (Oestrich-Winkel)**17. Geisenheimer Rothenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €33**

The nose is closed, but still some fine peach aroma makes its way through, bringing much relief after the previous three wines. A lovely texture and medium length complete the picture. (60–750ml; 60–375ml) ★★

Johannishof (Johannisberg)**18. Rudesheimer Berg Rottland Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €19.50 (375ml)**

A very nice wine that’s clean, pure and concentrated, with a clean mineral edge to balance its full fruitiness. The sweetness is also quite well balanced by bright, ripe acidity. (96–375ml) ★★★

Josef Spreitzer (Oestrich-Winkel)**19. Oestricher Lenchen Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €57.50 (375ml)**

My other discovery at this auction was the Lenchen vineyard. It’s quite a large vineyard of medium quality that’s never really caught my attention before. But there is a small section of it that is steeper, with stonier soil, than the rest and that’s where this and the Kühn Spätlese came from. This is tighter in the nose than the Kühn, but still showing that Lenchen mineral pungency that is so interesting. Beautiful fruit flavors unfold on the palate in silky concentration and superb length. A great wine. (30–375ml) ★★★★★



Balthasar Ress (Hattenheim)

20. Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Riesling Auslese 2001 – €63
Tight in the nose. Bitter and boring on the palate. (60–750ml)

Prinz von Hessen (Johannisberg)

21. Johannisberger Klaus Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €20.50 (375ml)

This shows some nice mineral-inflected lemon in the aroma. It's too sticky sweet on the palate, but finishes cleanly. (48–375ml) ★★

Joachim Flick (Flörsheim-Wicker)

Wickerer Mönchsgewann Riesling Auslese 2001 – €27 (500ml)

This was one of the great bargains of the auction. It takes years for a new producer to get established among the old boys club that dominates the Rheingau, so this excellent Auslese also sold for the offering price, as if it were in some way similar to the very poor Knyphausen Auslese (Lot 15). It is not. True, it is tight in the nose, but under that it has very fine focus, with pretty, layered fruits on the palate and an elegant harmony. (48–500ml) ★★★★★

Hans Barth (Hattenheim)

23. Hattenheimer Hassel Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €60 (375ml)

It's big and fat in the nose, but tasty as hell. There's just enough focus to make you think it might grow out of its baby fat, but it's quite broad now, with a lovely, though soft, fruity texture. (24–375ml) ★★

Robert Weil (Kiedrich)

24. Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €265

Really a whole new level of finesse and concentration. This is the great Robert Weil estate back on form after the troublesome 2000 vintage. A striking wine, with racy, mineral balance and a long, gripping finish. (24–750ml: 48–375ml) ★★★★★

Toni Jost (Walluf)

25. Wallufer Walkenberg Riesling Beerenauslese 2001 – €77

Toni Jost is tops in the Mittelrhein, but his Rheingau estate in Walluf is usually a bit disappointing. This BA, however, is pretty good. It is full and sweet, with a tight mineral nose and terrific length. It's only a bit too heavy on the palate. (6–750ml; 24–375ml) ★★★

Graf von Kanitz (Lorch)

26. Lorcher Krone Riesling Beerenauslese 2001 – €37.50 (375ml)

Back in the dumps with a sour, raw nose and harsh, bitter fruit. (12–375ml)

Schloss Reinhartshausen (Erbach)

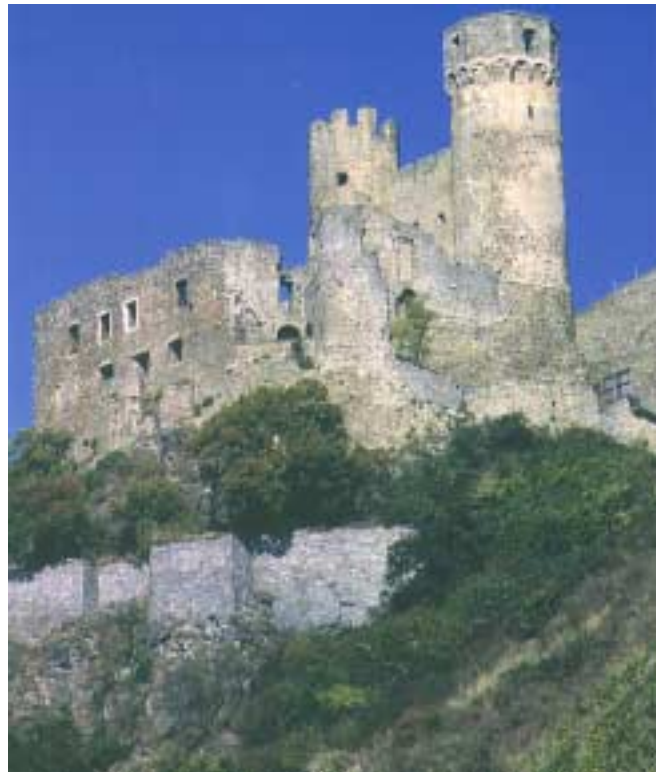
27. Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Beerenauslese 2001 – €35 (375ml)

Hard, unclean botrytis. Another major disappointment from a famous old estate that we thought had been making progress in recent years. (24–375ml)

Joachim Flick (Flörsheim-Wicker)

28. Wickerer Mönchsgewann Riesling Beerenauslese 2001 – €73.50 (500ml)

My new hero Flick saves the day again. Like the Auslese (Lot 22), this is closed in the aroma, but has the same superb focus and finesse. Rich and concentrated on the palate, a firm acid grip gives it excellent balance, keeping it from being too heavy, and carrying through to a wonderfully long, complex finish. (24–500ml) ★★★★★



Ruins of the magnificent Ehrenfels castle stand guard over the vineyards of the Rheingau's Rudesheimer Berg.

Robert Weil (Kiedrich)**29. Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €680**

The star of the show, as usual, Weil's BA doesn't disappoint. Huge and dense, it's like drinking Riesling syrup. Nobody else in the Rheingau even comes close to this level of ripeness and concentration. It is thick and heavy on the tongue, but balanced, with Weil's characteristically masculine power and build. A bold, impressive wine. (12–750ml; 24–375ml) ★★★★★

Schloss Reinhartshausen (Erbach)**30. Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1937 – €2850 (700ml)**

A special treat from the glory days of the Rheingau that we unfortunately didn't get to taste. Only one bottle was auctioned.

Hans Lang (Hattenheim)**31. Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Riesling Eiswein 1998 – €77 (500ml)**

This has a high-toned aroma of overripe apple juice. It's cleanly made, with appropriate Eiswein raciness, but it lacks the purity of great Riesling. (48–500ml) ★★

Diefenhardt'sches Weingut (Martinsthal)**32. Martinsthal Wildsau Riesling Eiswein 2001 – €34 (375ml)**

A very nice wine, with interesting red fruit flavors and a fine, elegant texture on the palate. Not a monster of Eiswein acidity, but delicious to drink. (24–375ml) ★★★

Fritz Allendorf (Oestrich-Winkel)**33. Winkeler Gutenberg Riesling Eiswein 2001 – €90 (375ml)**

Not tasted. (60–375ml)

Franz Künstler (Hochheim)**34. Hochheimer hölle Riesling Eiswein 2001 – €60 (375ml)**

A quiet wine, which is a bit surprising considering Helmut Künstler's reputation for over-the-top wines. It will no doubt emerge in a few years, but the nose is completely closed now. It is cool and concentrated on the palate, with a clear, silky texture. (36–375ml) ★★★

Hans Barth (Hattenheim)**35. Hattenheimer Schützenhaus Riesling Eiswein Goldkapsel 2001 – €70 (375ml)**

A tight, funky nose gives way to some lovely fruit and a rather soft texture. It has good length and just enough Eiswein tingle to keep it interesting. (24–375ml) ★★★

Weingüter Wegeler (Oestrich-Winkel)**36. Geisenheimer Rothenberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 2001 – €215 (375ml)**

This is rather simple, especially for a TBA. It's hampered further by a somewhat sour botrytis nose and slight bitterness in the taste. (12–375ml) ★★

Hans Barth (Hattenheim)**37. Hattenheimer Schützenhaus Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 2001 – €290 (375ml)**

Not too badly balanced, just rather boring and lifeless. (12–375ml) ★

Josef Leitz (Rüdesheim)**38. Rüdesheimer Berg Roseneck Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 2001 – €500**

The cheesy, yeasty nose needs a few more years to open up, but it's beautifully bright and clean on the palate, with a complex mix of delicate fruits, from peach to plum. An excellent TBA for long-term cellaring. (12–750ml) ★★★★★

Bernhard Eser (Oestrich-Winkel)**39. Oestricher Lenchen Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese 1999 – €155 (500ml)**

A big, blowsy aroma, followed by a harsh, chemical palate make for a less than inspiring wine. (12–500ml)

August Kessler (Assmanshausen)**40. Rüdesheimer Berg Schlossberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Goldkapsel 1999 – €1800**

A bright, honeyed nose, with good concentration and decent acid balance, yet it's a bit heavy on the palate. The flavors are tasty and the medium-long finish is somewhat satisfying, but overall it's not a very evocative wine. (6–750ml) 12–375ml) ★★★



VDP Nahe/Ahr*29 September 2002*

This is the combined auction for two of the smallest wine regions in Germany. The tiny, protected Ahr valley is even farther north than the Mosel, but they have a fairly warm climate there and a tradition for Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir). Deutzerhof and Meyer-Näkel are the two best producers here.

The Nahe region is home to one of the great cult followings in all of Rieslingdom. Helmut Dönnhoff is the main reason that a good number of non-German collectors still travel to this auction. His closest rival is his good friend, Armin Diel, at Schlossgut Diel. Excellent winemaking is also to be found at Kruger-Rumpf and at Emrich-Schönleber, who produced this year's finest Eiswein.



The dramatic Rotenfels ("red cliffs") of the Nahe valley.

J.J. Adeneuer (Ahrweiler/Ahr)**1. Ahrweiler Rosenthal Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 2001 – €33**

A delicate wine, with a brambly red berry aroma and a hint of smokey oak. (300–750ml) ★★

H.J. Kreuzberg (Dernau/Ahr)**2. Ahrweiler Silberberg Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 2001 – €25**

A bright, light ruby color. Smokey and a bit sharp on the palate, with a short, tart finish. (300–750ml) ★

Deutzerhof (Mayschoß/Ahr)**3. Mayschösser Mönchberg Spätburgunder trocken 2001 – €65**

This is ripe and quite elegant, with a bright berry nose and sweet fruit on the palate, followed by a spicy finish of excellent length. (300–750ml) ★★★

Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Marienthal (Marienthal/Ahr)**4. Ahrweiler Silberberg Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 2001 – €34**

Ripe plum and red berries in the aroma draw you in to this generous wine, which rewards you with its warm, round texture. Juicy and spicy on the palate. (300–750ml) ★★★

Nelles (Heimersheim/Ahr)**5. Frühburgunder trocken 2001 – €36**

This has a clean, though straightforward, aroma. It hits the palate with a hard, rough edge, but finishes with a bit of ripe, sweet fruit. Still, it's dominated by firm acidity throughout. (300–750ml) ★★

Meyer-Näkel (Dernau/Ahr)**6. Dernauer Pfarrwingert Spätburgunder Auslese trocken 2001 – €84**

Very deep in color, this is very tight in the nose. But the quality of its serious dark and red fruits comes through on the palate. Its penetrating acidity is searing an long through its fine, ripe finish. (300–750ml) ★★★★★

Kruger-Rumpf (Münster-Sarmsheim/Nahe)**7. Münsterer Pittersberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €22**

A pretty wine with brilliant aromas of peach, lime, orange and pure Riesling grapes. It's brisk and juicy on the palate. Quite nice. (72–375ml) ★★★

8. Münsterer Pittersberg Riesling Eiswein Goldkapsel 2001 – €56

A lovely citrus aroma, delicately dominated by tangerine, leads to a big blast of fruit on the palate. Quite crisp and racy, with an intense acid grip and a long finish. This was among the best values of the whole auction. (48–375ml) ★★★★★

Schloss Wallhausen (Wallhausen/Nahe)**9. Wallhäuser Felseneck Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €25.50 (750ml); E76 (1.5l)**

There's a light mineral pungency in the nose, and it's nicely balanced, but overall this wine is rather flat and uninteresting. (120–750ml; 1–1.5l) ★★

10. Wallhäuser Johannisberg Riesling Auslese 2001 – €50 (750ml); E150 (1.5l)

This has a similar pungency in the aroma, but is simple and sweet on the palate, with mushy, soft acidity. (60–750ml; 1–1.5l) ★★

Schäfer-Frölich (Bockenau/Nahe)**11. Bockenauer Felseneck Riesling Auslese 2001 – €10.50 (500ml)**

Sour and unripe in the aroma, this seems somehow interesting at first taste. Then you realize it's quite bland except for the unclear character of the taste. (120–500ml)

12. Bockenauer Felseneck Riesling Beerenauslese 2001 – €41 (375ml)

A small Beerenauslese, this is light and delicate, with gentle grip on the palate and medium length. Like the Auslese, it is rather funky and unclear. (30–375ml) ★

Tesch (Langenlonsheim/Nahe)**13. Laubenheimer St. Remigiusberg Riesling Spätlese trocken 2001 – €9**

The dry Rieslings from Tesch have been getting better and better in the past few years, but it may not have been the best idea to include one in the auction. It's quite difficult to taste after the very sweet wines that have gone before. Still, you find here a lively mineral aroma and a full, racy texture. After a few sips to recalibrate the palate, the structure and nuance of this wine begin to emerge. (1200–750ml) ★★★

14. Langenlonsheimer Löhrrer Berg Riesling Beerenauslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €51 (375ml)

There's complex fruit in the attack, which emphasizes the fecund flavors of melon and fig, but the finish is fairly short and delicate. (12–375ml) ★★★

Schlossgut Diel (Burg Layen/Nahe)**15. Dorsheimer Goldloch Riesling 2000 – €61 (750ml); €34 (375ml); €185 (1.5l); €510 (3l)**

Armin Diel is, justifiably, quite proud of his 2000 Rieslings, which were some of the best of the vintage in all of Germany. This wine, labeled without a Prädikat designation, has impressive density on the palate, with the lovely, mineral-driven fruit aromas that are characteristic of this great vineyard. It is warm and rich, with excellent balance and length. (60–750ml; 92–375ml; 6–1.5l; 1–3l) ★★★

16. Dorsheimer Goldloch Riesling Beerenauslese 1983 – €600

A bonus bottle from Diel's cellar. Not tasted. (1–750ml)

Dr. Crusius (Traisen/Nahe)**17. Norheimer Kirscheck Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €20 (500ml)**

An effusive peach aroma gives this a lovely nose, but it's soft and sticky on the palate, followed by a bitter finish. (36–500ml) ★★

18. Traiser Riesling Eiswein 2001 – €49

The dark aroma is dominated by fig, which right away indicates that there was too much botrytis allowed into this wine. It's concentrated, but rather too heavy and soft on the palate. You could drink this, but it definitely does not fulfill your expectations of an Eiswein. (12–750ml) ★



Gutsverwaltung Niederhausen-Schlossböckelheim (Niederhausen/Nahe)

19. Schlossböckelheimer Kupfergrube Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €9.70

Yeasty, biscuity, simple and bitter. (360–750ml)

20. Niederhäuser Hermannsberg Riesling Auslese 2001 –

€17 (750ml); €8.50 (375ml)

Funky and unclear in the nose; light and unconcentrated on the palate. (48–750ml; 120–375ml)

21. Niederhäuser Hermannsberg Riesling Eiswein 2001 –

€68 (750ml); €34 (375ml)

There's a nice citrus peel component to the aroma, but it's coarse, heavy and inelegant on the palate. (48–750ml; 120–375ml) ★

22. Schlossböckelheimer Kupfergrube Riesling 1943

Another rarity from the cellar. Not tasted. (1–700ml)

Emrich-Schönleber (Monzingen/Nahe)

23. Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 2001 – €38 (500ml)

A very engaging mineral aroma that is high-toned and focused gives way to a delicate, elegant structure and quiet acidity on the palate. (60–500ml) ★★★

24. Monzinger Frühlingplätzchen Riesling Eiswein Goldkapsel 2000 – €400

One of the big Eiswein stars of the 2000 vintage, the wine press has been all over this estate, especially in the United States. This wine shows why. It's quite complex, showing a penetrating citrus blossom aroma over a dark and deep, nearly brooding, concentration. It has excellent grip on the palate, but is not overbearing as it takes you on a fruit-infused journey from bright citrus to dense white peach and through to very ripe fig. All the while it retains an elegant nobility. (24–750ml; 48–375ml) ★★★★★

Dönnhoff (Oberhausen/Nahe)

25. Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg Riesling Spätlese 2001 – €49

Bright and insistent in the nose, with mineral intensity followed by a fine, delicate palate. Superb focus, as is always the case with Dönnhoff, and a medium-long finish. (480–750ml) ★★★

26. Oberhäuser Brücke Riesling Auslese 2001 –

€330 (750ml); €165 (375ml); €590 (1.5l)

Warm, rich and full in the nose, this is insanely complex and concentrated on the palate. Yet, through that wondrous alchemy known simply as “the Dönnhoff touch,” it remains nimble and refreshing, with very pretty berry and stone fruit flavors. Quite ripe, but not overripe, this is a beautifully balanced Auslese that is supremely elegant. (60–750ml; 180–375ml; 4–1.5l) ★★★★★

