

Boise Co-op Uncorked!

WINE DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER

888 W FORT STREET
BOISE, ID 83702

Robin Goes to Germany!

—Robin Zimmermann

Early last month I had the pleasure of traveling to Germany to become educated in the art of German winemaking, a craft dating back more than 2000 years. The wineries I visited are all blanketed under the Valkenberg export portfolio, which encompasses esteemed wineries such as J.J. Prum, Graf, Schloss Johannisberg, Maximin Grunhaus, Valkenberg and Basserman Jordan, to name a few.

Travelling with 17 other wine representatives from around the world, our journey followed the Rhein River from Pfalz up to Rheinhessen, Nahe, Rheingau, to the famous Mosel valley, and inland to Franken. The predominant varietal grown in Germany is Riesling, closely followed by Muller Thurgau, a cross between Riesling and Sylvaner. German wines are currently experiencing a renaissance, as critics and consumers alike are lauding the exceptional production achieved in recent vintages. Accolades from Wine Spectator, particularly the April, 2007 article in which 300 German Rieslings of the 2005 vintage scored 90 points or higher, have solidified the auction potential of these refined, vibrant wines. It was such an honor to have sampled these highly acclaimed wines firsthand with the family who produced them, at their vineyard site.

The first winery toured was the Valkenberg estate. Not only famous as Germany's oldest wine export company, the Valkenberg estate is home to the original Liebfraumilch vineyards. A Madonna-like shrine honoring the Liebfraumilch goddess overlooks the plantation. Their famous Liebfraumilch is characterized by a light, elegant body of sweet lemon and floral notes, composed of varietals Riesling, Muller-Thurgau, Sylvaner and Kerner.

The next day we journeyed to the Castell estate in Franconia, sampling their famous exotic dry white Sylvaner wines and Rieslaner, a fragrant, moscato-like

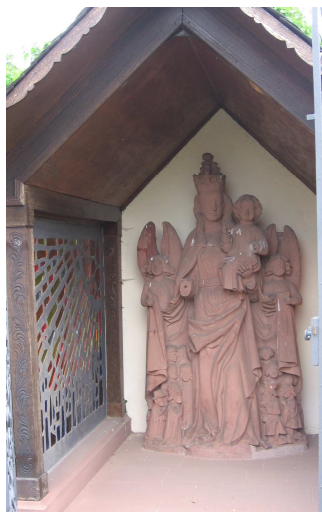
cross between Riesling and Sylvaner. On to Johannishof in the Rheingau, the long tradition of winemaking dating back to 1685 is

apparent in the elegance and refinement of their Rieslings. We were fortunate to sample a 1963 Beerenauslese along with a dinner of wild boar and rabbit!

Day three was my favorite. Our group toured the famous Kloster Eberbach monastery founded in the 12th century by Cistercian monks who practiced viticulture. The ancient monastery was breathtaking, and we sampled their excellent, high mineral Riesling in the old gothic candlelit cellar next to ancient wine presses and casks. Next, we toured Estate Baron Knyphausen and pruned his vineyard after sampling classic sweet Riesling and refreshing, acidic, mineral-based Sekt, a Riesling-based bubbly. The day ended at Schloss Johannisberg, a daunting and ancient estate dating back to 1100 A.D.! Some of the best Riesling in the world comes from Schloss Johannisberg.

The fourth day of our journey began with a long, arduous trek up the Kriemer mountain past Urziger Wurzgarten vineyards to sample Carl Graff wines. The view from the top was stunning, overlooking the breathtaking Mosel valley. We then journeyed to Schloss Saarstein in the Saar region, and had the pleasure sampling the famous, honey, butter, raisin, botrytis-laden 2005 Riesling TBA (97 points, WS). After a lunch of wild boar and blood

Robin continued on back page....



Liebfraumilch Goddess

AUGUST CLUB PICKS

Bonheur Convivial Pinot Blanc

KWV Steen 2006

Giacomo Grimaldi Dolcetto 2005

Monterosso Cab-Merlot Blend 01

Fontaine-Audon Sancerre 2004

Drouhin Vero Bourgogne 05

Ott Riesling 2005

Ch d'or et de Gueules La Bolinda

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- *Rosemary's final ode to Grüner Veltliner*
- *A Divit Recipe!*
- *August Wine Club Picks*



Grüner Veltliner: Among the World's Greatest White Wines

—*Rosemary S Gray*

If there is one wine that is pulling its weight in my household this summer it's Pollerhof Grüner Veltliner in the liter bottle. I've touted the beauty of Grüner Veltliner many times in these pages and since this is one of my final stints putting this newsletter together, I felt it appropriate to write one last anthem to the great Austrian grape. Don't be shy, pronounce it with me now — GREW-ner felt-LEE-ner — that 'V' is a soft f sounding v — think about how words that end in f in English are morphed into a v when pluralized (wolf-wolves).

Grammar lesson complete, let's talk about a grape that deserves more attention and respect. I've noticed something funny about wine in Idaho: while the internet has allowed us to catch up with the cutting edge in music and movies, when it comes to wine our isolation from all that's hip is nothing short of drastic. Some of us have just barely jumped on the Malbec bandwagon. When it comes to trends, GrüVe has had it's day, it's come and gone and Idaho never even knew. Good thing that Grüner Veltliner is not merely a trendy grape, good thing it's a grape that deserves to stand alongside Chardonnay, Riesling and Chenin Blanc as one of the world's best white wines.

Before you begin thinking that's a hyperbolic claim, consider the characteristics we use as criteria for determining the greatness of a wine: Does it have a place at the table? Does it reflect terroir while still retaining character (think Chablis v Montrachet)? And of course, can it age? Grüner Veltliner does all these things and often does them better than our beloved Bundundys and Rieslings.

Grüner Veltliner doesn't just have a place at the table,

it has a presence. It's in its element. One of the greatest aspects of this grape is that it is the answer to all foods that are not friendly to wine. I have a friend who always throws 1/2 a habanera pepper in her salad of mixed greens — Pollerhof GrüVe is our answer. Artichokes? Asparagus? Curry? My raging hot Cajun kabobs? Avocado? Ahi with a side of wasabi? Oh, Grüner Veltliner.

But it's not just the odd balls that Grüner Veltliner gracefully compliments, it can do what Chardonnay, dry Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc can do at the table — and often better. It's grace and beauty is unsurpassed, it's acidity charmingly present, and it's flavors ethereal and visceral.

That's the thing — the versatility of Grüner Veltliner is impressive. While maintaining it's central character it can be a zingy or classy or as powerful as any white Burgundy. Some GrüVe is zesty patio wine with a twinge of effervescence, some is creamy on the mid-palate with a snap-pea sweetness, some Grüner is powerful with white pepper and compacted minerals. Unlike Chardonnay, it is rarely masked by oak, but always reflects it's terroir — It comes rich from the Wachau, classy from Kamptal and clear and clean from the Weinviertel.

Finally, the thing people don't know about Grüner Veltliner is that it's age worthy. It surpasses Pinot Grigio, Sauvignon Blanc and all other populous white varieties because of this fact. According to importer Terry Theise, there is no other white wine that stays youthful quite so long (Chenin Blanc from the Loire he claims is the only contender). As they age flavors of

Grüner Veltliner continued on back page

A Divit Recipe! Quick Appetizers: Things on Toast!

These are "no recipe recipes" that are perfect for a quick appetizer or party snack. They can be served on toasts or crackers or served in little bowls with toast and crackers on the side. Remember when you make the toast to brush them with olive oil first and don't toast them completely dry. A little softness left in the bread makes for a crisp-outside-soft-on-the-inside treat.

Green Olive Tapenade: Drain a 12 oz can of anchovy stuffed Spanish green olives and process in a small food processor with a clove of garlic, some fresh oregano and some olive oil. Add a chunk of fresh goat cheese and some fresh black pepper to taste. Adjust salt, oregano or cheese. Serve cool.

Red Pepper Tapenade: Get a jar of Zergut roasted red peppers and clean seeds and black bits out. Put in processor with garlic and fresh basil. Add some feta cheese and taste — adjust salt and pepper. Serve at room temperature.

Eggplant Dip (Babaganouch): This can be done two ways. Traditionally the eggplants are pricked with a fork and roasted in a 375° oven for 30-40 minutes until soft. Then peel & mash. You can also peel the eggplants and dice them up fine, season with salt and pepper and sautee in olive oil until soft (you can hurry this along with a lid and a little warm water in the pan). Then add crushed garlic, lemon juice, tahini and basil until it tastes good. Mint, cilantro and parsley can also be used in any combination with or without basil as your taste buds desire. Serve warm.

Serve with any of our Grüner Veltliners: Pollerhof, Markowitsch, Buchegger, Ott, Soellner & Loimer

Wine Club Selections

Cru Classe Club

2005 Bernard Ott Riesling von Rotem Schotter

Ott is located in a small region just beginning to be defined, the Wagram, east of the more famous Kamptal region and 5-10 miles from the Danube River. In 2005 Ott committed to biodynamic vineyards, and according to importer, Bill Mayer, it has given Bernard peace to be in the vineyards more. As it's name indicates this Riesling comes from red gravel about 350 meters up. A fine, mineral-rich Riesling with beautiful flavors of mango and tangerine with a sweet, subtle finish of lime. This is a stunning example of dry Riesling.

We got very little of this wine (only 5 cases came to our importer), so enjoy what's available. Will age but is absolutely delicious and perfectly food friendly now. I had it with gorgonzola-stuffed squash blossoms... hmmm. **Rosemary*

2003 Chateau d'Or et de Gueules La Bolinda

"La Bolinda," means "small cuvee," in old, local Occitan language. Made from the oldest vines on the Ch. d'Or et de Gueules estate, La Bolinda is based mostly on Mourvèdre picked at the start of October. Tiny yields and optimal ripeness give this wine a wonderful balance *and* power. This impressive wine is dark and textured while being fresh with beautiful finesse. Definitely a wine for the cellar, the oak is present and yet the Mourvèdre does not yield to its flavors but keeps it's own fruit and structure with just a sense of smokiness and spice. The 2003 is opening up now and should show the sultry beauty of a Mourvèdre-based wine. **Rosemary*

Passport Club

2005 Drouhin Vero Bourgogne

This is what I refer to as a "segue wine." Meaning it is a good wine for introducing someone to French wines who are acclimated to drinking domestic wines. This Pinot Noir has all the sweet cherry fruit of a domestic, and is forthcoming and approachable, but it also has the elegance, earth and rustic quality often found in Burgundy, and even a little barnyard edge.

Drouhin is a highly respected Burgundy negotiant who also does some estate bottling. Made by Vernique Drouhin (Vero is her childhood nickname) this Pinot is made from a blend of grapes from Chambolle-Musigny, Haute Cote-du-Beaune, Vosne-Romanee and Rully. Delicious. **Rosemary*

2004 Domaine Langlois-Chateau

Fontaine-Audon Sancerre

The two occasions I've had this wine I tasted it after tasting some bargain Spanish wines that were good but not mind-blowing. A different animal yes, but this wine has never failed to shine.

This Sancerre has a rich, golden hue with a twinge of green. On the palate it is herbaceous and lemony with strongly accentuated notes of stone and steely minerals. It is a wine for food and would go well with a dish of lighter fish done in a simple lemon-butter dressing and a salad. Drink now.

**Rosemary*

R & R Whites: Riefle & KWV R & R Reds: Giacomo Grimaldi & Monterosso

Riefle Bonheur Convivial Pinot Blanc 2005

With a family tradition of winemaking spanning three centuries, the Riefle family has continued their legacy through the newly established estate of Domaine Joseph Riefle et Fils in Alsace, currently managed by grandsons Jean-Claude and Christophe. The Riefle's take advantage of the calcium laden soil common to Alsace in order to produce remarkable wine. Their 2005 Pinot Blanc awakens the palate with a burst of mandarin orange, pineapple and cinnamon, softening to a quiet, elongated citrus and mineral finish. A touch of sweetness rounds off this complex wine. **Robin*

KWV Steen 2005

Now for a whole new style of Chenin Blanc. South Africa is one of the few regions other than the Loire that is coming out with a large amount of Chenin Blanc based wines, only sometimes they call it Steen. This KWV Steen is very sprightly and citrusy — almost like a Sauvignon Blanc. KWV is one of South Africa's largest wine making and distributing companies, with a reputation for making quality vino since 1918. This is a great summer sipper that will go well with salads, squash and vegetables and will cool off any hot August day. **Rosemary*

2005 Giacomo Grimaldi Dolcetto d'Alba

Ferruccio Grimaldi has been making wine at his estate in Barolo since 1996. One of his more minor bottles, this Dolcetto d'Alba is lovely. Something like the Beaujolais of Piemonte, this Dolcetto is done 100% in steel vats and is packed with fresh, delicious red berry flavor. Rustic with spice makes for complexity. Dolcetto at its best — pair with stewed meats or a mushroom dish. **Rosemary*

2001 Monterosso Cab-Merlot Stellenbosch

Estate owners Socrate and Camilla De Franchi relocated from Italy to Stellenbosch shortly after World War II, and employed their years of winemaking knowledge to the mineral rich South African terrior. The resulting Cabernet-Merlot blend is a classical representation of South African wine in its earthy and leathery palate, backed by pepper, oregano, sage and dark fruit, a flavor combination similar to some Super Tuscans. This wine has had the luxury of aging, and it is formidable! The fairly powerful nose of red fruit and leather barely hint at the complexity to be found on the palate. Decant, or let breathe, and you will see the true potential of this wine, as it becomes much more fruit driven and vibrant with time. I can't recommend it enough! **Robin*

August 2007



888 W Fort Street
Boise, ID 83702

Boise Co-op Wine Department
208-472-4519
wineguys@boisecoop.com
www.boisecoopwineshop.com

...Robin continued from pg 1

sausage prepared by the estate owners, we ended our day at the Maximin Grunhaus estate, overwhelmed by the medieval cellar and blue Devonian slate-based wine bordering on perfection.

Day 5 we met my heroes: Manfred and Katharina Prum of J.J. Prum fame. Tasting their world-famous wine from the Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard at their castle was an experience I'll never forget. On to Dr. Thanisch in the Mosel, this famous estate has been headed by women for four generations. We sampled '04, '05 and '06 vintages side by side, a great learning experience for determining differences in vintages. These wines are outstanding in their complexity and uniqueness. The day ended at Schloss Wallhausen, in the Nahe valley, with a tour of the Wallhausen castle grounds led by Princes Michael and Constantin zu Salm-Salm. After carrying slate up a steep hill to help the Princes rebuild their ancient castle, we sampled wine made from both red and green slate, a fascinating lesson in minerality.

The last day we toured the Basser-mann-Jordan Estate in the Pfalz. This ancient estate is home to the famous wine museum, showcasing wine from as early as 1811. We were fortunate to sample a



Graff Vineyards site in the Mosel

1912 Auslese! It was still drinkable, with a medium brown color and a palate bordering on sherry.

The trip was an experience of a lifetime. The German tradition of winemaking is unprecedented in its attention to detail and quest for perfection. These are some of the best wines in the world. Try some of these at the Co-Op, and see for yourself why these wines have garnered so much attention!

...Grüner Veltliner continued

white pepper and dried-mushrooms arise amongst the ore and herbs. I recently tasted a 1991 Nikolaihof Vinotheck, it was honeyed and reminiscent of startlingly-youthful old Chenin Blanc from the Loire, just as Theise claims. (By the way this wine will be available for the Co-op in the late fall).

Sadly, there are one dimensional Grüners out there — all green apple or dull vegetable. But for the most part I am always wooed by the beauty of Austria's most pervasive grape (a third of all vineyards). It is wine you have to listen to. Never in your face but always articulating it's presence whether it be through hedge flowers, snap-pea, summer squash, white pepper, chalk, elusive lemon, fresh garden herbs, green apple taffy, rhubarb or arugula. There isn't a classier white out there nor one I want to drink more of.

Grüner Veltliners to Try:

- Pollerhof (Liter): Fresh Summer Garden \$12.99**
- Buchegger: Creamy and Herbaceous \$13.49**
- Markowitsch: Fresh and Effervescent \$11.49**
- Soellner Danubio: Lemon Zesty \$10.99**
- Loimer Lois: Green Apple Zinger**
- Summerer Steinhaus: Snap-pea Class \$19.99**
- Buchegger Pfarrweingarten: Ore and herbs \$34**
- Bernard Ott: Vibrant Pear \$32**
- Bernard Ott Reserve: Smoky Apple \$47**
- Prager Achleiten: White Pepper & Bean \$44**

Late this fall we will proudly be offering several Grüner Veltliners (and other Austrian and German wines) from the **Terry Theise Portfolio**. Watch for wines from the great producers Walter Glatzer, Willi Brundlmayer, Hirsch, Schloss Gobelsburg and Nikolaihof! Also watch for a trio of Grüner Veltliner in Liter format from Swarzbach, Ecker and Berger! And even a liter of Zweigelt from Berger — it will be a delightful red to get you through the cold, winter Boise months.