



San Francisco Chapter German Wine Society

One Laurel Lane
Sausalito, CA 94965



Newsletter Vol. 09-3

March 5, 2009

Recap of January Tasting

An enthusiastic group of members tasted a flight of German Rieslings at the first GWS event of the season at the Gregory residence in Sausalito. The wines came from six of the Germany's growing regions and the vintages ranged from 2005 back to the most memorable 1976. Three members with exceptional palates tied for first place in the mystery wine contest, and the winner of a bottle of 1976 von Simmern Erbacher Marcobrunn Auslese was decided amongst them by lot. A few pictures from this event are posted at: <http://gws-sf.org/Gallery%201-31-09/>.

For a delightful account of each of the fourteen wines from this event, please see Keith Matrick's tasting notes below.

Preview of March Tasting: Wines of the Rheingau

Our next event will continue the on-going series of single region tastings and will feature the wines of the Rheingau. The Rheingau is a compact region, only the eighth largest in total vineyard area. It is planted predominantly (80%) in Riesling and Spätburgunder (20%). Growing conditions in the Rheingau are considered ideal for these grapes and the region's wines are celebrated for their high quality and great aging potential. We will sample a representative selection these outstanding wines. A preliminary list of the wines to be poured follows:

| | Year | Producer | Description | Style |
|----|------|--------------------------------|---|----------|
| 1 | 2007 | Maximin Grünhäuser | Abtsberg, von Schubert | Kabinett |
| 2 | 1999 | Franz Künstler | Hochheimer Hölle, trocken | Kabinett |
| 3 | 2001 | Staatsweingut Kloster Eberbach | Rauenthaler Baiken, Gold Kapsel, (auction wine) | Kabinett |
| 4 | 1998 | von Simmern | Hattenheimer Nußbrunnen | Kabinett |
| 5 | 1998 | von Simmern | Rauenthaler Baiken | Kabinett |
| 6 | 1998 | von Simmern | Erbacher Marcobrunn | Kabinett |
| 7 | 1998 | von Simmern | Erbacher Marcobrunn | Spätlese |
| 8 | 2001 | Staatsweingut Kloster Eberbach | Rauenthaler Baiken, Gold Kapsel, (auction wine) | Spätlese |
| 9 | 1999 | Robert Weil | Estate Riesling, (Wasserros & Sandgrub vineyards) | Spätlese |
| 10 | 1998 | Hans Lang | Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen | Auslese |
| 11 | 2004 | Fred Prinz | Hallgartener Jungfer | Auslese |
| 12 | 2002 | Robert Weil | | Auslese |

Date: Wednesday, March 25th
 Time: 7 to 9 p.m.
 Location: Gate House, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco
 Price: \$40 for members, \$60 for others.
 First time guests may attend at the members' price, and each member may also bring one guest at the members' price.

The reservation deadline is Wednesday, March 18th. Checks, payable to the German Wine Society, should be sent to:

Laura Gregory
 One Laurel Lane
 Sausalito, CA 94965

Membership Renewal

We are still accepting 2009 membership dues. In addition to supporting the society, your annual dues of \$70 are a pretty good deal since members save up to \$40 per tasting compared to the non-member price.

Dues checks, payable to the German Wine Society, should be sent to:

Laura Gregory
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New Members Bonus

Members (except board members) who introduce someone who then becomes a GWS member will receive a bonus: a bottle of fine German wine from our cellar. A nice way to introduce new prospective members is for them to attend one of our events. Non-members are always welcome and may attend their first testing at the reduced member price. If you know someone who might be interested in German wine, direct them to our website for more information: www.gws-sf.org. We will also gladly e-mail copies of this newsletter to any interested persons; just give us the address.

2009 Tasting Program

Here is a quick summary of the tasting events that are coming up this year. Further details about each event will be provided in future issues of this Newsletter.

| Date | Event Theme |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <u>Tue., Jul. 16</u> | Wines of a premium producer sit down dinner (Note date change) |
| Thu., Sep. 3 | Spätburgunder and other German Reds |
| Thu., Oct 15 | Exploring the German Wine Regions |
| Thu., Dec. 3 | Holiday Sparklers and Stickies |

Best regards from your board.



GWS S.F. Chapter Management Board Members

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Tasting Notes – January 30, 2009
by Keith Mattrick

It was a beautiful crisp evening in Sausalito and the perfect setting for the first tasting event of 2009 for the San Francisco chapter of the German Wine Society. The bottles were opened and folks cheerily jumped right in. Starting off was the 1998 Langwerth Von Simmern Rauenthaler Baiken Riesling Kabinett (Rheingau) which had a vibrant and expressive nose of tangerine and soft liqueur and tasted soft and slightly sweet, it was a bit tired on the midpalate (completely unlike the vibrant nose), but came back swinging with some light crispness on the finish with some good spice.

Next up was the 1999 Dr. Loosen Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett (Middle Mosel) with a pleasant but simple nose of bare mineral and what I call paint (which is a pleasant thing for me). A welcoming dollop of light acid upfront was followed by some pretty wonderful soft peach and nectarine flavors, and a bare kiss of something mineral. The finish had me longing for something else, though it was solid, and even lively at times, somehow it just wasn't exciting for me.

Vibrant seems to be the continuing theme, as the nose of the 2000 Müller-Catoir Haardter Bürgergarten Riesling Kabinett (Pfalz) was indeed vibrant, with kiwi, lime, guava and some other very layered tropical elements going on. A fun nose. The nice quickly fading acid upfront was followed by very well-bound flavors: a light fruit touch of faded granny smith apples, a touch of spice here and there, drier elements that edged towards cheese. A more savory wine and a yummy one at that.

The age was pretty apparent on the nose of the 2001 Hessische Staatsweingüter Kloster Eberbach Rauenthaler Baiken Riesling Kabinett Goldkapsel Auction (Rheingau). Stinkier and funkier, it suggested (and aged wines is where my tasting note descriptors become ever more idiosyncratic) concrete, chrome, rust—one certainly felt they had wandered into the antiques section. A bit thicker than I'd expect from a Kabinett, it was rounded, nicely bound, rusty, and had nice faded sweetness, a nice taste now, but seems like there's no reason to delay any longer on enjoying this wine.

The 2003 Emrich-Schönleber Monzinger Frühlingsplätzchen Riesling Kabinett (Nahe) had a full but simple nose with very nice notes of hay and lime. The taste was delicious acid, good sugar, and then a dirty/earthy very cool mineral aspect. Quite a fantastic and unexpected mix. This is great stuff! it caught my fancy quite a bit.

The nose on the 1999 Robert Weil Riesling Spätlese (Rheingau) was much quieter and not very expressive at all. In terms of tasting, the dominant impression was of lightness (though the wine was actually a bit thick), which was neat. Beyond that initial impression was scrumptious juicy peach with some, mainly-fruit based, complexity. Very light on the finish again. Right now it's a really delicious peach—but the best days may lie in the future for this wine.

The time for wow, wow, wow had come with the 2000 Willi Schaefer Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese #8 (Middle Mosel). It was showing the tiniest bit of age on the nose, and it was utterly beautiful. The texture was slightly sweet and thick, but still maintained an air of delicacy. The taste was savory nuts, faded indian spice, tamarind and a melting-in-your-mouth quality. This wine is in a beautiful place and is awesome stuff for my palate.

The nose of the 2001 Von Schubert Maximin Grünhauser Abtsberg Riesling Spätlese (Ruwer) was harder to identify, some hay and cheese and bits of age. The texture was light and easy and the taste cycled through pears/nectarines/almonds to weird good savory notes with some funky rhubarb sweetness. It was a more difficult wine to pin down and I'm not exactly sure what I thought of it.

The 2005 Joh. Jos. Prüm Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Spätlese feinherb (Middle Mosel), on the other hand, had a crazy wild nose that smelled like anything but riesling—

herbs, some sulfur, even asafetida. It was stinky and it was wonderful. The taste was a delicate balance of embedded acid, tart very light and crisp apples, and a finish toward the tart and bitter. Not a beginner's riesling, perhaps, but funky and rather awesome stuff to my taste.

On a much simpler plane was the 2002 Fritz Haag Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese #6 (Middle Mosel) with a very pleasant nose of lime, acid, and stone. The razor-sharp acid was very welcome upfront and balanced by delicious pure sugar and mangoes. That was pretty much it, a delicious back and forth between those two elements. It would be interesting to check back again with this wine later in a few years.

The 2004 Weingut Keller Dalsheimer Hubacker Riesling Auslese (Rheinhessen) had a very broad nose of hay, honey, tropical fruits, and a light touch of lime. It was delicious pear syrup that managed to be delicate while thick. Concentrated and lumbering, it was the wine where my opinion diverged most from others around the room. Many were wild about it, while I, though I enjoyed the glimpse of its delicacy, was not quite as wowed. Certainly lively, it should have a good life ahead of it.

I was very excited to sample a wine from my birthyear, the 1976 Langwerth Von Simmern Rauenthaler Baiken Riesling Auslese (Rheingau). It was a beautiful smoking caramel color and the nose was vibrant and screamingly alive—delicate and light spices, smoke. The taste was scrumptious—beef jerky, aged nectarine (not sure what that means, but that's what it tasted like), smoky, spicy, everything I love about cardamom, cumin, and coriander was present in this wine in spades. Tasty and lip-smacking, I adored it. What a lovely contribution to the event. If the wine is in decline, it is a beautiful decline, and I wouldn't regret having held on to it for this long as it still tells a wonderful story.

A beautiful finish to the regular lineup was the 1999 Erben von Beulwitz Kaseler Nies'chen Riesling Beerenauslese #13 (Ruwer). It had an explosive but very nicely subtle nose with some element of the outdoors—mulch or something. A nice good light dollop of acid and wonderfully composed flavors with floral guava notes. Nicely done and in a beautiful place, drinkable indeed.

Finally the mystery wine, which ended up being the 2005 Dönnhoff Norheimer Kirschheck Riesling Spätlese (Nahe). It smelled of soft honey with a bit of lime and vanilla and offered a sweet/soft texture which was really wonderfully bound and complex. Tangy tangerine and lime, lots of tangy fun. Changes quite a bit in the glass, certainly an impressive wine well worth returning to over the course of an evening.

A very delicious lineup with wonderful wines and lively conversations.