

TERRAIR

THE REAL DIRT FROM THE ESTATES OF ERNST LOESEN

THE NOBILITY OF ROT

The sweet delights of botrytis selection

SUMMER 2006

Riesling is an amazingly versatile grape. It has an unmatched ability to capture a vineyard's *terroir*, and it is one of the few varieties that can produce a complete range of wine styles, from bone dry to monstrously sweet. In this issue, we take a look at the sweet end of the spectrum.

The high-end dessert wines that we make in Germany are some of the rarest and most astonishing wines in the world. It is thanks to the naturally occurring *botrytis cinerea* mold — often called “noble rot” — that we are able to make them.

Botrytis is an ugly, fuzzy mold that has a beautiful effect on grapes. It draws water out of them, leaving behind an ultra-concentrated nectar. The drier the grapes get, the more intense the wine will be. At harvest, we

Botrytis wines are special gifts, worth every bit of the effort.

painstakingly separate these precious, moldy grapes into three quality categories:

Auslese Gold Capsule

This “super Auslese” is our first botrytis selection. It's a luscious wine made from very ripe grapes that have just begun to be shriveled by botrytis.

Beerenauslese (BA)

This rich, honeyed dessert wine is made from botrytis-affected



Botrytis selection at harvest time requires separate picking buckets for the healthy grapes and the various stages of botrytis.

grapes that have shriveled about half way. Minimum must weight is 110° Oechsle (26 Brix), but we always go higher.

Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA)

The pinnacle of dessert wines, TBA is an extraordinarily dense and complex wine made from grapes that have shriveled down to mere raisins. Minimum 150° Oechsle (34 Brix).

Botrytis is totally dependent on weather conditions, so we can never be sure which vineyards, if any, will produce botrytis wines in a given year. Even in

years when we do get botrytis, the quantities are always very low, because grapes that have been dried by noble rot yield very little juice. We consider ourselves very lucky if we get even a few liters of any of them.

Producing these dessert wines is an expensive, labor-intensive process, but they are special gifts, worth every bit of the effort. 🍷

DR. LOOSEN DESSERT WINES

A rundown of what's normally produced

AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE

- Erdener Prälat (*very limited*)
- Erdener Treppchen
- Ürziger Würzgarten
- Wehlener Sonnenuhr

BEERENAUSLESE

- Dr. Loosen Estate (*new in 2005!*)
- Erdener Treppchen
- Ürziger Würzgarten
- Wehlener Sonnenuhr

EISWEIN

- Bernkasteler Lay
- Erdener Prälat (*very rare*)
- Erdener Treppchen
- Wehlener Sonnenuhr

TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE

- Bernkasteler Lay (*new in 2005!*)
- Erdener Prälat (*extremely rare*)
- Ürziger Würzgarten
- Wehlener Sonnenuhr



As explained in the cover story, not every dessert wine can be made in every vintage. For a list of what is currently available, please send an inquiry to us by phone, fax or e-mail (see contact info on the following page).

DR. LOOSEN PRESS NOTES

WINE SPECTATOR

[April 30, 2006]

94 | Dr. Loosen

2004 Riesling Beerenauslese Erdener Treppchen

Precision balance is the hallmark of this elegant Riesling. Peach, lime, honey and a hint of spice flavors mingle with the bright acidity and smooth texture. It ends with moderate length and intensity.

93 | Dr. Loosen

2004 Riesling Beerenauslese Wehlener Sonnenuhr

Fresh and delicate, here's a BA in a lighter, snappy style that relies more on fresh fruit than botrytis. Peach, lime and mineral aromas and flavors are persistent, courtesy of the vibrant structure. Fine lingering aftertaste. — Bruce Sanderson

WINE & SPIRITS

[December 2005]

"Choosing a Loosen wine to buy is not an issue of quality, but rather of terroir; as each wine shows its vineyard's character so clearly."

96 | Dr. Loosen

2004 Riesling Beerenauslese Wehlener Sonnenuhr

This is breathtaking in its balance and finesse, with extraordinary detail and focus. It's heady and tooth-rattlingly dense, yet its acidity keeps the wine racy and sleekly elongated, allowing the flavors to expand on the palate in three-dimensional complexity. It finishes with complex aromas and a palate-staining length, not showy, but quietly dazzling with understated elegance. — Peter Liem

ROBERT PARKER'S

WINE ADVOCATE

[Issue 163 – February 23, 2006]

"This year's collection from Loosen is indeed a tour de force, and no Mosel lover will want to be without an opportunity to follow at least a few of these wines in his or her cellar."

2004 Dr. L Riesling

relies on contract fruit, but all of it comes from steep, slate sites. The result fits into the estate portfolio both stylistically and qualitatively, resulting in a surprisingly complex and outstanding value in nearly dry Riesling. Lemon, green apple, wet stone and lightly floral aromas are followed by a crisp, slate-saturated palate and a finish of juicy citrus and apple, nut oils, mineral salts, and wet stone. **88** — David Schildknecht

WALL STREET JOURNAL

"The Dow Jones German Riesling Index" [March 3, 2006]

Dr. Loosen 2004 Riesling Kabinett Bernkasteler Lay

Best of tasting. Bright, with bracing fruit and spiky lemon flavors. Fresh and vibrant, with a long, orange-blossom finish. Interesting sweet-tart tastes. Nicely focused and light as a whisper.

YORKSHIRE PRESS (UK)

[June 3, 2006]

Surely the most reliable wine in the world award should go to Loosen Bros. **Dr. L Riesling 2005?** Previous vintages have had rave reviews in this column. The 2005 keeps up the good work. — Mike Tipping

THE TORTOISE WINS AGAIN

A slow, steady growing season leads to a legendary finish

There's no doubt about it: The 2005 vintage rocks! And it's all thanks to a remarkably unremarkable growing season.

Weather-wise, 2005 was very ho-hum in Germany. Just your usual stuff, with nothing out of the ordinary. But when it really counted — in September and October — the weather didn't turn ugly, as it often does. September, in fact, was simply gorgeous, bringing beautiful ripeness to the grapes well before the harvest began in mid-October.

Acidity levels are also excellent, which means the wines have extraordinary balance. So, with the full ripeness, long hang time and bright acidity that this "unremarkable" growing season gave us, we have what Ernst calls, "A classic Auslese vintage." We made the full range of Prädikats, except for Eiswein, but the Auslese in particular seem to shine.

All of the wines have an amazing density of fruit, with complex, layered flavors and real staying power. Even our simplest Mosel wine, the Dr. L Riesling, is weighty, deep and drenched in minerals. It may be the richest, most "serious" Dr. L we've ever made.

The Kabinett and Spätlese wines at Dr. Loosen share this character of power and density, with each single-vineyard site bringing its own special taste



Photo © Kohlhaas Fotodesign

Our most experienced harvest workers handle the demanding job of meticulous botrytis selection.

into the bottle. The fruit is so pure and bright, and the structure so firm and elegant, that these wines are going to age gracefully for many years.

At J.L. Wolf, we find the same thing: beautiful, vibrant fruit, a dense structure and juicy acidity. Yields were quite low, so quantities of the estate wines are limited. But never fear — the Villa Wolf varietal line (from contracted fruit) is in good supply.

The crowning glory of the vintage, without question, was the abundance of perfect botrytis. Morning Mosel mists brought it on, but the fine fall weather kept it dry. That is the ideal situation for making clean, pure botrytis wines. For that, we thank this slow and steady tortoise of a vintage.

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receive it, please send an e-mail
to newsletter@drloosen.com



At Spago with Wolfgang Puck (left) and Ste. Michelle winemaker Bob Bertheau – first stop on the 2006 Riesling Roadshow.

ON THE RIESLING ROAD

Everything seems to be coming up Riesling these days. Everywhere I go now, people are excited, enthusiastic and energetically supportive of Riesling. It's sure a refreshing change from the sad state of Riesling affairs when I started in this business 20 years ago.

In February, I attended the semi-annual Frankland Estate International Riesling Tasting in Sydney, Australia. This sold-out event attracts Riesling growers, wine pros, journalists and wine lovers from all over the world. It could have been filled many times over.

In March, I spoke at the 30th annual Wineries Unlimited conference in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where the focus was on Riesling. Many passion-

ate winemakers were there to learn about and discuss our favorite grape. I met several who are already making excellent Rieslings in places like New York and Michigan.

Later in March, I visited Southern California and Las Vegas to co-present a series of

“Everything seems to be coming up Riesling these days.”

trade seminars on Riesling together with Chateau Ste. Michelle. Once again, a very eager crowd filled every venue of our Riesling Roadshow.

It's all very encouraging, and I'm looking forward to many more adventures on the Riesling Road. Please join me!

— Ernst Loosen