

THE WINEMAKER'S CLUB

German/Alsace Whites - July 12, 2008

Riesling Profile

Riesling's homeland is Germany, where it has been cultivated since the 1400s. Riesling is produced in a range of styles, from bone dry and crisp to Botrytis-infected, late-picked grapes known as Trockenbeerenauslese. If left on the vine, Riesling will develop Edelfäule (Nobel Rot). A non-toxic mold, Botrytis cinerea, shrivels the grapes, evaporates the juice, and concentrates the sugar. German hierarchy for the degree of noble rot: Spätlese (late-picked), Auslese, Beerenauslese, and Trockenbeerenauslese. These latter, sweet Riesling wines have especially long aging potential. Indeed, Riesling's high acidity makes it suitable for extended aging: 5-15 years for dry, 10-20 years for semi-sweet and 10-30+ for sweet versions. You may also have heard this wine referred to as Johannisberg Riesling. Schloss **Johannisberg** is a winery in the Rheingau wine-growing region in Germany.

Aroma (from the grape varietal): woodruff, rose petal, violet, apple, pear, peach, apricot.

Bouquet (from the winemaking and aging): petroleum (diesel, kerosene, rubber) in aged wines and mineral (flint, steel).

Noteworthy Regions: Hillsides with cool climates, like the Mosel and Rhine River valley regions in Germany. Riesling is also successful in Alsace, France, in California (Santa Barbara, Monterey, Santa Cruz, and Mendocino) and in Washington and Oregon.

Gewürztraminer Profile

French Alsatians call this grape gewürztraminer, which literally means spiced or perfumed traminer. The parent grape is Traminer from Italy. Gewürztraminer has a dark pink color and produces wine colored from light to dark golden yellow with a copper tone. Full-bodied with a strong, perfume scent and heavy texture.

Aroma (from the grape varietal): rose petal, gardenia, honeysuckle, lychee, linalool, peach, mango, spice, perfume.

Bouquet (from the winemaking and aging): petroleum and honey with late harvest.

Noteworthy Regions: Alsace, France is the best region for Gewürztraminer. In the U.S., the best regions are in California (Monterey, Mendocino and Sonoma) and in Washington and Oregon.

Next Winemaker's Club Meeting

Saturday, August 9, 2008 at 5:30 pm: California Reds (Zinfandel, Petite Sirah).