

THE FINE WINE REVIEW

2007 IN GERMANY, PART I: A GREAT VINTAGE

The Year of the Long Hang Time

It takes some cheek to go out on a limb and call the 2007 vintage for Riesling in Germany great after the skein of vintages that started with 1988, but that's what I'm going to do. Of all those vintages, virtually all of which were at least very good to outstanding, the wines that I have tasted so far from 2007 stand out more than those from any other vintage with the exception of 1990. Moreover, when one tastes the 1990s today and one can see that the vineyard and cellar practices have changed so that the wines are not fully comparable.

Before getting into what makes the wines of 2007 so special, let's discuss some limitations. There's not a lot of botrytis in this vintage (although as always, there are exceptions), so if you are looking for heavily botrytised wines to purchase and cellar, you generally are better off looking at 2005 and 2006, both outstanding for this type of wine. Second, even if you accept that the late harvest wines generally don't have a lot of botrytis (which is not necessarily bad), the amounts of late harvest wines in 2007 are not large, so it will not necessarily be easy to find them. Third, although Eiswein was made in 2007, not all the examples that I tasted were thrilling, so those in search of Eiswein may want to search for other vintages unless they have tasted the specific example that they are searching. Finally, even where 2007 does rank as a great and memorable vintage – Spätlese, Kabinett, and dry wines – not all producers were uniformly successful, but such is the case in almost any vintage.

In addition to the foregoing, I should add that the wines do not stand out for dramatic qualities. Rather, it is the harmony and completeness of the wines and the overall balance and very fine acidity that make them a very special case. Additionally, from capable producers, it was possible to get very good wines from lesser vineyards, thereby narrowing the quality gap among vineyards compared to various other vintages. In these ways, the strengths of 2007 German Rieslings parallel the strengths of the already-storied 2005 red Burgundies.

Another notable, and welcome, characteristic is that after two short crops in 2006 and 2005, there are good amounts of 2007 available.

Weather Conditions. Generally, the winter was not very stressful and there was enough rain to lay the foundation for a good vintage. Warm weather in April was followed by even hotter weather in May, leading to what is generally called the earliest bud break and flowering in recorded history, although Dirk Richter with Max Ferdinand Richter in the Mosel says that from 1911 to 1921, there were several vintages that were this precocious. By late June, it looked as though the harvest was going to be extremely early, perhaps competing with 2003. But then a largely cool July and August with rain at appropriate times slowed the development in the vineyards, and by September, the vintage was only a few weeks ahead of normal. In mid-September, there were some weather incidents that suggested a

repeat of 2006, especially in the southern Pfalz and Baden, causing some producers to panic and harvest out of fear of a repeat of 2006, when the vineyards degraded very rapidly. But the weather in late September and October was beautiful and mild, allowing producers to go at the harvest pace that they preferred at each step of the way -- a rarity, if not unique. As a consequence of this delay caused by the cool summer and the fine weather in late September and October, instead of the usual harvesting of grapes a hundred days after flowering, the came in 120 to 130 days after flowering, sometimes even more. These conditions yielded wines with good acidity but with more of a balance to tartaric acidity and away from malic acidity than usual, thereby giving the very fine acidity of the vintage, and possibly being responsible also for the yellow fruit, honey, and quince elements that occur so frequently in the wines.

For much of the late harvest wine, it was the concentration that came from the long time on the vine, rather than botrytis, that made for the sweetness and concentration. Because of the relative lack of late harvest wines, the vintage has been designated a Kabinett and Spätlese vintage -- a good description as long as you understand that Kabinetts today are a different breed from what they were before the late 1990s. Additionally, although there are many beautifully-balanced Kabinetts and Spätlesen, there do exist ones that are too alcoholic and/or do not have proper sugar/acid balance.

Grosses/Erstes Gewächs. In other developments, the concept of the *Grosses/Erstes Gewächs* continues to evolve. For space reasons, I refer you to the website of the outstanding group of producers, the Verein Deutscher Prädikatsträger (VDP) at www.vdp.de and the explanation under the "classification" link. I add the further explanation that only VDP members and vineyards in which they have holdings can be classified as an *Erste Lage* from which a *Grosses Gewächs* wine can be made, and *Grosses Gewächs* is limited to wines of VDP members. Thus, for example, the great Maximiner Grünhaus Abtsberg vineyard is not an *Erste Lage* because the vineyard's sole owner, von Schubert, is not a VDP member. An additional complication (nothing is ever simple in Germany) is the state of Hesse (Rheingau vineyards): there the vineyards are set by law, and the producer's membership in VDP is not determinative of ranking of the vineyard or whether the producer may produce an *Erstes Gewächs* wine -- it must merely be from an *Erstes Gewächs* vineyard and be judged by a tasting panel to be of sufficient quality.

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In some regions, notably the Pfalz, *Grosses Gewächs* means that the producer can't make other wine labelled from that vineyard except for Auslese and above. This obviously favors those with small holdings in *Grosses Gewächs* -- a producer that has a large holding in a particular vineyard may find that he produces far more wine than he can market as *Grosses Gewächs* and lose his harvest. Also, there is an arbitrary rule on amount of residual sugar that can be in a *Grosses Gewächs* wine -- but it is the sugar/acid balance that will determine whether the wine is dry tasting or not, not merely the amount of sugar. Further, different terroirs show their best qualities in different types of wines, as Helmut Dönnhoff, who knows a thing or two about terroir, observed. Some may produce their best wines as dry wines and late harvest, others may be ideally suited to Spätlese.

Many producers put only the name of the vineyard on the front label, as is the case with Burgundy *grand cru*. The problem is, that even among *Erste Lage* vineyards, there are three different Kirchenstück *Erste Lagen* (Rheingau, Pfalz, and Franken), two different Jesuitengarten *Erste Lagen* (Rheingau, Pfalz), etc. In Burgundy, there is only one Chambertin, one Richebourg, or one Corton-Charlemagne. (If Meursault-Perrières ever were promoted to *grand cru* quality, that would no longer be true, as there are many Perrières vineyards in Burgundy.)

Some further observations:

-- 2007 is very good for grapes other than Riesling, but not as special as it is for Riesling.

--Americans (at least in San Francisco and New York) are becoming serious consumers of German dry (*trocken*) style wines, which previously had been difficult to sell here; symmetrically, fruity-style QbA, Kabinetts, and Spätlesen are finally beginning to make inroads with the German public.

-- In some regions, such as Pfalz, Rheinhessen, Nahe, many producers are labelling all their dry wines as QbA trocken and eschewing the Prädikat of Kabinett, Spätlese, or Auslese, if applicable. This makes eminent sense to me; dry wines are all the same style; in contrast, for the fruity style, Kabinett, Spätlese, and Auslese are (or should be) each different styles of wine.

-- The Germans are doing very well in finding new markets around the world; even in Europe, Italy and Spain are now becoming significant markets for top German wines.

-- Although German wines are more expensive than they used to be (in part related to the weakness of the dollar), for their level of quality, they generally remain very fairly priced, especially compared to wines of equivalent quality from other areas.

-- German Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder) remains uneven (as I suppose Pinot Noir is everywhere). Frequently, excesses of oak and/or alcohol remain problematic, but not always. Some producers are achieving world-class quality, others not. For some reason, many of the wines do not show well when initially poured, but are transformed when they have been open 24-48 hours. Some of the wines are also unusual to those used to Burgundy because they come from slate soils, not found in Burgundy.

About the Notes Below. All wines below are Riesling if no other grape is identified. *Trocken* and *dry* are used interchangeably here as they may differ from one label to the next of the same wine. The same for *halbtrocken* and *medium-dry*. These days, most, but not all, producers use *halbtrocken*/medium dry to signify a wine that tastes essentially dry but with a little more roundness (due to residual sugar) than a *trocken*/dry wine. A wine that tastes a little sweet often is labelled *feinherb* these days because that avoids the arbitrary legal limits on amount of residual sugar that govern the *trocken* and *halbtrocken* designations.

Words in parentheses appear on the back label but not the front label, although as with the use of *trocken* and dry, the same wine many have different labels for different markets.

GG = *Grosses Gewächs*; EG = *Erstes Gewächs*; EL = *Erste Lage*.

The last digits of the A.P. Nr. identify the lot; two bottles with the same A.P. numbers are from the same lot; two bottles with different A.P. numbers are different lots.

Time has not allowed me to write up all the wines that I have tasted and I will continue to taste wines of this vintage for review. I will write the rest up in a second issue devoted to the vintage.

AHR

NELLES

2007 SPÄTBURGUNDER (TROCKEN) 1479N **\$26.00 85/C+**
All Pinot Noir should be drunk cool (55-58° F), but it is especially important with this wine, Nelles's entry-level Pinot Noir, which is really more comparable to a Beaujolais than a Pinot Noir. The wine shows energetic, if simple, red and dark fruit aromas and flavors in a medium-light body. Drink young (artificial cork). 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 002 08. Importer: Winesellers, Ltd., Skokie, IL.

MOSEL (FORMERLY MOSEL-SAAR-RUWER)

The new rules have changed the appellation from Mosel-Saar-Ruwer to Mosel, although Saar wines can be labelled Saar or Mosel. The offense for Ruwer appears to be that Ruwer is both the name of a river and its valley and the name of a town in that valley, and consumers might confuse a wine from the Ruwer Valley with a wine from the town of Ruwer. Fortunately, the French do not think these things through so deeply or else we would not have appellations such as Vosne-Romanée, Gevrey-Chambertin, or Margaux, all of which allow vineyards outside the communal borders. Producers are allowed to use up remaining labels, though, so you may still find Mosel-Saar-Ruwer on the labels of some 2007s.

CLEMENS BUSCH

2007 KABINETT TROCKEN	91(+)/B+
2007 KABINETT "N" TROCKEN	92/A-
2007 SPÄTLESE TROCKEN **	93/A
2007 MARIENBERG ROTHENPFAD GG	94(+)/A
2007 MARINEBERG	94+/A
2007 VOM ROTEN SCHIEFER	94/A
2007 ROTHENPFAD	94/A
2007 FAHRLAY	94+/A
2007 FALKENLAY	94+/A
2007 FAHRLAY TERRASSEN	94+/A
2007 FELSTERRASSE	93(+)/A
2007 RAFFES	94/A
2007 KABINETT FRUCHT SÜSS	91/A
2007 MARIENBERG SPÄTLESE EL	94/A
2007 MARIENBERG SPÄTLESE GOLD CAPSULE EL	94+/A
2007 MARIENBERG VOM ROTEN SCHIEFER	95/A

2007 MARIENBERG AUSLESE FAHRLAY EL	94(+)/A
2007 MARIENBERG AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE EL	95/A
2007 MARIENBERG AUSLESE LONG GOLD CAPSULE EL (AUCTION)	96/A
2007 MARIENBERG BEERENAUSLESE EL	98/A
2007 MARIENBERG TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE EL	99/A

I only began visiting Busch last year, but this year, as last year, the visit was one of my highlights in Germany. He is a perfectionist who says that he, his wife, and his son do not like to do the fancy publicity-related events, but would rather spend the time in the vineyards. Did someone say terroir? This fanatic for terroir has a multitude of wines (I'm sure that I didn't taste them all) because he wishes to capture the individual expression of each plot. The first wine is the *Kabinett trocken*, harvested 3 November. Stony quince aromas are followed in the mouth by calmness and purity with minerality, roundness, and complexity. This wine is quite delicious already. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 7 08. The *N* in the *Kabinett "N" trocken* stands for Nonnengarten, which is a second name for the Marienberg vineyard that is Busch's prime property. The soils here are red slate. The wine is slightly rounder in the nose than the regular *Kabinett trocken* and is tender. In the mouth, it is firmer and still has calmness with stone flavors much more evident, as well as minerality and a bit more hardness. This is a linear wine that is long with yellow fruits, especially plums. Clemens Busch likens it to a Rheingau -- which I find, too, in its texture and the yellow plum fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 8 08. Busch has two types of Spätlesen from the Marienberg vineyard. ** means healthy grapes, *** means some botrytis, and hence more opulent. The *Spätlese trocken* ** has floral honey and quince aromas, followed on the palate by floral flavors with beeswax, honey, and purity. The wine is calm, precise, round, long, and silky in texture. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 9 08. The *Grosses Gewächs Marienburg Rothenpfad*, despite having been bottled just a few weeks prior to tasting, showed extremely well: more intense in the nose with beeswax aromas. Intense in the mouth but also pure, calm, and very long with depth and juiciness but also finesse to the beeswax. This is from red slate soils. The *Marienburg* is less floral in the nose than the previous, but more mineral. This is from gray slate soils. In the mouth, the wine has more to the flesh of the fruit, but at the same time is more austere and closed: quince and yellow plums are apparent and there is more power than in the prior wine, but also great finesse. Busch's *vom Roten Schiefer* is from red slate soils, as the German name states. The wine is spicy and round in the nose, and lemony and round in the mouth with purity and a sensual texture to go with tremendous development of the yellow fruit. It is harmonious and tastes dry even though there are 14 g/l residual sugar here. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 35 08. The *Rothenpfad* is subtly spicy with a bit of juiciness to its yellow fruit and honey aromas. On the palate, the wine is broad and sensual with a velvet/satin texture and length to the yellow plum fruit. Here, too, red soils and 14 g/l residual sugar and the style is *halbtrocken*. 13.5% alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 31 08. The *Fahrlay* comes from blue slate soils. The wine is more concentrated and less floral in the nose than the *Rothenpfad*. In the mouth, the minerality is more marked, and the wine is a bit less broad with tenderness -- again *halbtrocken* in style. 13.7% alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 27 08. The *Falkenlay* is from gray slate soils with some red mixed in. There is some botrytis in this wine -- Busch says that it is his best location for late harvest wines. There is some spiciness in the nose, but it is mostly closed. I got the impression of biting into fresh fruit, especially yellow fruit, in the mouth, and overall the wine is like a synthesis of the two previous wines. Also *halbtrocken* in style. 14.3% alcohol, although it doesn't show. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 28 08. The *Fahrlay Terrassen* is from 65 year-old vines on terraced vineyards. It is floral with a bit of honey and beeswax in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is intense and concentrated with citric flavors. It is still quite young with nervy acidity and seems dry with no sense of alcohol. Harvested at 111° Oe, I was amazed to learn that the wine has 15.8% alcohol because it doesn't show! Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 32 08. The *Felsterasse* is from 75 year-old vines on terraced gray slate soils. There is a slight touch of butter here but the wine is still mostly closed in the nose. In the mouth, it is lighter and more lively than the *Fahrlay Terrassen* with a little sweetness showing. The flavors are citric and

mineral, the texture is chewy and almost meaty, but the wine needs time to come together, impressive as it already is. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 33 08. The *Raffes* has a hint of grapefruit peel with tropical aromas -- almost like a Sauvignon Blanc. The grapefruit continues in the mouth with more structure and dryness (although the sugar is perceptible) than the preceding few wines. This wine is nervy, juicy, and powerful, but very young and needs some time to express itself. 14.5% alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 34 08.

Turning to the fruity-style wines, the *Kabinett "Fruchtsüss"* is from gray slate soils with some botrytis. The wine has leesy notes in the nose, and is chewy, rich, and lemony in the mouth with purity and nervosity and apples on the finish. 7.5% alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 4 08. The *Marienberg Spätlese* is lemony, flinty, and spicy in the nose. In the mouth, it is ripe, round, sensual, and powerful with lemony flavors that are pure and linear. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 15 08. The *Marienberg Gold Cap Spätlese* has apply aromas and in the mouth is richer but more closed than the regular Marienberg Spätlese. It is lemony with some tropical fruit, lively with some botrytis showing, and seems almost like an Auslese. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 26 08. The *Marienberg "vom Roten Schiefer"* has spice and honey in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is long, deep, nervy, caressing, pure, calm, and honeyed. There are some spice flavors, but also minerality and peach and pear fruit. This superb wine is a fine example of the proverbial iron fist in a velvet glove. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 21 08. Busch's *Marienberg Fahrlay Auslese* is long, mineral, and nervy and almost gold capsule in style for its richness and botrytis. The *Marienberg Gold Cap Auslese* is notable for its purity and the great quality of its botrytis. The wine is honeyed, calm long, subtle, rich, ripe and creamy and is delicious to drink already. The *Marienberg Long Gold Cap Auslese* is even more pure and dense, really Beerenauslese in style with honey and brown sugar in the nose and mouth. This, too, is wonderful to drink now, but it will age seemingly forever. Speaking of Beerenauslese, the *Marienberg Beerenauslese* in fact could be a Trockenbeerenauslese. The fabulous nose is concentrated with sauteed apples and quince. In the mouth, the wine shows great density and purity with caramelized apples. It is a breathtaking wine. Busch has three TBAs in 2007, but I only tasted one as the other two had not finished fermenting. The *Marienberg Trockenbeerenauslese* is even more intense than the Beerenauslese with caramelized brown sugar aromas and flavors and lively mineral flavors with plenty of acidity. The wine is not heavy, but it is so intense that one sip is sufficient. It is one of the very greatest wines of the vintage. Importer: Mosel Wine Merchant, New York.

ANSGAR CLÜSSERATH

2007 STEINREICH (TROCKEN)

92(+)/A-

Raised in Fuder, the *Steinreich* is nervy, pure, and mineral with austerity for the moment, but plenty of promise for 2-3 years down the road. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, New York.

LE GALLAIS

2007 WILTINGER BRAUNE KUPP AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE

97/A

From Egon Müller, who owns half the estate, this superb wine shows a touch of smoke with some honey in the nose. The botrytis is quite evident here. In the mouth, the wine is dense and deep with honeyed golden fruit and plenty of apple. It is interesting to taste with Müller's Scharzhofberger because the structure is not the same here. The wine is long and fine with more elegance and a fine, drawn quality, compared to the more rigorous structure of the Scharzhofberger. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. Various importers.

CARL GRAFF

2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH SPÄTLESE

\$15.00 88/B

2007 ÜRZIGER WÜRZGARTEN AUSLESE**\$23.00 87(+)/C**

Year after year, I've tasted wines from this negociant and said that for the money, they were not bad, but the truth was, for the vineyards, they were disappointing -- notwithstanding that they have featured wines made under the supervision of the likes of Ernie Loosen and Robert Eymael. But 2007 represents a major change. The *Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese* is stony in the nose and mouth with typical austerity and good acidic attack. This is not a wine to lay away for 10-20 years, but for the next few years, there is great pleasure to be had, no matter how well you know German wine. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 09/08. The *Ürziger Würzgarten Auslese* seems complete but very young. No botrytis showing here, and with high acidity, the wine does not come across as terribly sweet -- but very good for accompanying food. Crystalline pear and apple fruit here with a little spice. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 08/08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

GRANS-FASSIAN

2007 RIESLING	\$21.00	SEE NOTES
2007 TRITTENHEIMER KABINETT	\$25.00	90/A
2007 TRITTENHEIMER APOTHEKE SPÄTLESE GOLD CAPSULE	\$38.00	93/A
2007 PIESPORTER GOLDTRÖPFCHEN SPÄTLESE		91/A-

The estate *Riesling* despite its 9.5% stated alcohol, is sweet beyond balance for my palate. If you have this, serve it virtually at freezer temperature or age it 8-10 years so that the sugar drops. The wine does display good slate minerality. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. The *Trittenheimer Kabinett* is juicy with yellow peach and pineapple flavors and freshness from the acidity. This is not one of the profound Kabinetts of the vintage, but it is immensely enjoyable. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 8 08. The outstanding *Trittenheimer Apotheke Gold Cap Spätlese* is a wine of great finesse with incisive nectarine and yellow peach fruit and roundness from the year's fine acidity. The wine is fairly full in the mouth, yet also extremely light. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2 08. For the *Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Spätlese*, the fullness and power of the vineyard are not as marked as I find with some other producers, but the wine displays excellent slate minerality with refreshing acidity and characteristic yellow peach and clove, as well as overall balance and nervosity. Stated alcohol: 8%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

FRITZ HAAG

2007 TROCKEN	90/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	91+/B+
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR SPÄTELESE TROCKEN	92/A-
2007 RIESLING	88/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER KABINETT	86/B
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER SPÄTLESE	92/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE	94(+)/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE (AUCTION)	97/A+
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER AUSLESE	94/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR AUSLESE	95(+)/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR AUSLESE #10	96(+)/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE	95(+)/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE	96+/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE #12	96+/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR BEERENAUSLESE	97/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	99/A

I had already had quite a day, including visits to Dönnhoff and Schäfer-Fröhlich, and as I made the twisty drive from the Nahe to Brauneberg, I wondered whether I could possibly find wines to match those from earlier in the day. As I walked up the stairs of the attractive, modern building I discovered a new addition of a lovely tasting area surrounded with glass that allows the visitor to look out in one direction to a lovely green forest behind the house, and in another across the Mosel to the impressive steep slope of the Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr vineyard. I was greeted by three generations of winemakers here -- retired Wilhelm, his son Olivier who is the current generation, and after shaking their hands, two year-old Fritz, the next generation, tugged at my trouser to be sure that I bent over to shake his hand, too. We then sat down to the work of evaluating the wines, and I learned, indeed, that I would find wines to match those from earlier in the day, and as memorable as any set I have tasted from this great estate. We start with a surprisingly fine QbA *trocken*. The pure, mineral lime aromas are followed by a mouth with very fine acidity, good length, very good density, and none of the harshness one might fear from a Mosel dry wine. 11.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer Spätlese trocken* has very finely-beaded acidity with classic blue slate minerality, calm, purity, and overall roundness. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 17 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese trocken* is more closed and more strict for the moment, but also may have more potential for the future with great tension and electricity here. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 08 08.

The QbA *Riesling* begins the transition to the fruity-style wines. The wine is off-dry with clear lemony fruit, a smooth texture, very good purity, and overall refreshing in impression. It is for drinking in the next few years. The *Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett* was my one disappointment here, and indeed, Olivier did say that the vineyard works best either for dry wines or late harvest wines. I found the wine relatively (too) sweet and a little soft. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 03 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer Spätlese*, however, bounces back to the level of quality of the rest of the wines. It shows quince fruit, purity, and a smooth texture. But it is with the *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese* that the truly special wines begin. The wine is ripe and rich with minerality and pure, filigreed yellow and white peach and apricot fruit and great energy and depth. And then there is the phenomenal *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr acution Spätlese*. The wine is rich, pure, and deep with fantastic potential to its peach fruit, and it maintains its Spätlese presence with not too much sweetness, but a fabulous combination of finesse and intensity. The noble sweet wine parade begins with the *Brauneberger Juffer Auslese*. The wine shows white peach aromas followed in the mouth by fine underlying acidity that gives tension to the honeyed peach flavors. The wine is elegant and not too sweet, making for delicious drinking already. Almost no botrytis in this wine. The *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese* similarly has almost no botrytis. The nose is still fairly closed, white peach aromas are notable. In the mouth, the wine is more tightly wound than the Juffer with lots of energy to go with its white peach, quince, and apricot fruit. This is a lovely expression of Juffer-Sonnenuhr with the lightness and energy combined. This is a wine for holding 10 years or so before drinking. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 06 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese #10* does have some botrytis, but it is very healthy botrytis. The nectarine nose is followed by purity in the mouth with fine acidity and filigreed yellow peach flavors. This is much more nuanced than the previous wine. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer Gold Cap Auslese* is round and more relaxed than the Juffer-Sonnenuhr. The wine is honeyed with peach fruit, good acidity but still a somewhat soft texture. It is an elegant wine that should develop well. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 22 08. Haag's *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Gold Cap Auslese* shows the extra concentration from botrytis but is still very elegant with great finesse to its peach and other yellow fruits. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 09 08. Great finesse to the peach and quince aromas provide the introduction to the *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Gold Cap Auslese #12*. In the mouth, the wine is significantly denser and deeper than the "regular" Gold Cap Auslese but it still retains the

elegance, along with the intensity and nervosity. Honeyed apricot and nectarine flavors of great purity and definition complete the fabulous package. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr Beerenauslese* has great filigree, depth, and purity to its apricot and peach fruit and perfect balance. But this stunner needs 20-30 years in the cellar to show its full potential. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 16 08. Finally, the *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr-Sonnenuhr Trockenbeerenauslese* begins with strong peach aromas. The wine has fantastic acidity in the mouth, like a great Eiswein and it is clear and mineral. This is ideal Mosel TBA. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 21 08. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

REICHSGRAF VON KESSELSTATT

2007 PIESPORTER GOLDTRÖPFCHEN KABINETT	\$24.00 91(+)/A
2007 JOSEPHSHÖFER KABINETT	\$25.00 90(+)/A
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER KABINETT	\$29.00 93/A+
2007 JOSEPHSHÖFER SPÄTLESE EL	\$46.00 93/A
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER SPÄTLESE EL	\$34.00 95/A
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE #10 EL	94+/A

Kesselstatt's *Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Kabinett* is firm but opulent and powerful with Piesporter yellow peach fruit. The acidity is sufficient that the wine does not taste overly sweet, and there is quite a bit of depth here. You can drink the wine with great pleasure now, but ideally, I would guess it held for at least ten years. Stated alcohol: 8.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 14 08. The *Josephshöfer Kabinett*, from a vineyard owned entirely by Kesselstatt, is still quite young. The wine shows gooseberry and grapefruit aromas, followed by slight sweetness in the mouth with a medium-light weight and apple flavors in the mouth. I expect it to show still better by the beginning of 2009. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 15 08. Kesselstatt's *Scharzhofberger Kabinett* is classic Scharzhofberger: tight acids with very stony aromas and flavors, barely showing sweetness for the moment because of the great acidity. Very noble and austere. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. The *Josephshöfer Spätlese* is delicious already with filigreed yellow peach aromas and flavors in a delicate body supported by elegant acidity. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 32 08. Kesselstatt's *Scharzhofberger Spätlese* is nothing short of sensational. The wine is light and elegant with pure, precise yellow peach fruit, Saar firmness underneath, and beautifully balanced sugar/acid play. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 28 08. Although the *Scharzhofberger Gold Cap Auslese #10* shows plenty of botrytis, it is less penetrating and interesting, at least to this taster, than the Spätlese from the same vineyard. Simply: the botrytis seems not to be fully clean, and so the penetration and purity are not on the same level. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 35 08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

LUBENTIUSHOF/ANDREAS BARTH

2007 BURG VON DER LEYEN TROCKEN	(88-91)
2007 GONDORFER GÄNS TROCKEN	(90-93)
2007 KOBERNER UHLEN ALTE REBEN	(90-94)
2007 GONDORFER GÄNS ALTE REBEN	(90-94)
2007 GONDORFER GÄNS KABINETT	(90-93)
2007 GONDORFER GÄNS SPÄTLESE	(91-94)
2007 GONDORFER GÄNS AUSLESE	(91-94)

Andreas Barth is the winemaker at von Othegraven in the Saar and has these vineyards at his own estate in the lower (eastern) Mosel, an area that has not historically been renowned but thanks to producers such as Busch, Heymann-Löwnestein, and Knebel, the region is gaining notice. Add Barth to the list of excellent producers. I tasted these wines on 30 August, 2008, about two weeks before Barth was going to bottle them. He began the 2007 harvest around 20 October and continued to early November. The wines

undergo a long spontaneous fermentation in stainless steel. The *Burg von der Leyen trocken* is very pure, long, and silky with minerality with calm and elegance but also substantial body and it is dry. The *Gondorfer Gäns trocken* is from a mixture of blue slate, quartzit and *Grauwacke*. The wine is pure, silky, smooth and long-drawn with apricot fruit beginning to peek through. The *Koberner Uhlen alte Reben* is from 60 year-old vines. The nose is mineral and fine. In the mouth, there is substance and density with yellow plum fruit and finesse. The wine tastes essentially dry. Barth's *Gondorfer Gäns alte Reben* is from vines that are 80-90 years old. Still closed in the nose, the wine shows plenty of substance with deep yellow plum fruit backed by the wonderful fine acidity that characterizes the vintage and the wine is quite long. It tastes virtually dry and is round and creamy. Turning to the fruity-style wines, the *Gondorfer Gäns Kabinett* has a fine, flinty nose with a touch of nutmeg and vanillin and other spices. In the mouth, the wine is round and off-dry with slate and yellow peach flavors, and it is finely-drawn and elegant. Barth's *Gondorfer Gäns Spätlese* is spiced and fine in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is round and ripe with some botrytis showing, here to concentrate the wine. Spicy and very fine on the palate, this wine is close to being an Auslese in style. Last, the *Gondorfer Gäns Auslese* has honeyed lees aromas (Barth leaves his wines on the lees for a long time as do many other top producers, most notably J. J. Prüm). In the mouth, the wine shows considerable finesse and is long and filigreed with sweetness, elegance, and purity. No current U.S. importer.

MARKUS MOLITOR

2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE KABINETT FEINHERB	89/A-
2007 ZELTINGER SONNENUHR KABINETT	91/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE	94(+)/A

This was my first visit to this producer who began in 1983 with thee ha. of vines and now has an amazing 42 ha in 20 different single vineyards and produces 60-80 different wines each year. On such a scale, one expects industrial wines of little interest, but there is surprising quality here. 94% of the vines are Riesling and 4% are in Pinot Noir. Molitor uses no enzymes, clarification, bacteria, or cultured yeasts. He has some steel tanks, but 70-75% of the wines are in large wood casks (*Fuder*). The *Bernkasteler Badstube feinherb* shows pure slate aromas and flavors. The wine shows just slightly sweet and should be delicious with food. The *Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Kabinett* is from Molitor's favorite vineyard. He owns 5 ha here, one quarter of the total vineyard. The wine displays very fine acidity with great finesse and length and some minerality in its fruit. The *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese* is floral with some vanillins in the nose -- archly typical of Wehlener Sonnenuhr. The Sonnenuhr continues in the mouth with elegance length, quince flavors, and leesiness. Importer: Schmitt Soehne, Atlanta, GA.

EGON MÜLLER

2007 SCHARZHOF	91/A+
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER KABINETT (# 3)	94(+)/A+
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER KABINETT (# 5)	94/A+
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER SPÄTLESE	96/A+
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER SPÄTLESE (AUCTION)	96(+)/A+
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER AUSLESE (#7)	96(+)/A
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER AUSLESE (#11)	97/A+
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE	98/A+

I tasted many great collections of 2007s, but perhaps the greatest overall collection that I tasted was here, at what is justly one of the most renowned wine estates in the world. Egon Müller said that there is relatively little botrytis in his 2007s; there is some in the grapes picked from 10 October on, but quantitatively, that represents relatively little of the production. As he likes botrytis in his wines, it was not surprising that he said that in the future, people will debate 2005 (where there is more botrytis) vs.

2007 the way they now debate 1971 vs. 1976 (high botrytis in 1976; most observers would today choose 1971 as the greater vintage; but at Müller, the 1976s are exceptional, perhaps influencing his outlook). This is a raised expectation because at the end of the harvest, Müller did not think 2007 had the potential of 2006. Müller also thinks that the wines will close down hard after about two years, only to reopen again some time down the road. The QbA *Scharzhof* is from vines in Saarburg, mostly harvested at the beginning. As a QbA it is stunning: pure, beautiful Saar wet stone aromas. The mouth is essentially dry, but the wine is fruit and pure with a very direct structure. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2 08. There are three Kabinetts, and I tasted two of them. Interestingly, although analytically all are the same, at least between the two that I tasted, there are notable differences. The first *Scharzhofberger Kabinett* (#3) is from the center of the vineyard and relatively late harvested. The wine is stony, pretty, and pure in the nose with some botrytis. In the mouth, the wine is fruity and stony with white peach fruit that is crystalline in quality and very pure, but with Saar structure. It is like biting into a perfect piece of fruit. Müller's Kabinetts can last forever -- the 1976 is just now at its peak. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 3 08. I did not taste the #4, but it, like the #5 is from the Oberemmel side of the vineyard; the #4 was picked early, the #5 late. The *Scharzhofberger Kabinett* (#5) is lighter with nectarine fruit that is quite pure; it is a bit more austere than the #3, but it seems that it also might mature a little earlier. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 5 08. The *Scharzhofberger Spätlese* shows pure, wet and chipped stone aromas, followed in the mouth by yellow fruits, especially some mirabelle plum, and honey. There is great depth here and lovely acidity to balance against the richness and sugar. Plenty of ripeness, and this wine is lovely to drink already. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 6 08. The *auktion Scharzhofberger Spätlese* is analytically the same as the regular Spätlese, but this is from old vines. It is floral in the nose, and in the mouth is extra deep and pure with yellow plum flavors and great length. It is rounder than the regular Spätlese, but still remains a Spätlese. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08. Müller will only designate a wine Auslese (or above) if it is 100% botrytised, so these wines are quite rare in 2007. The first *Scharzhofberger Auslese* (#7) was bottled early. It has honeyed botrytis in the nose. In the mouth, the wine shows ripe, honeyed apple fruit but it is still young. The wine has fabulous focus, but unlike the wines up to here, I would not sacrifice a bottle of this young and would hold until it was at least 10-12 years old. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 7 08. In contrast, the *Scharzhofberger Auslese* (#11) was one of the last wines to be bottled, in June 2008. Less open in the nose, the wine is chewier and denser on the palate with creaminess and depth, but still not showing a lot of fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08. Last, the *Scharzhofberger Auslese* has the pure, stony Scharzhofberger nose with botrytis very evident. In the mouth, the wine is very pure with golden botrytis and the rigor of Scharzhofberger plus wave after wave of fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 14 08. Various importers.

VON OTHEGRAVEN

2007 TROCKEN	93/A
2007 FEINHERB	88/A
2007 MAXIMUS	91+/A
2007 KANZEM ALTENBERG EL GG	94(+)/A
2007 WILTINGEN KUPP	92+/A-
2007 OCKFEN BOCKSTEIN	92(+)/A-
2007 WILTINGEN KUPP KABINETT FEINHERB	93/A+
2007 KANZEM ALTENBERG KABINETT	93+/A+
2007 OCKFEN BOCKSTEIN KABINETT	93/A+
2007 OCKFEN BOCKSTEIN SPÄTLESE	93(+)/A
2007 KANZEM ALTENBERG SPÄTLESE ALTE REBEN EL	95(+)/A+
2007 KANZEM ALTENBERG SPÄTLESE EL (AUCTION)	96/A+
2007 OCKFEN BOCKSTEIN AUSLESE	94(+)/A

Some producers in the Saar will tell you that the greatest vineyard in the Saar is not Scharzhofberg, but the Kanzem Altenberg, the majority of which is owned by this estate. Until not terribly long ago, the estate was in the hands of an aged woman and not especially well-run. The estate's succession passed to her neice, Dr. Heidi Kegel, who gave up her medical practice to return to the estate, which sits at the foot of the Altenberg. The results in 2007 are nothing short of magnificent. Harvest here took place from mid-October to mid-November. A wine not to miss, should you come across it, is the QbA *trocken*. The wine has wet stone aromas, and in the mouth is exciting for the acidity and the stony, pure flavors with great energy and rigor. It is fully dry. This is classic Saar Riesling. Stated alcohol: 12.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 14 08. The *feinherb* is leesy and mineral in the nose and is mostly dry in the mouth with energy but to me, lacks the same level of energy, the bite, and the clarity of the trocken. 10.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. The *Maximus* is a dry wine made 70% from Altenberg grapes, 20% from Bockstein, and 10% from Wiltinger Kupp, roughly reflecting the estate holdings. Normally, the grapes are picked at Spätlese quality and the wine apparently is quite popular in restaurants. The nose is leesy with red and yellow plum fruit. In the mouth, the wine has a good attack with lively acidity, minerality and yellow plum fruit. It needs a half year or a year to come into focus but shows plenty of depth and purity. 11.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. From pure Devonian slate, the *Kanzem Altenberg Grosses Gewächs* is a breathtaking wine with a deep, stony Saar nose. It is relatively ripe in the mouth, but chewy, intense, and deep with plenty of stoniness. A Saar prototype that will silence your guests when you serve it in 5-6 years. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 22 08. The *Wiltinger Kupp* is dusty and stony in the nose, and is riper on the palate showing some residual sugar. It will be good with food. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 19 08. The *Ockfen Bockstein* is mineral and stony in the nose. In the mouth, it shows Bockstein's round, acidic attack with some sweetness that mostly manifests itself as roundness. 12% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 20 08. The *Wiltinger Kupp Kabinett feinherb* is very stony and very Saar in the nose. In the mouth, the wine has a lovely acidic attack with no sweetness, the sugar serving only to broaden the texture. One feels as though this is a wine carved in stone, think of the great Gothic sculptures on the façades of Chartres or Rheims cathedrals and there is some flinty spice here, too. Although labelled feinherb, the wine tastes essentially dry. 10.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08.

In the fruity style, the *Kanzem Altenberg Kabinett* has classic spicy, flinty, stony aromas, followed in the mouth by a chewy texture with fruitiness, depth, and stoniness -- again carved out of stone like Gothic sculpture -- but this still tastes quite dry with depth, purity, and classic Saar rigor. 9.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 16 08. The *Ockfen Bockstein Kabinett* is stony in the nose and mouth with plenty of acidity and mineral yellow fruit flavors. It is superb but needs more time to develop. 9.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 17 08. The *Ockfen Bockstein Spätlese* is very stony and dusty in the nose and round and plum with opulent yellow fruit in the mouth. This a rich wine but still remains a balanced Spätlese. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 9 08. Von Othegraven's *Kanzem Altenberg Spätlese alte Reben* has great nobility to go with the botrytis in the nose. The yellow plum and nectarine flavors are very clear, pure, and long and there is great attack here. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 7 08. The *auktion Kanzem Altenberg Spätlese* has great depth and purity. Because of the acidity, it does not appear as sweet as the preceding wine, but it is noble with golden, red, and dark fruit. It is a great wine. 7.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 6 08. The *Ockfener Bockstein Auslese* is pure, honeyed, smooth, deep, and fine -- a classic. 7.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 5 08. The *Kanzemer Altenberg Auslese* has honeyed botrytis aromas. In the mouth, the wine is pure, nervy, deep, and honeyed with lovely acidic support. For the moment, it is less open than the Bockstein Auslese, but also shows greater potential. 7.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 4 08. Finally, the

Kanzem Altenbaerg Eiswein is stony in the nose. In the mouth, there is botrytis evident from the honeyed flavors, which I generally do not prefer in Eiswein, but the cutting acidity supports it, although making this more like a Beerenauslese than an Eiswein in type. Importer: Michael Skrunik Wines, Syosset, New York.

JOH. JOS. PRÜM

2007 KABINETT JOH. JOS. PRÜM	90/A
2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE KABINETT	92/A
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH KABINETT	92+/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR KABINETT	93+/A+
2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE SPÄTLESE	94/A
2007 ZELTINGER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE	92(+)/A
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH SPÄTLESE	94/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE	95+/A+
2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE AUSLESE	94/A
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH AUSLESE	95(+)/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE	97(+)/A+
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE	96/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE	97/A+

With each successive vintage, this fabled estate seems to come up with a new set of wines that leaves me shaking my head in admiration. Dr. Manfred Prüm is now working with his eldest daughter, the talented and beautiful Dr. Katharina Prüm, and it seems clear that for at least another generation the greatness of this estate is assured. Harvest here began on October 8 and lasted to late December when the Eiswein was taken in a day or two before Christmas. We start with the *Kabinett "Joh. Jos. Prüm,"* which shows the characteristic pure, mineral, leesy nose of Prüm wines. In the mouth, the wine is pure and fine with fantastic focus. It is drier than the Badstube Kabinett that follows and also elegant, long, and crystalline in its minerality with a slight mouthwatering quality to the acidity. The *Bernkasteler Badstube Kabinett* shows a touch of spice and is less mineral in the nose than the preceding wine. It is round, elegant, pure, and calm in the mouth with a medium-weight body, relative dryness due to the acidity, and hints of yellow fruit flavors to develop and go with the spice flavors. The *Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett* shows mineral aromas followed by the succulent Graacher Himmelreich texture and taste of pure stones plus spice and apples. The *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett* is deeper than the Himmelreich with salty minerality in the nose, followed by crispness and purity to its penetrating minerality with very good acid support. The *Bernkasteler Badstube Spätlese* has mineral aromas with some honey. The minerality continues in the mouth and the wine is medium weight with succulence, electric acidity, clarity, purity, and crystallinity to its spiced quince fruit. The *Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Spätlese* shows more body than the Badstube but also more finesse to its pear fruit, and some tenderness supported by firmness, too. However, the wine doesn't have the same fantastic energy of the Badstube. Prüm's *Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese* has spiced apple aromas and flavors with lively electricity. This wine is very typical, and extremely fine, Graacher Himmelreich. Last of the Spätlesen, of course, is the *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese*, a great Spätlese by any measure. Mineral, deep, and nervy in the nose, the wine is electric, deep and very mineral with lime and Sonnenuhr vanilla flavors and great depth. Not unusual for the vintage, the *Bernkasteler Badstube Auslese* has hardly any botrytis. It is spiced and mineral with mouthwatering acidity and excellent length. Likewise, there is hardly any botrytis in the *Graacher Himmelreich Auslese*. The wine is somewhat rich with Himmelreich spiced apple fruit plus minerality. It is a very young and outstanding representative of this terroir. Very little botrytis in the *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese*, too. The wine is pure, deep, and mineral in the nose, and in the mouth shows great acidity with apricot fruit, nervosity, purity, and depth. It will be a great bottle. Both the Gold Cap

Auslesen with which I finish have some botrytis, but not a lot as they did in 2006. The *Graacher Himmelreich Gold Cap Auslese* has honeyed spiced apple aromas and flavors with great finesse and clarity; it is chiefly differentiated from the regular Auslese by more body and some spiced honey; in fact, this seems to be a relatively big wine. The *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Gold Cap Auslese* is pure and fine in the nose with minerality. In the mouth the wine has mineral apricot fruit that gradually becomes apricot preserve fruit. It is nervy, crystalline and deep, and because of the acidity, not especially sweet. Alas, time did not permit me to taste the auction wines. Importers include: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA. and Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

MAX FERDINAND RICHTER

2007 CLASSIC	87/A
2007 MÜHLHEIMER SONNENLAY KABINETT FEINHERB	88/B+
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST KABINETT FEINHERB	91/A
2007 RIESLING	87/A
2007 VELDENZER ELISENBERG KABINETT	90/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER KABINETT	91/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR KABINETT	92/A
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH KABIENTT	91/A
2007 VELDENZER ELISENBERG SPÄTLESE	93/A
2007 WEHLENER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE	93+/A
2007 BRAUNEBERGER JUFFER-SONNENUHR AUSLESE	93(+)/A-
2007 MÜHLHEIMER HELENENKLOSTER EISWEIN	94/C
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	96+/B

Dirk Richter said that he started the harvest in early October and finished most of the harvest by November 6-7, with a little bit harvested still later. His *Classic* is pure and clean, off-dry with some minerality showing and good finesse. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. The *Mühlheimer Sonnenlay Kabinett feinherb* is relatively sweet with the fine acidity of the vintage and the wine is drawn and silky. Nothing great here, but it is a pleasing wine. 11.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 45 08. The *Graacher Domprobst Kabinett feinherb* has attractive slate and lemon-lime aromas. In the mouth, the wine is lush, suave, and welcoming with a bit of tropical fruit melded with the lemon-lime flavors. Again, the fine acidity of the vintage. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 10 08. The estate *Riesling* has peach fruit with fine acidity and good length but the wine is relatively simple and a touch on the sweet side. Stated alcohol: 9.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 26 08. Richter makes very interesting wine from his property in Veldenzer. He says that it is a microclimate in a valley, and so resembles Ruwer wines. The *Veldenzer Elisenberg Kabinett* has incipient fruit aromas and flavors that are already quite pretty. The wine is light, flowery, and pure, making for a lovely Kabinett. Stated alcohol: 9.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 25 08. The *Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett* is a deeper wine with red and green plum fruit and stoniness. This is an easy-to-drink Kabinett. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 01 08. The *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett* is richer and riper still, with fine acidity. It is a lovely wine, even if it does not show what I think of as classic markers of this vineyard, such as vanillins in the nose and mouth. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 06 08. Finishing off the Kabinetts, the *Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett* shows acidity and finesse with more structure than the Sonnenuhr. The wine is long and attractive for its red fruits. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 07 08. The *Veldenzer Elisenberg Spätlese* has a crisp, pure Spätlese attack with minerality and some sweetness, although not too much, and yellow plum fruit. The overall impression is refreshing. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 21 08. The *Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese* shows a bit of hone in the nose. In the mouth, the wine has the Sonnenuhr vanillins and is harmonious with delicacy and minerality. Although it is light and dancing, it is also a more serious wine than the Elisenberg. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 24

08. Richter's *Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese* is tightly wound, wiry, and reductive in both nose and mouth, but the elegance and finesse are there and this will be an outstanding wine with some more time in the bottle. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 15 08. The *Mühlheimer Helenenkloster Eiswein* is round and mineral with concentration, sweetness, and it is clean -- the botrytis was sorted out. Still it doesn't thrill me the same way that the 2004, reviewed below, does. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 30 08. Finally, the *Graacher Domprobst Trockenbeerenauslese* is very concentrated, caramelized, and sweet -- classic TBA. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 36 08. Importer: Langdon Shiverick, Cleveland, OH.

SCHLOSS SAARSTEIN

2007 PINOT BLANC	\$20.00	87/A
2007 SERRIGER SCHLOSS SAARSTEIN SPÄTLESE FEINHERB		91/A-
2007 SAARSTEIN	\$14.00	88/A
2007 SERRIGER SCHLOSS SAARSTEIN KABINETT	\$22.00	91/A
2007 SERRIGER SCHLOSS SAARSTEIN SPÄTLESE	\$29.00	93+/A
2007 SERRIGER SCHLOSS SAARSTEIN AUSLESE	\$51/375 ML	94/A
2007 SERRIGER SCHLOSS SAARSTEIN AUSLESE (GOLD CAP)		94+/A

Saarstein's *Pinot Blanc*, as usual, shows some richness and breadth but also some minerality. In this vintage, I find little more residual sugar (it is 9.8 g/l) than I, a notorious lover of bone dry wines, would like, so I would recommend drinking this wine very cold or else with food -- in either of those events, the wine should serve fine. It is floral with some pear and yellow fruit flavors and good acidic underpinning. I'd drink this young, although I would not be surprised to be shown a vital bottle in 10-12 years. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 02 08. The *Serriger Schloss Saarstein Spätlese feinherb* has mineral aromas and in the mouth is essentially dry tasting due to the acidity (25-26 g/l residual sugar). The texture is firm but succulent with apricot and nectarine flavors and excellent length. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. *Saarstein*, the QbA Riesling, is from quite ripe grapes, about 30% of which come from vineyards that Schloss Saarstein rents. Despite the stated alcohol of 9.5%, the wine is almost Spätlese sweet. The wine shows wet stones in the nose and is mineral with lime and yellow peach flavors in the mouth. Serve very cold for now to counter the sugar, but I think this is a wine than can age a decade or more, and as it does, it will become drier. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 5 08. The *Serriger Schloss Saarstein Kabinett* is stony and mineral in the nose, followed by a firm body with some succulence from the acidity. Stony and mineral in the nose, the wine is firm with some succulence from the acidity in the mouth -- very impressive for 2009 on. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 09 08. The *Serriger Schloss Saarstein Spätlese* is spiced and stony in the nose, and juicy on the palate with lemony nectarine and peach flavors plus great finesse. 8% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08. The *Serriger Schloss Saarstein Auslese* is an extremely rare wine -- about 10 cases is all that was made. The wine shows honeyed aromas and is firm on the palate with lightness but depth to its honeyed fruit. The wine can be drunk now, but I'd hold it 8-10 years. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11-08. The *Serriger Schloss Saarstein Gold Cap Auslese* is mineral and honeyed in the nose, and pure with restrained yellow peach apricot fruit in the mouth. With time, I'm sure this will develop further. Importer: Valckenberg, International, Tulsa, OK.

WILLI SCHAEFER

2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH KABINETT #2	\$28.50	93/A+
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST KABINETT #16	\$28.50	93+/A+
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH KABINETT #9	\$28.50	94/A+
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST SPÄTLESE #12	\$40.50	95(+)/A
2007 GRAACHER HIMMELREICH SPÄTLESE	\$40.50	96/A+
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST AUSLESE #17	\$42.00	96(+)/A

The short review of Willi and Christoph Schaefer's 2007s is: buy everything that is made available to you; it is as fantastic a collection as you are likely ever to see. There are only two vineyards here, Graacher Himmelreich and Graacher Domprobst. I once presented my puzzlement to Willi Schaefer that the wines were not as different as I found in other cellars that had wines from the two vineyards, and he replied that his parcels in the two vineyards are contiguous. So don't look here for classic differences between Himmelreich and Domprobst because they are very subtle at this address; just enjoy and wonder. We begin with the *Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett #2*, a wine that shows purity in its peach aromas, and is mouthwatering and mineral in on the palate with its crystalline yellow and white peach flavors and that binds it all together with perfect balance. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 02 08. Next up is the *Graacher Domprobst Kabinett #16*, a wine that is intense and nervy with deep yellow peach fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 16 08. The *Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett #9* is pure and crystalline with yellow fruit, good acidity and great intensity. This is a really special Kabinett. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 09 08. Schaefer's *Graacher Domprobst Spätlese #12* is intense and pure and extraordinary for its balance, with deep, long, spiced yellow peach fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. The *Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese* is spiced, deep, and nervy with pure white peach fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 14 08. Last for this review is the *Graacher Himmelreich Auslese #17*, a wine that is pure, precise, and crystalline with rainwater purity in the mouth and raspberry and peach flavors. It is a wine for drinking on its own or with a meal. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 17 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, New York.

SELBACH-OSTER

2007 ZELTINGER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	\$30.00	89(+)/B
2007 ZELTINGER HIMMELREICH KABINETT HALBTROCKEN	\$25.00	89/A-
2007 KABINETT	\$25.00	89/A-
2007 ZELTINGER SONNENUHR KABINETT	\$26.50	(86-90)
2007 ZELTINGER SONNENUHR KABINETT (APN 027 08)	\$26.50	90(+)/A
2007 SPÄTLESE	\$30.50	90(+)/B+
2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE SPÄTLESE	\$31.50	92/A
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST SPÄTLESE	\$34.50	(90-94)
2007 ZELTINGER SCHLOSSBERG SPÄTLESE (APN 19 08)	\$31.50	91+/A-
2007 ZELTINGER SCHLOSSBERG SPÄTLESE	\$31.50	(89-93)
2007 ZELTINGER SCHLOSSBERG SPÄTLESE *	\$38.50	92(+)/A
2007 ZELTINGER SCHLOSSBERG SPÄTLESE "SCHMITT"	\$41.50	93/A
2007 GRAACHER DOMPROBST AUSLESE	\$41.50	94/A
2007 ZELTINGER SONNENUHR AUSLESE "ROTLAY"	\$63.00	95(+)/A

As one would expect from Selbach-Oster, wines of consistent quality that are fine reflections of the character of the vintage. The *Zeltinger Sonnenhr Spätlese trocken* has floral and slate elements in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is succulent, juicy, and mediu-full with strawberry flavors, and it finishes dry but round. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 017 08. The *Zeltinger Himmelreich Kabinett halbtrocken* is juicy with lime fruit and just the slightest hint of sugar, but basically refined. The overall effect is one of refinement. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 007 08. Selbach's *Kabinett* is mineral with a juicy texture and displays refinement and elegance. This wine is not overly sweet. The wine is all from Zeltinger Himmelreich, raised mostly in stainless steel, but with some wines raised in cask blended in. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 024 008. I tasted two different lots of *Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Kabinett*. The first, a cask sample, is fairly sweet and has a juicy texture to go with its lemon drop fruit. The second, already bottled despite the fact that I tasted it six weeks prior to the cask sample, has fresh, spiced pear aromas, followed in the mouth by a creamy texture with a fine quality to its acidity, quince flavors, and overall purity. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 027 08. The *Spätlese* is a blend from Zeltinger Himmelreich and Kinheimer Rosneberg. The wine is quite sweet with lemon drop flavors, but there is an overall delicacy (without being fragile) to it. Last

digits of A.P. Nr.: 022 08. Selbach's *Bernkasteler Badstube Spätlese* has slate wet stone aromas, followed by pure lemon-lime on the palate with some succulence and sweetness and an impressive layering of flavors. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 009 08. The *Graacher Domprobst Spätlese* barrel sample had lemony aromas and is juicy and chewy with purity to its white peach flavors, but the wine still very primary both times that I tasted it. A bottled *Zeltinger Schlossberg Spätlese* showed richness and purity but still is in need of time to allow it to open. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 019 08. A cask sample of another lot of *Zeltinger Schlossberg Spätlese* tasted six weeks after the previous wine displayed a floral, slate-mineral nose, with clarity and balance to its lemony fruit, and it showed more elegance than, for example, the *Bernkasteler Badstube*. The *Zeltinger Schlossberg Spätlese** has some botrytis. The wine is quite sweet and almost juicy with outstanding depth and still primary lemon-lime flavors. It should improve even more with time. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. The *Zeltinger Schlossberg Spätlese "Schmitt"* is from a parcel known as "Schmitt" prior to the 1971 wine law's making it part of the Schlossberg. In order to get the best expression of terroir (and vintage), Selbach has decided to pick it as a single block with no selections, taking whatever the year gave. The wine is pure, elegant, and appley with roundness and some lime, too, and fine sugar/acid balance. The flavors, despite the elegance, are powerfully expressed. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 020 08. There is no botrytis in the *Graacher Domprobst Auslese*. The wine has a lovely delicacy to it with subtle sweetness that plays with the acidity and makes it a good candidate to pair with a meal. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08. In contrast, there is quite a bit of botrytis in the *Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Auslese "Rotlay."* Rotlay is an old, pre-1971 law name of the parcel that the grapes for this wine come from, and like the "Schmitt," they were all picked in one block. The wine has pronounced spiciness in both nose and mouth, almost a peppermint. In addition, there are chipped stone elements to the nose and apple flavors in the mouth. The balance is outstanding and the wine is rich and deep, yet at the same time there is delicacy here. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY.

WWE. DR. H. THANISCH (ERBEN THANISCH)

2007 RIESLING	\$21.00	85/B
2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE KABINETT	\$26.00	90/A
2007 BERNCATELER DOCTOR KABINETT	\$39.00	92(+)/A
2007 BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE SPÄTLESE	\$28.00	91/A-
2007 BERNCATELER DOCTOR SPÄTLESE		92(+)/A
2007 BERNCATELER DOCTOR AUSLESE	\$78.00	94(+)/A

The QbA *Riesling* is relatively sweet but has good acidic support. The citric and tropical fruit aromas and flavors are in balance and provide this wine charm, but it is simple. Drink over the next couple of years. 10.0% stated alcohol, so the grapes were quite ripe at harvest. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 1 08. The *Bernkasteler Badstube Kabinett* is pure and mineral with less sweetness than the Riesling but more complexity. The crystallinity here is marked. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2 08. As good as that wine is, the *Bernkasteler Doctor Kabinett* is significantly better with slaty fern and yellow peach aromas and flavors and richness but also elegance to the body and excellent play between the sugar and the acidity. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 8 08. The *Bernkasteler Badstube Spätlese* is fairly sweet for the moment with the quince fruit that one finds so often in this vintage and also some pear and orange. The wine is elegant and light, and should come into better focus by early next year. The *Bernkasteler Doctor Spätlese* has slate, peach, and apricot aromas and flavors with the elegance that is typical of Thanisch's wines. Very attractive, and my intuition is that this will be a relatively fast developing wine, i.e., drink now-2010 and 2015-2025. It is perhaps a shade less crisp than the Kabinett. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 9 08. The *Bernkasteler Doctor Auslese* is clear and pure with apple, quince, and white peach fruit in nose and mouth and excellent supporting acidity. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

VAN VOLXEM

2007 SCHIEFER	87/A
2007 SAAR	88/A
2007 WILTINGER BRAUNFELS	90/B+
2007 ALTE REBEN	91(+)/A-
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER EL	94/A
2007 (WAWERN) GOLDBERG EL	94(+)/A
2007 (WILTINGEN) VOLZ EL	90/B+
2007 (WILTINGEN) GOTTESFUSS EL	94/A
2007 SCHARZHOFBERGER "P" EL	SEE NOTES
2007 (KANZEM) ALTENBERG EL	95/A
2007 (WILTINGEN) GOTTESFUSS ALTE REBEN EL	94(+)/A
2007 KABINETT ROT SCHIEFER	87/B

Roman Niewodniczanski stands out wherever he goes for his handsome looks, his long blonde ponytail, and his height, which is enough to qualify him as a center on a top quality NCAA basketball team and maybe even in the NBA. He purchased this historic estate in Wiltingen in 1999 and changed its name back from Jordan und Jordan to van Volxem in 2000. His goal is to produce wines the way they were in the nineteenth century. To this effect, he has been buying up old vineyards that were renowned on old tax maps and also working with some vineyard owners who supply grapes grown to his strict specifications. He now has 40 ha of vines (up from 20 ha just three years ago), mostly from European rootstocks and all from old DNA. Yields are very low. The wines are raised in wood casks with natural yeasts and allowed to ferment as long as they go, and with no additional intervention past where they stop. The result, for the most part, is wines that can be described as dry but with a little bit of residual sugar that adds roundness to them (the Kabinett is an exception with some sweetness to it). The wines have created some controversy, and I have had some producers tell me that the wines do/will not age. A friend tells me that at a dinner featuring the wines, Niewodniczanski guaranteed that they would age ten years. As you can see, I am impressed by the wines, and I say that they are so good for drinking at present that even if they don't age they are of top quality. As with Ponsot in Burgundy, I am happy that not everyone makes wine this way, but I am happy that there is an estate that follows these practices. These wines were all tasted a couple of days after bottling, but with one exception seemed not to be suffering. Still, the possibility exists that as favorably as I have reviewed them, they are still better. We start with the *Schiefer*. Schiefer means slate. The wine is airy with slate minerality and floral aspects. It is soft, calm, pure and firm with chewiness to its texture and good austerity. The *Saar* is considerably stonier in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is firm, elegant, and clear with purity, roundness, a smooth texture, and incipient peach fruit. The *Wiltinger Braunfels* is lightly stony and dusty in the nose, but mostly closed. In the mouth, the wine shows density, smooth texture, firmness, and incipient white peach flavors, but there is a touch of graininess to the texture. The *Alte Reben* (old vines) is stony in the nose with spring flower aromas. In the mouth, the wine is firm, smooth and elegant with yellow peach flavors, depth, and stony flavors with power. Van Volxem has two wines from *Scharzhofberger*, and this is the first one. Spicy in the nose, in the nose, in the mouth the wine is ripe, powerful, and rich with stoniness, incipient white peach fruit, nervosity, and creaminess. The *Goldberg* has stony aromas and is firm, creamy and round in the mouth with incipient yellow peach and nectarine flavors and density on the palate. The *Volz* is very floral in the nose and also has a stony aspect. In the mouth, the wine has a touch of sweetness and a touch of grassiness but is elegant with nectarine fruit. There is good length, but this wine does not show the class of the two preceding wines. The *Gottesfuss* has floral aromas that with time open to peach. In the mouth, the wine is medium full with a slight suggestion of sweetness. It is racy, firm, and elegant with nectarine and pomegranate flavors. The *Scharzhofberger "P"* is from a part of the vineyard called Pergentsknopp. I have seen reliable reports that this wine is outstanding, but

the day that I tasted it, two days after bottling, I found a stony nose with spices and wild herbs and power in the mouth with sweetness showing and a creamy texture, but with the flavors not yet integrated or well-defined. I need to see this wine again before evaluating it. Surprisingly, many producers in the Saar say that the greatest vineyard there is not Scharzhofberger, but rather *Altenberg*, and certainly, van Volxem's argues the case. Floral and steely in the nose, the wine is big, creamy and intense in the mouth and easily the most forward of the wines in this collection, but it seems very young. It is firm and virtually dry. The *Gottesfuss alte Reben* is from 120 year-old vines in this great vineyard site. The wine has floral and peach aromas, followed by a smooth, oily texture in the mouth with apricot, peach, and a little nutmeg for flavors and great length. Last, the *Kbinett Rot Schiefer* is from red slate soils. here the wine is fairly sweet, broad and powerful, but lacks elegance and is, to my taste, less interesting than the other wines presented.

NAHE

DR. CRUSIUS

2007 (NIEDERHÄUSER) FELSENSTEYER GG	93/A
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The *Felsensteyer* is relatively rich in the context of the Nahe and crystalline with its red and yellow plum fruit. Quite promising. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 28 08.

SCHLOSSGUT DIEL

2007 DIEL DE DIEL	\$29.50	88/A
2007 ROSÉ DE DIEL	\$34.00	87/A
2007 DORSHEIM	\$38.00	91/B+
2007 (DORSHEIMER) SCHLOSSBERG GG	\$66.50	93+/A
2007 (DORSHEIMER) PITTERMÄNNCHEN GG		92/A-
2007 (DORSHEIMER) GOLDLOCH GG		93/A
2007 (DORSHEIMER) BURGBERG GG		94/A
2007 (DORSHEIMER) BURGBERG KABINETT	\$36.50	91(+)/A
2007 (DORSHEIMER) GOLDLOCH SPÄTLESE	\$59.00	92(+)/A
2007 (DORSHEIMER) PITTMERMÄNNCHEN AUSLESE	\$101.00	93+/A

Armin Diel's talented daughter Caroline has decided to make her career with the estate and the results of her early work with her father are encouraging for the future of this estate. The *Diel de Diel* is a dry wine made from 60% Pinot Gris and the rest Pinot Blanc, Riesling, and Chardonnay. The wine is crisp, refreshing, stony, and pure. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08. The *Rosé* is entirely from Pinot Noir. The wine shows substance, acidity, firmness, and plum fruit. It is one of the better rosés on the market (which it ought to be, given the price). Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 26 08. The *Dorsheim* is floral in the nose and mouth with crisp acidity and texture. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 03 08. Diel's *Schlossberg Grosses Gewächs* shows fine minerality and some stoniness in the nose, green plum fruit, stoniness, and minerality in the mouth. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 22 08. The *Pittermännchen Grosses Gewächs* is richer and chewy but fine with fresh yellow plum fruit and nervosity. The *Goldloch Grosses Gewächs* features yellow and red plum fruit that is pure in a medium-light body with a little creaminess, crystallinity, and Nahe lightness. It is quite lovely. But my favorite among the Diel *Grosse Gewächse* was the *Burgberg* which is perfumed and floral in the nose and shows red and yellow plum flavors along with a floral aspect in the mouth and depth. The wine is delicate without being fragile. In the fruity style, the *Dorsheimer Burgberg Kabinett* has pear and peach aromas. In the mouth, the wine shows fine acidity with pear flavors and is medium-full but has overall finesse. The *Dorsheimer Goldloch Spätlese* has spicy aromas and shows cassis in its nervy mouth. The wine is crisp and elegant, but a little shy at the moment. Last, the *Dorsheimer*

Pittermännchen Auslese has cinnamon spice in the nose and mouth with a fine bead. The wine is pure and not heavy. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, New York.

DÖNNHOFF

2007 TROCKEN		90/A
2007 TONSCHIEFER		91/A+
2007 (SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER) FELSENBURG GG		95/A
2007 (NORHEIMER) DELLCHEN GG		95/A
2007 (NIEDERHÄUSER) HERMANNSHÖHLE GG		96/A
2007 RIESLING		91/A+
2007 KREUZNACHER KAHLENBERG KABINETT	\$30.50	92/A
2007 OBERHÄUSER LEISTENBERG KABINETT	\$35.50	92(+)/A
2007 NORHEIMER KIRSCHHECK SPÄTLESE		93/A
2007 KREUZNACHER KRÖTENPHUL SPÄTLESE	\$53.00	93+/A
2007 FELSENTÜRMCHEN SPÄTLESE	\$60.50	94+/A
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER KUPFERGRUBE SPÄTLESE		95/A
2007 OBERHÄUSER BRÜCKE SPÄTLESE	\$70.50	95/A
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER HERMANNSHÖHLE SPÄTLESE		94+/A
2007 OBERHÄUSER BRÜCKE AUSLESE		96/A
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER HERMANNSHÖHLE AUSLESE	\$71/375ML	97/A+
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER FELSENBURG BEERENAUSELESE		97(+)/A
2007 OBERHÄUSER BRÜCKE EISWEIN		94/C

The formula is simple: great producer + great vintage = great wine. Nothing more to be said. Well, just to fill you in, harvesting began on 8 October and proceeded through the rest of the month. Until the end of September, it looked like it might be another 2006 because there was some rain, but Helmut Dönnhoff decided to take the risk and wait rather than bring his grapes in. Many of his neighbors did not wait, and as a result, Dönnhoff continued, they had unripe acidity and physiologically unripe grapes. Meanwhile, the weather in October was beautiful and the rot did not spread. We begin with the QbA *trocken*. The wine has apricot fruit that is clear and crystalline with no harshness. The wine is from grapes in Oberhausen. 11.5% stated alcohol. The *Tonschiefer* is named for the German word for gray slate. But the gray slate in the Nahe is different from that in the Mosel: in the latter, it is a hard rock and can be, and is, used for roofs; in the Nahe, the slate can be crumbled in your hand. The wine is mineral in the nose and on the mouth with apricot and quince flavors, a lovely dry Riesling. The *Felsenberg Grosses Gewächs* is from volcanic (porphyry) soils. The wine has stony aromas and more structure than the Tonschiefer with small red fruits that are characteristic of this soil, along with purity, length, and harmony. This is simply a fabulous wine. The *Dellchen Grosses Gewächs* is from a mixture of soils, but the deep soil is slate. The wine displays apricot aromas, and it is structured, stony, and long with some citric aspects, ripe acidity, and perfect harmony. But Dönnhoff's greatest *Grosses Gewächs* is his *Hermannshöhle*. The wine shows quite a bit of quince in the nose. In the mouth, it is lemony with extreme purity, great structure, linearity, a smooth but firm texture, and a drawn quality. There is a bit of green plum in the wine, and maybe some yellow plum, too with tremendous intensity and clarity.

In the fruity style, the QbA *Riesling* has floral aromas and in the mouth shows apricot fruit that is pure with cutting acidity and some dark plum coming on late. The wine is balanced and there is no sense of the alcohol. The fruit is from Oberhausen Kieselberg (some years, it also includes the pre-harvest from other vineyards). Stated alcohol: 10.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. The *Kreuznacher Kahlenberg Kabinett* is intense, nervy, pure, and deep with some chewiness and incipient yellow peach flavors. Loam soils here. This is a new vineyard for Dönnhoff, with quartzit soils. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08.

The *Oberhäuser Leistenberg Kabinett* is floral in the nose with a touch of red plums and a piquant aspect. In the mouth, the wine shows yellow peach and apricot flavors and it is long and barely sweet. A fantastic quality to its succulent acidity. Sandy slate soils here. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 09 08. The *Norheimer Kirschheck Spätlese* is floral with a bit of spice and quince in the nose. On the palate, the wine is medium-weight, firm, and pure. 8.5% stated alcohol. The *Kreuznacher Krottenpfühl Spätlese* is from quartzit soils on a south-facing slope. This is a warmer site than most of Dönnhoff's other vineyards, and hence one that gets picked early. The nose is dusty and there are pure, lovely dark plum and quince flavors with crystallinity and some power. The wine is long and has a rounder acidity than most here. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 06 08. The *Felsentürmchen Spätlese* is from a separate parcel in the Felsenberg vineyard, right below the tower that gives this wine its name (*Türmchen* means "little tower" in German). The vines are about 25-30 years old and the soils are porphyry. Helmut Dönnhoff says that this parcel can make an adequate dry wine, but it is better suited to wines with residual sugar. The wine has chipped stone aromas with a hint of spice. In the mouth, it is rich and chewy, even opulent, but also pure and precise with yellow plum and quince fruit that will need some time to develop and lovely cut. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08. Dönnhoff's *Schlossböckelheimer Kupfergrube Spätlese* has pear and quince aromas. In the mouth it is opulent and a bit more elegant than the Felsentürmchen, and maybe even more complex with time. Again, the wine shows plenty of ripeness, but balanced against nervy acidity. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 14 08. Dönnhoff says that his *Oberhäuser Brücke Spätlese* is from a vineyard that does best in ripe years, and it is always his last vineyard to be harvested. There is some botrytis in this wine and it features deep apricot and yellow peach aromas. They are followed on the palate by chewy but elegant apricot and nectarine flavors with length, a firm texture, and a superb sugar/acid balance. 9% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 07 08. The *Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Spätlese* also contains a little botrytis, as evidenced by the honey in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is a little Auslese with power, chewiness, precision, and length, but it is a wine to stick in the cellar for 6-8 years before beginning to drink. 9.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 08 08. The *Oberhäuser Brücke Auslese* is honeyed and floral in the nose. In the mouth, there is great finesse and purity with depth and acidity. The wine is relatively dry for an Auslese because of the acidity which gives perfect balance and great tension to this wine. Dönnhoff characterized the botrytis here as dry botrytis. One can drink the wine now, but Helmut Dönnhoff reckons it will be asleep between ages 3 and 10 -- and then it should last a few decades, at least. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 19 08. The *Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Auslese* has wonderful honeyed botrytis in the nose. On the palate, the wine is pure with nectarine and apricot flavors, density, length, depth, and finesse, but it is relatively closed for the moment. Still, this is a great classic Auslese for those willing to cellar it for a decade. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 16 08. The *Schlossböckelheimer Beerenauslese* is from 100% botrytised grapes. Honey, quince, and orange peel in the nose are followed by great acidity in the mouth that gives a sharpness and focus to the quince fruit. This wine is very focused, long, pure, and crystalline, but expect to wait 20-30 years to appreciate its full potential. Last is the *Oberhäuser Brücke Eiswein*, harvested on 20 December. There is some botrytis in this wine, which I do not like in Eiswein. The wine has a honeyed nose and is round in the mouth with quince fruit as well as plum and baked apple flavors. Because of the botrytis, it is more like a Beerenauslese than an Eiswein. In any case, it is pure and long, but I am a long way from Terry Theise who has written that he has never tasted a better Eiswein. Importer: Michael Skurnik, Syosset, NY.

EMRICH-SCHÖNLEBER

2007 (MONZINGER) FRÜHLINGSPLÄTZCHEN GG

94/A

2007 (MONZINGER) HALENBERG GG

95/A

Schönleber was on vacation when I visited in the Nahe, but these two *Grosse Gewächse* are quite spectacular. The *Frühlingsplätzchen* has apple blossom and mineral aromas, and is mineral on the palate

with a bit of succulence, light airiness, good penetration, and floral flavors. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08. The *Halenberg* is mineral and ethereal in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is light and pure -- a Mozart of a wine -- with very fine acidity underlying the mineral flavors. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 12 08.

HEXAMER

2007 MEDDERSHEIMER RHEINGRAFENBERG "QUARTZIT"	\$22.50	89/A
2007 MEDDERSHEIMER RHEINGRAFENBERG KABINETT	\$31.00	91/A
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER IN DEN FELSEN SPÄTLESE	\$37.50	93/A
2007 MEDDERSHEIMER RHEINGRAFENBERG SPÄTLESE **	\$38	91(+)/A-

For several years, now, Hexamer has been producing excellent wine, perhaps behind only a little the very top Nahe producers more in the potential of his vineyards rather than in his skills. The *QbA Meddersheimer Rheingrafenberg "Quartzit"* is pure, crystalline, and mineral, with a touch of oiliness to the texture. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08. The *Meddersheimer Rheingrafenberg Kabinett* is packed with quince and white peach fruit that is crystalline in quality. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 003 08. The *Schlossböckelheimer In Den Felsen Spätlease* has floral aromas and is elegant, silky and crystalline in the mouth with some baked yellow peach flavors. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. Hexamer's *Meddersheimer Rheingrafenberg Spätlease*** is slightly earthy in its yellow peach fruit and is round and full, but less elegant than the *Schlossböckelheimer In Den Felsen Spätlease*. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 006 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY.

KRUGER-RUMPF

2007 (MÜNSTERER) DAUTENPFLÄNZER GG	\$25.50	93/A
2007 (MÜNSTERER) PITTERSBERG GG		91+/B+
2007 MÜNSTERER PITTERSBERG SPÄTLESE HALBTROCKEN	\$32.00	92/A
2007 MÜNSTERER RHEINBERG KABINETT	\$24.00	90(+)/A
2007 MÜNSTERER DAUTENPFLÄNZER SPÄTLESE	\$30.00	92+/A
2007 SCHEUREBE SPÄTLESE	\$30.00	92/A

Stephan Rumpf is not someone to beat his own drum -- and so you can find some extremely keen values from this estate. Along with Diel, this is one of the two top names that I know at the eastern end of the Nahe. We start with the two *Grosse Gewächse*: The *Dautenpflänzer* is a great bargain anyway you look at it: The wine is stony in the nose with all sorts of plum fruit in the nose and mouth: dark, green, and yellow. It is light, lively, and crystalline. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 039 08. The *Pittersberg* is a little bigger and more structured, but less open. Rumpf intended that the *Münsterer Pittersberg Spätlease halbtrocken* be part of the *Grosses Gewächs*, but the wine did not ferment dry. It is crisp with intense, crystalline yellow plum fruit and tastes virtually dry. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 030 08. The *Münsterer Rheinberg Kabinett* is pure and crystalline with green plum fruit and it shows some sweetness. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. Rumpf's *Münsterer Dautenpflänzer Spätlease* is medium-full with purity and crystallinity and rainwater transparency; it is relatively sweet. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 022 08. The *Scheurebe Spätlease* shows typical rose aromas and flavors with none of the underripe cat's pee. The wine is almost dry on the palate and long and racy. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 023 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY.

NIEDERHAUSEN-SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIM

2007 ALTENBAMBERGER ROTTENBERG TROCKEN		89/B
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER HERMANNSBERG TROCKEN		89(+)/B
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER FELSENBURG TROCKEN		92/A

2007 TRAIER BASTEI TROCKEN	90/B+
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER KUPFERBERG TROCKEN "UNTER DER MAUER"	88/B
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER KERTZ	91/A-
2007 (NIEDERHÄUSER) STEINBERG GG	94/A
2007 (NIEDERHÄUSER) KERTZ GG	93/A
2007 (NIEDERHÄUSER) HERMMANSBERG GG	93/A
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER STEINBERG KABINETT	91/A
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER HERMANNSHÖHLE SPÄTLESE	92/A
2007 NIEDERHÄUSER HERMANNSHÖHLE AUSLESE	93/A

This is the old Staatsdomäne holding, purchased by the Maurer family some years ago. Without a doubt, the vineyards are jewel. Unfortunately, the estate is so large, and there have been such rapid turnovers of personnel, that the potential here has yet to be fully realized, despite some steps in the right direction in the past. In particular, it seems to me that the estate is hurting from a lack of importers in countries who could support the better wines; instead, the market for these wines appears to be primarily German, and therefor for wines of quality less than could be produced here. An additional factor may be that there has been some personnel turnover in the last year. Nevertheless, with some selection, one can do quite well here. Harvest lasted from the beginning of October through October 26. All dry wines have been given the QbA designation. We start with the *Altenbamberger Rotenberg trocken*, a wine that shows some minerality in both nose and mouth with roundness that is almost softness, and some red plums appearing in the back of the mouth. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08. The *Niederhäuser Hermmannsberg trocken* is a 6 ha monopole of the estate with slate and loam-loess soils. The wine is less mineral than the Rotenberg but shows greater firmness and some finesse on the palate with green plum flavors. Stated alcohol: 12.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 008 08. The *Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg trocken* has floral, stony aromas. In the mouth, the wine is firm without being hard, and round but not plump with mouthwatering acidity. Stated alcohol: 12.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 020 08. The *Triaser Bastei trocken* is from porphyry soils. The wine shows spicy small red fruit aromas that also have a floral aspect. The wine is round and firm in the mouth with red cherry flavors, mouthwatering acidity, and good purity. Stated alcohol: 12.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 015 08. The *Schlossböckelheimer Kupferberg "Unter der Mauer" trocken* has smoky and stony aromas. There is attractive, mouth-watering acidity to go with minerality and red fruits and an overall firmness. But this is not a hard wine, and it has good length. Where it comes up a bit short, though, is in penetration. The *Niederhäuser Kertz* shows minerality in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is sleek, racy, mouth-watering, and mineral with lime peel and yellow plum flavors, intensity, nervosity, and elegance, and it is fairly dry (5.1 g/l residual sugar with an acidity of 7.4 g/l). This is from gray slate soils. The *Steinberg Grosses Gewächs* has gorgeous chipped stone and mineral aromas. In the mouth, the wine has density, depth, and substance with crystalline red plum fruit. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 033 08. The *Kertz Grosses Gewächs* is mineral and floral in the nose and shows green and yellow plum fruit in the mouth, with greater density than the Steinberg and almost chewy texture. The wine is very direct -- almost like biting into a fresh plum. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 32 08. The *Hermmannsberg Grosses Gewächs* is floral in the nose with yellow fruits. In the mouth, the wine is pure with some power folded into an overall delicate Nahe style with fine acidity. There is just a touch of rusticity on the finish, but overall this is excellent. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 30 08.

In the fruity style, the *Niederhäuser Steinberg Kabinett* has a stony nose, followed by minerality and small red fruits in the mouth, especially strawberries and red currants, but also some lime. The mouth-watering acidity in previous wines continues here, and also the nervosity. This is a very attractive Kabinett. 9.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 011 08. The *Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Spätlese* shows chipped stone aromas. In the mouth, the wine comes across as very sweet as though it were a

light Auslese, with juicy acidity and long lime and lemon flavors. It needs a year or so to pull together. 9.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. Finally, the *Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Auslese* has honeyed aromas but is largely closed in the nose. In the mouth, the wine shows sauteed apple and mineral lemon flavors with length, calmness, crystallinity, depth, and penetration. 9.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 022 08. No current U.S. importer.

PRINZ ZU SALM-SALM/DALBERG'SCHES

2007(WALLHAUSEN) JOHANNISBERG GG	92/A
2007 (ROXHEIM) BERG GG	91/A-
2007 TWO PRINCES	\$13.00 84/C
2007 KABINETT	\$21.00 86/B-
2007 SPÄTLESE	\$28.00 88/C

The *Johannisberg Grosses Gewächs* is floral and fruity with crystallinity and a touch of chewiness to the texture. The *Berg Grosses Gewächs* shows yellow and green plum fruit and is a bit weightier than the Roxheim, but it also has a touch of graininess to the texture. The QbA *Two Princes* is not entirely estate produced. The stated alcohol is 11.0%, making the wine a little too big and cumbersome for a QbA that has some perceptible residual sugar. Still, the wine does have decent acidity and apricot and prune fruit, making it pleasurable to drink, especially at this moderate price. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 001 08. The *Kabinett*, at 9.5% stated alcohol, is also relatively rich for its type, but here the wine comes off as relatively dry -- I wonder if a decade or two ago, this wouldn't have been called *halbtrocken*, at least in style if not technically (today most wines labelled *halbtrocken* that I taste seem essentially dry with the residual sugar manifesting itself only in the texture and roundness of the wine. This wine shows plenty of ripe apricot aromas and apricot and peach flavors with a little minerality, but the wine lacks some crispness and focus. Still, it is a good wine for consuming young. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. The *Spätlese*, also an estate wine, displays ripe, even a touch jammy (not negative), apricot aromas and flavors. Once again, stated alcohol is 9.5%. Here the wine is not too big and has sweetness that is neither more nor less than one expects, but there is less crispness than a superior wine would show. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 014 08. Importer: Valckenberg, International, Tulsa, OK.

SCHÄFER-FRÖHLICH

2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIM TROCKEN	90/B+
2007 BOCKENAUER TROCKEN	91/A-
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER FELSENBURG TROCKEN	92+/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK TROCKEN	93/A
2007 (SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER) FELSENBURG GG	94+/A
2007 (MONZIGER) HALENBURG GG	95/A
2007 (SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER) KUPFERGRUBE GG	95/A
2007 (BOCKENAUER) FELSENECK GG	96/A+
2007 WEISSEBURGUNDER "S" TROCKEN	91/A-
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK HALBTROCKEN	92/A
2007 KABINETT	92/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK SPÄTLESE	94/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK SPÄTLESE GOLD CAPSULE	96/A+
2007 SCHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER FELSENBURG AUSLESE	95+/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK AUSLESE	96+/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK AUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE (AUCTION)	98/A+
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK EISWEIN	94/C
2007 SHLOSSBÖCKELHEIMER FELSENBURG BEERENAUSLESE	96(+)/B

2007 BOCKENAUER FELESENECK BEERENAUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE (AUCTION)	97(+)/A-
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK EISWEIN GOLD CAPSULE	97/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	97/A
2007 BOCKENAUER FELSENECK TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE GOLD CAPSULE	98/A

Tim Schäfer shows his extraordinary talents across a wide stretch of wines. He harvested very late in 2007, finishing at the same time as Dönnhoff, with whom he once apprenticed. He characterized the vintage as one in which you could make everything perfect. That said, I'm not sure that he has better wines in 2007 than in 2006 or 2005, not because 2007 is disappointing, but because he succeeded so fabulously in the earlier years. As with many other producers, he is now labelling all his dry wines as QbA (i.e., no Kabinett trocken, Spätlese, trocken, etc.). We begin with the *Schlossböckelheim trocken*, a wine entirely from the Felsenberg vineyard. The wine shows superb acidity with great finesse, razor-sharp minerality and a little red fruit, all coming together in a racy package. 12% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 0308. The *Bockenauer trocken* is entirely from the Felsenberg vineyard. Stonier in the nose, the wine is razor-sharp, pure, and nervy with minerality and even more raciness. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 04 08. The *Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg trocken* is rounder, spicier and deeper, but still mineral, racy, and sharp. 13% stated alcohol. The *Bockenauer Felsenberg trocken* is very stony and mineral in the nose. The minerality and stoniness in the mouth are amazing and the wine displays finesse to go with the razor sharpness and incipient apricot fruit. In 2007, Schäfer's yields for each of his *Grosse Gewächse* wines was a maximum of 20 hl/ha. However, Tim Schäfer observed that he usually has to do a very strict selection to get what he wants for his *Grosse Gewächse*, but in 2007 that was not the case. The grapes for the *Grosse Gewächse* were harvested between November 1 and November 4, with perhaps a small amount at the end of October. The grapes for all four came in at about 103° Oe and they are all in the range of 7.4-7.5 g/l acidity. The *Felsenberg Grosses Gewächs* is mineral and apply in the nose. In the mouth, this shows more finesse than the previous wines. It is light but has tremendous intensity. The *Halenberg Grosses Gewächs* is stonier still in the nose and again presents some apple aromas. In the mouth, the great finesse continues, and the wine is finer, but less sharp, than the Felsenberg. The *Kupfergrube* is very stone in the nose, and fine in the mouth but with some richness and with firmness and elegance for its dark fruit flavors. Last of the *Grosse Gewächse*, the *Felsenberg* is very fine and pure in the nose with stoniness and a very fine minerality. In the mouth, the wine displays great finesse, penetration, and calm with weight despite its ethereal quality. These *Grosse Gewächse* wines probably should not be drunk before they are 1-1/2 to 2 years old and ideally not until they are at least 5-6 years old. We now take a detour to the *Weisseburgunder "S" trocken*, a Pinot Blanc raised about half in 600 l German oak casks, about half in stainless steel. The wine is very racy, pure, razor sharp and austere. Amazingly, at 14° stated alcohol, it remains light. The *Bockenauer Felsenberg halbtrocken* is from tanks that were intended for the *Grosses Gewächs* wine but that did not finish their fermentation. The wine is rounder than the *Grosses Gewächs* but still comes across as dry due to the acidity. It is deep, pure, and long with minerality and apricot fruit.

Moving to the fruity-style wines, the *Kabinett* is from the Bockenau Stromberg vineyard, with porphyry soils. This is the first Riesling harvest from the vineyard for Schäfer-Fröhlich. Stony peach aromas are followed by freshness and a little honey in the mouth (but not from botrytis) with length, crispness, refreshing apricot flavors, and a long finish. The grapes for this wine were the first that the estate harvested, and 3-1/2 weeks later it harvested the grapes for the *Bockenauer Felsenberg Spätlese*. This wine fermented to the end of May (very long) and is from 12 year-old grapes on a very steep slope. The wine is still reductive in the nose with some minerality and honey. The *Bockenauer Felsenberg Gold Cap Spätlese* is from grapes from the same parcel and harvested at the same time as the *Grosses Gewächs*, but made in the fruity style. The wine is still reductive in the nose, but in the mouth is rounder and fuller with greater minerality and depth than the regular Spätlese with more character. It is honeyed but

remains a Spätlese, not a mini-Auslese. 7.5% stated alcohol. For the noble sweet wines, Tim said that it was more overripeness than botrytis in 2007. In particular, the *Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg Auslese* is from overripe grapes that did not go into the *Grosses Gewächs*. The wine is pure and crystalline with orange and lime peel fruit and cutting acidity that masks part of the sweetness. I found myself at the end continuing to marvel at the purity. The *Bockenauer Felseneck Auslese* has no botrytis at all. Brown sugar and spiciness characterize the nose. On the palate, the wine is spicy with orange peel flavors, purity, airiness, and nervy acidity. The *Bockenauer Felseneck Gold Cap Auslese*, harvested four days after the harvest of the grapes for the *Grosses Gewächs* from this vineyard, is spicy, pure, and ethereal in the nose, and deep and nervy in the mouth with plenty of raciness. It will be a treasure for those lucky enough to possess a bottle. The *Bockenauer Felseneck Eiswein* is an example of how many Eisweine of this vintage didn't quite get the character down. Harvested at about 135-140° Oe, the wine has zinging acidity and is very clean and sweet, but just doesn't present the essence of Riesling quality that makes Eiswein so unique. Certainly a wine that one can drink with pleasure, and it is only in regarding it as an Eiswein that disappointment sets in. The *Schlossböckelheimer Felsenberg Beerenauslese* represents an extreme selection -- only about 1-3% of the grapes, according to Tim Schäfer. With fruit coming in at 160° Oe, the wine is intense and golden with more weight, intensity, and acidity than the Eiswein, and in fact, the acidity is such that it prevents the wine from being fully sweet. Age this wine 20-30 years. Normally, one would drink a BA on its own, but this one might match well with various cheeses. Only 150 l of the *Bockenauer Felseneck Gold Cap Beerenauslese* are in existence -- half for auction, half for the Schäfer-Fröhlich cellar. Golden BA aromas in the nose with some raisin aspects. In the mouth, the wine shows fantastic acidity with beaded honeyed flavors that are long and tightly wound and with great finesse. Another wine for drinking 20-30 years from now. In contrast to the regular Eiswein, the *Bockenauer Felseneck Gold Cap Eiswein* is just what an Eiswein should be. Harvested on 22 December, the wine has a sharp, concentrated, honeyed nose and intense honey flavors with finesse, a biting, sharp quality, and the necessary essence of Riesling character. There were five pickers who only selected the best berries. The wine has about 18-19 g/l acidity. Finally, there is the monumental *Bockenauer Felseneck Gold Cap Trockenbeerenauslese*, of which there are 60 liters. The grapes were so concentrated that there was no juice and Schäfer had to add sixty liters of the regular TBA just to get juice. It then took six days to filter just to get these 60 liters. The wine is very powerful and intense with concentrated quince fruit along with candied orange peel and a syrupy texture. The overall impression of is immense concentration bound up with incredible finesse. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

RHEINGAU

GEORG BREUER

2007 GRAUER BURGUNDER	86/B
2007 GRAUER BURGUNDER CHARM	86/B
2007 GRAUER BURGUNDER SAUVAGE	86/B
2007 RÜDESHEIM	88/B
2007 RAUENTHAL	90/A-
2007 TERRA MONTOSA	90/A-
2007 (RÜDESHEIM) BERG ROSENECK	90(+)/A-
2007 (RÜDESHEIM) BERG ROTTLAND	94/A
2007 (RÜDESHEIM) BERG SCHLOSSBERG	92/A
2007 (RAUENTHAL) NONNENBERG	93/A
2007 (RAUENTHAL) NONNENBERG AUSLESE	95/A
2007 (RÜDESHEIM) BERG SCHLOSSBERG AUSLESE	96/A
2007 (RÜDESHEIM) BERG ROTTLAND AUSLESE	94/A

2007 (RÜDESHEIM) BERG ROSENECK AUSLESE**94/A**

But for the wines bearing a *Prädikat* of Auslese or above, the wines here are dry, and most are extremely dry in a style that will not please all. The wines remind me of paintings by Ellsworth Kelly or Barnett Newman or Clyfford Still -- wonders for some viewers, but too minimalist for others. Breuer's regular **Grauer Burgunder** (Pinot Gris) is entirely from vines in Rüdesheim at the top of the hill. It shows Pinot Gris nuttiness in the nose with some minerality. In the mouth, the wine has a creamy texture with acidity underneath to give it some nervosity and minerality. Drink in the next 2-3 years. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08. The **Grauer Burgunder "Charm"** is about 70% bought-in wine, the rest estate. This wine is halbtrocken in style with lime minerality in a medium-light body with some minerality. 11.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 023 08. The **Grauer Burgunder "Sauvage"** is dry, austere, pure, and stony. It will not be to everyone's taste. 11.5% stated alcohol. Here, too, there is some bought-in wine. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. The **Rüdesheim** is entirely from estate grapes, 60% in oak, 40% in stainless steel. The nose is salty and mineral, and the wine is salty, pure, intense and dry in the mouth with notably acidity, minerality, and a little bit of creaminess to the texture. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 004 08. The estate **Raenthal** has subtle chipped stone aromas and is crystalline and nervy in the mouth with lime and mineral flavors. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 006 08. The **Terra Rosa** is the second wine of the three vineyard-designated wines. The wine is relatively closed in the nose with some stony minerality and spicy-mint qualities showing. In the mouth, it is racy and mineral with some earthiness (in the positive sense) and good acidity. It appears totally dry on the palate (11.4 g/l residual sugar, 8.9 g/l acidity) and needs a year or two in the bottle to meld. 12.5% stated alcohol. The **Berg Roseneck** is stony and flinty in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is austere and stony -- a very pure and uncompromising expression of the Riesling grape. Give this wine some time in the bottle before drinking. The **Berg Rottland** is rounder in the nose with yellow peach and spice showing. In the mouth, the wine is austere, especially on the finish, but shows richness underneath. It is a wine to keep for 8-10 years before drinking. Breuer's **Berg Schlossberg** is mineral and spicy in nose and mouth and perhaps more austere than the Berg Rottland. Give this wine 4-7 years in the cellar. The **Nonnenberg** shows white peach flavors but is extremely austere for the moment. Give this wine, too, several years in the cellar before drinking, but the quality of the wine and the skill that went into making it are readily apparent.

Curiously, the estate presented the four Auslesen in the opposite order of the single-vineyard dry wines. These wines are intense and honeyed, wines to contemplate on their own as they continue the monastic austerity. The **Nonnenberg Auslese** has a fascinating, complex, and subtle nose of hay with a bit of honey. In the mouth, the wine is sweet with long honeyed flavors that are intense. There is a calm here, and a satiny texture. The **Berg Schlossberg** has additional mineral tones to its intense honeyed aromas and flavors and is very pure and silky. The **Berg Rottland Auslese** has a stonier minerality with perhaps a shade less refinement. It also shows the honey and some sauteed apples, and is intense, pure, and relatively powerful. Last, the **Berg Roseneck Auslese** is floral, confectionary, and honeyed in the nose, reminding of apple crêpes. It is sweet and the most powerful of the four Auslesen, and the least refined, with almost candied apple flavors and a rich, ripe, chewy, intense mouth, again of apple crêpes. Importer: Classical Wines, Seattle, WA.

KLOSTER EBERBACH/HESSISCHE STAATSWEINGÜTER**2007 (WIESBADENER) NEROBERG (KABINETT) TROCKEN****92/A****2007 STEINBERGER TROCKEN****90+/B+****2007 (RAUENTHALER) GEHRN SPÄTLESE TROCKEN****91/A-****2007 (RÜDESHEIMER) BERG ROTTLAND TROCKEN****91(+)/A-****2007 (RÜDESHEIMER) BERG SCHLOSSBERG EG****93/A**

2007 (ERBACHER) MARCOBRUNN EG	94/A
2007 STEINBERGER KABINETT	92/A
2007 STEINBERGER SPÄTLESE	93(+)/A
2007 RAUENTHALER BAIKEN SPÄTLESE	(93-96)
2007 RAUENTHALER BAIKEN AUSLESE	97/A
2007 STEINBERGER TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	98+/A

This is Germany's largest estate, and this list of wines tasted gives some idea of the amazing array of vineyard holdings. New state of the art cellars, just outside the estate's monopole Steinberger vineyard will be inaugurated with the 2008 vintage, which should help to even out quality. The *Neroberg trocken* is from a vineyard above the city of Wiesbaden that had belonged to the city for most of the twentieth century and then reverted to Kloster Eberbach. The great majority of the wine is sold in Wiesbaden itself, but it is worth looking out for, if you are visiting Wiesbaden or otherwise. The wine has floral aromas and is elegant and smooth, almost silky, in the mouth, with purity and minerality and round acidity. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 022 08. The *Steinberger trocken* is stonier and more closed in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is stony, mineral, and pure but not as broad or round as the Neroberg -- it is more a wine for the future. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 015 08. The *Gehrns Spätlese trocken* is lemony and mineral in the nose and very direct with lemon flavors, elegant acidity, and good purity. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08. The *Berg Schlossberg Erstes Gewächs* shows intense minerality with just a hint of vitamin in the nose, and also seductive floral notes. In the mouth, the wine is medium-weight with minerality that is intense and pure but the wine is still young. There is a fair amount of power here. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 042 08. The *Marcobrunn Erstes Gewächs* has white and yellow flower aromas with some lemon blossoms. In the mouth, the wine has pomegranate fruit with a slightly soft texture but enlivening acidity and a medium-weight body. The wine shows great finesse and a silky texture. This wine may mature relatively early. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 041 08.

In the fruity style, the *Steinberger Kabinett* has floral aromas and is lemony and pure in the mouth with a fine acidity and the wine is very drawn out in the mouth. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08. The *Steinberger Spätlese* has a small bit of botrytis. The nose is lemony and in the mouth, the wine is round and rich with much more power than the Kabinett and with a chewy texture. This wine needs some time in the bottle, still. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 035 08. The *Rauenthaler Baiken Spätlese* is pure and long with a texture that is more satin than silk. There is great minerality here and tremendous length; probably less botrytis than the Steinberger Spätlese, and once again the very fine acidity of the vintage. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 034 08. In 2007, there was relatively little noble sweet wine here, as at many other estates. The *Rauenthaler Baiken Auslese*, still in cask when I tasted it on September 1, is very heavily botrytised. The wine is quite honeyed, pure, long, and mineral with great acidity, intensity, and nervosity. It really is a small Beerenauslese. Last, the monumental *Steinberger Trockenbeerenauslese*, has spices, herbs, and dried apricots in the nose and is ripe and round in the mouth with dried apricot flavors. The wine is intense but elegant and, having been opened two days when I tasted it, great for drinking now, although obviously with a long future. Importer: Dee Vine Wines, San Francisco.

AUGUST ESER

2007 (OESTRICHER) LENCHEN EG	92/A
2007 (RAUENTHALER) ROTHENBERG EG	92(+)/A

Eser's *Lenchen* has relatively soft acidity with some residual sugar apparent. The wine has yellow plum flavors and should make a good food pairing. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 023 08. The

Rothenberg is tightly wound with nice acidity and stoniness. The wine is impressive, but needs five-six years to reach its peak.

FLICK

2007 WICKERER MÖNCHGESWANN EG 94/A

2007 WICKERER NONNBERG EG 94/A

The last few years, I have been greatly impressed by the wines from this estate in largely-ignored Wicker. I tried to schedule a visit this year but was unable to do so. Hopefully, next year. The *Wickerer Mönchgeswann EG* displays lemon blossom and yellow plum aromas and is firm, deep, dense, and concentrated in the mouth with fine minerality and quince flavors. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. The *Wickerer Nonnberg EG* is a bit more floral and more mineral in its lemon blossom and beeswax aromas. In the mouth, the wine is a little more elegant than the Nonnberg with mineral, lemon fruit. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 022 68.

EMMERICH HIMMEL

2007 HOCHHEIMER HÖLLE EG 91(+)/A-

2007 HOCHHEIMER KIRCHENSTÜCK EG 93/A

I have no previous experience with this relatively small (35,000 bottles/year) producer, but I was impressed by these two *Erste Gewächse* impressed me, and I understand that Himmel also has a reputation for Spätburgunder. The *Hochheimer Hölle* is a little rustic but attractive for its mineral fruit in a relatively heavy body. Last digits of A.P.Nr.: 015 08. The *Hochheimer Kirchenstück* is quite floral in the nose, and mineral and floral in the mouth with some elegance and a medium-weight body. No current U.S. importer.

SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERG

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER TROCKEN 86/B-

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER KABINETT TROCKEN 89/A-

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER SPÄTLESE TROCKEN 92/A

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER EG 94(+)/A

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER (FEINHERB) 92/A

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER KABINETT (FEINHERB) 94/A+

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER SPÄTLESE 95+/A

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER AUSLESE 96+/A

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER BEERENAUSLESE 97+/A

2007 SCHLOSS JOHANNISBERGER TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE 98/A

Yet again a vintage of very high quality here. The *trocken* is fruity with some peach notes in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is fairly strict, although there are some peach and nectarine flavors showing. This wine is intended for the German market and it is German-style in its very dry approach. There are some new casks used on this wine (not for the purpose of introducing new wood, but simply because the estate is in the process of replacing some older casks), but I did not notice their effect. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. The *Kabinett trocken* is lightly floral in the nose and also features peach fruit. In the mouth, the wine has good acidity but is also elegant. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 004 08. The *Spätlese trocken* has white flower aromas. In the mouth, the wine is elegant, pure, long, and ripe with white peach fruit and less severity than the Kabinett. This has about 20% new casks, but again, I did not notice any effect of new wood. Expect this to last 15-20 years, at least. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 006 08. The *Erstes Gewächs Schloss Johannisberger* has some spice and perfumed dark plum aromas. In the mouth, the wine displays great finesse and fine acidity with length, purity, dark plum and yellow peach flavors and outstanding balance. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 008 08.

In the fruity style, the QbA *Schloss Johannisberger* (which will be labelled *feinherb* for some markets, but not the U.S.) shows white and yellow peach aromas and flavors and great purity. This will be one of the great values of the vintage. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08. The *Kabinett* similarly will be labelled *feinherb* for some markets, but not the U.S. The wine shows white peaches and minerality in the nose. In the mouth, the wine has wonderful purity and depth to its white peach fruit; it is off dry and easy to drink. A little spice kicks in at the finish. This is a superb Kabinett. 11.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 005 08. Christian Witte, director of Schloss Johannisberger, thinks that the *Spätlese* is the best that the estate has produced in decades -- given recent efforts, that is quite a statement. No botrytis in this wine. The nose is very pure in its peach aromas. In the mouth, the wine is broad and ripe with minerality and peach and apricot flavors that are quite long, as well as some honeyed aspects. There is great finesse here, and length, too. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 007 08. In contrast to the *Spätlese*, the *Auslese* is about 40-50% botrytised. The wine shows pineapple and other tropical fruits as well as honey and brown sugar. The wine is opulent and rich with finesse and a silky texture. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 009 08. The *Beerenauslese* displays finesse along with pure BA character -- botrytis and cutting acidity. The wine is pure, long, smooth, and drawn-out in the mouth. Needless to say, decades and decades of future for this wine. Finally, the *Trockenbeerenauslese* shows typical caramel and brown sugar in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is long, nervy, and pure with citrus peel and caramel flavors -- just great. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

JOHANNISHOF/J. ESER

2007 CHARTA	\$19.00	91/A-
2007 JOHANNISBERGER HÖLLE EG		93(+)/A
2007 JOHANNISBERG "V" KABINETT	\$20.00	90/A
2007 JOHANNISBERG "G" KABINETT	\$25.00	91(+)/A
2007 JOHANNISBERGER KLAUS SPÄTLESE	\$37.00	94/A
2007 RÜDESHEIMER BERG ROTTLAND SPÄTLESE	\$31.00	94/A

Johannishof is one of the most underrated German estates that I know. Year after year, Johannes Eser turns out pure, perfectly balanced wines that do not stand out at large tastings because they are subtle. Simply put, it is one of the top tier estates in the Rheingau. The *Charta*, technically a QbA dry wine, is a classic with minerality and Rheingau yellow plum fruit plus crystallinity. Undoubtedly, the wine will age well, but frankly why wait? -- it is delicious now. With a suggested price of \$19, this wine is a steal. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 00308. The *Johannisberger Hölle Erstes Gwächs* is steely and tightly wound -- promising but in need of more time in the bottle to develop. The *Johannisberger "V" Kabinett* is from the Vogelsang vineyard. It is an elegant wine with pure strawberry flavors, a little bitter almond in the back of the mouth, crystallinity, and good length. Stated alcohol is 9.5%, but the wine is well balanced. This wine may age well, but it is so charming now that I'd be inclined to consume it in the next several years. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 009 08. The *Johannisberger "G" Kabinett* is from the excellent Goldatzel vineyard. This wine is a step up in its finesse, its depth, and its complexity. Pineapple and other tropical fruits with some orange overtones are the primary flavors. Here, too, 9.5% stated alcohol but impeccable balance. Unlike the previous wine, I think this wine can take some aging, so I'd drink it either over the next 3-4 years or wait until the wine approached 10 years of age to start drinking again. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 010 08. The *Johannisberger Klaus Spätlese* charms and impresses by its great purity and finesse. This is a Mozart of a wine. It is airy and elegant with penetrating lime and lemon blossom aromas and flavors. There is enough substance here so that one is aware that the wine is from the Rheingau, but the crystallinity and elegance will attract Nahe enthusiasts. Stated alcohol: 9.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 01308. Equally outstanding is the *Rüdesheimer Berg Rottland Spätlese*. The wine is rich and dense with

minerality and white and yellow peach fruit. The smooth, round texture hides the acidity that enlivens the fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 1408. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

JAKOB JUNG

2007 (ERBACHER) STEINMORGEN EG	92/A
2007 (ERBACHER) HOHENRAIN EG	92/A
2007 (ERBACHER) SIEGELSBERG EG	92(+?)/A

As with last year, I am favorably impressed by the wines of this estate that come my way. The *Steinmorgen* has floral, peach, and lemony aromas. In the mouth, the wine showed yellow peach flavors. It is elegant and not big, but with good ripeness and acidity. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08. The *Hohenrain* was similarly lemony in nose and mouth but also had yellow peaches, and showed better concentration and acidity. The wine has ripe acidity, is medium-light and elegant. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 033 08. The *Siegelsberg* was intense with red and yellow plum fruit. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 034 08.

BARON KNYPHAUSEN

2007 DRY	\$15.00	87/B
2007 (ERBACHER) STEINMORGEN EG		92/A
2007 (HATTENHEIMER) WISSELBRUNNEN EG		91(+)/A-
2007 RIESLING	\$15.00	86/B
2007 KABINETT BARON K'	\$15.00	85/B-
2007 ERBACHER STEINMORGEN KABINETT	\$28	89(+)/A-
2007 KIEDRICHER SANDGRUB SPÄTLESE	\$26.00	92/A
2007 ERBACHER STEINMORGEN SPÄTLESE	\$36.00	92/A
2007 ERBACHER STEINMORGEN AUSLESE		95/A
2007 HATTENHEIMER WISSELBRUNNEN BEERENAUSLESE	\$137/375 ML	97/A

Knyphausen's *Dry* estate Riesling is a lovely wine for drinking that doesn't require too much concentration. There is enough sugar here to give the wine roundness but it tastes essentially dry with elegance and firmness and yellow plum jelly flavors with a touch of bitter almond and a hint of bitterness on the finish. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 001 08. Knyphausen's *Erstes Gewächs Steinmorgen* is refined in the nose with light honey and yellow peach aromas. In the mouth, the wine has plenty of acidity to underlie the yellow peach flavors and it should drink very well in 5-7 years. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 020 08. The *Wisselbrunnen Erstes Gewächs* shows slightly underripe peach aromas and flavors and the wine is elegant -- with time it may show even better. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 026 08. The QbA *Riesling* has a stated alcohol of 11.5% and tastes dry. The wine shows attractive minerality in both nose and mouth and has a nice little bite in the mouth. It's not complex, but nevertheless attractive for serving on its own or with a wide variety of dishes, including seafood, cheese, and charcuterie. Drink over the next 4-5 years. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 003 08. Even at 11.0% stated alcohol, the *Baron K' Kabinett* is overly sweet unless served quite cold. Serve it very chilled and enjoy the mineral pear and yellow plum fruit with a lush body. I'd drink young or hold for a decade. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 1408. The *Erbacher Steinmorgen Kabinett* has 12.5% stated alcohol, yet bears the sweetness one would expect of a Kabinett. Pear and quince aromas are followed by a medium-weight attack in the mouth with soft acids that give a satiny feel, and some liveliness to the quince fruit that shows light minerality. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 006 08. Knyphausen's *Kiedricher Sandgrub Spätlese* needs a little time to open. It is smooth and elegant. The wine features yellow plum, lemon and quince flavors and fine, nervous acidity is fairly sweet for a Spätlese, but well-balanced. 9% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 007 08. The *Erbacher Steinmorgen Spätlese* is an attractive wine, done in Knyphausen's typically understated style. The wine has lavender and white peach aromas and

flavors, and is delicate and lively in the mouth. 9.5% stated alcohol here. This wine is very good for drinking young, although I would expect it to age well, too. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 003 08. There is quite a bit of botrytis evident in the *Erbacher Steinmorgen Auslese*. The wine shows honey, caramel, chocolate, orange peel, and tropical fruit aromas and flavors, really being at least gold cap Auslese in style, perhaps even Beerenauslese. The soft acidity renders the body satiny, but not flabby. Certainly, this wine will live for decades, but it is delicious to drink already -- on its own or with a meal. Stated alcohol: 12%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. Faithful to Knyphausen's style, the *Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen Beerenauslese* is understated in style, but with airing, the botrytis elements come out -- the caramel, chocolate, orange peel, honey, and brown sugar. The texture is satiny, and the wine is sweet, but not painfully so, with good balancing acidity. Nothing over the top here, this is truly a wine for meditation. Like the Auslese, with some airing, there is no sacrilege in opening a bottle now. 10.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 018 08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

J. KÖGLER

2007 ELTVILLER SONNENBERG EG

91/A-

Kögler's *Eltviller Sonnenberg Erstes Gewächs* has spicy, flinty aromas that are followed in the mouth by good and relatively aggressive acidity with chewy lemon flavors. It is an unusual combination of rusticity and elegance.

FRANZ KÜNSTLER

2007 HOXHHEIMER HÖLLE EG

92/A

Künstler's *Hochheimer Hölle Erstes Gewächs* has floral and peach aromas and a touch of diesel -- just enough to give complexity. In the mouth, the wine has yellow peach and nectarine flavors, but the texture is a bit grainy. It is a good wine, but not the best that Künstler can do. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

FREIHERR LANGWERTH VON SIMMERN

2007 ELTVILLER KABINETT TROCKEN

90/B+

2007 HATTENHEIM KABINETT TROCKEN

91/B+

2007 RAUENTHALER BAIKEN KABINETT TROCKEN

92/A

2007 HATTENHEIMER NUSSBRUNNEN KABINETT TROCKEN

92+/A

2007 RAUENTHALER BAIKEN SPÄTLESE TROCKEN

93/A

2007 HATTENHEIMER MANNBERG EG

94/A

2007 JUST RIESLING

83/D

2007 BARONESS ANDREA

86(+)/B

2007 HATTENHEIMER NUSSBRUNNEN KABINETT

92/A

2007 ERBACHER MARCOBRUNN KABINETT

93(+)/A

2007 ERBACHER MARCOBRUNN SPÄTLESE

93+/A

2007 HATTENHEIMER MANNBERG SPÄTLESE

93+/A

2007 RAUENTHALER BAIKEN AUSLESE

94(+)/A

2007 ERBACHER MARCOBRUNN AUSLESE

94/A

2007 HATTENHEIMER MANNBERG AUSLESE

95(+)/A

2007 HATTENHEIMER MANNBERG BEERENAUSLESE

98/A

For many years Langwerth von Simmern was one of the leading estates, and arguably the best of all, in the Rheingau. Beginning with the late 1970s or in the 1980s, the estate (along with most of the Rheingau) lost its edge. Even in the 1990s, when the Rheingau began to recover, the occasional bottles I came across did not thrill me. But slow progress was being achieved: beginning in 1996, the cellar converted to stainless steel, which was then further upgraded in 2000 along with a new press. Then a new technical

Director, Dirk Roth, previously the winemaker at Josef Biffar in Deidesheim, was brought in, and changes in the vineyard with respect to matters such as trellising and pruning were instituted. Last year, I was impressed by the *Erstes Gewächs* wine and made a mental note to visit. I did, and I am glad that I did so -- these wines did justice to the earlier reputation of this estate. The style is relatively modern, but of quality. Harvest in 2007 was fairly early, beginning in mid-October. The label at this estate has been very distinctive with a vine motif against a red background and the coat of arms in the middle. Now, that label is kept for the wines designated as from the top vineyards; the others have the same design but with a black background. Although traditionally known for its noble late harvest wines, the dry wines here are remarkable and most worthy of your attention. We start with the *Eltviller trocken*, from the Sonnenberg and Rheinberg vineyards. The wine is light and pure with yellow plum fruit and a refreshing acid attack. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 001 08. Next, the *Hattenheimer Kabinett trocken* is from the Mannberg, Nussbrunnen, and Wissebrunnen vineyards. The wine is smoother, silky, and chewy with yellow plum fruit. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 035 08. The *Rauenthaler Baiken Kabinett trocken* is silky with slate minerality and dark and yellow plum flavors. No harshness in this wine. The *Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Kabinett trocken* has floral aromas and in the mouth is fuller and darker than the Baiken with pure yellow plum fruit and overall raciness. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 008 08. The *Rauenthaler Baiken Spätlese trocken* has floral lime blossom aromas with a hint of grapefruit. Still closed in the mouth, the wine is dense and racy with green plum flavors. This is a splendid wine. The *Erstes Gewächs Hattenheimer Mannberg* has some grapefruit aromas and fuller in body than the Baiken and also more forward. It is smooth and elegant, but not quite as dry as the Baiken, as is frequently the case with *Erstes/Grosses Gewächs* wines. This is the estate's original vineyard, dating back to the middle of the fifteenth century. Langwerth von Simmern owns 90% of the vineyard; the only other owner of the vineyard is Kloster Eberbach, which grows only Pinot Blanc there. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 024 08.

In the fruity style, the *Just Riesling* is a QbA meant for picnics and other less serious occasions, and is so distinguished from the other wines by being packaged in a colorless Bordeaux bottle and having a transparent decal label without the estate's distinctive coat of arms on it. The wine is correct and fruity with simple yellow plum flavors and it is not terribly sweet. No great depth or concentration here. 10.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 005 08. The *Baroness Andrea* is the more serious, classic QbA. The wine is much finer with a smooth texture, lemon and yellow plum fruit, and an overall elegance. 10.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 004 08. The *Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Kabinett* is notable for its intensity, sugar/acid balance, and depth. The wine has a chewy texture a drawn out development in the mouth of its red and yellow plum fruit. 10.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. The *Erbacher Marcobrunn Kabinett* is more aromatic with fine red and yellow plum fruit. In the mouth, the wine is fuller bodied, ripe, round, rich, deep, and powerful with intensity to its plum flavors. This is a truly outstanding Kabinett. 10.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08. Beginning with the fruity Spätlesen, the wines are designated with a blue capsule. The *Erbacher Marcobrunn Spätlese* initially shows grapefruit aromas but with a little time in the glass, they turn floral. The wine is fairly sweet and powerful but with underlying acidity showing and long yellow fruits. 10.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 025 08. The *Hattenheimer Mannberg Spätlese* is smooth and pure with more finesse and race than the Marcobrunn and very fine purity. Give this wine a little longer in the bottle to develop. 11.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 026 08. The remaining noble sweet wines were made in but minute amounts in 2007, so consider yourself fortunate should you latch onto some bottles. The *Rauenthaler Baiken Auslese* shows honey aromas and flavors and is racy and deep with mineral overtones. Length is medium. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 027 08. The *Erbacher Marcobrunn Auslese* has mineral and grapefruit aromas that will develop into different aromas with time, and some honey. In the mouth, the wine is elegant, long, pure, and honeyed with good depth.

10.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 030 08. The *Hattenheimer Mannberg Auslese* shows more botrytis with caramel aromas and flavors and more sweetness -- this is a gold cap Auslese style wine and will make a great bottle for those who hold it 10 years or more. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08. Last, the great *Hattenheimer Mannberg Beerenauslese*, a wine with caramel and honey in the nose and mouth with great nervosity and virtually a Trockenbeerenauslese for its concentration. Alas, it is extremely rare. Stated alcohol: 10.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 033 08. Importer: Chambers & Chambers, San Francisco.

JOSEF LEITZ

2007 EINS ZWEI DRY	\$16.00	87/B-
2007 RÜDESHEIMER BERG KAISERSTEINFELS TROCKEN ALTE REBEN	\$51.00	93/A
2007 DRAGONSTONE (RÜDESHEIMER DRACHENSTEIN)	\$19.50	89/A-
2007 RÜDESHEIMER KLOSTERLAY KABINETT	\$21.50	89(+)/
2007 RÜDESHEIMER MAGDALENENKREUZ SPÄTLESE	\$24.50	92/A
2007 RÜDESHEIMER BERG SCHLOSSBERG SPÄTLESE	\$39	93(+?)/A
2007 RÜDESHEIMER BERG ROSENECK SPÄTLESE	\$46.00	93/A

The *Eins Zwei Dry* comes from the highly-rated Geisenheimer Rothenberg vineyard. The wine is grapy and young but shows well with its apply fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 027 08. The *Rüdesheimer Berg Kaisersteinfels trocken "alte Reben"* is from an old, steep, terraced vineyard that Leitz (and Breuer) have recently taken over. The wine is pure and filigreed with depth to its slightly earthy yellow plum fruit and it is medium-light in weight. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 011 08. The *Dragonstone* QbA has become a hit in the U.S. over the last few years (Dragonstone is the English translation of *Drachenstein*). The wine is fruity with yellow plums and some dark plums and intense and deep. It lacks the complexity of a better wine, but at this price will provide plenty of enjoyment. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 025 08. Leitz's *Rüdesheimer Kloserlay Kabinett* is crisp with good acidity and minerality, although it needs a little time to open further. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 005 08. The *Rüdesheimer Magdalenenkreuz Spätlese* is Leitz's bargain Spätlese. The wine is rich, chewy, and sensual with long yellow plum fruit. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 001 08. The one time I tasted the *Rüdesheimer Berg Schlossberg Spätlese*, my notes say that it was pure, succulent, and nervy and showed some minerality, but another, later, visit of the wine will be necessary to judge its full potential. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 019 08. Last, the *Rüdesheimer Berg Roseneck Spätlese* has complex floral aromas, followed in the mouth by floral flavors with some yellow plums, good acidity, and a medium-weight body. Plenty of promise here. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 018 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY.

G. H. MUMM

2007 JOHANNISBERGER SCHWARZENSTEIN KABINETT TROCKEN	87(+)/B
2007 JOHANNISBERGER SCHWARZENSTEIN SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	88/B
2007 JOHNNISBERGER HÖLLE EG	92/A
2007 RÜDESHEINER BERG ROTTLAND EG	92/A
2007 JOHANNISBERGER MITTEHÖHLE SPÄTLESE	92(+)/A

As I explained last year, this estate is under the same ownership and management as Schloss Johannisberg. The *Johannisberger Schwarzenstein Kabinett trocken* has finesse and elegance with peach and nectarine fruit, purity, and good acidity. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 012 08. The *Johannisberger Schwarzenstein Spätlese trocken* has fine yellow peach aromas with some spice. In the mouth, the wine has yellow peach flavors with excellent length, elegance and a tender style. 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. The *Johannisberger Hölle Erstes Gewächs* is elegant, smooth, and lovely with yellow and white peach aromas and flavors and the fine acidity of the vintage. It drinks well already and does not betray the stated alcohol of 14.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 31 08. The

Rüdesheimer Berg Rottland Erstes Gewächs shows strawberry aromas and a bit of spice in its complex nose. In the mouth, the wine is firm, pure, spicy, and exotic with a creamy texture and an overall impression of finesse. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 030 08. Last, the *Johannisberger Mittelehöhe Spätlese* is pure, elegant, smooth, and silky with apricot and peach flavors and a bit of spice. It is medium-sweet and overall very fine. 10.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 014 08.

REBENHOF

2007 HOCHHEIMER HÖLLE EG 92+/A

This *Hochheimer Hölle Erstes Gewächs* is floral and mineral in the nose, and elegant, floral, and medium-full in the mouth. It is a little rustic, as Hölle can be, but with the finesse of the vintage as an overlay.

SCHLOSS REINHARTSHAUSEN

2007 (ERBACHER) SCHLOSSBERG EG 87(+)/

2007 (ERBACHER) SIEGELSBERGER EG 92+/

2007 (ERBACHER) MARCOBRUNN EG 89(+)/

These two wines represent the inconsistency that I've found when I've tasted the wines of this famous estate in recent years. The *Schlossberg* features spicy, underripe peach aromas and flavors and is very dry. The *Siegelsberg* is rounder, fuller, and less nervy in the nose. In the mouth, the acidity is less marked with lemony flavors but lacking precision or distinction. The *Marcobrunn* shows yellow and dark plum aromas with a touch of honey. Red plums dominate the mouth and there is an acidic attack. Eventually, there may be more here than I am seeing at this time.

SCHLOSS SCHÖNBORN

2007 (ASSMANNSHÄUSER) HÖLLENBERG SPÄTBURGUNDER TROCKEN \$55.00 87/B

2007 (HOCHHEIMER) DOMDECHANAY EG 92/A

2007 (ERBACHER) MARCOBRUNN EG 92/A

2007 (HATTENHEIMER) PFAFFENBERG EG 92(+)/A

Packaged in a bottle that looks almost like a magnum, the *Höllenberg Spätburgunder trocken* displays pretty, fresh strawberry aromas and flavors in a medium-light body. Oak is not an issue here. I do not have experience to know how this will age, but it can be drunk with pleasure at the present. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 45 08. The *Erstes Gewächs Domdechanay* features great finesse to its nose of beeswax with touches of honey and nectarine. In the mouth, the wine has nectarine flavors and is lively, pure, and intense with good acidity and nectarine flavors. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 006 08. The *Erbacher Marcobrunn* has beeswax aromas, followed by some apricot and red plum in the mouth and fairly marked acidity. With a few years in the bottle it should be very attractive. 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 039 08. Schönborn's monopole *Pfaffenberg* has apricot fruit that is refined and good length and acidity, and also roundness. It should be excellent with a few years in the bottle. 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 040 08. Importer: Winesellers, Ltd., Skokie, IL.

JOSEF SPREITZER

2007 (HATTENHEIMER) WISSELBRUNNEN EG 93/A

2007 (OESTRICHER) LENCHEN EG 93/A

2007 OESTRICHER DOOSBERG KABINETT \$26.50 92/A

2007 OESTRICHER LENCHEN KABINETT \$25.00 92/A

2007 WINKELER JESUITENGARTEN SPÄTLESE \$39.00 93(+)/A

2007 OESTRICHER LENCHEN SPÄTLESE "303" \$56.00 93+/A

2007 OESTRICHER LENCHEN AUSLESE \$55.50 95/A

Andreas and Bernd Spreitzer's *Erstes Gewächs Wisselbrunnen* is focused, crystalline, and mineral with yellow plum fruit; clearly above the other Wisselbrunnens I tasted (not all of which are reviewed here). 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 033 08. The *Erstes Gewächs Lenchen* has an outstanding, stony nose with grapefruit peel aromas that will develop and change with time indeed, on a later tasting, it showed spiced yellow plum aromas. In the mouth, the wine is pure, elegant, and intense with deep grapefruit flavors (second time tasting it was yellow plum) that will continue to develop and change with time. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 024 08. In the fruity style, the *Oestricher Doosberg Kbinett* has yellow plum aromas and flavors, lovely enlivening acidity and richness. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 027 08. The *Oestricher Lenchen Kabinett* is more mineral than the Doosberg and is chewy in texture with good depth and balance. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 028 08. The *Winkeler Jesuitengarten Spätlese* shows pure yellow plum and red grape fruit and is notable for its length and balance. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 025 08. Spreitzer's *Oestricher Lenchen Spätlese "303"* is mineral, subtle, and balanced with drawn out lime flavors. Very impressive for a wine this young. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 021 08. Last, the *Oestricher Lenchen Auslese* shows botrytis in both the nose and the mouth. The wine has good length and features brown sugar aromas and flavors. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 026 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY.

SCHLOSS VOLLRADS

2007 SCHLOSS VOLLRADS EG

94/A

I've found recent vintages improved over the wines from the 1990s and early 2000s, although not entirely consistent. This wine, however, shows quite well. It is steely, tightly wound, and energetic -- most promising for those willing to give it a few years' aging.

GEHEIMRAT J. WEGELER

2007 (WINKELER) JESUITENGARTEN EG

92+/A

2007 (RÜDESHEIMER) BERG-SCHLOSSBERG EG

93+/A

Wegeler's *Erstes Gewächs Winkeler Jesuitengarten* features lime blossom aromas and is pure and elegant in the mouth with lime blossom flavors and overall finesse. Last digits of A. P. Nr.: 20 08. The *Erstes Gewächs Rüdesheimer Berg-Schlossberg* is more mineral, but still floral in the nose and mouth with elegance. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

ROBERT WEIL

2007 TROCKEN

86/C

2007 KABINETT TROCKEN

88/B

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG KABINETT TROCKEN

90/B+

2007 SPÄTLESE TROCKEN

89/B

2007 KIEDRICH TURMBERG TROCKEN

90(+)/B+

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG EG (APN 55 08)

92/A

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG EG (APN 54 08)

93/A

2007 KABINETT HALBTROCKEN

87(+)/B

2007 KABINETT

88(+)/B

2007 SPÄTLESE

90(+)/B+

2007 KIEDRICH TURMBERG SPÄTLESE

92+/A

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG SPÄTLESE

94/A

2007 KIEDRICH TURMBERG AUSLESE

94(+)/A

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG AUSLESE

95/A

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG GOLD CAPSULE AUSLESE (AUCTION)

96+/A

2007 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG BEERENAUSLESE

98/A

Weil's production is up 15-30% over 2006. Harvesting began on 17 September and continued to mid-October for most of the wines, to the end of November for the botrytised wines. The estate regards the vintage as similar to 2005 in quality with perhaps a bit more tartaric acid. The estate's QbA *trocken* has mineral aromas with incipient yellow plums. In the mouth, the wine is not especially concentrated but pure and crisp with yellow plum flavors. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 046 08. The *Kabinett trocken* is crisp and pure in the nose, again with incipient yellow plum aromas and also minerality. In the mouth the wine is sleek and crisp with depth and purity. 11.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 047 08. The *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Kabinett trocken* is from vines that range from 40 to 80 years in age. Yields were 30 hl/ha. The wine has floral and tropical aromas and is mineral in the mouth and quite sleek and elegant with purity and nervosity. It is still young and will come together more with further bottle aging. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 048 08. The *Spätlese trocken* is primarily from the Kiedrich Sandgrub and Wasseros vineyards, although there is a little from Klosterberg and other vineyards here. The wine has red currant and strawberry aromas, and it is sleek, wiry, and nervous in the mouth with a good acid attack that supports the yellow fruit flavors. The wine is not especially fine or elegant, but it is sleek. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 049 08. In recent years, the estate has been bottling separately the wine from the Turmberg vineyard. Only 0.9 ha currently are producing with 3 ha having been replanted. Half the vineyard is on decomposing slate, half on loess. Eventually, Weil intends to seek *Erstes Gewächs* status for the vineyard. The *Kiedrich Turmberg trocken* is floral in the nose and dry on the palate with sleekness and more elegance than the previous wine with excellent length, but it still needs more time in the bottle to come together. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 050 08. I tasted on two different occasions the *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Erstes Gewächs*, and the two bottles had different A.P. numbers. I did not taste the two bottles side by side, and so in this case, I would regard the difference as insignificant. The wine is from grapes harvested at about 105-108° Oe from yields of about 20 hl/ha. About 10% of the wine underwent malolactic fermentation. The first wine is richer than the Turmberg, which I did drink next to it (although if Turmberg qualifies as an *Erstes Gewächs* vineyard, it probably will move stylistically in this direction) with the very fine structure that runs through the dry wines here. There is more finesse here than with the preceding wines a lemony fruit. This is still a very young wine that will show much more with time. 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 055 08. My notes on the second indicate that it shows a touch of diesel in the nose and has white peach flavors and is firm, sleek, and intense, but is not especially big. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 54 08. The *Kabinett halbtrocken* is fruity in the nose and essentially dry on the palate with plenty of fruit. It is delicate without being fragile, but fairly austere for the moment -- with time it should show more flavors. Stated alcohol: 10.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08.

In the fruity style, Weil's *Kabinett* has young, fruity aromas. On the palate, the wine sows finesse and filigreed yellow plum flavors of good length. The wine seems less rich and more shy than some other vintages at this stage and is fairly sweet. Give it until 2009 before starting to drink. Stated alcohol: 9.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 035 08. The *Spätlese* has mineral aromas and golden plum and lime flavors with some sweetness, elegance, length, and minerality. The wine is soft, but not flabby. No botrytis in this wine. Stated alcohol: 8.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 036 08. The *Kiedrich Turmberg Spätlese*, in contrast, has about 40-60% botrytis, but it is dry botrytis. The wine begins with an attractive nose of white flowers. In the mouth, it shows fine honeyed flavors with Mozartian finesse. This is an outstanding wine, but it needs a couple of years in bottle to develop. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 010 08. The *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Spätlese* similarly contains about 40-60% dry botrytis. The wine is citric in the nose and mouth with very fine acidity. It, too, needs until at least 2009 in the bottle, but is very

promising. 8.0% stated alcohol. The botrytis is considerably more evident in the *Kiedrich Turmberg Auslese* with brown sugar -- and plenty of finesse. In the mouth, the wine is pure with honey and finesse. Most promising for 10-15 years from now. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 011 08. The *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Auslese* has spiced brown sugar aromas. In the mouth, the wine is fuller and richer than the Turmberg, but with finesse and slate lemon and lime fruit. This too will need 10-15 years to reach its peak. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 040 08. The *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Gold Cap Auslese* is an auction wine, harvested in mid-November. It displays heavy botrytis in both nose and mouth, but the mineral characteristics of the terroir shine through. This is quite a sweet wine, as one would expect. Stated alcohol: 7.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 018 08. There are about 400-500 liters of the *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Beerenauslese*. The wine displays the caramel and toffee aromas and flavors consistent with Beerenauslese and is long, silky, smooth, and elegant, and here, too, the terroir shows through in the minerality. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 019 08. There is a *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Gold Cap Beerenauslese*, too. This wine is even more intense and concentrated than the regular BA with caramel, toffee, and some rust. This really is TBA-style and needs 25-30 years to achieve its full potential. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 038 08. Last, the *Kiedrich Gräfenberg Trockenbeerenauslese* shows more of an acidic lift and minerality than the previous wine. Again, a long period in bottle is necessary to achieve the full potential. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 020 08. 2007 marked the end of an incredible 23-year string of Eiswein at Weil, although the parallel string for TBA continues. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

DOMDECHANT WERNER

2007 HOCHHEIM CLASSIC	89/B
2007 HOCHHEIMER HÖLLE KABINETT TROCKEN	91/A-
2007 HOCHHEIMER KIRCHENSTÜCK SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	94/A
2007 HOCHHEIMER KIRCHENSTÜCK EG	95/A
2007 HOCHHEIMER DOMDECHENAY EG	94(+)/A
2007 HOCHHEIMER STEIN KABINETT HALBTROCKEN	85/C
2007 HOCHHEIMER HÖLLE KABINETT	90/A
2007 HOCHHEIMER DOMDECHANAY SPÄTLESE	89/B
2007 HOCHHEIMER DOMDECHANAY AUSLESE	94/A

Werner's *Hochheim Classic* is an excellent introduction to the wines of Hochheim, with the typical spicy, earthy aspect to its yellow plum aromas and flavors. "Classic" indicates that the wine is dry and they are supposed to be uncomplicated, but if you have vines in the right places and you do your job correctly, you get some complexity no matter what -- as here. This is a fairly rich, harmonious wine that I would be happy to have as an aperitif or with food. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 005 08. Werner's *Hochheimer Hölle Kabinett trocken* has floral aromas, followed by some volume in the mouth with incipient citric and tropical flavors, and with excellent acidity for support. The wine is fairly mineral at this point, promising to open more over the next few years, although it is most enjoyable already. Stated alcohol: 11.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 007 08. The *Hochheimer Kirchenstück Sätlese trocken* is a brilliant wine with direct, energetic acidity as well as some of the yellow plum of the Rheingau and overall minerality. I'd drink 2010-2020. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 008 08. The *Erstes Gewächs Hochheimer Kirchenstück* has most attractive floral, lemon blossom aromas, followed on the palate by incisive, pure lemon-lime fruit with great balance, length, and a filigree quality. The *Erstes Gewächs Hochheimer Domdechenay* has a gorgeous nose -- like walking in the late spring after the rain. In the mouth, the wine shows great finesse with layered fruit and purity, although perhaps not quite as intense as the Krichenstück. The *Hochheimer Stein Kabinett halbtrocken* is earthy, perhaps excessively so. The wine tastes essentially dry, as is the fashion these days with *halbtrocken* wines, but it lacks the charm of the Classic. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 019 07. The *Hochheimer Hölle Kabinett* is refined and elegant with yellow plum fruit and some chewiness to its relaxed, caressing body. Stated alcohol: 9.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 009 08. From a

vineyard that I think edges out Kirchenstück as the finest in Hochheim, the *Hochheimer Domdechaney Spätlese* is attractive for it pear fruit with a little bit of cinnamon, but the rather rich body (9.0% stated alcohol, so it shouldn't be all that rich) is a little heavy and sweet. I think your best shot with this wine is to age it 8-10 years. Stated alcohol: 9.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 010 08. The *Hochheimer Domdechaney Auslese* is a prime representative of the 2007 vintage: this wine shows spice and some botrytis along with light citric and mineral elements, but all this is enveloped in the elegance and finesse of both the vineyard and the vintage, making for a wine that is astonishing easy to drink now, even though it should age well for at least a few decades. The extra finesse that normally makes Domdechenay slightly superior to Kirchenstück at Hochheim is evident here. Stated alcohol: 8.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 001 08. Importer: Chambers & Chambers, San Francisco.

RHEINHESSEN

GUNDERLOCH

2007 TROCKEN	90/B+
2007 NIERSTEIN PETTENTHAL (TROCKEN)	93/A
2007 NACKENHEIM ROTHENBERG (TROCKEN)	95/A
2007 (NACKENHEIM ROTHENBERG) AUSLESE ***	94+/A
2007 KABINETT JEAN-BAPTISTE	90(+)/A
2007 SPÄTLESE DIVA	92/A
2007 (NACKENHEIM) ROTHENBERG SPÄTLESE	93+/A
2007 (NACKENHEIM) ROTHENBERG AUSLESE	96/A
2007 (NACKENHEIM) ROTHENBERG GOLD CAPSULE AUSLESE	96+/A
2007 GEWÜRZTRAMINER	87/B

Harvest began at Gunderloch in early October. On the first day of the harvest, the cellar master announced that she was pregnant, and as a result, down the line, there had to be some improvisation without her help here with all members of the Hasselbach family pitching in; the results indicate no ultimate problem, though, and this is a collection worthy of the great vintage. The estate *trocken* is from vines on the lowest terraces of the Nackenheim Rothenberg vineyard, as well as vines in the Nierstein Hipping, Pettenthal, and Ölberg vineyards. The wine is round, creamy, and silky with length to its spiced pear fruit, yielding overall harmony. There is good acidity to provide freshness, but no harshness. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 01 08. The *Nierstein Pettenthal* is Gunderloch's equivalent to a *Grosses Gewächs* wine (Fritz Hasselbach, like the late Bernhard Breuer, was an original proponent of the *Grosses Gewächs* concept, but also like Breuer, became disillusioned by its implementation and so far has not participated in the program.) The wine is pure, incisive, and stony in the nose. In the mouth, it is round, silky, and calm with quince fruit and a touch of residual sugar that manifests itself as the roundness, not as sweetness. This is a wine packed with character that develops early. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 07 08. The *Nackenheim Rothenberg* likewise is Gunderloch's equivalent of a *Grosses Gewächs*. Rothenberg is adjacent to the Pettenthal vineyard, but has less sand and more rocks in its soil. As a result, it gives a slower-developing wine. Here we have a full, earthy (in the positive sense) nose with great power. In the mouth, the wine is creamy with succulence and tremendous depth to its earthy apple and pear fruit and perfect balance. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 08 08. The *Nackenheim Rothenberg Auslese**** is an off-dry wine that is allowed to ferment naturally each year until the fermentation stops on its own, leaving some residual sugar, but not a sweet wine. The concept does not necessarily sound intriguing, but once tasted, it is a wine that one does not forget; and it is a wine that is superb with a wide variety of foods, especially many types of Asian cuisine. The wine shows earth and chipped stone aromas that are deep and complex. In the mouth, it shows some sweetness and a beautiful calm to its deep, nervy, off-dry mouth with its golden plum and quince fruit. The wine is

attractive now, but probably will only begin to show its best in 6-8 years. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 09 08.

The *Kabinett "Jean-Baptiste"* is airy, deep, and seductive, although not terribly complex, in the nose. In the mouth, the wine shows golden plums that are precise, although straightforward, with a medium-weight body and a long finish. The wine is barely sweet. 11.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 05 08. The *Diva Spätlese* is a blend of wine from the rented Balbach estate (Niersteiner Hipping, Klostergarten, and Ölberg) and from Gunderloch's own properties in Pettenthal. It is an outstanding effort with a stony nose followed by nervy, pure golden plum and apricot flavors in the mouth and an excellent sugar/acid balance. 9.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 16 08. Good as the Diva is, the *Nackenheim Rothenberg Spätlese* shows much greater complexity and some honey aspects in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is pure, sweet, and honeyed (but not from botrytis) with yellow plums. The wine needs a little more time to come together. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 031 08. In contrast to the Spätlese, there is some botrytis in the superb *Nackenheim Rothenberg*, which shows beeswax and honey in the nose. The botrytis comes through in the concentration on the palate and the honeyed nougat flavors that are pure and long. This wine, still quite young, is sleek and not at all heavy. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 04 08. The *Nackenheim Rothenberg Gold Cap Auslese* similarly shows beeswax and honey in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is sweeter and shows more botrytis than the regular Auslese, as one would expect. This wine is not a powerhouse; rather, it seduces by its complexity and length and should be fabulous in 10-12 years. There is plenty of sweetness here -- enough to be a Beerenauslese (the grapes were harvested at 145° Oe), but in style it is Gold Cap Auslese without the extra intensity of acidity and botrytis of a Beerenauslese. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08. Gunderloch did produce a Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese from 2007, harvested on 10 February 2008, but they were not yet ready to taste when I visited. A new entrant in the U.S. market is the *Gewürztraminer*. It is from 15-18 year old vines planted on deep red soils from the plateau above the Rothenberg vineyard in the Engelsberg vineyard. The wine is quite floral in the nose with roses that are typical of Gewürztraminer. In the mouth, the wine is dry, restrained, and spicy with good supporting acidity. Drink 2009-2012. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 22 08. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

HAUCK

2007 SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	85/C
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2007 SPÄTLESE	83/D
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2007 AUSLESE	SEE NOTES
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Hauck is located in Bermersheim, just north of Alzey. The wines remind me of the correct wines I've had in restaurants in the region, but are not going to compete with the leading estates of the region. It all comes down to price and what you are looking for. The *Spätlese trocken* is dry with fine acidity and pleasing apple fruit. Sealed with an artificial cork, I'd drink over the next few years. Stated alcohol is 12.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 1208. The *Spätlese* to me lacks depth and grip. It is simple with quince fruit and only shows a little sweetness 10.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 4408. The *Auslese* is a wine for table, not dessert. It may not appear sweeter than the Spätlese and it has somewhat of a rusty edge to its aromas and flavors. Judgment reserved. 10.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2108. Importer: Ingenium Wines, Huntsville, AL.

KRUGER-RUMPF

2007 BINGER SCHARLACHBERG SPÄTLESE	\$32.00 92+/A
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The *Binger Scharlachberg Spätlese* is closed but presents pure apple fruit and is promising for those willing to give the wine a year or so. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08. Importer: Michael Skurnik Wines, Syosset, NY.

UNDONE

2007 DRY	\$11.00	87/B
2007 PINOT NOIR	\$11.00	84/C

Undone is a label used by the Valckenberg negociant firm. The *Dry* gives fabulous value for Riesling. The wine has perfumed lime blossom aromas and flavors with some crystallinity. It is not very complex, but at this price, who's complaining? It is a wine that you want to gulp down for its deliciousness -- perfect for an aperitif or with a meal, and a very good introduction to the delights of dry Riesling from Germany for those who have always avoided them. Drink in the next 2-3 years, although the wine may last longer. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 36 08. The *Pinot Noir*, like the Riesling, is raised in stainless. Here, we have fresh, simple red fruit aromas and flavors, lacking just a little bite to my palate, but still quite good, and an unbeatable value for Pinot Noir at this price. Drink in the next 2-3 years. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 37 08. Importer: Valckenberg, International, Tulsa, OK.

P. J. VALCKENBERG

2007 (WORMSER LIEBFRAUENSTIFT-KIRCHENSTÜCK) DRY	\$15.00	91/A-
2007 (WORMSER) LIEBFRAUENSTIFT-KIRCHENSTÜCK (DRY)		93/A
2007 (WORMSER LIEBFRAUENSTIFT-KIRCHENSTÜCK) KABINETT	\$19.00	91/A

This estate belongs to the Valckenberg negociant firm. As I have previously noted, recent vintages have been of high quality, justifying the historic renown of this vineyard. The *dry* is austere in the positive sense of the word. The wine is stony and a little floral in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is firm, mineral, and stony with medium weight and good acidity and excellent crystallinity -- it is rainwater like. Unlike some wines marked dry, this one tastes bone dry, although it is not harsh, and there is good acidity although it is neither a harsh acidity nor a soft one. There is enough here to provide immediate enjoyment, but I expect this wine to improve for at least 3-5 years. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 17 08. The *Liebfrauentstift-Kirchentstück* is the equivalent of a *Grosses Gewächs* wine. The wine is dry (although not overly so) and round with very fine yellow plum fruit and good, fine acidity that is so typical of the vintage. This is a wine of great elegance that is already quite drinkable. The *Kabinett* is round and ripe with crystalline yellow plum fruit and enough acidity to give liveliness, elegance, and charm to the wine. I'd drink over the next 5-6 years, but a considerably longer evolution is quite possible. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 19 08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

VALCKENBERG

2007 RIESLING	\$12.00	88/A
2007 GEWÜRZTRAMINER	\$12.00	85/B-

I've been impressed over the years by the quality of the QbA negociant wines that Valckenberg turns out, and add to that a vintage such as 2007, and you have a fine *Riesling* available to the general public at very good price. The wine is round and complete with soft but present acidity that gives structure to underlie the peach, citrus, and tropical fruit. The wine is slightly sweet. Excellent for a meal or on its own. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 32 08. The *Gewürztraminer* shows the same soft acidity with some spiciness and just a bit of sweetness. Compare this with your average Alsace Gewurztraminer, and I think there is no doubt that at the price, you'll gladly be here. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 35 08. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

WITTMANN

2007 GRÜNER SILVANER TROCKEN	88/B
2007 GRÜNER SILVANER TROCKEN "S"	90+/A
2007 TROCKEN	91/A-
2007 WESTHOFENER TROCKEN "S"	92/A
2007 (WESTHOFENER) AULERDE (TROCKEN) GG	94(+)/A
2007 (WESTHOFENER) KIRCHSPIEL (TROCKEN) GG	95/A
2007 (WESTHOFENER) MORSTEIN (TROCKEN) GG	96/A+
2007 ALTE REBEN TROCKEN "150 TAGEN" (AUCTION)	96/A+
2007 (WESTHOFENER) MORSTEIN SPÄTLESE	96/A+
2007 (WESTHOFENER) MORSTEIN AUSLESE	95/A
2007 (WESTHOFENER) MORSTEIN GOLD CAPSULE AUSLESE	97/A+
2007 (WESTHOFENER) MORSTEIN TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	96+/A

Phillip Wittmann characterized 2007 as an easy vintage that was not rushed, and as a result, he was able to put into play all his ideas about how to approach his wines. The harvest here lasted from the beginning of September until the beginning of November (although the grapes harvested prior to the end of September or beginning of October were all used for the sparkling wine). Phillip thinks that the wines may be comparable in style to 2001 -- ripe fruit, Northern style, fresh, and mineral. For the third consecutive year, this has been one of the very top star estates for me in Germany. The *Grüner Silvaner trocken* (Grüner Silvaner is an alternate name for Silvaner) is stony, dusty, and mineral in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is clear, pure, and stony with finesse. It is not a complex wine, but excellently done for what it is. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 033 08. The *Grüner Silvaner trocken "S"* is from vines of 40+ years on limestone and loam soils. This wine is more closed in the nose and less expressive initially. In the mouth, though, it is dense and pure with roundness and no harshness, but ideally needs 4-5 years to open and show its full potential. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 026 08. Turning to Riesling, the *trocken* comes from 13 different vineyard sites, all in Westhofen, all picked and vinified separately. The wine shows some lime in the nose, but no sharpness. In the mouth, it is austere but deep with fruit underneath, showing great elegance, ripe acidity, and a dry finish. As with the Grüner Silvaner, this is a great job with a wine that is not especially complex, yet it can put many wines from famous vineyards to shame. 12.0% stated acidity. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 015 08. The *Westhofener trocken* is from Wittmann's three *Grosses Gewächs* vineyards, Aulerde, Kirchspiel, and Morstein, but picked earlier and/or from younger vines and/or from less stony sites. This wine is more piquant in the nose and shows dusty overtones. In the mouth, it is pure and somewhat fruity with elegance, but needs a year or so to open, then it should drink well for a few years. Phillip Wittmann thinks it will then go to sleep for a while and then begin drinking well again after it is 7-10 years old. This is a very classy, elegant wine. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 27 08. The *Aulerde Grosses Gewächs* is from the warmest of Wittmann's three top sites. The soils are less stony and have more clay and loam than the other two sites, giving the fruitiest of the three. There is no wind here, and thus he obtains ripe and intense fruit here. This is from vines planted in the 1940s and 1950s. The nose features lime zest and floral aromas. In the mouth, the wine is almost shocking by its direct penetration and its linearity. It needs a few years, but the outstanding qualities are not in doubt. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 28 08. The *Kirchspiel Grosses Gewächs* is from pure limestone soils and vines that are 30-35 years old. Phillip says that it usually yields a spicy wine. The wine is floral with some stones in the nose and noble austerity. In the mouth, it is fuller and broader than the Aulerde with some spiciness, but also restraint. This is a superb wine with beautiful harmony. 13.0% stated alcohol, about 4-6 grams residual sugar. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 29 08. Last of the *Grosse Gewächse* here is the *Morstein*. This vineyard ripens a little later than the others because it is about 100 m higher in altitude (at 250 m above sea level) and is not open to the Rhine Valley like the previous two. The wine is a floral and a bit vegetal (in the positive sense) in the nose. In the mouth, the wine initially has an acidic attack that then rounds out. This is the deepest of the three with

long, nervy, intense flavors and great energy, but it is for keeping for some years before it is ready. 13.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 30 08. A very special, and very rare, wine from Wittmann is the *Alte Reben trocken "150 Tagen."* Only about 480 bottles were produced, and this will be offered at auction. 150 Tagen means 150 days, referring to the fact that the grapes here were picked 150 days after flowering. This wine is from the Morstein vineyard and there is no botrytis. The nose is floral and deeper than that of the GG. In the mouth, this wine is rounder and deeper but at the sacrifice of nervosity. There is great elegance here, though. 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 36 08.

In the fruity style, Wittmann's *Morstein Spätlese* is salty in the nose and pure, long and drawn out in the mouth with dark berry and yellow fruits, elegance, balance, and a caressing texture. This is from the coolest part of the Morstein and is not a wine that Wittmann makes every year. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 18 08. The *Morstein Auslese* includes about 20-40% botrytised fruit. The salty yellow fruit aromas are followed by long, pure golden fruit in the mouth with quite a bit of sweetness, but also some saltiness to back it. An impressive Auslese. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 19 08. The *Morstein Gold Cap Auslese* is more pure and clear in the nose and shows some (positive) vegetal elements. In the mouth, the wine is round and pure with pear and quince fruit and exquisite sugar/acid balance the gives elegance to this not-terribly-sweet wine. The emphasis here is on elegance and purity, and indeed Phillip Wittmann confirmed that elegance was the basis of the decision to make a gold cap Auslese. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 20 08. Last, the *Morstein Trockenbeerenauslese* is pure elegance with honeyed yellow fruit aromas that show noble restraint, followed in the mouth by balanced honey flavors and some pineapple. The wine is not terribly sweet for a TBA, but sweet enough, and shows the contrast between 2007 and 2005 and 2006. 8.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 22 08. Importers: Frederick Wildman & Sons, New York and also available on direct import from Age of Riesling, Berkeley, CA.

PFALZ

GEHEIMER RAT DR. VON BASSERMANN-JORDAN

2007 TROCKEN	\$18.00	89/B
2007 RUPPERSBERGER REITERPFAD (KABINETT) TROCKEN		87/B-
2007 DEIDESHEIMER KIESLEBERG (KABINETT) TROCKEN		89/B
2007 FORSTER UNGEHEUER (KABINETT) TROCKEN		90+/B+
2007 PROBUS		91(+)/A-
2007 (FORSTER) PECHSTEIN GG		94/A
2007 (FORSTER) JESUITENGARTEN GG		92(+)/A
2007 (FORSTER) KIRCHENSTÜCK GG		93(+)/A
2007 (DEIDESHEIMER) KALKOFEN GG		93+/A
2007 DEIDESHEIMER PARADIESGARTEN KABINETT	\$22.00	90/A
2007 MUSKATELLER AUSLESE		94/A
2007 DEIDESHEIMER HOHENMORGEN AUSLESE		94/A
2007 FORSTER JESUITENGARTEN AUSLESE		95/A
2007 DEIDESHEIMER LEINHÖHLE BEERENAUSLESE		98/A
2007 RUPPERSBERGER REITERPFAD TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE		99/A

Harvest in 2007 here took seven weeks, as opposed to 3 weeks in 2006. The QbA *trocken* is not especially complex, but it is immensely satisfying. The wine is filled with white peach aromas and flavors with a fairly full body but excellent, biting acidity. Although the wine may possibly last for a number of years, I'd be inclined to enjoy it for its fresh youth. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 70 07. The *Ruppertsberger Reiterpfad Kabinett trocken* is generous, powerful, and fairly round with some earthiness to it. Stated alcohol:

13.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 18 08. The *Deidesheimer Kieselberg Kabinett trocken* is drier, nervier, and more mineral, and thus more to my taste. Stated alcohol: 11.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 6 08. The *Forster Ungeheuer Kabinett trocken* is less energetic but shows calmness, depth, harmony, and elegance. With time, it may well become something even better. Stated alcohol: 12%. The *Probus* is named for the Roman emperor Probus, who brought wine to the provinces in approximately 280 B.C. The wine comes from various sites in Forst. It is elegant and floral in the nose with a full body, good depth, and roundness. 13.0% stated alcohol. The *Pechstein Grosses Gewächs* shows its grand cru quality through great complexity and harmony with balance throughout and depth. But this is just a baby of a wine. Give it 4-5 years, at least, to develop. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 33 08. The *Jesuitengarten Grosses Gewächs* displays citric aromas and is creamy in the mouth with the same citrus fruits. The wine is elegant and shows power but is still quite closed compared to where it will eventually be. Stated alcohol: 13%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 10 08. Bassermann-Jordan's *Kirchenstück Grosses Gewächs* has an earthy nose and is rich and relatively intense with white and yellow fruits. Stated alcohol: 13%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 49 08. The *Kalkofen Grosses Gewächs* has quite fruit and is intense and juicy with an authentic profile. The wine has a smooth texture but is firm and shows real character. It should be a dream starting in about 2012-13. Stated alcohol: 13%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 43 08.

In fruity style, the *Deidesheimer Paradiesgarten Kabinett* has Pfalz earthiness, citrus fruit, and spiciness in a relatively full body (10.0% stated alcohol) with good acidic underpinning and not much sweetness showing. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 05 08. The *Muskateller Auslese* shows botrytis in the nose that goes well with the Muscat spiciness. In the mouth, the wine shows yellow fruit with spice, and it is not overly sweet so that it can be used with a meal, as well as on its own. I would be inclined to drink this wine in its youth. The *Deidesheimer Hohenmorgen Auslese* very rich, intense, and deep but still undeveloped in its nectarine fruit. This is neither overly sweet nor too acidic, yielding a lovely, harmonious balance typical of the vintage. Bassermann-Jordan's *Forster Jesuitengarten Auslese* displays more botrytis in the nose than the Hohenmorgen, and shows some orange peel aromas. In the mouth, the wine has a lovely acid attack with a sharpness to the acid/sugar play. In contrast to the Hohenmorgen, this is a wine that I would age a minimum of 8-10 years. The *Deidesheimer Leinhöhle Beerenauslese* shows minerality with depth, nervosity, and cut, along with pure lemon peel flavors. Let this wine sleep for a few decades and it will be great. Last, the *Ruppertsberger Reiterpfad Trockenbeerenauslese* has golden fruit aromas, followed by a dense mouth that is almost solid, and cutting mineral flavors with citrus peel elements and great acidity. With an amazing 17 g/l of acidity, this wine will be immortal. Importer: Valckenberg International, Tulsa, OK.

REICHSRAT VON BUHL

2007 HALBTROCKEN MARIA SCHNEIDER	\$15.00	87/A-
2007 DEIDESHEIMER LEINHÖHLE HALBTROCKEN		86(+)/B+
2007 DEIDESHEIMER HERRGOTSACKER TROCKEN		87/B
2007 FORSTER MUSENHANG TROCKEN		89(+)/B
2007 RUPPERTSBERG REITERPFAD GG		93/A
2007 DEIDESHEIM PARADIESGARTEN GG		94/A
2007 FORST UNGEHEUER GG		92/A-
2007 FORST PECHSTEIN GG		94+/A
2007 FORST JESUITENGARTEN GG		95/A
2007 FORST KIRCHENSTÜCK GG		96/A+
2007 KABINETT ARMAND		90/A
2007 FORST UNGEHEUER AUSLESE		96/A
2007 FORST UNGEHEUER BEERENAUSLESE		98/A

Excluding the Eiswein, which was picked at the end of December, harvest here lasted seven weeks. There was some rain around 10 October, but otherwise the weather held. The *halbtrocken Maria Schneider*, which I believe is sold only in the USA, is an excellent representation of the middle-Pfalz. The wine is relatively powerful and has some earthiness but is also supported by an excellent acidic backbone that makes the wine appear virtually dry -- verified by the fact that the estate presented it (and the next wine) before the officially dry wines. The wine features pronounced citric and tropical fruit that has a tinge of earthiness to it. Drink over the next 4-5 years, although if you have a bottle that gets lost in the cellar, I should not be surprised to hear that it drank well after 15-20 years. This is as good a version of this wine as I can recall tasting. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 33 08. Buhl's *Deidesheimer Leinhöhle halbtrocken* has salty aromas, followed by pineapple flavors. The acidity plays against the sugar here, but the wine is a bit one-note. It should be good for meals, though. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2808. The *Deidesheimer Herrgottsacker trocken* has floral notes in the nose and mouthwatering acidity in the mouth with sharp white fruits. This wine needs several months to come together but is promising. Lest one be suspicious of the residual sugar, it is 5.2 g/l with 8.8 g/l acidity. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2908. The *Forster Musenhang* is from a vineyard above the great Pechstein vineyard. It has colored sandstone and limestone soils and is cooler than Pechstein. The wine has white flower aromas, and on the palate is very dry, austere, long, and mineral. Lots of promise here. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 014 08. In 2007, Buhl produced (at least) an amazing six *Grosse Gewächse* wines. The *Reiterpfad* is noble, pure, and mineral in the nose, and in the mouth ripe and round with energy and elegance with apply, lemony fruit and a juicy, but trim, profile. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 35 08. The *Paradiesgarten* has a lightly spiced nose, and shows great acidity with quince fruit in the mouth. The wine is long, pure, sleek, and racy. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 32 08. The *Ungeheuer* has quince and floral aromas and more quince in the mouth, as well as some tropical flavors. The wine is ripe round and chewy. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 36 08. Buhl's *Pechstein* has floral aromas and is ripe, chewy, and racy in the mouth with a bit of apricot fruit and some white fruits starting to show through. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 33 08. The *Jesuitengarten* is flinty, stony, and spicy in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is racy, deep, pure, and powerful with quince flavors -- a great wine. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 37 08. Last, the *Kirchenstück* shows why it is considered by many (including me) the greatest Pfalz vineyard: spicy and stony in the nose, the wine shows great depth in the mouth. Perhaps not quite as racy as the Jesuitengarten, but it is more complete. Bravo! 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 34 08.

In the fruity style, the *Kabinett "Armand"* shows some earthy Pfalz fruit in the nose and Jonathan apple and pineapple fruit in the mouth. It is medium sweet and not heavy. It should be an excellent wine for drinking over the next 8-10 years. 8.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 13 08. One of the sad consequences in the Pfalz is that Buhl can make no other wines of less than Auslese grade from the vineyards for which it has declared *Grosses Gewächs* wines. Accordingly, we pass to the *Forst Ungeheuer Auslese*, which is concentrated, but pure in the nose. It shows tropical fruit with great acidity in the mouth. 11.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 16 08. The *Forst Ungeheuer Beerenauslese* has caramel from the botrytis in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is intense, sharp, pure and essence-of-Riesling/Eisweing like with its acidity and pure sauteed apple fruit. 7.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 20 08. Finally, the *Forster Pechstein Eiswein* shows some botrytis and is like Eiswein-like than the Ungeheuer BA. The wine is quite sweet in the mouth with caramel flavors and length. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 2108. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

A. CHRISTMANN

2007 (TROCKEN)

85/C

2007 DEIDESHEIMER PARADIESGARTEN (TROCKEN)	85/C
2007 KÖNIGSBACHER ÖLBERG (TROCKEN)	87(+)/B-
2007 RUPPERTSBERG "SC" (TROCKEN)	89(+)/B
2007 GIMMELDINGEN "SC" (TROCKEN)	89(+)/B
2007 KÖNIGSBACHER "SC" (TROCKEN)	90(+)/B+
2007 (RUPPERTSBERG) REITERPFAD GG	91/A-
2007 (GIMMELDINGEN) MANDELGARTEN GG	91(+)/A-
2007 (KÖNIGSBACH) IDIG GG	93(+)/A
2007 (RUPPERTSBERG) REITERPFAD AUSLESE	94/A
2007 (KÖNIGSBACH) IDIG AUSLESE	96(+)/A
2007 (RUPPERTSBERG) REITERPFAD TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	96/B
2007 (KÖNIGSBACH) IDIG TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	98/A

In recent years, Stefan Christmann, who is now president of the VDP, has taken this estate with great holdings into biodynamic production (for the last four years and he has been organic for the last nine) and has moved away from wines that emphasized power to finer, softer style. The results are paying off. Other than Auslese and above, all wines are classified as dry QbA with the *trocken* indicated only on the back label. The *trocken* is light and mineral in the nose, followed by a succulent, mouth-watering acidity in the mouth, but the result is not harsh, instead the wine is smooth, soft, and round. 12.0% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 002 08. The *Deidesheimer Paradiesgarten* is also soft, round, and finely-beaded with acidity, but the wines seems somewhat indistinct, almost as though it is a halbtrocken. Nice lime blossom flavors. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 27 08. The *Königsbacher Ölberg* has light minerality in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is a little more marked by the acidity and has a slight chewiness to its texture with lemon cream fruit and good length. This is considerably more interesting than the two previous wines. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 24 08. The *Ruppertsberg "SC"* has intriguing mineral and lemon aromas with some iron showing, too. In the mouth, the wine has mineral lemon/lime fruit with good intensity, roundness and creaminess, but underlined by nervosity. Stated alcohol: 13.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 35 08. Christmann's *Gimmeldingen "SC"* is more powerful and chewy but still in the register of finesse with good presence in the mouth, length, and a slight earthiness. Stated alcohol: 13.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 31 08. The *Königsbach "SC"* is mineral with a hint of butter in the nose. In the mouth, this is a a harder, firmer, more penetrating wine with harder acidity and more stoniness. Stated alcohol: 13.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 34 08. Moving to the *Grosses Gewächs* wines, the *Reiterpfad* is full, round, chewy, and sensual (from the sandstone soils) but also elegant, long, and broad. There is not a lot of penetration, though. Stated alcohol: 13%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 3908. The *Mandelgarten*, the only wine here to go through malolactic fermentation, is broad, fine, an silky -- very elegant, subtle, and drawn. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 032 08. The *Idig* is from what clearly is one of the finest vineyards in the Pfalz. The wine is penetrating, pure, nervy, deep, and intense, but there is also plenty of finesse here. There is limestone in the soils and its presence is a plus. Stated alcohol: 13%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 033 08.

In the noble sweet wines, the *Reiterpfad Auslese* has a honeyed nose, followed by minerality, intensity, and a play of the sharp acidity against the sugar, making for a classic. The *Idig Auslese* is essentially a Gold Cap Auslese, if not a Beerenauslese, in quality. The wine is intense, pure, direct, cutting and shows mineral flavors that will combine with the caramel in the future. The *Reiterpfad Trockenbeerenauslese* is salty, intense, and stony in the nose. In the mouth, the wine is very intense, deep, and pure with caramel flavors, depth, and good acidity. It is a that will age at least 60-80 years. Last, the *Idig Trockenbeerenauslese* shows very heavy botrytis in the nose but it is relatively clear with apple undertones. In the mouth, the wine is extremely dense and sweet with intense sauteed apple flavors, making for a superb combination. Importer: Classical Wines, Seattle, WA.

PFEFFINGEN

2007 DRY	90/B+
2007 (UNGSTEINER) HERRENWEG SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	92/A-
2007 (UNGSTEINER) WEILBERG GG	93+/A
2007 (UNGSTEINER HERRENWEG) MARDELSKOPF GG	94/A
2007 PFEFFO KABINETT HALBTROCKEN	89(+)/A-
2007 (UNGSTEINER HERRENBERG) SCHEUREBE AUSLESE	94(+)/A
2007 (UNGSTEINER HERRENBERG) SCHEUREBE BEERENAUSLESE	97/A
2007 (UNGSTEINER HERRENBERG) SCHEUREBE TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE	98/A
2007 (UNGSTEINER HERRENBERG) SCHEUREBE TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE FÜR MARIE	98/A

Jan Eymael's 2007 vintage is strong across the board. The *dry* is mineral with yellow fruit and excellent, refreshing acidity and medium-weight. This is from the Nussriegl vineyard. Stated alcohol: 12.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 11 08. The *Herrenweg Spätlese trocken* is from the top of the vineyard where there is lots of limestone in the soil. The wine was harvested on 2 October. Spicy in the nose, the wine is richer than the previous wine with more finesse to go with its apricot and yellow plum fruit. This is delicious already. Stated alcohol: 13.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 14 08. The *Grosses Gewächs Weilberg* is from red slate soils, fairly rare in Germany. The wine has floral aromas typical of red slate, and in the mouth is elegant, long, and linear with yellow peach and apricot flavors. Stated alcohol: 13.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 19 08. The *Grosses Gewächs Mardelskopf* takes the name of the pre-1971 wine law name for that portion of the Herrenberg vineyard, a reversion that German producers are increasingly resorting to. The wine is from limestone soils. Spicy in the nose it is much more active than the calm Weilberg. In the mouth, the wine shows lively acidity and it is very fine but structured with minerality. In comparison to the Herrenweg Spätlese trocken above, this wine is deeper, bigger, and more structured. It is drinkable already but should improve of another 3-4 years. Stated alcohol: 13.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 20 08. The *Pfeffo Kabinett halbtrocken* is a selection, that includes the pre-harvest, from Weilberg and Herrenweg. The wine is simple but attractive in the nose for its fruitiness. In the mouth, there is good minerality and the wine is refreshing with green plum fruit and a virtually dry finish. Stated alcohol: 11.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 6 08. The *Scheurebe Auslese* is from grapes that were about 30% botrytised. The wine is honeyed in the nose, and in the mouth the wine is elegant and fine with ripe peach flavors; the sugar is not overwhelming and the wine is calm and long. Stated alcohol: 11.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 22 08. The *Scheurebe Beerenauslese* displays pure peach aromas, followed in the mouth by calmness and airiness. The wine has honeyed peach flavors that are intense and sharp but also light and clear. Stated alcohol: 9.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 23 08. There are two Scheurebe Trockenbeerenauslesen. The "regular" *Scheurebe TBA* was harvested at 181° Oe and has 9.8 g/l acidity to go with 150 g/l residual sugar. The wine shows peach and quince aromas. In the mouth, it is light, clear, and airy with sauteed quince flavors. It is sweet, but beautifully balanced by the acidity and very pure. The *Scheurebe TBA "für Marie"* takes its name from Jan Eymael's daughter who was born in 2007. The grapes were harvested at 216° Oechsle, and the wine has 11.5 g/l acidity to go with an astonishing 355 g/l of residual sugar. The wine is very complex, pure and clear in the nose. In the mouth, it is very sweet and syrupy in texture but the acidity gives it an Eiswein-like cut. This is a wine for drinking when Marie is well into her twenties or thirties and it will probably outlive her. Stated alcohol: 6.5%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 25 08. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

ÖKONOMIERAT REBHOLZ

2007 BUNTSANDSTEIN SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	92+/A
2007 VON ROTHLIEGENDEN SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	92+/A
2007 VON MUSCHELKALK SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	93/A

2007 (GANSORN) IM SONNENSCHEN GG	95/A
2007 KASTANIENBUSCH GG	94(+)/A
2007 WEISSER BURGUNDER SPÄTLESE TROCKEN	91/A
2007 IM SONNENSCHEN WEISSER BURGUNDER GG	93/A
2007 CHARDONNAY	93/A
2007 ALBERSWEILER LATT GEWÜRZTRAMINER AUSLESE	93/A

High quality wines across the board at Rebholz in 2007. Harvest began in September, but Spätlese and Grosses Gewächs wine grapes were harvested in October and November. The *Buntsandstein Spätlese trocken* is the second wine from Im Sonnenschein, from colored sandstone soils. Lime aromas are followed by a fine but firm mouth threaded through the eye of a needle for the lime zest flavors with great finesse and clarity. 12.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 007 08. The *von Rothliegenden Spätlese trocken* is the second wine of Kastanienbusch and is from rare red slate soils. The wine is herbal in the nose with minerality. In the mouth, it is rounder and richer than the Buntsandstein with length and some creaminess. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 005 08. The *von Muschelkalk Spätlese trocken* will in the future be Rebholz's third Grosses Gewächs Riesling; in 2007, the best grapes were included in the Im Sonnenschein, but as these are from shellfish/limestone soils and the rest of Im Sonnenschein is colored sandstone, they make different wines. Rebholz has had the vineyard only two years, but the vines are 40 years old, quite old for the Pfalz where the vineyard reorganizations often cause the vines to be replanted before they can obtain a fully mature age. The wine shows pure, nervy lime aromas, followed on the palate by nervosity with a slight touch of sugar and finely beaded fruit with outstanding length. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 026 08. The *Im Sonnenschein Grosses Gewächs* is rounder and fuller in the nose with great austerity and purity on the palate. This wine needs time but it is fantastic for its purity and finesse. The *Kastanienbusch Grosses Gewächs* is rounder in the nose than the Im Sonnenschein, and also rounder in the mouth, but shows finesse with perhaps a slightly bit of sugar. It is finely beaded but not quite as nervy as the Im Sonnenschein. From vines planted in 1985. I'm generally not a fan of Pinot Blanc (*Weisser Burgunder* in German), but a few German producers are able to do remarkable things with the grape, and Rebholz is one of them. The *Weisser Burgunder Spätlese trocken* is from limestone soils and is the second wine of the Im Sonnenschein Grosses Gewächs. The nose is pure with very slight hints of vanillin. In the mouth, the wine is ripe and round, but also sleek and racy with fine acidity and overall finesse that one usually does not attribute to Pinot Blanc. I'd expect this to drink best 2010-2014. 13.5% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 016 08. The Grosses Gewächs *Weisser Burgunder Im Sonnenschein* is pure and fine in the nose with slight vanillins. In the mouth, the wine shows richness and is ripe but pure and elegant, with no feeling of alcohol, despite the stated 14%, and there is length here plus fine acidity. This is about as good as one can expect Pinot Blanc to be. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 17 08. Not only does Rebholz do wonders with Pinot Blanc, he does with *Chardonnay*, too -- another grape that frequently yields disappointing wines. This wine is buttery in the nose but not overly so. In the mouth, there is a slight sweetness (3.8g/l sugar, below the threshold of many people) and one can see some oak and peach fruit; somehow the finesse and acidity bundle it all together. This is a unique wine in my experience with Chardonnay, but it needs another year or two in the bottle. 13% stated alcohol. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. The *Albersweiler Latt Gewürztraminer Auslese* is from 61 year-old vines in a quarry with vines trained in the pergola system. The wine features typical spiced rose petal aromas. There is some sweetness in the mouth, but not too much and the wine is intense, chewy, nervy, and rich. Importer: Cellars International, Carlsbad, CA.

FRANKEN

FÜRSTLICH CASTELL'SCHES DOMÄNENAMT

2007 CASTELL-CASTELL SIVLANER TROCKEN	\$14.00	89/B
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2007 CASTELL KUGELSPIEL SILVANER (TROCKEN)**\$21.00 87(+)/B**

Castell-Castell Silvaner trocken is a negociant wine from Castell, and I find it regularly ranks among my top value wines of the year. 2007, not surprisingly, is no exception. The wine is crisp and extremely well balanced with intense wild strawberry aromas and flavors, plus just a touch of green apple. Being a Silvaner, there is a fair amount of power and some mineral overtones here plus good acidity, so this wine can match well with charcuterie and even red meats, as well as white meats and cheeses of all sorts. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 006-08. I have the feeling with the *Castell Kugelspiel Silvaner* that there is a substantially better wine than that which I'm perceiving waiting to get out of the bottle after a little more time in it. For now, there is a flowery wine in nose and mouth, with mineral undertones, firmness in the body. The texture is somewhat succulent, the wine is medium-weight, and there is good acidity that is not aggressive. This is excellent fare for the likes of charcuterie, sausages, roast chicken, pork dishes, cheeses, etc. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 025-08. Importer: Valckenberg, International, Tulsa, OK.

WÜRTTEMBERG**GRAFEN NEIPPERG****2007 NEIPPERGER SCHLOSSBERGER MUSKATELLER SPÄTLESE****\$34.00 85/B-****2007 LEMBERGER TROCKEN****\$20.00 86/B**

The *Neipperger Schlossberg Muskateller Spätlese* is in fact a dry wine. The nose smells of crushed, unfermented Muscat grapes. The wine is medium-weight in the mouth and, as stated, is dry, with spicy Muscat fruit. Stated alcohol: 11.0%. Last digits of A.P. Nr.: 013 08. In the past, red wines that I have tasted from this producer have not caught my fancy, generally because I found them too oaky. Oak is not evident on the *Lemberger trocken*, though (my guess is that it is raised in stainless steel). The wine has a velvet texture with cranberry and strawberry fruit and a touch of earthiness. It is not meant to be a great wine, but if you simply want something good and red to drink, this is a wine to consider. Last digits of A.P. Nr. 012 08. Importer Valckenberg, International, Tulsa, OK.

SOME WINES SAMPLED ON A VERY BRIEF VISIT TO THE LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

DOMAINE DE LA RECTOIRE/PARCE FRÈRES**2007 COLLIOURE BLANC L'ARGILE****87/A-****2007 COLLIOURE ROSÉ CÔTÉ MER****87/A-****2006 COLLIOURE ROUGE CÔTÉ MER****89/A-****2006 COLLIOURE ROUGE CÔTÉ MONTAGNE****93/A+****2006 BANYULS CUVÉE LÉON PARCÉ****94/A**

This producer has long been recognized as one of the references of Collioure and Banyuls, the wines from the southwest corner of France, that beautiful area up against the Pyrenées and the Mediterranean. The *Collioure blanc l'Argile* is from the Grenache gris grape. Until recently, only a vin de pays could be made from the grape as a white wine and Rectoire was in the lead in developing it for white wines. This is an old vine selection. The wine has floral aromas with slight lime overtones. In the mouth, there is good body with lime fruit and stuffing. Nothing oxidative here, and the wine can age well, as demonstrated by a 1998 that was opened. The *Collioure rosé Côté Mer* has raspberry and strawberry aromas and good acidity and substance -- it is not a wine for sipping on the beach, but rather for autumn and winter with Mediterranean dishes. It can age for at least a few years. The *2006 Collioure rouge Côté Mer* is half Syrah half Grenache. Slightly animal in the nose, the wine is spicy, ripe, and round in the

mouth and very dense. It is intended to be the early drinking cuvée here, but there are tannins that will permit aging for those who wish. The *Collioure rouge Côté Montagne* is intended to be the longer aging red wine here. The wine is from Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignane, and Counoise. The deep, mineral, fruity nose is followed by a deep, mineral, nervy mouth with blackberry and raspberry fruit and excellent depth, plus a velvet texture. The wine is so delicious that it can be drunk now, but it will age for many years. The **2006 Banyuls cuvée Léon Parcé** is from the estate's oldest vines - Grenache noir, a little Grenache gris, and some Carignane. The wine is dense and shows plenty of cassis fruit. It needs more time in the bottle to develop and is less sweet than some Banyuls, but the potential is there. I'd expect to start drinking in a decade or so.

GEORGES PUIG-PARAHY

2001 VIN DE PAYS D'OC MISERYS

91/A+

SEE NOTES FOR OTHER WINES BACK TO 1875

In the Catalan country just to the east of the Pyrénées sits this virtually unknown treasure of a cellar. When time came to divide up the possessions of one of M. Puig-Parahy's ancestors, one branch of the family took the real estate holdings, one branch took the paintings, and his branch took the wine. The only bottled wine that I tasted was the **2001 Miserys**, a fascinating white wine made from Grenache blanc and Grenache gris grown on steep schiste hillsides at about 200 m altitude. The wine has an oxidized nose resembling that of a fine sherry and also shows quince aromas. In the mouth, the wine is mineral with fresh lime fruit and a little bit of sherry to it and a razor sharp, lively cut. It is a fascinating, highly original wine that the hippest of sommeliers and wine bars should be tearing down the doors to serve with the greatest pride and to the greatest pleasure of their most sophisticated customers. Were this the only wine in the cellar, the estate would be of major interest. But M. Puig-Parahy has old Rancio Sec and Vin Doux Naturel (in the old days, sold as Grand Roussillon) still in barrel going back at least to 1875 (that is no typo!). Tasting through these barrels constituted one of the most fascinating tastings of my life. Alas, since this is the first time I had ever encountered wines such as this, I did not really have the vocabulary to describe them well, but I can say that they had a fabulous intensity with minerality, often white or black pepper elements, sometimes spicy, sometimes with oranges and cloves, sometimes smooth and succulent, and with fantastic tension. In the future, these barrels may be used to begin a solera system, as at Jerez. Those interested in obtaining some of these wines should contact the firm of Richards, Walford, Ltd. in Stamford, United Kingdom. Tel : (44) 1780460451.

DOMAINE GAUBY

2007 CÔTES-DU-ROUSSILLON VIEILLES VIGNES ROUGE (91-94)

2007 CÔTES-DU-ROUSSILLON VILLAGES MUNTADA ROUGE (92-96)

2006 CÔTES-DU-ROUSSILLON VIEILLES VIGNES ROUGE (90-93)

2006 CÔTES-DU-ROUSSILLON VILLAGES MUNTADA ROUGE (91-94)

I see Gérard Gauby's wines less often now that his U.S. importer is in the east than I used to when his importer was in the Bay Area. I have been positive on most of the wines (not the Muntada in the past, though -- see below) from the beginning, and this past May provided me the chance to visit again for the first time since 1999. Gauby's thinking and skills have evolved enormously in the intervening years, and instead of power he is now more focused on finesse and balance. As a result, the estate is now not only the finest in the Roussillon but deserves to be included on any list of top estates in France and in the world. The **2006 Côtes-du-Roussillon vieilles vignes** is intense and penetrating with red fruits and great complexity in the nose. In the mouth, the wine also displays complexity, along with elegance, depth, concentration, and mineral red fruits, especially red currants. The wine deserves to be called Burgundian for its finesse and purity. Gauby's **2007 Côtes-du-Roussillon-Villages "Muntada"** has long been his most famous wine, but it is completely different in style from my last visit -- and happily so, as

at that time I found the wine entirely overdone. The wine now is made from Grenache, Carignane (pre-phylloxera) and some Syrah) grown on limestone marne soils. The wine is less open in the nose than the Côtes-du-Roussillon but shows minerality and finesse. In the mouth, the wine is Burgundian and pure, and even more intense than the Côtes-du-Roussillon but also with greater finesse here. It will take longer to come around than the Clotes-du-Roussillon, but it will eventually produce a wine that can compete with grand cru Burgundy in overall quality (and to a large extent in style, too). The **2006 Côtes-du-Roussillon** has red fruits and some spiciness in the nose, but is less open than the 2007. In the mouth, the wine is more powerful than the 2007 and deep with a vein of red currant fruit. The **2006 Côtes du Roussillon-Villages "Muntada"** is dense, pure and spice with some black licorice (but evidently not from new wood, which is only 15% on this wine) and more power than the 2007. Very long in the mouth. Importer: Weygandt-Metzler, Unionville, PA.

LE SOULA

2006 VIN DE PAYS DES CÔTES CATALANES ROUGE

90(+)/A

2006 VIN DE PAYS DES CÔTES CATALANES BLANC

90/A

Gérard Gauby (see below), the outstanding Roussillon producer, makes this wine in partnership with his British importers. The project began only 5-6 years ago, but the wine is already featured in many of France's top restaurants and top wine shops in London, and also has received high praise from the French press. These wines are from old vines in very remote locations that were being abandoned until Gauby came along and identified the potential for the wines that could be made. The red is raised in *demi-muids* (casks that hold about 450 l or 600 bottles), about 30% of which are new. The *rouge* is about 25% Grenache, 30% Carignane, 25% Syrah, and 20% Cabernet. The nose shows fresh red fruits with raspberries and some spice. In the mouth, the wine shows excellent density to its raspberry and cherry fruit -- it seems that the Grenache is dominating for the moment. The wine has finesse and quality tannins. The *blanc* is about 1/3 each of Sauvignon Blanc, Grenache blanc, and Maccabeu, with a little Rolle, Marsanne, and Roussanne. The nose shows wax and mineral -- the grassiness of the Sauvignon (evident in a cask sample of the 2007) has been absorbed. In the mouth, the wine is long and mineral with elegance. It is a wine for the table.

WINE VALUES AND OTHER WINES OF INTEREST

The Best and Most Notable of Other Wines Recently Tasted

WHITE WINES

CALIFORNIA

SCHRAMSBERG

2001 J. SCHRAM BRUT

\$100

92/A

J. Schram is the top-of-the-line wine at Schramsberg, and this **2001** is head and shoulders above any California sparkling wine that I can recall having tasted. The nose shows brioche, green apple, and a touch of grapefruit peel that with time becomes peach. In the mouth, the wine is lively and energetic with pure, deep lemony flavors and plenty of energy. The wine is 78% Chardonnay, 22% Pinot Noir and 40% undergoes barrel fermentation. It is delicious now; the estate says it can age twenty years, but I have no experience with Schramsberg wines of any significant age.

CHAMPAGNE

DIEBOLT-VALOIS

2002 BRUT BLANC DE BLANCS	\$65.00	92(+)/A
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This excellent producer in Cramant, on the Côte de Blancs, the best Chardonnay part of Champagne, has a classic *Blanc de Blancs* (100% Chardonnay) -- austere and razor sharp with chipped stone aromas and lemony flavors. With further aging, it should only get better. Importer: Martine's Wines, Novato, CA.

DELAMOTTE

NV BRUT	\$50.00	86/B-
1999 BRUT BLANC DE BLANCS	\$90.00	92(+)/A

For many years, the *Brut* was a reference point for nonvintage Champagne. The version that was on the market last year, though, was disappointing. This year's version is better, although still not up to what I expect from this house. My guess is that there is a poor vintage (2001?) in the blend that is working its way through. To my taste, the wine just lacks the energy and cut that I look for in nonvintage Champagne, although there is nothing obviously wrong with it, except possibly a touch too much *dosage* (sugar). The *1999 Blanc de Blancs* is a classic Chardonnay-based Champagne that is now entering its maturity. The wine has yeasty in the nose and elegant on the palate with crispness and smoothness to go with the apple and peach flavors and a long finish. Importer: Wilson, Daniels, Ltd., St. Helena, CA.

LOIRE VALLEY

DOMAINE DE LA PEPIERE/MARC OLLIVIER

2007 MUSCADET DE SÈVRE ET MAINE SUR LIE	\$13.00	87/A
2007 MUSCADET DE SÈVRE ET MAINE SUR LIE CLOS DES BRIORDS VIEILLES VIGNES	\$16.00	90/A+

Ollivier's basic *Muscadet* is all that one desires from a standard Muscadet -- dry and austere with some chipped stone in the nose and firmness in its medium-light mouth with minerals showing. Artificial cork, so this is not one of the Muscadets that you would want to age. Lot L1071. The *Muscadet "Clos des Briords"* is similar: a little broader and less acidic but has more depth, and here the potential to age is 15-20 years (although the wine is immensely enjoyable now). Lot L 1207. Importer: LDM Imports, N.Y.

PASCAL JANVIER

2007 COTEAUX DU LOIR	\$18.00	90/A
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Janvier was not born into a family of vignerons and began on his own in 1991. I highly recommended the 2006 Coteaux du Loir, and I now also highly recommend this *2007 Coteaux du Loir*, a wine made from Chenin Blanc from a tributary river (le Loir) of the Loire River. The wine is crisp and mouthwatering and is an excellent example for those who compare the wines of Chenin Blanc to those of Riesling. Here we have the white flower honeyed aromas that can be Riesling but fall on the side of Chenin. In the mouth, the wine shows excellent acidity with some breadth and plenty of firmness along with acidity nervosity and lively, lemony quince fruit and a hint of tropicality. Synthetic cork, so drink over the next few years. Lot L 70. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

ERIC CHEVALIER/DOMAINE DE L'AUJARDIERE

2007 (VIN DU PAYS DU VAL DE LOIRE) CHARDONNAY	\$14.00	86/B+
2007 (VIN DE PAYS DU VAL DE LOIRE) FIÉ GRIS	\$25.00	89/A

Chevalier's *Chardonnay* is different from most wines I think of from this grape -- much more restrained and austere and dominated by lemony fruit. Good for drinking over the next 2-4 years, perhaps longer.

The *Fié Gris* needs a little time to open -- decanting would not be a bad idea, as I at first found the nose too vegetal. Served blind, I probably would guess a German Riesling from red slate soils (high praise) -- the same herbal aromas and mineral/white peach overtones with the oily, somewhat rich body played against excellent, round acidity. I have no experience with these wines aged, so I can't advise whether to cellar, but this is an excellent wine for drinking already -- on its own or with seafood or white meat dishes. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

RIAS BAIXAS

PAZO SAN MAURO

2007 RIAS BAIXAS ALBARIÑO

\$17.00 90/A

Here is an outstanding example of Rias Baixas, a light, nervy wine from the northwest coast of Spain that resembles a blend of Muscadet and Riesling. The wine is lemony, mineral, and nervy with a medium-full body (12.5% stated alcohol) and delicious for drinking now. Lot L0408.

ROSE WINES

CHAMPAGNE

DELAMOTTE

NV BRUT

\$99.00 90(+)/A

This price is rather astounding, but I see a number of retailers offering the wine for considerably less. The wine is virtually bone dry on the palate and features wild strawberry notes with stoniness in both nose and mouth. For those who like their Champagnes austere (I do), and it should improve with a couple of years in bottle. Importer: Wilson, Daniels, Ltd., St. Helena, CA.

RHÔNE AND PROvence

DOMAINE TEMPIER

2007 BANDOL

\$37.00 87(+)/A-

This is quite a rich wine with marked cherry fruit and and oily texture. Some will like it even more than I, but I miss the dry cut. I expect that this is one of the Tempier rosés that can age well and it may be substantially more interesting at age 10-15 than at age 1. Lot LS 07 03. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

RED WINES

BEAUJOLAIS

DUPEUBLE

2007 BEAUJOLAIS

\$15.00 87/A

This simple Beaujolais is delightful and delicious for its straightforward open red fruit aromas and flavors -- strawberries, cherries, and red currants, especially. If the high prices of many other French wines have got you down, load up on this, as it will provide excellent drinking for the next few years, at least. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

SOUTHWEST FRANCE

CLOS LA COUTALE

2006 CAHORS

\$15.00 87/B

With today's weakened dollar, you have to look hard to find this quality of wine at this price. The wine shows dark plum/prune aromas and flavors with a ripe (but not overripe), round texture and a fair amount of tannin, although the tannins are round. You can drink this wine now, especially if you have it with food, but I think ideally it needs 6-10 years in the cellar, and then you will have something very good. Lot L1. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

DOMAINE ETXEGARAYA

2006 IROULÉGUY **\$20.00 86(+)/B**

The wine is still tannic, but the synthetic cork argues for drinking over the next few years, so decant ahead of time (1-2 hrs) if you can. The wine is tight and tannic with strict dark fruits. For those who know French history of the 17th Century, and Jansenist wine. Lot L.07.01. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

RHÔNE AND PROVENCE

ORATOIRE ST-MARTIN/FRÉDÉRIC & FRANÇOIS ALARY

2006 CAIRANNE CÔTES DU RHÔNE-VILLAGES RÉSERVE DES SEIGNEURS **\$18.00 87/B+**

The stated alcohol is 14.5%, more than I personally would like to see, but moderate in terms of the vintage, and unfortunately, some of it shows on the nose. The resulting wine is rich, smooth, deep and juicy with dark fruits and peaches. Serve it cool, and ideally decanted, and from 2012-2018+. Lot Lres06. Importers: Estate Wines, San Rafael, CA. and LDM Wines, New York.

LA BASTIDE BLANCHE

2005 BANDOL **\$27.00 87/B-**

This is somewhat rustic and thick, lacking the focus and precision that I have come to expect of the better Bandol. Additionally, there is little that identifies the wine's slightly grapy and earthy cherry fruit as Bandol. It is nevertheless enjoyable. Importer: Weygandt-Metzler, Unionville, PA.

DOMAINE DE LA TOUR DU BON

2005 BANDOL **\$28.00 89(+)/B**

Although the texture is silky and the tannins smooth, this wine is still quite primary. The red fruit aromas and flavors are promising, though, and I'd expect a very good wine to drink, beginning in 5-6 years and perhaps lasting two decades. Lot L3. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON

SAINT-MARTIN-DE-LA-GARRIGUE

2006 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC TRADITION **\$12.50 86/B**

2006 VIN DE PAYS DES COTEAUX DE BESSILLES CUVÉE RÉSERVÉE **\$13.00 86/B+**

2006 BRONZINELLE COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC **\$17.00 86/B+**

Each vintage, this property continues to offer wines of top quality for their price, and the current offering is no exception. The *Coteaux-du-Languedoc "Tradition"* offers forward and intense, if simple, red and dark fruits with a round texture and soft tannins. Synthetic cork, so drink over then next year or two. The *vin de pays des Coteaux de Bessilles* is ripe and almost jammy with simple dark and red berry fruits and round tannins. Synthetic cork, so drink young. The *Bronzinelle-Coteaux du Languedoc* is almost jammy with dark plum fruit that is fragrant in the nose and smooth and silky in the mouth. The wine appears to be relatively low in acidity, so I would drink over the next 4-6 years. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

DOMAINE D'AUPILHAC/SYLVAIN FADAT

2007 COTEAUX DU LANGUEDOC LOU MASET

\$15.00 86/B

Sylvain Fadat is one of, if not the, best producers in the region. The *Coteaux du Languedoc "Lou Maset"* is far from his best production, but it shows what a talented producer can do with less than optimum vines. The wine has inky, iodide aromas, followed on the palate by richness, but not heaviness, with dark fruit, tannin, and a hint of fig on the finish. The wine drinks well now, but I'd imagine 2009-2013 as its prime. Lot L 01-07-01. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

CHÂTEAU LA ROQUE

2005 PIC SAINT-LOUP COTEAUX-DU-LANGUEDOC

\$20.00 91/A+

Jack Boutin has sold this property, and under new owner Jacques Figuet, the quality remains high. The regular *Pic St-Loup* shows all the finesse and silky texture that makes Pic Saint Loup, when done right, such an extraordinary location in the south of France, and has truffle aromas and black raspberry flavors. This is really top quality wine for a relative song in today's market. Drink now - 2018. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

LÉON BARRAL

2005 FAUGÈRES

\$24.00 91/A+

I've not been a fan of the more expensive bottlings from this biodynamic producer, but this basic wine is quite a stunner. The wine is packed in the nose and mouth with mineral red fruits with plenty of ripeness but also a cutting acidity, and a velvet texture. I expect this wine should age well for 10-20 years, but, frankly, it is delicious already. If you come across it, don't miss it. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

LOIRE VALLEY

PASCAL JANVIER

2007 COTEAUX DU LOIR CUVÉE DU ROSIER

\$17.50 87/A-

This wine is made from Pineau d'Aunis, a grape that yields polarizing wines. Related to Pinot Noir, but at least in this portion of the Loire Valley, the grape's expression seems to be more spicy and vegetal than for most Pinot Noir. I find white pepper in the nose, but it is close to rubber tires and I can see others finding rubber tires. The wine is smooth and silky on the palate with cranberry fruit. I have no previous experience with this wine (although I do with some other Pineau d'Aunis from other producers), but I would guess it would improve over the next 4-6 years. Lot L68. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

CATHERINE & PIERRE BRETON

2007 BOURGUEIL TRINCH!

\$18.00 87/A

The *Bourgueil "Trinch!"* is the Bretons' early-drinking wine. It packs a fabulous spiced cherry blossom nose with a medium-weight body that features mineral dark fruit with some bitterness from the acidity -- excellent for drinking with food. Synthetic cork, so drink young (and drink cool). Lot L1. Importers: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA and LDM Wine Imports, New York.

CHARLES JOGUET

2006 CHINON LES PETITES ROCHES

\$22.00 86(+)/B

Joguet's *Chinon, Petites Roches* has red fruit -- red currant and raspberry -- with some tannins but with an overall finesse, in its rustic way. I'd wait a couple of years to drink this wine, but it will provide

plenty of interest, without ever being as interesting or profound as Joguet's better cuvées. Lot L E100108RO. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

CATHERINE BRETON

2007 BOURGUEIL LA DILETTANTE

\$23.00 87/A

This wine is the responsibility solely of Catherine Breton (the same as in Catherine & Pierre Breton above). It is carbonically macerated and made without sulfur. As a result, you're going to find a wine that reminds you more of the Morgons of Marcel Lapierre and his gang of four (made the same way) than of Bourgueil. It's not going to be a wine for everyone, and it needs to be decanted a 15-30 minutes in advance of serving and served cool. As with other non-sulfured wines, the wine is grapy and has a calmness. Red fruits here, but in a very different register than you are used to, unless you have had unsulfured wines before. Synthetic cork, so drink young. Importers: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA and LDM Wine Imports, New York.

JURA

JACQUES PUFFENEY

2005 ARBOIS TROUSSEAU CUVÉE LES BÉCANGÈRES

\$30.00 88/A

Perhaps a little early to be drinking this wine, but it is attractive for its pure, clear red currant and strawberry fruit in a light, airy body. I'd drink 2009-2015. Importer: Rosenthal Wine Merchant, NY.

VENETO

CORTE GARDONE

2007 BARDOLINO LE FONTANE

\$15.00 86/A

This wine is smooth and easy to drink with clear, if simple, crushed raspberry fruit -- just what you'd want to find in a good trattoria. Lot No. L08 100. Importer: Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant, Berkeley, CA.

ABOUT THE RATINGS

Two forms of notation are used.

First, wines are rated on a scale of 0 to 100 points, credited as follows: 33 for aroma and bouquet; 33 for mouth; 10 for finish; and 24 for overall impression. The resulting scores can be broadly classified along a continuum, with scores in the upper 90s for truly exceptional wines, wines scoring below 80 being poor, and wines below 75 being unacceptable. A + indicates potential for improvement with age that cannot be judged accurately at this time. ***These scores have no inherent value and should be regarded simply as an ordering device to indicate an "objective" ranking of the wines, largely free from context.*** The scores may be considered to indicate a band of comparability from three to five points. Thus, a wine rated 88 would be comparable to wines rated between 87 and 89 or 86 and 90. A wine rated 89 would similarly be comparable to wines rated between 88 and 90 or between 87 and 91. (My experiences with blind tasting have shown that I rarely vary more than two points in my evaluations of a given wine.)

However, such scores fail to take into account a type of wine's maximum potential or the context of enjoyment of the wine. For example, a Muscadet may never score 90 points under this system, yet it may be a fine example of a Muscadet. Moreover, in many contexts, considering the accompanying food, occasion, and the company, and 84-point Muscadet, that is, a good Muscadet, may be an impeccable choice of wine, while a 96-point Montrachet would be a totally inappropriate choice. In a like manner, the reader may not always listen to music that is on an equal level, say, with Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but in many contexts, he or she may in fact enjoy listening to the "less great" music more than the Ninth Symphony. Moreover, such scores wrongly imply a broad leveling of comparability, ignoring the fact that the Muscadet and Montrachet are different wines, creating different expectations and should not be judged as comparable to each other.

As a result, I have devised a second set of notations, on an A, B, C ... scale to minimize confusion. This second set of notations is based on typicality of the wine and the expectations for that class or appellation of wine. Therefore, an 85-point Bourgogne Blanc may receive a mark of B+, while an 85-point Montrachet, from the same grape and also a white Burgundy, would receive a mark of C-. In some sense, this is a more "subjective" rating than the numerical system because the qualities of the wine are compared against an ideal, a more difficult task. However, I feel that these notations are the more meaningful for the enlightened consumer who can distinguish more than just white from red. The significance of the various marks can be summarized as follows:

- A** - An outstanding wine that deserves serious consideration when a wine of this type is sought.
- B** - A good wine that demonstrates characteristics of its class or appellation.
- C** - A wine that is acceptable to drink, but other wines that show more character of the class or appellation and better overall quality should be available.
- D** - A wine that is poor for its class or appellation and may contain some flaws.
- F** - An unacceptable wine.

I CONSIDER THE LETTER GRADES TO BE BETTER INDICATORS OF QUALITY OF A GIVEN PRODUCER AND WINE THAN THE NUMERICAL SCORES.

The grades and scores do not take into account overall quality of the vintage. That is, two wines graded 87/B are judged to be of the same quality, even if one is from a great vintage and one is from a poor vintage. Also, scores do not consider prices or the relative values of the wines because the market is so changeable.

Where available, I give information indicating the lot of the wine that I tasted so that consumers can be sure they are buying the same wine reviewed. For most European wines, this is the lot number, preceded by an *L*, which is required by European Union law. The lot number most frequently is printed on the front label, but it also can appear on the capsule, back label, or stenciled on the bottle itself. Some U.S. importers ask that the lot numbers not be added to the wines exported to the U.S. In place of lot numbers, German wines carry an A.P. number, generally found on the main label.

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Prices listed: The prices given are those I have noted in stores, mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area, or have been supplied by the distributor. No attempt has been made to do an exhaustive survey of prices or to guarantee accuracy. Rather, the prices are listed as an approximate guide. Prices vary, depending upon, among other factors, (i) location (such as shipping charges, local taxes, and competition), (ii) timing (such as prices changes due to fluctuations in demand and the value of the dollar against foreign currencies), and (iii) the efficiency of the distribution system (each party that participates in the system marks the price up).

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