

**PDF Generated:** 2023-06-30 14:25

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Julia Harding MW

23 May 2023

## Germany proves an all-rounder



*Quality, diversity, value – Germany scores a hat-trick. Above, Weingut May's Himmelspfad vineyard in Retzstadt, Franken, courtesy of the winery.*

Today there really is a German wine for every occasion, palate and budget: red or white, dry or sweet (and everything in between), powerful and feather-light. That was my conclusion at the end of the tasting described below hosted by UK importer and retailer Howard Ripley, specialist in wines from Germany and Burgundy.

Most of these wines are just getting into their stride: very few 2022s but lots of wines from 2021 and 2020, plus a good number of older vintages. (For a few more 2022s, see Paula's report from this year's Mainzer Weinbörse.) There are many well-known names

here so most of the wines should be available in the US and elsewhere. (To find stockists where you are, click on any wine name below and scroll down to 'See prices and stockists'.)

One wine that I would like to highlight but probably shouldn't because it won't be available from Howard Ripley until mid June is Falkenstein's Niedermenniger Sonnenberg Riesling Kabinett trocken 2022 from the Saar. It's an uncompromising dry Kabinett - a difficult style to do well - intense and delicate at the same time, as if it had been cut by a lapidarist. Keep an eye out for this producer, whose winemaker Johannes Weber is pictured in [Mosel's moment to shine](#).

But there are many more wines to recommend which are already available. For sheer quality and inimitable style among the white wines, I'd shine a light on Heymann-Löwenstein's rich and powerful Winninger Uhlen Roth Lay Riesling Grosses Gewächs, Knewitz's intense and piercing Nieder-Hilbersheimer Steinacker Riesling trocken and Schäfer-Fröhlich's R Chardonnay, which won me over even though I approached it with some scepticism because of the oak. Ziereisen's sophisticated Jaspis Nägelin Chardonnay is in a completely different style but also excellent. Aldinger's Untertürkheimer Gips Riesling Grosses Gewächs is one of those wines that seem to go on for ever, in a good way. May's two Sylvaners from Retzstadt are great examples of this unsung variety ([whose praises Jancis has been singing](#) for a very long time).

Among the reds, while the wines tasted were almost all Spätburgunders (the German name for Pinot Noir), the range of styles is exciting, showing thoughtful winemaking and respect for vineyard site: from Jülg's Opus Oskar, which is rich, ripe and a bit too primary to be broached right now, to Rings' Kallstadter Steinacker, which is scented and silky even though it is a year younger.

In terms of value for money, don't miss Vollenweider's Tschiel II Sekt, Willi Schaefer's Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese, von Schubert's Maximin Grünhäuser Abtsberg Riesling Kabinett, Weiser-Künstler's Enkircher Steffensberg Im Löwenbaum Riesling feinherb, **Huff's Schwabsburger Riesling trocken** and dry estate Rieslings from Knewitz and Schäfer-Fröhlich. Ziereisen's Steinkrügler Gutedel is excellent but sadly out of stock in the UK although the 2020 is available in the US thanks to importers Skurnik. May's Retzstadter Himmelspfad Silvaner Grosses Gewächs 2020 Franken is outstanding quality for the price.

Compared with current burgundy prices, most of the Spätburgunders are good value but Hanspeter Ziereisen's Tschuppen Spätburgunder and Peter Wagner's Oberrotweil

Spätburgunder are particularly so.

The 78 wines are grouped by region, then listed alphabetically by producer, whites before reds. You can change the order within the groups using the menu below.

Select sorting option ▼

## Mosel

### Falkenstein, Niedermenniger Sonnenberg Riesling Kabinett trocken 2022 Saar

*Organically farmed.*

Stony, almost peppery citrus. Searingly fresh and grapefruity on the palate. Intense, diamond-cut edges, utterly mouth-watering and feather-light. Tastes bone dry and minerally on the finish, despite the 5 g/l residual sugar. As Sebastian Thomas says of all the Falkenstein wines, 'uncompromising'. (JH)

10.5%

Drink

2023

-

2027

£TBC Howard Ripley

17

### Falkenstein, Krettnacher Euchariusberg Riesling Kabinett 2022 Saar

The aroma is ripe citrus, a little tropical. Intense harmony between sweet and crisp. Like the dry Kabinett, so pure and chiselled. Lively, deep-fruited, captivating. (JH)

8%

## **Battenfeld-Spanier, Mölsheimer Riesling trocken** **2021 Rheinhessen**

*AP number 34 22. From a VDP Erste Lage. Certified organic and farmed biodynamically. A little bit spicy and creamy, thanks to the big, old oak. Deep and crisp at the same time. Very pure citrus. Not complex (yet) but absolutely pristine. (JH)*

Drink

2024

-

2031

£24.95 Howard Ripley

16.5

## **Fritz Ekkehard Huff, Schwabsburger Riesling trocken** **2021 Rheinhessen**

*AP number 06 22.*

*Scented with spring hedgerow as well as pure grapefruit. So bright. Crisp, with masses of acid tension. Long and utterly pure. Salty, mineral and such **GV**. (JH)*

12.5%

Drink

2023

-

2030

£15.95 Howard Ripley

16.5

## **Fritz Ekkehard Huff, Pettenthal Riesling trocken** **2021 Rheinhessen**

AP number 17 22.

Riper-fruited and darker in its mineral character than the Schwabsburger. Extremely fresh, taut and lively, with moderate concentration on the mid palate and good length. Clean-cut citrus aftertaste. Very youthful. (JH)

Drink

2024

-

2032

£29.95 Howard Ripley

16.5 ++

## Knewitz, Riesling trocken 2021 Rheinhessen

AP number 02 22. Spontaneous fermentation.

Very stony on the nose and then deeply citrus-fruited on the palate. Impressive concentration in an estate wine. **GV** (JH)

12%

Drink

2023

-

2027

£14.50 Howard Ripley

16.5

## Knewitz, Nieder-Hilbersheimer Steinacker Riesling trocken 2016 Rheinhessen

AP number 17 17.

Smoky/herbal spontaneous-fermentation aroma. Mineral in a more 'oily' way. Deep, crisp and piercing on the palate; some green fruit on the long finish. A precise, intense wine with a long, taut finish. Still incredibly youthful. (JH)

12.5%

Drink

2023

-

2033

£34.95 Howard Ripley

17

## **Kühling-Gillot, Qvinterra Scheurebe trocken 2021** **Rheinhessen**

*AP number 11 22. Certified organic and farmed biodynamically. From five different sites, hence the name.*

At the moment, smells more of spontaneous fermentation than of the variety, but there is a strong grapefruit streak. Deliciously pure and crisp, scented with grapefruit on the palate. Sour-fresh finish. (JH)

12%

Drink

2023

-

2025

£13.50 Howard Ripley

16

## **Kühling-Gillot, Qvinterra Riesling trocken 2021** **Rheinhessen**

*AP number 08 22. Certified organic and farmed biodynamically.*

Simple lemon and lime aroma. Juicy, silky and cool citrus. Simple and utterly pure Riesling fruit. (JH)

12%

Drink

2023

-

2026

£13.95 Howard Ripley

16

## **Wittmann, Niersteiner Riesling trocken 2021**

### **Rheinhessen**

*AP number 15 22. Certified organic. A VDP Erste Lage.*

Fumy, fresh and creamy citrus. Multi-layered aromas. Intensely salty and crisp on the palate - only just in balance if you drink it without food, but a great wine for the table, or acid freaks. Taut, lean and long. Utterly mouth-watering. (JH)

12.5%

Drink

2024

-

2035

£27.95 Howard Ripley

17

## **Nahe**

## **Dönnhoff, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Riesling**

### **Grosses Gewächs 2021 Nahe**

After the oaky Schäfer-Fröhlich Chardonnay, this comes like a wisp of citrus freshness. Highly aromatic with blossom and citrus. Silky texture, utmost fruit purity and perfect freshness. Not yet complex but finely balanced for the future. (JH)

Drink

2024

-

2032

£TBC Howard Ripley

£21.50 Howard Ripley

16.5

## **Holger Koch, \*\*\* Pinot Noir 2018 Baden**

*AP number 21 19. Fermented in cask. Aged in 300- to 600-litre oak, some new. 40% whole bunch. From sunny, windy, terraced vineyards.*

Lightish garnet. Earthy and slightly leathery red fruit. Lots of freshness, despite the warm vintage. Bright, lively and still so very youthful – the tannins are very fine but still present. (JH)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2029

£85 per magnum Howard Ripley

16.5

## **Shelter, Oberrotweil Chardonnay 2021 Baden**

*AP number 04 22. Spontaneous ferment in older barrels. 10 months on the lees.*

The oak is very subtle here, just adding a touch of spice to the citrus aroma. Pure, bright, vibrant citrus fruit on the palate. This is all about the fruit, with a persistent sour-fresh aftertaste. (JH)

12.5%

Drink

2023

-

2029

£24.95 Howard Ripley

16.5

## **Shelter Spätburgunder 2020 Baden**