

# Mosel Fine Wines

*"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"*

## **Weingut Max Ferd. Richter**

As reviewed by Jean Fisch & David Rayer

Mosel Fine Wines #32 – October, 2016

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*Constantin Richter is extremely happy with his 2015 vintage, a result he put to a series of factors: "After the difficult 2014 vintage, I consciously took two decisions: Firstly to not prune early in order to delay the ripening process and get better grapes to resist the almost unavoidable September rains (if pruning is needed, one can always do it later in the season!). Secondly to not delay unnecessarily the harvest. Acidity is something positive that we need to embrace! In 2015, we started our Riesling harvest at the beginning of October. Unlike others, we discarded the first botrytis and immediately focused on producing our Kabinett wines for 10 days before moving on to our Spätlese and Auslese as well as some botrytis selections. At the end of the month, we harvested the fruit for our dry wines, when acidity is slightly lower. We finished the harvest by October 27. Not only were we able to produce everything we needed, but also the yields of 70-80 hl/ha proved within our ideal range. We did attempt to produce an Eiswein but abandoned the plan as the acidity and quality of the grapes were simply not up to standards." Dirk Richter joined for part of the tasting and added his perspective on the vintage and parallels: "Among the early vintages, I see parallels with 2012 (although 2015 is less ripe), 2008, 2004, 1996 and 1990. But honestly, the best comparable vintage for me is the 1975. 2015 is a classic vintage in the making."*

*The Estate was able to produce its usual range of wines which was complemented with a series of special casks of Auslese from the JufferSonnenuhr, a BA from the Sonnenuhr and a TBA harvested at 195° Oechsle in the Juffer-Sonnenuhr. In addition to its usual range of Kabinett wines and partially upon our remarks that*

*there should be more “true Kabinett” being made, Constantin Richter produced a special cask of Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett (Fass 4) which was made from a ruthless selection of ripe fruit harvested at a remarkably low 76° Oechsle, i.e. levels unseen since the 1990s if not the 1980s. Most of the wines were bottled by June but a small set of wines took their time and were only bottled in July or even August.*

*This is a major success of the 2015 vintage and easily the most complete collection of wines we have ever tasted at this traditional Estate. The wines reflect the gorgeous ripe-freshness duality of the 2015 vintage like few others yet they retain the utter lightness that has made the success of the Max Ferd. Richter wines over the decades. Nearly all wines are of outstanding quality and many will make it on the Vintage Highlights lists, among which such stunners as the Veldenzer Elisenberg Kabinett, the Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett, the Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese and the Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese \*\*\* Fass 115. While the Estate is best known for its fruity-styled wines, it also produced some smashingly elegant dry Riesling in 2015, among which the show-stopping Mülheimer Sonnenlay Trocken, a little jewel of ethereal elegance. In short: Lovers of classic Mosel wines should make every effort possible to get a few bottles from what will no doubt be called “the legendary 2015 vintage” at Max Ferd. Richter in a decade or two.*

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese**

Harvested at over 195° Oechsle, this offers a great nose of frangipane, honey, date, mango and spices. The wine is superbly clean and vibrant on the palate and, despite the high concentration, proves utterly elegant and subtle in the finish. This elegant expression of a TBA only needs time to integrate its sweetness to fully shine **(97+ points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese \*\*\* Fass 115**

Harvested at 140° Oechsle in the privileged Falkenberg part of the vineyard, this offers a stunning and super fine nose of white minerals, raisin and pineapple. The wine is still slightly harsh and sweet with some candy floss on the palate but the aromatic presence and elegance is simply mindbogglingly good. This is a gorgeous Auslese with finesse and juiciness in the making. **(95+ points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese \*\* Fass 101**

Harvested at 110° Oechsle in the Lay sector of the vineyard, this offers a gorgeous nose of yellow peach, a hint of dried fruits and almond as well as smoke. The wine is superbly pure and elegant on the palate and, despite all the finesse, remains lively and zesty with good vibrancy in the finish. What a beautiful effort! **(94 points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese**

Harvested at 92° Oechsle, this offers a gorgeous nose of pear, yellow peach, quince and apricot tree flower. The wine is hugely elegant and refined on the palate and leaves a clean and juicy feel with the presence of a light Auslese on the palate. **(94 points)**

### **2015 Veldenzer Eisenberg Riesling Kabinett**

This gorgeous Kabinett harvested at 85° Oechsle is still marked by residual scents from spontaneous fermentation at this early stage and needs quite some airing to exhibit its stunningly fresh and vibrant scents of grapefruit, cassis, white melon, herbs and spices. The wine is juicy and lively on the palate and leaves a superb cocktail of chalky minerals, grapefruit, white peach and spicy herbs in the long finish. This will be a breathtaking Kabinett at maturity once the acidity will have mellowed away and integrated into the juicy aromatics. **(94 points)**

### **2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese**

Harvested at 160° Oechsle, this wine is still marked by post-bottle reduction yet offers a gorgeous nose of apricot, fresh pineapple, herbs and fruits. It is gorgeously well balanced on the palate and leaves a superb feel of honey, apricot, yellow peach and brown sugar in the creamy and zesty finish. This is a gorgeous vibrant expression of BA in the making. **(94 points)**

### **2015 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Spätlese Trocken**

The 2015er Mülheimer Sonnenlay Spätlese Trocken is made from fruit in the Johannisberg sector (2/3) and from the Himmelsleiter sector (1/3) and was fermented for 8-10 months and left on its gross lees before being bottled in August 2016. It offers absolutely gorgeous scents of white peach,

cassis, pear, white minerals and flowers, with just a touch of apricot blossom adding an extra-dimension to the nose. The wine is ethereally elegant on the palate, with stunning smooth fruits wrapped into tickly acidity. The airy finish proves full of cassis, more tangerine and vibrant minerals as well as a hint of zest and silky smoothness. This epitomizes the great elegance and lightness which dry Mosel Riesling can achieve. What a beautiful wine which is cut from the same wood as the Estate's magical Graacher Domprobst Auslese Trocken 1993! **(93 points)**

### **2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese**

Harvested at 95° Oechsle, this offers a gorgeously ripe nose of grapefruit, pineapple, apricot tree flower and grapefruit. The wine is superbly elegant on the palate and leaves a juicy feel of Auslese racy creaminess in the mouth-watering finish. **(93 points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Fass 4**

The Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett Fass 4 (the Fass 4 is indicated in small character at the bottom right of the label) was made from ripe fruit harvested at a refreshingly low 76° Oechsle as an experiment to see if one could make Kabinett "like in the old days." The short answer is yes! This Kabinett offers a glorious nose of white peach, herbs and spices. Stunningly light and playful at first, the wine quickly shows some slightly rough edges as acidity and watery minerals are still dissociated on the palate. The finish, while packed with flavors, is still in need of integration. But make no mistake, this will be glorious at maturity, in 10 years' time or more, for who appreciates very elegant and light expressions of Riesling. This proves if need be that sugar content is not necessary to make great fragrant Riesling! Lovers of more medium to full-bodied Riesling should however stay well clear of this wine. **(93 points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese**

Harvested at well above 95° Oechsle, this offers a pure nose of coconut, passion fruit, pineapple and smoke. The wine is gorgeously playful and juicy on the palate and leaves a great clean feel of sweet fresh fruits in the long finish. **(93 points)**

### **2015 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese**

This Spätlese was harvested at a comparatively low 89° Oechsle in the privileged Busslay sector from a parcel still trained on single pole. Bright in color, this wine offers a very subtle nose of white peach, melon, pear, grapefruit and dried herbs. It is gorgeously fruity and elegant on the palate and leaves a stunning feel of white minerals and fresh herbs in the long finish. This is a gorgeous wine in the making and a huge success. **(93 points)**

### **2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese**

Harvested at 95° Oechsle, this offers a gorgeous nose of coconut, grapefruit, yellow fruits and spices. Some firm acidity brings focus and a more passion fruit-infused side to the palate and enhances the mineral side of this juicy Auslese. The sweetness only comes through in the long aftertaste. **(93 points)**

### **2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett**

Harvested at a low 82° Oechsle, this offers a gorgeous and delicately ample nose of ripe apricot tree flower, white flowers, melon and yellow peach. The wine is stunningly crisp and focused on the palate and superbly playful acidity brings great Kabinett freshness to the delicately ample and long finish. This is a superb Kabinett in the making! **(93 points)**

### **2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese Trocken**

Harvested at over 90° Oechsle, this offers a bright fruit-driven nose of greengage, mango, laurel and dried fruits. This wine is nicely juicy and tart on the palate. Despite quite some aromatic intensity, this remains gorgeously medium-bodied on the palate and shines through complexity rather than power. The finish is nicely persistent, with dry minerals intertwining with fruity flavors in the aftertaste of this truly gorgeous dry wine. **(92+ points)**

### **2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese**

Harvested at a comparatively low 86-87° Oechsle in the Humberg sector of the Himmelreich, this offers a nose of pear, coconut, apricot tree flower, passion fruit and dried herbs. The wine is gorgeously juicy and elegant on the palate and leaves a clean and superbly fresh touch of pure fruits and zest in the long finish. **(92+ points)**

### **2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett Feinherb**

This Kabinett Feinherb includes the maiden wine from a recently replanted parcel as well as wine made from older vines is still marked by notes of spontaneous fermentation. These give way to stunning scents of cassis, pear and delicate white flowers. The finish is beautifully elegant and pure. This is still a little bit rough on the edges but the underlying wine will be stunning at maturity. **(92+ points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett**

Harvested at 86° Oechsle, this offers a gorgeous nose of fresh fruits, herbs and spices. The wine is gorgeously light, fresh and packed with pure flavors of fruits and minerals on the palate. The finish is nicely sharp and refreshing. This is a gorgeous Kabinett in the making! **(92 points)**

### **2015 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett**

Harvested at 87° Oechsle, this offers a gorgeously inviting nose of pear, melon, grapefruit, mirabelle, smoke and brown sugar. The wine is juicy and elegant on the palate, where it delivers its goods with the delicate presence of a light Spätlese. The finish is juicy and livened up by great zesty acidity and fresh fruits. This is a superb wine in the making. **(92 points)**

### **2015 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Spätlese**

Harvest at a comparatively low 89° Oechsle, this offers a touch of reduction which gives way to gorgeous orchard fruits, a hint of passion fruit and herbs. The wine is nicely juicy and fresh on the palate and leaves a gorgeous and very intense feel of pure fruits and minerals in the long and zesty finish. **(92 points)**

### **2015 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Feinherb Alte Reben**

The 2015er Sonnenlay Feinherb Alte Reben comes from a privileged parcel in the Mülheimer Sonnenlay, the Himmelsleiter, planted in 1952. The wine offers a superb nose of pear, ginger, cassis and mint. It proves superbly elegant and juicy on the palate, yet it shows quite some freshness in the finish. This is a gorgeous wine in the making! **(92 points)**

### **2015 Veldenzer Eisenberg Riesling Spätlese**

Harvested at a comparatively low 91° Oechsle, this offers a stunning nose of white minerals, fresh pear and green herbs. The wine has the presence of a racy and slender Auslese on the palate and leaves a gorgeously fresh and zesty feel in the long finish. This is plain gorgeous. **(92 points)**

### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese Trocken**

Harvested at just over 90° Oechsle from fruit selected throughout the vineyard, this offers a delicately creamy nose of pear, starfruit, melon, grapefruit and quite some smoky earthy spices. This elegantly light-bodied wine proves superbly playful on the palate and leaves a gorgeous feel in the long and multi-layered finish. This textbook of dry Mosel elegance could even exceed our high expectations at maturity. It is that impressive! **(91+ points)**

### **2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett**

This Kabinett comes from fruit out of the privileged Goldwingert sector harvested at 87° Oechsle. The wine offers a great nose of white peach, pear, flint stone and green herbs. A focused and fresh palate leads to a clean and fresh feel in the sharp and acidic finish. This backward effort still needs time to develop its goods but could then easily exceed our high expectations. **(91+ points)**

### **2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Trocken “Uralte Wurzelechten Reben”**

Harvested at over 95° Oechsle from clean grapes, this offers a gorgeously rich and complex nose of apricot tree flower, yellow melon, greengage, whipped cream, almond and minerals on the nose. The wine is rich, round and smooth on the palate and offers great aromatic persistence and presence without any undue power in the finish. This remarkable wine made in a light GG style could easily exceed our high expectations if it gains in focus at maturity. **(91 points)**

### **2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett Feinherb**

This offers a delicately ripe nose of mango, brown sugar, greengage and a hint of juicy mint. The wine is gorgeously juicy and elegant on the palate, with tartness driving the structure. But the elegance in the finish and the after-taste already hint at greatness to come! **(91 points)**



### **2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Trocken**

The 2015er Juffer Kabinett Trocken comes from grapes in the lower part of the Hasenläufer harvested at over 90° Oechsle. It offers an ample and hugely inviting nose of pineapple, passion fruit, mango, dried pear and saffron. The wine is deliciously elegant and playful on the palate, where it develops the presence of a light Spätlese. But a gorgeously crisp and juicy feel in the finish makes one magically go for more. This utterly delicious wine proves a huge success in a juicy light Spätlese style. **(90 points)**

### **2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese Alte Reben**

Harvested at just above 90° Oechsle from over 70-year-old un-grafted vines, this wine stopped its fermentation at 12.7 g/l, i.e. just above the legal limit for dry wine. It offers a deep nose of brown sugar, pear, white melon, infused peach and mint. The wine is gorgeously smooth and elegant on the palate and leaves a very nice feel of herbs in the long finish. This is very nicely made in a delicately intense and persistent style. **(90 points)**

### **2015 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Kabinett Feinherb**

Harvested at 88° Oechsle, this wine made from the Bitschberg hill offers a beautiful nose of cassis, mint, elderflower and ginger on the nose. The wine is beautifully elegant and playful on the palate and leaves a great fresh feel in the long finish. This textbook of a gorgeous off-dry wine proves a great success thanks to its superb refreshing side **(90 points)**

### **2013 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Sekt Brut**

The 2013er Riesling Brut was fermented with ambient yeasts and left on its lees without added sulfur for 11 months before undergoing its second fermentation and aging on its lees for 24 months before being disgorged in September 2015 (the information is provided on the back label) and bottled with an Eiswein dosage to 6 g/l. It will be commercially released after three months of post-disgorgement bottle aging. This hay-colored Sekt offers a delicately rich and inviting nose of pear, yellow peach, mirabelle and a hint of baked pineapple, all wrapped into smoky slate. It proves rather rich and elegantly smooth on the palate. The finish is crisp and nicely firm. This only needs a bit of bottle age to shine. **(89+ points)**



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### **2015 Pinot Blanc R**

The 2015er Pinot Blanc R comes from holdings in Veldenz and was fermented and aged on its gross lees in new 500-liter oak casks until bottling in September. This offers a nice nose of pear, lemon curd, spices and white minerals. The wine is quite marked by oak on the palate but the fruit and zesty acidity comes through in the smooth and yet crisp finish. The fruit that Dirk and Constantin Richter managed to pack into their Pinot Blanc is, as usual, superb. This is made for lovers of oaked yet fruit driven wines. There is great potential here. **(89+ points)**

### **2015 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Zeppelin Label**

This offers a gorgeous and slightly reduced nose of herbs, melon and wet stone. The wine is nicely elegant and playful on the palate and leaves a nice off-dry feel in the tart, juicy and crisp finish. This offers great value! **(88 points)**

### **2015 Riesling Classic**

The 2015er Riesling Classic is made from 40-year-old vines in the Burgener Hasenläufer und Veldenzener Kirchberg, complemented by some fruit out of the Graacher Himmelreich and Brauneberger Juffer. Harvested at a full 89° Oechsle, this wine offers a delicately ample yet quite inviting nose of melon, pear and smoky herbs. A fresh grapefruit-infused side runs through the wine and brings focus and zest to a rather full-bodied finish (certainly by Max Ferd Richter standards). One is left with persistent and almost powerful flavors of fruits and minerals in the after-taste. Far from being a “small” Estate wine, this has true

potential and we would not be surprised if this would even hold up longer than we forecast. **(88 points)**

### **2015 Weissburgunder Trocken**

The 2015er Weissburgunder Trocken was made from a roughly equal blend of fruit in Mülheim (on gravel) and Veldenz (on deep slate), fermented in a mix of stainless steel and traditional wooden casks. It was left on its gross lees and then fine lees before being bottled in September. This yellow-white colored wine offers a beautiful and delicately ample nose of pear, whipped cream and smoke. The wine proves nicely fresh and complex on the palate and leaves a ripe and soft feel in the finish. This delicately rich but precise expression of Weissburgunder is nicely lifted up by a touch of acidity in the after-taste. **(88 points)**

### **2015 Riesling Richter Estate**

The 2015er Riesling Richter Estate was made from the fruit of own vines and fermented to the levels of residual sugar of Kabinett from the old days, i.e. 30-35 g/l. The wine offers a rather delicate but hugely fruity nose of yellow peach, grapefruit, minty herbs and spices. This leads to a nicely juicy, fruity and round feel on the palate and in the nicely refreshing finish. This needs a little time of time to show its best. **(86 points)**



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