



Germany, Mosel: Part Two – 2015: A Great Vintage for Mosel Classics featuring Max Ferd. Richter

as reviewed by Stephan Reinhardt

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The 2015 vintage marks a great, great success for Constantin Richter. Especially fans of lighter Rieslings—medium-dry or medium-sweet Kabinett, sweet Spätlese and Auslese—get their money's worth: For more-than-reasonable prices, they can buy world class Mosel classics from old, ungrafted vines that belong to the very best the exceptional 2015 vintage has to offer in these categories. "All our grapes were healthy in autumn, so we could wait for the perfect ripeness in all our vineyards," Constantin told me when I tasted his range in February 2017. Surprisingly—or rather a result of the uneven flowering in June—he was able to pick perfect grapes for Kabinett even in the best (and warm) vineyards, i.e. grands crus such as Erdener Treppchen, Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Graacher Domprobst, Mühlheimer Sonnenlay and Brauneberger Juffer. The harvest of the 20 hectares took the team from early October to early November. The team managed to select even higher predicates such as starred Auslese, Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese. On top of that, Max Ferdinand Richter has also released two TBA's from the rich 2011 vintage for the first time earlier this year.

2015 Brauneberg Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese ***

The 2015 Brauneberg Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese *** (Fass 115) was picked at 135° Oechsle and is the negative selection of the TBA, so it is based on 100% botrytis grapes. The wine opens intense, concentrated and spicy-piquant like a Beerenauslese, displaying grapefruit, honey and candied fruit aromas. On the palate, this is a very fine, fresh and elegant Auslese with bright and concentrated fruit and some bitter botrytis flavors in the finish. I'd keep it untouched for another 10 or more years. **(94+ points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett

The 2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett is super smoky, precise and delicate on the nose that represents a very elegant and reductive style. Round and lush on the palate, this is a sweet and mouth-filling Kabinett with good intensity and grip but almost a monster compared to the lean and filigreed Kabinett #4 bottling. **(90 points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett #4

From 70-year-old vines, picked at 76° Oechsle and ended up at 7% alcohol, the 2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett #4 is super clear and fine on the nose. Super light, fresh and filigreed, this is a lean Riesling of great purity and finesse. Almost dry in taste (despite 45 grams of residual sugar), the 2015 comes along as a Kabinett from the good old times or, if you so will, as a Ruwer-styled Riesling from the Middle Mosel. Excellent and authentic. **(91 points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Trocken

Fermented in traditional Fuders, the 2015 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Trocken displays a pretty intense Riesling bouquet with ripe yellow fruit aromas and delicate slate flavors. Pure and salty on the palate, this is a light and piquant, finesse-full and fruit-intense Riesling with a dry and racy taste as well as a good grip. Bottled with 10.8% alcohol. **(87 points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese

Made with 50% to 60% of botrytis, the 2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese displays a very clear and aromatic, slightly spicy bouquet of super ripe yet precise and fresh tropical fruit aromas intermixed with citrus fruit flavors. Sweet, piquant and with great finesse, this is a very stimulating 7% alcohol Auslese with aromatic raisin flavors and a sweetness (95 grams per liter) that is greatly moderated by the minerality as well as the great 2015 acidity. This 2015 Auslese is a Riesling you can't just taste: You have to swallow it! **(94 points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese **

Picked at 120° Oechsle and "with 90% fine and juicy botrytis," according to Constantin Richter, the 2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese ** (Fass #101) displays a very fine, precise and concentrated grapefruit and raisin aroma along with delicate slate notes. Rich, lush and elegant on the palate, this is a precise and very fine, super sensual and well structured Auslese with serious grip and concentration. Keep it for 15 and drink it over 30-40 years. **(95+ points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

Made from less than 10% of botrytis grapes picked at 91° Oechsle, the 2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese opens very clear, finessed and elegant on the nose, with intense but perfectly ripe and precise Riesling aromas. This is a light, very delicate and filigreed

Riesling with sweet, lush yet precise and finesse-full fruit followed by a stimulatingly salty finish. A classic, and one of the finest Brauneberger Rieslings you can find from this vintage. The price is sensationally low. **(94 points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese Trocken

The 2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese Trocken is very clear, deep, elegant and smoky/complex on the nose, with very fine ripe Riesling and "JSU" flavors. Fruit-intense, very mineral and finessed, this is a very complex and lingering salty dry Riesling with very good grip and a powerful, very persistent finish. The 2015 should be aged for 10 years but will go for up to 20. **(92+ points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

Picked at 205° Oechsle, the 2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese has a very clear, fresh and dense citrus fruit aroma. Concentrated and piquant, almost like an Eiswein, this is a sweet and dense, beautifully piquant TBA with great precision and pronounced acidity of 13 grams per liter that easily cuts through the 270 grams of residual sugar. The finish keeps the grapefruit and lemon flavors but also seems a bit caged at the moment. It will age terrifically over 50 years, though **(96+ points)**

2015 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett

The 2015 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett is super clear, precise and fresh but also perfectly ripe and flinty on the nose. Round and lush on the palate, this is a well structured though not very deep or complex Riesling with a nice mineral grip in the finish. To swallow in larger sips...**(88 points)**

2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Alte Reben

From 100+-year-old vines, the 2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Alte Reben is deep, pure and smoky/flinty on the nose, with ripe, dark fleshed yellow stone fruit aromas and lovely clarity and elegance. Full-bodied, intense and juicy, with a very good mineral grip and mouthwatering fruit, this is a full-bodied, powerful, clear and elegant Riesling with excellent aging potential. Fermented and aged in traditional oak Fuders until June 2016, this was bottled with 11% alcohol and is dry styled, with 12.7 grams of residual sugar. **(92+ points)**

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2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese Trocken

Sourced from 30- to 35-year-old vines and only produced in great vintages, the 2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese Trocken displays a very delicate and aromatic bouquet with pure flint-stone aromas. On the palate, this is a lush and fruit-intense Riesling from younger vines on deeper soils that give a very elegant and fine, less firmly structured wine for earlier consumption. The finish is salty and pure but not as tight and intense as that of the Spätlese Trocken. The grapes were picked at 93° Oechsle, and the fermentation finished at 11.5% alcohol plus six grams of residual sugar. **(90 points)**

2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

The 2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett Feinherb is pure, precise and smoky on the nose where a very clear and aromatic stone fruit aroma is displayed. This is a light to medium-bodied, very clear, fine and salty Riesling with ripe, lush but precise and elegant fruit and crystalline acidity. Gorgeous and very delicate, a true Richter classic for the next 20-30 years. This has 10% alcohol plus 20 grams of "medium-dry" residual sugar. Sensationally priced. **(93 points)**

2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett

The 2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett is super clear, bright and smoky/flinty on the nose. Lush and seductive on the palate, this is a gorgeous Kabinett with a stunning acidity of 10.2 grams per liter and feather-light 7.5% alcohol. Excellent price/quality relation! **(92 points)**

2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese

From up to 70- to 80-year-old vines, picked roughly four weeks after the corresponding Kabinett and entirely fermented in oak Fuders, the 2015 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese is a classic with great clarity and freshness. It also has a great sweetness of 67 grams that tastes much drier since the purity and salinity is really distinctive here. Keep this Himmelreich for 10 years and enjoy it until 2040+ as a clear and leaner, mineral style of Spätlese. **(89+ points)**

2015 Mühlheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Alte Reben Feinherb

From 65-year-old vines, the 2015 Mühlheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Alte Reben Feinherb is very clear, complex and pure on the nose, with fine but ripe and perfectly concentrated fruit and coolish/smoky aromas of crushed stones. Intense, finessed and salty on the palate, this is a highly elegant, round and balanced Spätlese with very clear definition and a concentrated, perfectly ripe fruit aroma. You can try it today, but you will love it even more in 10 years and

would like to buy more of it in 20 years. A great quality for an exceptionally low price! **(89+ points)**

2015 Mühlheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Spätlese Trocken

The 2015 Mühlheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Spätlese Trocken is from the Johannisberg plot and was picked very late, around November 10th. After a maceration of six hours, it fermented slowly over a period of seven months. The resulting wine has a very clear, fine, pure and mineral bouquet with ripe Riesling flavors. Round and intense, this is a complex Riesling with racy acidity and a persistent mineral finish. Pretty young but provided with excellent aging potential, this lean and finessed Riesling should be delicious in 10+ years. **(90+ points)**

2015 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Spätlese

From deep soils structured by slate and gravels, the 2015 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Spätlese is very clear and elegant on the slightly smoky, beautifully fresh and well-defined nose where bright fruit, herbal and some vegetal aromas are displayed. Juicy, intense and elegant, this is a perfectly balanced Spätlese with a certain richness but also a gorgeous piquancy and mineral backbone. Excellent quality for a very reasonable price. **(93 points)**

2015 Richter Estate Riesling

The 2015 Richter Estate Riesling is the "calling card wine" of the family estate: typical Mosel, typical Richter. Sourced from young vines in top vineyards, the 2015 shows a very clear, refined Riesling and slate aroma on the nose and palate. It is perfectly round and gentle, seductive but with grip and tension. Very good indeed! **(87 points)**

2015 Richter Riesling Classic

The 2015 Riesling Classic opens with a very clear, ripe and subtle Mosel bouquet. Light, round and delicate on the palate, this is a piquant and pure, beautifully round and slatey Riesling that comes along in the dry style and shows good grip and salinity in the finish. The Classic is from older vines cultivated in good yet less well known vineyards. It was fermented entirely in traditional oak Fuders. **(87 points)**

2015 Riesling Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett

From roughly 90-year-old vines, the 2015 Riesling Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett is super clear and flinty on the bright and very precise nose. This is a super lush and salty Riesling with good intensity, just 7.5% alcohol and 45 grams of residual sugar. The finish is very clear, pure and stimulatingly salty. This is another picture book Kabinett and the one with probably the most famous name. **(93 points)**

2015 Veldenzer Elisenberg Riesling Kabinett

Coming from quartzite soils, the 2015 Veldenzer Elisenberg Riesling Kabinett is one of the most beautiful Kabinett Rieslings I have tasted from this vintage along Saar and Mosel. The nose is super clear and smoky, indicating a light and fine but complex Riesling. Lush and racy on the palate, this is a firmly structured, pure and piquant Kabinett with lots of stones and minerals on the palate and a long, complex finish. This wine is clear as a mountain stream, and its sweetness of 54 grams of residual sugar is almost completely swallowed by the pure and flinty minerality. The finish is salty and highly piquant. This is simply great Riesling coming along as a picture book Kabinett. Sensational price! **(94 points)**

2015 Veldenzer Elisenberg Riesling Spätlese

The 2015 Veldenzer Elisenberg Riesling Spätlese opens super clear, fresh, precise and stony on the nose, with refreshing lemon aromas. Coming from quartzite soils, this is a highly precise, finessed and elegant Spätlese that is provided with palate-tickling tension and fascinating mineral purity. This mouthwatering Riesling is filigreed and firm at the same time. It is bottled with 7.5% alcohol and 81 grams of residual sugar that is almost completely hidden. **(93+ points)**

2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese

Picked at 155° Oechsle and made from pure raisins, the 2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese is super clear, fine, fresh and piquant on the nose, as well as super concentrated and clear, with ripe apricot aromas but all in all still a bit too reductive to be fully fascinating. Sweet, refined and lush, this is a very elegant, beautifully clear and intense BA with precise acidity and a very well defined finish with lemon and some nice bitter grapefruit flavors. Great elegance, finesse and piquancy here. It has 6% alcohol, 202 grams of residual sugar and 11.5 grams of total acidity. **(95+ points)**

2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

Fermented in traditional oak Fuders but still a bit reductive at this early stage, the 2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett Feinherb opens very clear and aromatic, with white stone fruit and flinty aromas. Round, lush and intense on the palate but also pure, precise and vital, with remarkably fine acidity, this is a perfectly ripe, finessed and balanced Kabinett with a mouthwatering finish. Gorgeous! Keep it for 10 years and enjoy it over another 10-20 years. At this price, almost donated! **(93 points)**

2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

From 90-year-old vines and picked on the same day as the Uralte Wurzelechte Reben, the 2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese opens with a very clear, precise and aromatic stone fruit bouquet intertwined with flinty and herbal aromas. Dense, piquant and lush, with seductive fruit and a mineral backbone, this is a concentrated and complex Riesling with pronounced,

tickling acidity and mouthwatering salinity. There is great grip and tension in the finish. Still very young and with a massive acid attack for all Non-Vikings, this will turn out to be a great 2015 Spätlese in 15-20 years. **(95 points)**

2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Trocken Uralte Wurzelechte Reben

From vines planted in 1890, the 2015 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Trocken Uralte Wurzelechte Reben is deep and very fine on the nose, with perfectly ripe and intense fruit, highly delicate slate aromas and a bit of flint stone. Silky, round and highly finessed on the palate, this is a very elegant, pure and intense Riesling with a long and juicy, mouthwateringly salty, stimulating finish with fine grip. **(93 points)**

2015 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

Bottled in late 2016 with 5.5% alcohol plus 360 grams of unfermented sugar, the dark orange/amber colored 2011 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese is clear and aromatic on the spicy nose where ripe and dried stone fruit flavors intermix with yeasty and still mineral notes. On the palate, this is a very rich but also piquant and firmly structured TBA whose 11.5 grams of total acidity give it a stunning brilliance, elegance and lingering vitality. The finish is even a bit salty and beautifully precise. Compared to the corresponding TBA from the Graacher Domprobst, the Juffer-Sonnenuhr is more aromatic, finessed, precise and stimulating, at least at this early moment. This was picked at 280° Oechsle. **(97 points)**

2015 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

Richter's amber/orange colored 2011 Graacher Dompropst Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese, picked at 260° Oechsle and bottled with 5.5% alcohol plus 340 grams of unfermented sugar and 12.5 grams of total acidity, needs some time to open up and breathe free. Provided with clear and concentrated dried yellow-fleshed stone fruit, white meat and ginger flavors on the nose, this is a terribly sweet, rich and viscous TBA with great intensity and freshness. The acidity is perfectly integrated and gives remarkable finesse and elegance. The finish is even a bit salty and is certainly sweet and aromatic. This TBA fermented until early 2016 and has been filtered only after the harvest of the same year. **(97 points)**