

Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

Weingut Max Ferd. Richter

as reviewed by Jean Fisch & David Rayer

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Constantin Richter is visibly very happy with the quality of the 2017 vintage, even if it yielded only half a harvest: "Bud break was already well behind us and the shoots well developed when we were hit – as much as all northern Europe – by some severe frost at the end of April. However the warmer and lowest vineyards were less affected than those situated higher in altitude, where vegetation was most advanced. In the end, we had for instance almost normal yields in Brauneberg, especially in the Hasenläufer sector, whereas we only harvested 20 hl/ha in the Graacher Domprobst. On average, we did not exceed 45 hl/ha in 2017. Thankfully, May and June proved warm and dry and we had a very good and rapid flowering. July and August were rather humid, so that the berries swell and sometimes burst, which sometimes led to nests of diseases. September was again warm and mostly sunny, and we started our harvest as early as the end of September. We first brought in the grapes for our Kabinett bottlings, then went to Mülheim and Velden. Our Spätlese and Auslese then came in and we finished the harvest by some botrytis selections for our noble-sweet wines. Funnily enough, it proved almost more work to bring in suitable grapes for our Kabinett than for our BA and TBA! Yet the right and clean selections helped us to have grapes with no more than 90° Oechsle for these wines. Overall, the wines are concentrated and show high levels of dry extracts, which makes them behave at a higher level than what their Prädikat would suggest. They do have low pH and ripe acidities, actually almost only tartaric acidity. I therefore see some parallels with the 2013 and 2010 vintages, even though 2017 is much better. The fact that we did strict

selections and brought in only clean and ripe grapes also meant that the wines needed less sulfur during the winemaking.”

The Riesling harvest started on September 25 and was completed as early as October 13, the earliest finish in the whole history of the Estate (going back to the 17th century!). The Estate produced its full portfolio of wines, up to a Wehlener Sonnenuhr BA and a Brauneberger Juffer- Sonnenuhr TBA. It added its first “GG” from the Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr. The low yields only prevented the Estate from producing its oakaged Pinot Blanc. All in all, as Constantin Richter is happy with his collection, except at the lower end of the scale: “We are short of our bread-and butter wines, such as Qualitätswein and Kabinett.” The wines were bottled comparatively late, between the end of April and the end of June.

This is yet another stunning collection of wines crafted by young Constantin Richter. While all single-vineyard wines (and especially those made in a fruity-style) are highly recommended, we have to underline the extremely high quality of the Estate’s “basic” wines. Unfortunately these are only available in tiny quantities, but no stone should be left unturned in trying to get some of these great QPR champions. Another area where the Max Ferd. Richter Estate is making huge progress is the dry category. A cask sample of Graacher Domprobst Alte Reben was breathtakingly beautiful and full of promises. Finally lovers of noble-sweet wines will fall in love with the Auslese, BA and TBA. All in all there is much to love in the 2017 Richter wines!

2017 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Beerenauslese

The 2017er Wehlener Sonnenuhr BA was harvested at a full 150° Oechsle. The wine proves still rather restrained yet already more than hints at gorgeous TBA-like notes of honey, raisin, baked spices, apple jelly, orange zest, toffee, and nut paste come through. These scents lead to stunningly creamy and honeyed notes including raisin, baked spices and apple jelly on the palate. A refreshingly acidity makes gives this superbly oily wine the great zesty side of an Eiswein (no wonder as this wine has a massive 14 g/l of acidity). The finish is very delicate, beautifully airy and refined. This is a breathtaking success! **(98 points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

The 2017er Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr TBA was harvested at 205° Oechsle. It displays a hugely gorgeous and multi-layered nose of raisin, toffee, passion fruit, mango, beeswax, smoke, plum, pine and wood fire. The wine is viscous and syrupy at first on the palate before an Eiswein-like acidity kicks in (no wonder, as it lies at an impressive 16.5 g/l of acidity) and provides great focus to the fascinating flavors of passion fruit, lime, pineapple, dried apricot, raisin and mirabelle. This still hugely sweet and very primary TBA will need a full decade to blossom. It could then easily turn out even better than we currently anticipate, especially as it will develop more finesse with age. **(97+ points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese

The 2017er Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese was harvested at well over 110° Oechsle. It offers a very classy and elegant nose of apricot blossom, whipped cream, almond, smoke and fine herbs. The wine proves highly concentrated on the palate, yet delivers this with great creamy subtlety. The finish is all about refined notes of honey, whipped cream, sappy peach and juicy pineapple. This is a terrific “Auslese lange GK”-styled dessert wine in the making! **(95 points)**

2017 Veldenzer Eisenberg Riesling Spätlese

The 2017er Veldenzer Eisenberg Spätlese was harvested at a comparatively modest 87° Oechsle. This beauty immediately captures one’s attention through its hugely complex and elegantly floral nose made of white peach, minty herbs, Limoncello and smoke. The wine is superbly refined and elegant on the palate, where a delicately smooth and creamy texture underlines the ethereally light yet highly complex flavors beautifully. The finish is pure, precise and utterly refined. This is a classic Spätlese in the making which shines through its glorious finesse. **(95 points)**

2017 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese

The 2017er Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese is made from fruit harvested at under 90° Oechsle from very old un-grafted vines in the Goldwingert part of the vineyard. This still quite reductive wine only gradually reveals its gorgeous nose made of smoke, vineyard peach, almond cream, minty herbs and spices. The wine

rewards one with magnificent creamy and sappy peach as well as well-integrated candied grapefruit driven acidity on the superbly playful palate. The finish is ethereally light and multi-layered. This is a great light-feathered Spätlese. **(94 points)**

2017 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Auslese

The 2017er Mülheimer Sonnenlay Auslese was made from a 60-70% botrytis selection harvested at 107° Oechsle from old vines. It delivers a quite opulent and ripe nose of pear, melon, candied ripe grapefruit, toffee, mirabelle, whipped almond cream and bakery elements, all wrapped into some herbal notes. Zesty acidity whips up the whole experience and gives great focus to the ripe and juicy flavors of melon, quince and peach on the palate. The finish of this superb “Auslese lange GK”-styled dessert wine is beautifully pure and long. **(94 points)**

2017 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

The 2017er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese was made from fruit harvested at 93° Oechsle on very old un-grafted vines (thought to have been planted in 1890). It immediately shows quite the exotic ripeness of a fine Auslese on the nose as scents of apricot, mango, honeyed orange and spices emerge from the glass. The wine is superbly juicy even if still on the sweet side on the palate. Thankfully, a tickly and juicy acidity whips up the flavors and brings great balance to the very long and focused finish. This quite marvelous expression of a light “drinking Auslese” only needs a decade to fully blossom and develop its full complexity. **(94 points)**

2017 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese

The 2017er Graacher Himmelreich Auslese, harvested at 93° Oechsle, includes 30-40% of botrytized fruit. It delivers a gorgeously ripe nose of quince, tangerine, honey, mango, spices, mirabelle, and orange zest, all wrapped into a hint of toffee and volatile. The wine is superbly exotic and smooth on the palate, with still quite some sweetness in need of integration. This sweetness conveys a bulky side to the finish at this early stage, but the underlying zesty tension will make for great balance at maturity. This could well surprise us all if it gains in finesse with time. **(93+ points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

The 2017er Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese was harvested at a full 96° Oechsle. It develops a quite opulent and aromatic nose of apricot, juicy peach, pineapple, guava, a hint of melon and honey. The wine coats the palate with intense and juicy creamy fruits. Some smooth yet juicy acidity adds to the intense Auslese presence of this wine. The finish is driven by beautifully pure and lingering flavors of quince, peach and pear. This Auslese in all but name is quite a treat but will only truly be at its best in a decade or so. **(93 points)**

2017 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett

The 2017er Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett was harvested at 84-85° Oechsle from very old un-grafted vines in the Goldwingert part of the vineyard. It displays a most beautiful nose made of white flowers, whipped almond cream, vineyard peach, tangerine and candied grapefruit. The wine is very delicate and beautifully light-weighted on the palate, layers upon layers of smoke, grapefruit zest and spices add presence and complexity. This is a marvelous Kabinett in the making. **(93 points)**

2017 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Spätlese

The 2017er Mülheimer Helenenkloster Spätlese was harvested at 92° Oechsle. It delivers a very minty and refreshing nose of white peach, grapefruit, flowers and smoke. Ample yellow make for a deliciously creamy and juicy feel on the palate. The finish is superbly fruity but also spicy, zesty and focused. This riper expression of Spätlese shines through its utter drinkability. **(93 points)**

2017 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett

The 2017er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett was harvested early at 82° Oechsle. It offers a gorgeous nose of grapefruit, apricot, under-ripe pineapple, citronella, yuzu, ginger cream and smoke. The wine is quite rich at first on the palate, which is driven by ripe yellow fruits. Yet, a most animating, racy and energetic acidity kicks in and makes for a refined and focused finish. This is a gorgeous fruity-styled in the making! **(93 points)**

2017 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Alte Reben

The 2017er Graacher Domprobst Alte Reben comes from fruit harvested at 91° Oechsle in the prime Domprobstbann sector of the vineyard. It was fermented down to 6 g/l, i.e. legally dry levels, even if this is not written on the label. This cask sample reveals a beautiful nose of yellow flowers, mirabelle, plum, smoke, cherry and aniseed herbs. The wine is superbly concentrated and playful on the palate and leaves a very subtle and highly spicy feel in the delicately racy finish. This potentially great dry Riesling in the making leaves one with a great feeling of presence without any undue weight in the after-taste. **(92-94 points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett

The 2017er Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett (AP 15) was harvested at 86° Oechsle. It delivers a ripe and aromatic fruity nose of apricot, canned yellow peach, spices, herbs and lead pencil. The wine coats the rich, smooth and delicately round palate with juicy and creamy fruits. **(92 points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett - Fuder 4

The 2017er Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett labeled as - Fuder 4 - on the back label (whereas the front label indicates Kabinett – 4 –) was harvested at a low 81° Oechsle from old vines in the upper sector of the Juffer (near the Kammer). It was fermented down to fully fruity levels at 45 g/l of residual sugar. Some initial residual scents from spontaneous fermentation quickly give way to ripe scents of almond cream, canned yellow peach, pineapple and gingerbread. The wine is light-weighted on the palate, smooth and delicate. A tickly and very playful touch of acidity underlines the nicely racy and straight. **(92 points)**

2017 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese

The 2017er Erdener Treppchen Spätlese is made from fruit harvested at 90° Oechsle in the prime Busslay sector of the vineyard. This is still quite reductive at first and only gradually reveals some superbly complex scents of yellow peach, mirabelle, a hint of apricot, earthy spices and smoke. The wine proves intense and concentrated on the palate, where the initial touch of sweetness adds to the smoothness and delicacy of the structure. The finish is nicely long and complex.

This rich expression of a Spätlese only needs a decade to fully blossom. **(92 points)**

2017 Veldenzer Eisenberg Riesling Kabinett

The 2017er Veldenzer Eisenberg Kabinett was made from fruit harvested at 81° Oechsle. It offers a gorgeously spicy and herbal nose of nettle, green tea, anise, peach and pear. The wine proves nicely smooth and delicate on the palate where some tickly acidity is waiting for its great day. The finish is light-weighted and leaves one with a beautiful feel of tangerine, a hint of apricot and yellow peach in the after-taste. **(92 points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trocken GG

The 2017er Brauneberg Juffer-Sonnenuhr GG (a first at the Estate) comes from fruit harvested at 91° Oechsle in the prime Falkenberg sector and was fermented down to 6 g/l. Still marked by residual scents of spontaneous fermentation at first, it only gradually reveals some superbly refined and nicely aromatic scents of yellow peach, pineapple, tangerine, orange zest and pear as well as a touch of anise, lime and smoke. The wine is very delicate and nicely perfumed on the palate, where a zesty acidity whips up the smooth and fruity flavors. The finish is quite racy and straight. **(91-94 points)**

2017 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett

The 2017er Erdener Treppchen Kabinett was harvested at 85° Oechsle. It proves still quite reductive and marked by a touch of sulfur at first. After some airing, this gives way to scents of canned peach, pineapple, herbs, mirabelle and orange zest. The wine is driven by quite some sweet luscious yellow fruits on the palate, whereas the finish is straighter and more focused. This will need some time to integrate its sweetness. **(90 points)**

2017 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett Trocken

The 2017er Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett Trocken was harvested at 84° Oechsle from very old un-grafted vines in the Goldwingert part of the vineyard. It delivers a beautiful nose of almond cream, vineyard peach, elderberry, earthy spices and a hint of gingerbread. The wine is delicately creamy and smooth on the palate

where a gorgeously integrated kick of acidity brings lightness and finesse. The finish is still on the tart and slightly acidic side, but this will integrate nicely after a year or two of bottle aging. **(90 points)**

2017 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Trocken

The 2017er Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett Trocken was harvested at 87° Oechsle in the Hasenläufer part of the vineyard. It proves marked by residues of spontaneous fermentation at first before it reveals a beautifully fruity and ripe nose of yellow peach, pineapple, almond cream, orange blossom and earthy spices. The wine coats the palate with ample juicy fruits. These are wrapped into a dynamic and racy acidity, giving the wine a fully dry feel in the long and slightly powerful finish. **(90 points)**

2017 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Feinherb Alte Reben

The 2017er Mülheimer Sonnenlay Feinherb Alte Reben was harvested at 88° Oechsle in the Himmelsleiter and was fermented down to fully off-dry levels (25 g/l of residual sugar). It exhibits a ripe nose of toffee, almond cream, yellow plum, a hint of coconut, earthy spices and dried herbs. The wine proves quite intense on the ripe and creamy palate. Notes of mirabelle and melon make for a comparatively smooth feel in the finish. This baroque and slightly opulent styled off-dry Riesling needs some time to integrate its richness. **(89 points)**

2017 Riesling Richter Estate

The 2017er Riesling Richter Estate is made from Estate holdings of young vines in the Erdener Herrenberg, Graacher Domprobst and Himmelreich as well as parcels in Mülheim. It was fermented down to fully off-dry levels at 30 g/l of residual sugar. The wine delivers a nicely fruity and ripe nose of yellow peach, plum, earthy spices, smoke and a hint of tar. It unfolds good presence yet remains light-footed on the just off-dry palate. Some nicely tickly acidity whips up the flavors right into the focused, light and long finish. **(89 points)**

2017 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Zeppelin Label

The 2017er Mülheimer Sonnenlay Zeppelin Label comes from equal parts from own fruit and from fruit purchased from local growers in Mülheim. It was

fermented down to fully off-dry levels at 30 g/l of residual sugar. The nose is initially quite reduced and driven by residual scents from spontaneous fermentation. It only gradually reveals some smoky notes of grapefruit, lemon, herbs and green apple. The wine is nicely structured on the palate, where a delicately smooth and fruity touch of sweetness add some charm to the wine. The finish is lightly smooth and nicely long. **(88 points)**

2017 Riesling Classic

The 2017er Riesling Classic is made from 40 year-old vines from Estate's holdings in the Burgener Hasenläufer und Veldenzer Kirchberg, complemented by some fruit out of the Brauneberg Juffer and was fermented down to just under 13 g/l of residual sugar. It offers a delicate and elegantly floral nose of almond, yellow peach, tangerine, herbs and smoke. The wine is superbly playful and unusually intense for an Estate wine on the palate. The finish is focused and tasting dry as the after-taste is all about minerals and racy citrusy fruits. **(88 points)**