

Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

Weingut Max Ferd. Richter

As reviewed by Jean Fisch & David Rayer

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The difficult growing season of the 2016 vintage left Constantin Richter comparatively unfazed: "Mother Nature has thrown almost everything it got at us in the spring 2016. Our vineyards in Graach and Wehlen got hit by hail in May and then peronospora spread above all in our finest vineyards. For instance we only harvested 20 hl/ha in our parcels in the Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr. One may whine about it, but this is nature. Thankfully, the rest of the season proved much better even if some of our vineyards did suffer from sunburn during the heat wave at the end of August. The autumn proved a really relaxed affair as the weather remained stable. We harvested from the end of September right until November 10, starting with Kabinett, then Weissburgunder and finally our Spätlese wines. One really needed to be on the look-out for botrytis this year, as hardly any developed. Despite this, we did manage to produce tiny amounts of a BA. Given the stable weather, the grapes remained truly clean, which led us to leave parcels for Eiswein after the main harvest. And we were lucky as temperatures really tumbled on December 5, allowing us to make not one, but two Eiswein! Overall, must levels are comparable to those of 2015 at our Estate, but the resulting alcoholic yield was higher in 2016. The wines have low dry extracts despite low yields and somewhat lower acidity, but the acidity is almost only tartaric, so the firmer one. Overall, 2016 is a classic Mosel vintage at our Estate. The wines are incredibly open at this early stage, and those from Mülheim are particularly successful this year. My father and I see much resemblance with our 2002 vintage, sometimes 2004 and sometimes, when riper, a blend of 2007 and 2012."

Due to the lower yields, the Estate focused on off-dry and fruity-styled wines in 2016. The portfolio goes right up to tiny amounts of a BA in the Graacher Himmelreich. Besides its 2016 collection, the Estate was finally able to commercialize its BA and TBA from 2011 (which had first been refused the AP number ... before getting full marks on the sensory test only a year later!).

After an almost legendary effort in 2015, the Richter dished up another glorious collection in 2016, marked by riper but juicy flavors and great zesty charm. The sweet spot clearly lies in the fruity side of the portfolio in 2016, with a string of outstanding Kabinett, Spätlese and Auslese. The highlights are, as so often, the wines from the Veldenzer Elisenberg and those from the Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr. However, also Graach and Erden did outstandingly well. The collection is crowned by a string of noble-sweet wines. The 2016er Helenenkloster Eiswein Fass 103 and Himmelreich BA are easily among the finest of the vintage. In addition, the just-released 2011er BA and TBA are gloriously decadent noble-sweet Riesling in the making. The ability by the Max Ferd. Richter Estate to master so many vineyards, so many stylistic directions and still respect the vintage character never ceases to amaze us.

2011 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

This TBA harvested at 275° Oechsle fermented for 3.5 years and then took over two years to get an approbation by the authorities, hence the late bottling in December 2016. This offers a huge nose of apricot puree, candied blood orange, date, salted caramel, raisin, honey and earthy spices. The wine is hugely concentrated on the palate, with more intense notes of apricot and salted caramel running right into the still very sweet and viscous finish. This will prove a massive effort at maturity and one with great upside potential if the sweetness mellows away and the aromatics remain pure. **(98+ points)**

2016 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Eiswein ** Fass 103

This Eiswein was harvested at 160° Oechsle at -9°/-10°C (16°/14°F) on December 5 from the main pressing of only fully frozen and clean grapes. It starts with some stunningly fruity and fresh notes of cassis, pear, mirabelle, raspberry, honey, pineapple and cinnamon. A great feeling of focus, freshness and bright fruitiness

emerges on the palate. This carries over right into the elegant yet razor sharp finish. Far from being over-powering, this remains elegant and light, with just the right amount of sweetness to ensure longevity. This is a little masterpiece of an Eiswein in the making but one with a very high feel of acidity which makes us opt to enjoy this earlier than later. This Eiswein is a dream. **(98 points)**

2016 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Beerenauslese

A strict selection of completely shriveled and botrytized fruit at 155° Oechsle yielded a meager 20 liters of this BA. It offers a gorgeous nose of pear puree, cinnamon, pineapple, raisin, honey, date, greengage and fine spices. The wine is beautifully pure and elegant on the palate, where a zesty touch of acidity provides the backbone to an explosion of unctuous pear, quince, nut, star fruit and earthy spices in the beautifully elegant and pure finish. It is really a shame that so little of this little gem is available. **(97 points)**

2011 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese

This TBA harvested at 260° Oechsle fermented for 3.5 years and then took over two years to get an approbation by the authorities, hence the late bottling in December 2016. This already bronze-colored wine delivers a hugely concentrated nose of furniture polish, apricot puree, date, backed pineapple, caramel and Christmas spices. It proves hugely concentrated, oily and almost syrupy on the palate, and yet it leaves a stunningly long feel in the finish. This huge TBA in the making will certainly need a solid two decades to blend all its components. **(96 points)**

2016 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese

This Auslese was harvested late from shriveled berries at 120° Oechsle from vines with minimal yields. It delivers a rather restrained but very pure nose of date, honey, nut, apricot and strawberry on the nose. The wine is nicely zesty on the palate (the wine does have 10 g/l of total acidity) and leaves a superbly unctuous feel in the racy and complex finish. The after-taste is all about date and ripe exotic fruits as well as pink grapefruit. This is an amazing effort which proves pure and electrifying in its light “BA-Eiswein” style. **(95 points)**

2016 Veldenzer Elisenberg Riesling Auslese

The Elisenberg Auslese was made from 100% botrytis-affected fruit harvested at a whopping 110° Oechsle. It is still rather marked by reduction and sulfur at this early stage but, after a while, one notices already some great notes of date, pear puree, honey, grapefruit and white minerals lurking in the background. The wine is still non-saying at this early stage on the palate but the refined and subtle aromatic in the background already hints at stunning greatness to come at maturity. This is one of the few 2016 Auslese which does not shine in its youth. It does have immense development potential though. **(94+ points)**

2016 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese

Harvested 96° Oechsle with approx. 30% of botrytis, this offers a beautiful nose of pear, greengage, white flowers and spices. The wine proves elegantly creamy and yet zesty on the palate and leaves a clean and pure feel of zesty fruits and saltiness in the ravishing finish. Only a slightly saturating touch of candy floss in the after-taste still needs to mellow away, something a decade of aging will easily take care of. **(94 points)**

2016 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Eiswein

This Eiswein was harvested at 140° Oechsle at -9°/-10°C (16°/14°F) on December 5. It offers a beautiful nose of date, brown sugar, greengage, apricot blossom and earthy spices. The wine is nicely balanced with good tension between fruit and unctuous sweetness right into the juicy finish. The aftertaste is still on the sweet side but the overall balance of this Eiswein is simply beautiful. While already quite enjoyable now, this fruit-driven expression of Eiswein will develop nicely as it matures. **(94 points)**

2016 Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

The 2016er Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese was made from clean and shriveled grapes harvested at 94° Oechsle. It develops a delicately creamy nose of vineyard peach, grapefruit, some earthy spices and quite some citrusy whipped cream. The wine proves deliciously playful and mouth-watering on the palate as rich creamy fruits are balanced out by zesty acidity. The finish is still on the sweet side at this early

stage but this should develop positively at maturity, and there is even quite some upside potential if it gains in finesse. **(93+ points)**

2016 Veldenzer Eisenberg Riesling Kabinett

The Eisenberg Kabinett AP27 was made from fruit harvested at 81° Oechsle. It offers a stunning nose of white peach, mint, peach and ginger. The wine develops a stunning balance with pear, ginger and fine herbs and spices on the palate. The finish is salty, refined and superbly light-featured yet packed with flavors. This is a stunning Kabinett in the making but one which will need a few years to develop its full balance. It could even exceed our high expectations if it maintains the tension and finesse of the aromatics. What a stunning piece of Kabinett in the making! **(93+ points)**

2016 Veldenzer Eisenberg Riesling Spätlese

This Spätlese, harvested at a low 87° Oechsle, offers a beautifully elegant nose of pear, vineyard peach, apricot blossom and whipped cream. The wine proves gorgeously racy and vibrant on the palate, which gives it focus and tension. The finish is mouth-watering, tart and loaded with ripe fruits and minerals. This is a beautiful Spätlese in the making. **(93 points)**

2016 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett - Fuder 4

This Kabinett (labelled as - Fuder 4 - on the back label, whereas the front label only indicates Kabinett -4-) was harvested at a low 78° Oechsle and fermented down to 35 g/l of residual sugar. It offers a gorgeously nose of green herbs, white peach, cassis, apple and fine spices. The wine is beautifully playful with quite some tartness on the palate and in the structured and firm finish. This needs some time to develop its full aromatic profile and integrate its rough edges. But as in its debut vintage in 2015, the Juffer Kabinett - Fuder 4 - proves a superb classic Kabinett in the making. **(92 points)**

2016 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Spätlese

The 2016er Treppchen Spätlese is made from fruit harvested at 90° Oechsle in the prime Busslay sector of the vineyard. It offers a beautiful even if rather flamboyant nose of cassis, white peach, spices and floral elements. The wine

develops the delicately creamy side of an Auslese on the palate. Great almost racy zest brings however freshness and juiciness to the vibrant, intense and gorgeously playful finish. **(92 points)**

2016 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett

This Kabinett harvested at 82° Oechsle from very old un-grafted vines in the Goldwingert part of the vineyard. It offers a gorgeous feel of creamy grapefruit, pear, star fruit, anise and fine herbs. The wine proves delicately creamy with nicely integrated acidity on the palate and leaves a superbly crisp and focused feel in the long and racy finish. While slightly Spätlese in style on the palate, the finish is definitively that of a crisp Kabinett. **(92 points)**

2016 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Spätlese

The 2016er Helenenkloster was made from fruit partially affected by botrytis and harvested at 92° Oechsle (this was the pre-harvest of the Eiswein to take the ripe fruit out of the vineyard). It offers a gorgeous nose of melon, pear, grapefruit, ginger and laurel. It proves beautifully balanced and delicately smooth, and yet fruity and playful, with a racy side adding depth and vibrancy to the nicely playful finish. **(92 points)**

2016 Veldenzer Elisenberg Riesling Kabinett

The Elisenberg Kabinett AP16 was made from fruit harvested at 80° Oechsle from old vines situated in what is internally known as the “Alte Elisenburg” sector of the vineyard. It offers a delicately ripe nose of cassis, peach, pear and herbal elements on the nose. The wine delivers its flavors with the creamy and ripe presence of a Spätlese on the palate yet proves elegantly ripe and fruity in the long finish. **(92 points)**

2016 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese

This Spätlese was from fruit harvested at 94° Oechsle from very old vines. Still quite reductive in style and marked by residual notes of spontaneous fermentation, this wine develops a gorgeously elegant nose of pear, cinnamon, fine spices and herbs. It proves however on the rich and ripe side on the palate as it unfolds exotic flavors of mango and guava not unlike those found in an Auslese.

The finish is all about ripe fruits, vibrant freshness and lightness. This is a beautiful even if slightly riper expression of Sonnenuhr Spätlese. **(92 points)**

2016 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett

The Juffer Kabinett (AP13) was harvested at 84° Oechsle. It offers a delicately creamy nose of vineyard peach, melon, grapefruit and fine herbs. The wine is juicy and spicy on the palate and leaves a great refreshingly tart feel in the long and focused finish. This structured Kabinett will need a good decade in the bottle in order to develop its full potential. It could eventually warrant a higher rating as it mellows away and integrates aromatically. **(91+ points)**

2016 Erdener Treppchen Riesling Kabinett

This Kabinett harvested at 80° Oechsle offers a beautiful nose of peach, laurel, brown sugar and flowers. The wine is gorgeously light-feathered on the palate and leaves a flowery feel in the finish. This is a textbook Kabinett with huge charm in the making. **(91 points)**

2016 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett Trocken

The 2016er Himmelreich Kabinett Trocken was harvested at 84° Oechsle from very old un-grafted vines in the Goldwingert part of the vineyard. It offers a superbly flowery nose of pear, pineapple, apricot blossom, anise and smoky slate. The wine is beautifully balanced on the palate, with great freshness and elegance carrying right into the delicately tart finish. This only needs a year or two to integrate its elements and should then prove a superbly light expression of dry Riesling. **(91 points)**

2016 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Feinherb Alte Reben

The 2016er Mülheimer Sonnenlay Feinherb Alte Reben was harvested at 87° Oechsle in the prime Himmelsleiter sector of the vineyard. It offers a gorgeous nose of white and yellow peach, cassis, pear, grapefruit and white flowers. The wine is nicely balanced on the palate, with a nice kick of zesty acidity providing structure and vibrancy right into the elegant and beautifully balanced finish. This only needs a little bit of time to shine. **(91 points)**

2016 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett

This Kabinett harvested early at 82° Oechsle offers a rather beautiful nose of canned yellow peach, grapefruit, pineapple and flowers. The wine is nicely balanced with good, almost Spätlese, presence on the palate and a delicate light-feathered and juicy finish. **(91 points)**

2016 Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Kabinett Trocken

The 2016er Juffer Kabinett Trocken comes from fruit harvested at 87° Oechsle in the Hasenläufer part of the vineyard. It offers a gorgeous nose of white peach, pear, melon, herbs and spices and proves comparatively compact and structured on the palate. However, the wine turns to the fresher side as it leaves a delicate but intensely tart feel of minerals and grapefruit-infused fruits in the finish. This will need a year or two to fully integrate and should then offer much pleasure in a delicately intense style for many years to come. **(90 points)**

2016 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

The 2016er Domprobst Kabinett Feinherb was made fruit harvested at 84° Oechsle in the prime Domprobstbann part of the vineyard. It develops ripe scents of melon, pear, apricot, grapefruit, spices and fine herbs. The wine has the presence and the creaminess of a Spätlese on the palate and leaves a gorgeous off-dry feel in the long and quite complex finish. **(90 points)**

2016 Mülheimer Helenenkloster Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

This off-dry Kabinett was fermented down to 20 g/l of residual sugar. It develops an inviting nose of melon, star fruit, pear, apricot blossom and earthy spices. The wine proves slightly on the broad and creamy side on the palate yet it leaves a clean and juicy feel in the elegantly long and delicately zesty finish. This needs at least two years to integrate its riper elements. It should then prove a very nice off-dry Riesling. **(89 points)**

2016 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

The 2016er Mülheimer Sonnenlay Kabinett Feinherb was harvested at 82° Oechsle. It develops an attractive nose of melon, candied grapefruit and a hint of

apricot blossom. The wine is delicately fruity and elegant on the palate and leaves delicious even if slightly ripe feel in the long and juicy finish. **(89 points)**

2016 Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett Feinherb

This offers a ripe nose of pear, apple, melon and herbs. The wine is nicely smooth and delicately zesty on the palate and leaves a slight structured yet nicely tart feel in the long off-dry finish. This is a nice wine made in a slightly more approachable style than recently. **(89 points)**

2016 Graacher Domprobst Riesling Alte Reben

The 2016er Domprobst Alte Reben comes from fruit harvested at 94° Oechsle in the prime Domprobstbann sector of the vineyard. It saw some prefermentation cold soak and was fermented down to 8 g/l of residual sugar. It offers a delicately ample nose of yellow peach, pineapple, almond and smoky slate. The wine proves comparatively mild and imposing on the palate and leaves a feel of brown sugar, almond and mirabelle in the long and delicately powerful finish. This “off-dry GG-styled” wine could develop positively as the slight feeling of sweetness recedes at maturity. **(88+ points)**

2016 Riesling Classic

The 2016er 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 Erdener Herrenberg and Graacher Himmelreich. It offers a gorgeously inviting nose of pear, apricot blossom, white flowers and fine spices. The wine proves beautifully playful on the palate and delivers a great elegant feel in the long, juicy, and nicely drytasting finish. This cruises well above “normal” Estate wine standards. **(88 points)**

2016 Riesling Richter Estate

The 2016er Riesling Richter Estate is made from Estate holdings and fermented to the levels of residual sugar of Kabinett from the old days, i.e. 30- 35 g/l. This offers a beautiful nose of greengage, grapefruit, green apple, Limoncello, star fruit and a whiff of pineapple. The wine is beautifully balanced on the palate and

leaves a great delicately crisp and flowery feel in the impeccably balanced finish. **(88 points)**

2016 Mülheimer Sonnenlay Riesling Zeppelin Label

The 2016er Sonnenlay Zeppelin Label is largely made from purchased fruit from local growers in Mülheim. It offers a delicately fruity nose of apple, melon, pear, white flowers and green herbs. The wine is nicely fruity and direct on the palate and leaves a gorgeous feel of pear and citrusy fruits in the long and juicy finish. This is, as usual, a hugely dependable source of everyday Riesling. **(87 points)**

