



Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

Weingut Willi Schaefer

(Graach – Middle Mosel)

The usually rather reserved Christoph Schaefer was all excitement when talking about the vintage 2015: "Already during harvest, we had a hunch that 2015 could turn out very special. Now that the wines are bottled and we can show them, we are over the moon about the quality of our wines! For Andrea and I, it could well be a kind of once-in-a-lifetime vintage, although we would be very happy to have another vintage like this any time. The warm and dry weather during summer was perfect for our deeper and water-rich Graacher soils, which did not show any signs of hydric stress, the leaves remained green during the whole summer. Then October came and turned out perfect for harvesting: Dry, cool and sunny. The harvest and later the cellar work proved pure fun this year!"

The Estate started its harvest at the beginning of October and ended it by the end of the month. "We could harvest at a peaceful pace", Christoph Schaefer added, "so that we could slightly reduce the size of our harvest team this year as we had enough time." The Estate started with a pre-harvest in all its vineyards and could carry out quite some grape and berry selections in the course of the harvest. Oechsle degrees [sugar levels] ranged from the 80s (i.e. Kabinett/Spätlese level) to 140 for a BA out of the Domprobst. As Christoph recalled, "the acidity levels remained high but one could see that the grapes became perfectly ripe. Quite some botrytis developed at a time at which the grapes were already ripe. Overall yields were comparable to those in 2014." The portfolio only includes two "basic" wines, a dry and off-dry Graacher Riesling (both made out of grapes harvested in the Graacher Himmelreich), and these were produced only in small quantities. All the rest is fruity styled Kabinett, Spätlese and Auslese, as well as the BA.

The collection proves an absolutely epic success. All wines are driven by ripe and clean flavors of fruit. The overall rich side of the vintage is well captured and balanced in all wines. The zesty and delicious acidity make all wines irresistibly approachable now, yet the fruity styled wines will undoubtedly gain in presence and complexity over the years. The Domprobst wines have slightly the upper hand on the Himmelreich this year, as they have extra ripeness which gives those wines a superb interplay with the zesty acidity. There are some legendary wines in the making and wine lovers should lay their hands onto some of these gems!

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese	14 16	97
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The nose offers quite some complexity with comparatively clean flavors of apple jelly, mango, star anise, raspberry and yellow peach, all blended into more botrytized scents of apricot and honey. The wine is smooth, creamy and almost viscous on the palate yet this is superbly well lifted up by great intense flavors of fruits. The finish proves gorgeously focused, hugely long and stunningly precise. This is a terrific Auslese in the making! 2025-2065

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Beerenauslese	15 16	97
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This offers a superb ripe nose driven by plenty of honeyed scents of exotic fruits such as apricot, yellow peach, pear and pineapple but also by fresher fruits of lime and grapefruit. The wine is honeyed, creamy and almost syrupy on the palate. A superbly fresh touch of fresh acidity lifts up the flavors and provides a stunning frame to a gorgeously complex and multi-layered feel of honey, nut paste, apple jelly and marzipan in the after-taste. This BA is quite a head-turner! 2025-2065

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese	11 16	96
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This offers a most beautiful and complex nose of freshly cut pineapple, honey, yellow peach, mirabelle as well as fresh flavors of citrus, mint and tar. The wine is creamy, juicy and fruity yet at the same time superbly zesty and focused on the palate. The finish has intense and aromatic finish proves long, zippy and precise. What a little beauty in the making! 2025-2040

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese	04 16	95
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This starts off on the toffee side before fresher scents grapefruit, orange, lime, smoke, incense and tar kick in. A superb streak of acidity cuts right through the palate into the very long, fresh and focused finish, providing a gorgeous balance to a powerful and delicately creamy structure. The finish is intense and very long. While amazing now, this Auslese Eiswein styled wine should prove stunning in a decade or two. 2025-2045

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	05 16	94
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This delicately backward wine only gradually develops a full array of complex scents of smoke, tangerine, spices, tar and mango. The wine is packed with flavors on the palate as its fruity side drives the aromatic profile at this stage and brings some smoothness to the racy structure. The acidity is present even if more in the background on the palate, and only really emerges at this stage in the very long and clean finish. This little jewel of elegance and delicately zesty creaminess will prove quite simply irresistible at maturity. 2025-2045



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2015er	Willi Schaefer	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese	17 16	94
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This "maiden wine" comes from the "new" parcel in the central part of the vineyard which was replanted after the 2011 vintage. This shows a quite smoky nose at first and only gradually reveals a fruity side driven by apricot and orange as well as mint and yellow peach. The wine is creamy and smooth on the palate, with just the right amount of acidity to keep things interesting. The unctuous feel to the finish in the finish adds to the pleasure of enjoying this deep and direct expression of Sonnenuhr Auslese. 2025-2040

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett	03 16	93
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Some residual scents from spontaneous fermentation quickly give way to subtle floral elements immersed in some white peach and anise. The wine is pure and fresh on the palate as lovely fruity flavors including sappy peach play with one's senses. This wine retains the lightness of a Kabinett but delivers its goods with the intensity and complexity of a Spätlese. The finish is very long, both smoky and juicy. This is a gorgeous wine in the making but one which will only truly shine at maturity! 2025-2035

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	10 16	93
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Scents of flowers and spontaneous fermentation quickly give way to riper and creamy fruits such as yellow peach, apricot and mango. The wine proves succulently light and fresh on the palate. This feeling of lightness carries nicely over into the juicy and smooth finish. One is left with a delicately creamy feel of herbs in the long after-taste. This proves plain gorgeous. 2025-2035

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese	08 16	93
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Shy on the nose (where it only hints at more than exhibits fresh fruity scents of grapefruit, tangerine and a touch of mango as well as mint) this Spätlese proves surprisingly open on the palate as smooth and ripe flavors of juicy fruits play havoc with one's senses. The finish has great intensity and presence with more fresh ripe fruits. This is a superb Spätlese in the making. 2025-2040

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett	02 16	92
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This shows a most delicately fruity nose of yellow peach, canned pineapple, orange zest and grapefruit. Bright intense fruits make for a gorgeous Spätlese feel on the palate. Despite this aromatic concentration, the fresh, pure and focused feel in the finish makes this a superb fruit-driven Kabinett. 2025-2035

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Riesling Trocken	06 16	89
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This is made from grapes harvested in the Graacher Himmelreich. A quite attractive and fresh nose with flavors of mint, smoke, mineral, grapefruit, white peach and cardamom leads to a zesty and pure palate with plenty of mineral elements and freshness in the spicy and long finish. There is a slightly denser feel on the mid-palate yet the whole thing remains light and fresh. The after-taste is very dry, smoky and, quite frankly, plain gorgeous! 2017-2022

2015er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Riesling Feinherb	07 16	88
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Made from grapes harvested in the Graacher Himmelreich, this off-dry Riesling offers an open and attractive nose of yellow peach, spices, smoke, green apple, a touch of pineapple and herbs. The wine is light on the palate with juicy fruits and an elegant smooth feeling. The light off-dry finish is zesty and spicy. Now-2020

About Mosel Fine Wines

[Independent publication](#) on Mosel Riesling (and beyond!) with reports on vintages, Estates and wines at maturity.

Covering every year up to [1,000 wines from the current vintage](#) from all leading Estates of the region, of which the best make it into the Issues.

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