



Mosel Fine Wines

“The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling”

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

Weingut Willi Schaefer

(Graach – Middle Mosel)

Christoph Schaefer is quite satisfied about his 2018 vintage and, in particular, with the decisions the Estate took: “It is a great vintage as we did not endure any losses due to the weather, something which we had not seen since quite a while! The defining factor of the vintage was the hot and enduring summer with hardly any rain. Fortunately, the Graacher vineyards are well provided with water so this was less of an issue for us. Many people saw parallels with the 2003 vintage, but there was a big difference. The grapes were not ripe by mid-September in 2003. In 2018, they were. We tasted them and were quite surprised. So we started our harvest on September 17 and really pushed through the harvest as quickly as we could as the acidities were tumbling. While we finished on October 13, we harvested the most in September and focused on higher up the hill in the last days of picking. At first, I was not sure if such an early start was a good plan. But now, with hindsight, I’m totally convinced that it was. Despite the ripe softness often described with the vintage, our wines remain truly filigreed and elegant. The wines are delicately fruity and offer much pleasure. It’s hard to make any comparisons, but 2009 and 2007 may be close relatives.”

The good yields allowed the Estate to produce its full portfolio with good quantities of Spätlese to satisfy the seemingly never-ending demand. In addition to its regular portfolio, the Estate produced a GG, its first since 2012, again from the Graacher Himmelreich, as well as a BA from the Domprobst and, possibly, another high-end botrytized wine from the Domprobst. Alas, the Estate was not able to produce much botrytized wines so that the quantity of Auslese is comparatively small in 2018.

Christoph Schaefer once again underlined its remarkable talent in 2018. He is one of these few growers who managed to transcend the ripe softness of the vintage and produce real classic Mosel wines: filigreed, true to their Prädikat level, racy and engaging. It therefore comes to no surprise that the portfolio is full of highlights, including an amazingly successful dry Graacher, a gorgeous Graacher Domprobst Kabinett and some superb Graacher Domprobst Spätlese. The botrytized wines are amazing but it could unfortunately prove very difficult to lay one’s hand on a few bottles. Quantities are simply too small. Overall, this superstar Estate delivered in the seemingly easy but actually quite challenging 2018 vintage!

NB: The Graacher Himmelreich GG was not tasted. The auction wines will be reviewed in the dedicated Issue to be released ahead of the Auctions.

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese	14 19	96
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The 2018er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese AP 14 was harvested at 108° Oechsle and was fermented down to fully sweet levels of residual sugar. A whiff of volatile quickly gives way to gorgeous scents of almond, whipped cream, caraway and citrusy fruits. The wine is beautifully playful and elegant on the palate. Some superb acidity kicks in and provides a superb sense of structure to the long and intense finish. This is a superb Auslese in the making with a lot of tension and precision. 2028-2048

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Beerenauslese	16 19	96
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The 2018er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Beerenauslese was harvested at 135° Oechsle and was fermented down to noble-sweet levels of residual sugar. The wine offers a gorgeous nose made of raisin, pear puree, honey, dried fruits, barbeque herbs and some smoke. The wine is beautifully balanced on the palate, where some sweetness still needs to get the final kick of integration. The finish is smooth, long, multi-layered. This is a gorgeous, playful even if slightly ripe expression of BA. 2033-2058

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese	18 19	95
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The 2018er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese was harvested early at 106° Oechsle from virgin vines in a newly planted parcel and was fermented down to noble-sweet levels of residual sugar. It offers a gorgeous nose of cassis, quince, passion fruit, almond and a hint of white canned peach. The wine is smooth and multi-layered on the creamy yet delicately palate. The finish is still a tad sweet and marked by apricot blossom, but somehow, the finesse and depth of this wine are simply staggering. This is a stunning effort! Alas, only few bottles were made of this beauty. 2033-2053

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese	11 19	94
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The 2018er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese AP 11 was harvested at 100° Oechsle from fully ripe grapes and only little botrytis impact and was fermented down to noble-sweet levels of residual sugar. This offers a beautiful nose of pear, citrusy fruits, a hint of apricot, spices and herbs. The wine is nicely playful yet creamy on the palate and leaves a gorgeously zesty feel in the long finish. The mouthwatering feel in the after-taste is simply to die for. 2028-2048



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2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	10 19	94
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The 2018er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese AP 10 was harvested at just above 90° Oechsle and was fermented down to fully fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. This offers telltale aromatics including pear, quince, greengage, laurel and caraway. The wine is packed with fruits, spices and herbs and yet remains incredibly filigreed right into the spicy finish. This is a superb effort and a great Spätlese with real Spätlese character. 2028-2048

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	05 19	94
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The 2018er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese AP 05 was harvested at 93° Oechsle in the Nikolausley and Gerdgrub and was fermented down to fully fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. The wine offers a gorgeous nose dried herbs, hay, greengage, whipped cream, and smoky elements. It is overtly fruity yet playful on the delicately creamy palate and leaves a clean and pure feel of herbs and spices in the long finish. 2028-2048

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett	03 19	93
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The 2018er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett was harvested at approx. 83° Oechsle and was fermented down to fruity-styled levels of residual sugar (50 g/l). It offers some herbal elements, mirabelle, greengage and some caraway. The wine is superbly racy and playful on the palate and leaves a razor-sharp yet nicely juicy feel in the finish. A subtle and beautifully soothing touch of whipped cream rounds off the experience in the after-taste. This is a real Kabinett with all the raciness defining the style on show. 2026-2038

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese	08 19	93
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The 2018er Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese was harvested at just above 90° Oechsle and was fermented down to fully fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. This offers a gorgeously elegant nose of mirabelle, greengage, dried herbs and earthy spices, all wrapped into some residual scents of spontaneous fermentation. The wine is gorgeously filigreed on the palate before a nice touch of creamy fruits joins the party in the finish. 2028-2038

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese	17 19	92
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The 2018er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese was harvested at about 93° Oechsle and was fermented down to fully fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. It proves rather reduced and only gradually reveals its gorgeous nose of pineapple, greengage, herbs and fine spices, all wrapped into some whipped cream. The wine is nicely fruity and yet also racy on the palate and leaves a superb feel of herbs and minerals in the tense finish. 2028-2048

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett	02 19	91
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The 2018er Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett was harvested at approx. 83° Oechsle and was fermented down to fruity-styled levels of residual sugar (50 g/l). It offers a beautiful even if rather ripe nose of pear, quince, herbs and spices. The wine is firmly structured and racy on the palate and leaves a great long feel of ripe fruits and fine herbs into the long and racy finish. This is one of the few real Kabinett of the vintage, but one which is still marked by its acidity and will need a few years to find its balance. 2026-2038

2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Riesling Trocken	07 19	91
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The 2018er Graacher Riesling Trocken comes from the Himmelreich. It offers a gorgeous nose of pear, passion fruit, mirabelle, Provence herbs and smoke as well as a touch of whipped cream. The wine is beautifully airy and elegant on the delicately creamy palate. The finish is tart, playful and simply superb. This remarkably elegant and filigreed expression of dry Graach Riesling will prove highly enjoyable over the coming decade. 2020-2028



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2018er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Riesling Feinherb	06 19	89+
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The 2018er Graacher Riesling Feinherb comes from the Himmelreich and was fermented down to 18 g/l of residual sugar. It offers a rather reduced nose of passion fruit, herbs, mirabelle, citrus, and fine herbs. The wine is remarkably racy on the palate and leaves an almost searing feel in the long and almost dry-tasting finish. This will be one of the few off-dry wines for lovers of acidity in the 2018 vintage. There is some upside if the wine integrates its acidity after a few years of bottle aging. 2022-2032

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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