



Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

Weingut Willi Schaefer

(Graach – Middle Mosel)

Christoph Schaefer loves his 2020 wines: "They have such a great classical structure. However, the vintage was anything but looking like one generating classical wines when the season started. Flowering was extremely early and I was already bracing myself for another record early harvest. The summer was hot and dry. Fortunately, Graach has quite some water reserves naturally, and we got some odd showers which kept our vines going through the heat. And, as expected in June, the grapes were already nearly ready by beginning of September. Harvest was made that little bit more complex as we had to respect all sorts of Covid-19 regulations but we decided to start our harvest early, already before the Trier Auction [Note: the 2020 Trier Auction was held on September 18]. Normally, we would have been able to harvest Kabinett grapes for a few days and then go on with Spätlese and Auslese. But the weather turned and we had some rain. The Oechsle degrees did not really move during the following 4 weeks. We had set ourselves for a fast harvest but the pauses and the need to wait made it that, in the end, our harvest lasted over 4 weeks! The fact that the Oechsle degrees did not shoot through the roof makes the vintage a real Kabinett and Spätlese one. But it also meant that we had to remain flexible and really watch each parcel and see when it was best to pick it. All the efforts paid off, even if it is not an Auslese vintage: As I mentioned at the beginning, the wines have a beautifully well-integrated acid structure, they are light-footed and incredibly elegant. However, I also noticed that, more than in recent vintages, the wines go through some reduced phases. I think they will need quite some time to fully blossom."

The Estate produced its usual portfolio of wines ranging from dry and off-dry village wines right up to an Auslese from the Domprobst. The collection will not include any GG but will include a special cask of Kabinett from the Domprobst to be released via the annual Auction of the VDP Mosel in Trier later this. Besides its portfolio of 2020 wines, the Estate also released a 2019er off-dry wine from the Himmelreich.

The combination of intense flavors and airiness delivered by Willi Schaefer in 2020 is one of the great successes of the vintage! The village wines truly shine through their airy precision, the Kabinett are airy and packed with juicy and ripe acidity. The Spätlese are subtly creamy yet also hugely animating and playful. The Domprobst Auslese shines through its subtle purity and intensity. We would just give one word of advice: The wines are still remarkably backward and truly benefit from a few days of airing at the moment. But, if finesse is your thing, look no further! We were also highly impressed by the 2019er Himmelreich GL, a barely off-dry wine with a huge potential.

NB: The auction wines will be reviewed in the October Issue, ahead of the November Auction.

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese	11 21	97
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The 2020er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese AP 11 was made from fully ripe grapes harvested with little botrytis in the Fergert sector of the vineyard and was fermented down to noble-sweet levels of residual sugar. It offers a backward yet stunningly airy nose made of pear, quince, whipped cream, caraway, and subtly honeyed elements. The wine is gorgeously light-footed on the palate and leaves the most incredibly complex, discreet yet intense feel in the long and hugely persistent finish. A hint of almond enhances the flavors in the aftertaste. This Auslese is a huge success and shines through its marvelous delicate style! 2030-2060

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	05 21	96
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The 2020er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese AP 05 was made essentially from grapes harvested in the Gerdgrub and Fergert sectors of the vineyard and was fermented down to fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. It proves still rather backward and marked by residual scents from its spontaneous fermentation. After a while subtly apricot-infused flavors of melon, cassis, blueberry, blackberry, and aniseed herbs emerge from the glass. The wine proves subtle, intensely cream, and nicely zesty on the palate and leaves a gorgeous feel of ripe and delicately exotic fruits in the long finish. The combination of dark fruits, whipped cream, and juicy acidity packed into mouthwatering sweetness are truly remarkable. 2030-2050

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett	03 21	95
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The 2020er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett was fermented down to fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. It offers an incredibly subtle feel of pear, cassis, bergamot, white flowers, vineyard peach, wet stone, and fine subtle smoky elements. The wine is stunningly vibrant, subtly multi-layered with ripe and citrusy fruits, but, above all, incredibly light-footed on the palate. The finish is all about elegance and finesse. This stunning Kabinett is clearly still on the backward side but the airy finesse is simply stunning. This brings us right back to the glorious 1990s! 2030-2050

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese	10 21	95
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The 2020er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese AP 10 was harvested mainly in different prime sectors of the vineyard and was fermented down to sweet levels of residual sugar. It offers a beautiful and subtly exotic nose made of pear, passion fruit, vineyard peach, apricot, whipped cream, aniseed herbs, and fine smoky spices. The wine is gorgeously light-footed on the fruity palate and leaves a superbly intense feel of melon, cassis, wet stone, and herbs in the nicely playfully fruity-styled finish. The aftertaste is intense yet comes over as light as a feather. This gorgeous Spätlese will turn into a modern-day legend at maturity, in 10 years and more. 2030-2050



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2019er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling GL	12 21	94+
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The 2019er Himmelreich GL, as it is referred to on the consumer label (GL stands for "Grosse Lage"), is a barely off-dry wine which was left on its gross lees for 18 months before being bottled (hence the late AP number). It proves still rather reduced and only reveals a spicy nose of dark fruits and fine spices at first. After quite some airing (ideally a day at the moment), its core of fresher elements comes through. The wine proves surprisingly impactful on the palate (at least by Willi Schaefer standards!) but this presence is gorgeously well wrapped into zesty and spicy elements. The finish is hugely long and subtly balancing between juicy and dry-tasting. A stunning feel of citrusy zest, spices, and dark berried fruits makes for a hugely rewarding aftertaste. This off-dry wine will really need time to reveal its beauty. But the potential is huge here especially as the wine firms up with age. 2026-2034+

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett	02 21	94
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The 2020er Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett was fermented down to fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. It offers a superb nose made of residual scents from the spontaneous fermentation, chalky minerals, wet stone, mirabelle, cassis, melon, pear, and some subtle aniseed elements. The wine is beautifully pure and airy on the palate and leaves a stunningly juicy feel in the long, subtly ripe, and spicy finish. The wine really shines through its incredible silky airiness delivered with the presence and zest of a light Spätlese. This Kabinett is truly remarkable! 2030-2050

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese	08 21	93
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The 2020er Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese was fermented down to sweet levels of residual sugar. It offers a beautifully fragrant nose made of passion fruit, vineyard peach, pear, smoke, cassis, and herbs. The wine is superbly light-footed on the palate and delivers a stunning feel of fresh orchard fruits wrapped into a dash of herbs and whipped cream in the superbly juicy finish. A hint of apricot adds an exotic touch in the aftertaste. This gorgeous fruity-styled wine is all about filigreed complexity. 2030-2050

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Riesling Trocken	06 21	91
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The 2020er Graacher Riesling Trocken comes from the Himmelreich. It offers a beautifully airy and fragrant nose of white melon, starfruit, pear, cassis, fine herbs, wet stone, a dash of whipped cream, and smoky herbs. The wine is beautifully juicy and spicy on the palate and leaves a hugely mouthwatering feel in the airy finish. The aftertaste is subtly tart, animating, and elegant. This grandiose expression of dry Mosel lightness and freshness kicks far above the normal levels of village wines! Now-2032

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett	19 21	91
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The 2020er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett comes from the prime Redellay sector and was fermented down to fruity-styled levels of residual sugar. It offers a subtly ripe nose of melon, vineyard peach, apricot blossom, white flowers, brown sugar, and fine spices, all wrapped into some smoky elements. The wine develops the subtle creaminess of a light Spätlese on the palate. Seemingly smooth at first, a great feel of zest comes through and adds zing to the citrusy and minty-infused finish. The aftertaste blends riper flavors (melon, pear, and dark spices) with fresher citrusy zest. The whole wine oozes subtle creaminess delivered with light-feathered juiciness. 2030-2050

2020er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Riesling Feinherb	07 21	90
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The 2020er Graacher Riesling Feinherb is an off-dry wine made from fruit picked in the Himmelreich. It offers a beautifully fragrant nose made of lemon zest, passion fruit, vineyard peach, ginger, white flowers, chalk, and subtly smoky elements. The wine is nicely animating on the juicy and off-dry palate and leaves a subtly zesty feel of fresh citrusy elements wrapped into spices, a hint of apricot, and melon in the finish. The aftertaste is intense yet stunningly feather light. 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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