



# Mosel Fine Wines

“The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling”

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

## Weingut Willi Schaefer

(Graach – Middle Mosel)

Christoph Schaefer smiles broadly when he talks about the 2023 vintage, clearly pleased with his wines: “The year got off to a very good start, firstly with sufficient water during the winter, which was much needed after the hot and dry 2022 vintage. Then development took place under rather cool weather, which delayed flowering and bud break a little. Then temperatures really rose, and summer really arrived in June. There was even a long spell of dry weather. Fortunately, the old vines didn’t suffer at all. Then, in August, the rains came and stayed. With September’s high temperatures, we had to be ready. Some grapes were already quite ripe at the beginning of the month. This really changed, because in 2003, for example, the grapes were rich in sugar at the beginning of September, but not at all ripe. We asked ourselves what strategy to adopt and decided to start early, on the Friday of the Trier Auction, September 15. We wanted to give ourselves enough time, so as not to be caught out later. The humidity was quite high during the harvest, and in retrospect we’re very glad we started early. However, the vintage was different from what we had expected, and we brought in some excellent grapes, so we opted not to produce any *Gutswein* or *Ortswein*. For us, I think 2023 is really a Kabinett vintage. We produced a few Spätlese and barely any Auslese. We also noticed that during the harvest, the grapes didn’t get any better the longer we waited. We did a lot of *Vorlese*, or pre-harvest selection. In the end, we harvested for 4 weeks, without ever feeling stressed. Starting early really took the pressure off. It was also very important to visit each vineyard and taste the grapes before harvesting, as each vineyard had a different development stand.”

The Estate produced a restricted collection, limited to fruity-styled and sweet wines, and including 4 Kabinett, one from each of their Grand Crus (Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Graacher Himmelreich and 2 Domprobst, one of which is for the Auction), 4 Spätlese (one of which is for the Auction) and 2 Auslese in ridiculously low quantities (one of which, the Wehlener Sonnenuhr, is for the Auction). In terms of news, Willi Schaefer aficionados will notice a significant change to the labels: all legal information is now on a back label. The front label now bears only the vintage and the name of the wine, and for some of them (only the Domprobst Spätlese and Auslese bottlings) the AP number is now written in small on the bottom right of the front label.

Christoph and Andrea Schaefer have produced a stunning collection in 2023, defying all the difficulties encountered in this vintage. The wines are pure, vibrating, and energetic, with great depth and freshness. The Kabinett wines are superbly light yet have depth. We have a very slight preference here for the one from the Himmelreich. The Spätlese line-up is dominated by the magnificent Domprobst #05, while the Domprobst Auslese #14 is simply magical (but was produced in frightfully small quantities).

NB: The auction wines will be reviewed in Issue No 73, to be published before the November Auctions.

2023er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese #14	14 24	100
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The 2023er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese #14 (the reference to #14 is written in small on the bottom right of the label) is a noble-sweet wine made from harvested in the Gerdgrub. It displays a fully aromatic and captivating nose of botrytis as notes of mango, passion fruit, honeyed pineapple, orange zest, dried apricot, honeyed peach, cassis, mirabelle, acacia, flower blossom, and William pear captures one’s attention. The wine is even slightly oily on the palate, with magnificent notes of candied exotic fruits, fine honeyed elements, and citrusy fruits. The finish is very intense, superbly zesty, and hugely long. What a breathtaking expression of pure yet intense Mosel Auslese! 2033-2073

2023er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese #05	05 24	96
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The 2023er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese #05 (the reference to #05 is written in small on the bottom right of the label) is a sweet wine made from harvested mainly in the Gerdgrub. It possesses a stunningly fresh and layered nose, even if still slightly reserved at first, made of candied lime, fine spices, white flowers, rose, lavender, thyme, cassis leaf, minerals, and flintstone. The wine proves superbly playful and juicy on the delicate ripe yet fresh and pure palate. The finish is vibrating and very intense, without any undue power. This is a classy and refined Spätlese in the making, combining intensity and finesse. 2033-2063

2023er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett	02 24	96
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The 2023er Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett is a fruity-styled wine which displays a superbly refreshing and complex nose of spearmint, smoke, greengage, fine herbs, candied lime, and tangerine. The wine is very intense right from the start, with mineral notes coupled to gorgeous candied citrusy fruits. The energy and purity are remarkable, and leave a very pure and focused feel, which is already more off dry than fully fruity. The aftertaste is still taut and very spicy. This is a splendid, fresh Kabinett, with a lot of energy. 2033-2053



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2023er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett	03 24	95
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The 2023er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Kabinett is a fruity-styled wine which proves really reserved and almost non-saying at first, with only faint scents of fine smoke and almond cream and needs quite some time to develop a very refined and elegant nose of anise, jasmine, white flowers, cassis, lavender, and earthy spices. The wine reveals more on the palate, where intense yellow and zesty fruits come through and give it a superbly playful and animating side. The finish is very long, still compact and in need of integration. The density is quite superb, and the wine proves both intense and focused. The length in the aftertaste is stunning and mouthwatering. This great Kabinett needs a good decade to fully deliver. 2033-2053

2023er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese #10	10 24	94
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The 2023er Graacher Domprobst Riesling Spätlese #10 (the reference to #10 is written in small on the bottom right of the label) is a sweet wine made from harvested mainly in the Fergert. The nose proves quite appealing and refreshing as delicate scents of candied citrusy fruits and fresh mint, anise, tangerine, thyme, and candy floss. The wine is very playful and juicy on the palate, where some ripe yellow fruits give a creamy and delicately smooth side to the whole. The finish is very long and precise, as some zesty elements give freshness and purity. This is a drinking Spätlese, with depth and complexity. 2031-2053

2023er	Willi Schaefer	Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese	08 24	94
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The 2023er Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Spätlese is a sweet wine made from harvested in the Stablay. It has a superbly aromatic and refined nose of yellow flowers, minty herbs, cassis, lime tree, orange blossom, thyme, and white minerals. The wine proves aromatic and delicately ripe with quite some fruity notes of tangerine, orange blossom, vineyard peach, and pineapple, with even a hint of exotic fruits. It is intensely juicy and creamy and leaves a very clean and pure smoky feel of herbs in the nicely long and animating finish. This is a gorgeous, aromatic Spätlese. 2031-2053

2023er	Willi Schaefer	Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett	19 24	94
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The 2023er Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett is a fruity-styled wine with a superbly flowery and elegant nose of grapefruit, smoke, vineyard peach, orange blossom, candied lime, anise, and fine spices. The wine is superbly creamy and delicately creamy on the refined and playful palate. It has a smooth and velvety side, yet the finish is layered, focused, and long. The lightness is superb. This is a delicate and subtle Kabinett, with depth and intensity. 2031-2043

### 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 finest ones make it into the Issues.

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