

HOWARD RIPLEY

Burgundy and German Wine

2017 German Wines

Heat, cold, frost, drought, rain, storms, hail – 2017 saw it all. The extreme weather brought challenges, and only the most focussed and dedicated growers were able to overcome them, but the best bottles are a joy: yields that are well below average have produced dense wines with bright acidity, charming ripe fruit and great transparency. They combine the richness of 2015 with the delightful elegance of 2016.

A cold fine winter was followed by an unusually warm spring, so warm that bud break came in early April, three weeks ahead of the average. At the end of April, a hard winter frost caused extensive damage, but it was mitigated by secondary bud growth, and vine development was still well ahead of the norm. A dry May was succeeded by a rainy humid July and August, with localised hailstorms, particularly in the Middle Mosel and Rheingau. Because ripening was so early, the grape skins were exposed to more aggressive sunshine than they were used to, which weakened the skins and made them susceptible to rot, a particular danger when it is warm as it can spread rapidly. An enormous amount of work went into combating this, especially by organic and biodynamic growers who had forsworn chemical treatments. The harvest was very early, but fortunately the weather was fine and cool throughout, and the grapes were harvested in perfect conditions; for those brave enough to wait, an onset of delicate late botrytis produced some fabulous sweet wines.

Such unpredictable conditions required great flexibility from growers, and long, painstaking hours in the vineyards: growers reported that it cost twice as much to produce half the normal quantity of wine. The effects of frost produced uneven fruit: buds not affected by frost ripened earlier than those that emerged two weeks after them. Drought made young vines suffer, and disease pressure in August and September during the wet warm weather meant that selective picking was essential, along with a willingness to discard fruit that was not up to standard, even in such a small vintage. Growers who were able to surmount these challenges have made lovely wines.

What are they like? First off, there are a lot less of them this year: up to half the potential crop was lost along the way but these low yields have given density and length. Concentration also derived from the rainfall in August, which allowed the vines to suck up matter from the soil, meaning that the levels of dry extract (the stuff left over when all liquid is removed) are unusually elevated, and this can be seen in the wines' persistent minerality. Crucially, acidity levels remained high, giving a taut lively quality and balancing the ripe fruit. The result is wines that are dense, ripe and crisp, with complex fruit and elegant mineral flavours. They perfectly reflect the vineyards in which they were grown.

It is an excellent year for dry wines: they are less powerful and less alcoholic than in some earlier vintages, and they have a seductive elegance and purity. At the other end of the scale, a delicate botrytis that never overwhelms has produced some very memorable dessert wines.

This is a charming, bright vintage, with excellent ageing capacity. As such it is yet another in an unbroken run of excellent years.

We will offer a large selection of *Grosse Gewächse* and other top dry wines in September, when they are officially released. There will also be a broad range of reds.

The 2017s of Joh.Jos. Prüm will be offered later this summer.

As ever, we will be visiting the auctions in September, where the finest *cuvées* will be released. Please let us know if you are interested.

PRICES ARE IN BOND LONDON.

UNLESS OTHERWISE MARKED, WINES ARE PACKED:

6-BOTTLE CASES (750ml)

12-BOTTLE CASES (375ml)

3-BOTTLE CASES (1500ml)

UNLESS OTHERWISE MARKED, WINES ARE OFFERED BY THE CASE ONLY, BUT MANY SINGLE BOTTLES ARE AVAILABLE

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Terms of Business

Explanatory notes

- We identify wines by the last four digits of the AP number, unique to the wine, for example [11 17] This avoids confusion when telling them apart.
- Auctions: in the last weekend of September, the VDP's finest and rarest wines are auctioned in the Mosel, Rheingau and Nahe (which includes Ahr, Pfalz and Rheinhessen). Mostly the wines are of the current vintage, but old rarities are also on offer. Prices here are sometimes very high, but there are often bargains.

THE WINES

FRANKEN

Rudolf May Retzstadt

Rudolf May founded his estate in 1998 with two hectares, and through hard work and prioritising quality has grown it to fourteen. His focus has always been on Silvaner, and his poor, fossil-rich soils allow him to make very fine, pure, mineral-driven wines. He is one of few growers to demonstrate that this often overlooked varietal can produce distinctive wines that have ageing potential, and produces the finest Silvaners in Germany. He believes in minimal intervention, hence his recent conversion to organic viticulture. This is an estate clearly on the way up.

2017 was full of challenges: a dry start to the year was followed by heavy rain in July, which led to disease pressure, and was not helped by the ubiquitous April frosts. Lots of hard work saw off the problems, and the resulting vintage has great potential.

Two GGs will be released in September

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Silvaner [02 18] - DRY

2017	Made from young vines from great sites, this is a forward charmer with yellow fruit, some salty mineral flavours and a fresh finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2020</i>		£36
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Silvaner Retzstadt [08 18] - DRY

2017	This <i>village</i> , or <i>Ortswein</i> , comes in the traditional Franconian bottle, the <i>Bocksbeutel</i> , which may bring back memories of a dubious Portuguese product. Don't be put off. 30-year-old vines on fossil-rich limestone soils (including the GG Himmelspfad) give an astonishingly fine, vibrant wine with yellow fruit flavours, including passion fruit, and a fresh salty finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2020</i>		£48
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Silvaner Retzstadter Langenberg [13 18] - DRY

2017	This <i>1er cru</i> , or <i>Erste Lage</i> is made from 40-year-old vines in the heart of the vineyard, growing on very poor soils. It is very lean and fine, with melting mineral flavours and a hint of smooth tropical fruit. <i>Drink 2018 – 2023</i>		£60
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Silvaner Retzstadter Der Schäfer - DRY

2017	A subplot of the Langenberg vineyard, planted in 1969, with naturally low yields. Vinified in a new 1200-litre cask, it has rich, very fresh yellow fruit overlaid with spice and smoky notes, and a soft lemony finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£90
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Weigand Iphofen

The best thing that ever happened to Andi Weigand was to be turned down for a job in a bank. He decided to make wine instead, and after an apprenticeship and work experience and various high-profile estates – including Ziereisen – he revitalised the small family holdings and began to make very exciting wines. His 8 hectares include some of the best vineyards in Iphofen, where soils of gypsum keuper give citrus-laden wines with a powerful minerality. He works organically, with minimal intervention in the cellar, fermenting spontaneously in old wooden casks. The range is divided into three tiers: Der Wilde, the equivalent of an estate wine, consisting of fresh wines to be drunk young, Der Franke, in a traditional Franconian bottle (see Rudolf May, above), at *1er cru* level, consisting of Silvaner from his best vineyards – the Kalb and Julius Echter Berg – and Der Held, the *grand crus*, made from grapes from very old vines in the best parcels.

The Weigand vineyards suffered little from the April frosts, but heavy rains during a warm August caused a good deal of rot pressure, so careful selection was necessary during the harvest.

A top white will be released in September

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Scheurebe ‘Der Wilde’ [04 18] – DRY

2017	Fresh grapefruit and lemon flavours in a vibrant mineral-tinted package. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£48
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PER CASE OF 6 IB

Silvaner ‘Der Wilde’ [08 18] – DRY

2017	Distinct herbal notes join the zingy citrus and pronounced mineral flavours, leading to a clean pure full finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£39
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Iphöfer Julius Echterberg Silvaner ‘Der Franke’ [18 17] – DRY

2016	Ripe yellow fruit of great freshness and intensity is joined by clean pure mineral flavours and a there is a long vibrant finish. <i>Drink 2017 – 2025</i>		£84
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Silvaner ‘Der Held’ [25 17] – DRY

2016	Herbaceous flavours and very ripe yellow fruit are backed by vibrant citrus in a wine that is smooth, deep and elegant, with considerable reserves of power on the long mineral finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2028</i>		£108
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MOSEL

Fritz Haag Brauneberg (Middle Mosel)

No shortage of weather in the Brauneberg in 2017: early budbreak, severe April frosts and heavy storms presented big challenges. Yet meticulous vineyard work overcame them, and produced an exceptional, if small harvest ranging across the board, from estate wine to two fine TBAs.

A Spätlese, and Auslese LGK will be auctioned in September. Two Grosse Gewächse and sweeter wines at the upper end of the spectrum will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Brauneberger Kabinett [03 18]

2017	What the Mosel does best: fresh, light, persistent, open floral and tangy citrus flavours, spicy minerality and a vibrant finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2029</i>		£57
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Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese [07 18]

2017	Made from vines clustered around the sundial in the heart of the vineyard, where it is very rocky. The rocks absorb warmth quickly, and the resulting wines are richer and warmer than those from the surrounding Juffer vineyard. It is beautifully fine, intense and ripe, with lively lemony acidity balanced by floral and stone-fruit flavours and a long pithy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£87
		Magnums each	£38
		Double Magnums each	£85

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese [06 18]

2017	Piercingly clear bright yellow fruit – peaches, greengages and apricots – give a sense of lushness, although there is no botrytis, and the whole is seamless, elegant and smooth, ending on a long juicy tangy sweet-sour-salty note. <i>Drink 2024 – 2041</i>		£120
		Halves	£132
		Magnums each	£50
		Double Magnums each	£110

Brauneberger Juffer Auslese Goldkapsel [22 18]

2017	Botrytis adds a rich, powerful note to the vibrant citrus and peach flavours, and there is a smooth mineral undercurrent that emerges strongly on the finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>	Halves	£165
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Fritz Haag (contd.)

Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese Goldkapsel [09 18]

2017	A dense wine, juicy and ripe, packed full of rounded peach and apricot fruit, lifted by zingy citrus notes, and balanced by an ethereal very spicy minerality that makes it run and run. <i>Drink 2026 – 2041</i>		£210
		Halves (12-bottle case)	£228
		Magnums each	£88

Julian Haart Piesport (Middle Mosel)

So the big news this year is that Julian Haart has given up his best vineyard, the Schubertslay. Why? Quite simply because he was losin money: steep and rocky, the amount of labour required to maintain it did not correspond to the price the wines commanded. So his great friend Klaus-Peter Keller has taken on the lease, and his stardust will mean that the wines will be more in demand, and the prices correspondingly higher. Perhaps in ten years or so he will hand it back. In the meantime, Julian Haart will get a little Flörsheim Frauenberg – both red and white – and make wines from limestone soils.

Now in his seventh vintage, the assured Julian Haart is making wines as exciting as any in the Mosel. They are well worth seeking out, and demand for them is set to increase. Get in while you can!

His 2017s are quite stunning, but there are only tiny quantities due to the adverse weather conditions. Yields in the Schubertslay, for example, were just 5 hl/ha. The small quantities allowed him to experiment with extended maceration, long slow pressing of up to seven days on a basket press, and reduced sulphur levels. It is quite the best vintage he has ever made. The low yields ensure much greater concentration than the powerful 2015s, and the acidity is higher.

Of particular note are the *Auslesen*. It was his daughter Elisabeth's birth year, and her mother Nadine spent whole nights selecting only the best berries so that she will have something special to drink in twenty years' time. They are wonderful!

Two top dry wines will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Mosel Riesling [11 18]- DRY

2017	Wow, what a start! Yields a third of normal give a wine that is full of elegant cool ripe pear fruit, vibrant acidity, a hint of tannin and minerals, and a fine silky texture. <i>Drink 2019 – 2023</i>		£60
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Piesporter Riesling [19 18]- DRY

2017	Partial whole-bunch fermentation here: the best bunches were put aside and added to the pressed juice in cask. The result is a dense and textured wine, showing ripe yellow fruit with exotic floral notes, a creamy rich minerality and a long nuanced finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2026</i>		£78
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Wintricher Riesling [20 18] - DRY

2017	Grapes from Wintrich tend to be greener and thicker skinned, and it shows here: the fruit is cooler and very fresh, the wine leaner and more elegant and the minerality darker and more pronounced. The finish is long and exciting. <i>Drink 2019 – 2026</i>		£102
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Julian Haart (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Kabinett [15 18]

2017	Just 25 hl/ha: enough to make a grower cry, but oh, the quality! It is fresh, vibrant, pure, and above all elegant, with yellow fruit and citrus flavours backed by a lean minerality and a juicy pithy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2033</i>		£72
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Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Spätlese[17 18]

2017	There is a knot of dense juicy yellow fruit here that will untie itself with bottle age, but in the meantime there is plenty of floral and citrus fruit to enjoy, allied to a cool freshening minerality that drives through to a very long sweet sour finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£90
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Wintricher Ohligsberg Spätlese [18 18]

2017	Wines from Wintrich are accessible earlier than those from Piesport, and this is more relaxed, with a fine juicy core of ripe citrus and mineral flavours, lots of energy and a rich finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£102
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Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Auslese [08 18]

2017	A fine delicate botrytis accentuates the ripe yellow fruit, and a distinct minerality and bright acidity keep it lean and smooth, accompanied by a long fresh finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2038</i>	500ml	£120
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Wintricher Ohligsberg Auslese [02 18]

2017	Just 50 litres made of this extraordinary wine. There is no botrytis, and the fruit is pure, bright and energetic, with herbal notes and a long salty finish. <i>Drink 2021 – 2035</i>	500ml	£120
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Wintricher Ohligsberg Auslese* [06 18]

2017	It took two days in the basket-press to produce this luscious, bright wine. It has a delicate, nuanced texture but there is considerable power behind the fresh green herbal notes and long zingy finish. <i>Drink 2021 – 2035</i>	500ml	£165
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Reinhold Haart Piesport (Middle Mosel)

The Haarts have been making wine in Piesport since 1337. In the last century Theo Haart raised it to one of the Mosel's great estates of the Mosel, and although he has handed control of the winemaking to his son Johannes, he still looks after the vineyards. The heart of the estate is the Goldtröpfchen, and it is harder to find better examples in the sweeter style anywhere.

2107 saw both frost and rot issues, and yields are correspondingly low. The quality, however, is outstanding.

Two Grosse Gewächse and a 2017 Goldtröpfchen Auslese will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Kabinett [22 18]

2017	Sweet ripe fruit is balanced with juicy citrus acidity; the wine is playful and harmonious, and the minerality builds to a long fresh finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2033</i>		£60
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Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Spätlese [25 18]

2017	Spicy pithy notes with bright lemon flavours are tempered by a smooth honeyed minerality, finishing on a long salty stony note. <i>Drink 2019 – 2033</i>		£78
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Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Spätlese [13 10]

2009	From the estate's library stock A ripe waxy nose with powerful stony notes is joined on the palate by luscious honey and yellow fruit flavours. The years of bottle age have made it smoother and finer, and there is a long juicy mineral finish.		£102
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Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Auslese [35 18]

2016	A special late-release Auslese, this has bright, lean mineral flavours and a ripe yellow fruit core, plus a juicy lime-tinted salty finish. <i>Drink 2020 – 2041</i>		£144
		Halves	£150

Von Hövel Konz (Saar)

Since taking over the estate from his father in 2010, Max von Kunow has radically changed it. Not only has he considerably enlarged it by buying the moribund Schmidt-Reuter estate, but his style is very different. Viticulture is now close to organic (he does not use herbicides or pesticides), and he makes a range of dry wines – a style which did not interest his father. He also uses natural yeasts and does a pre-fermentation maceration of the grapes.

Budbreak in the von Hövel vineyards was not as advanced as in other areas, so they were not affected by the frosts in April. Yields were normal, and there were no problems with rot late in the season. The harvest began normally on 7th October and finished on 23rd. The wines are pure and lean, with lots of energy and balance.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Scharzhofberg Kabinett [11 18]

2017	The finest vineyard in the Saar for a reason: this juicy, lean and mineral-driven wine, packed with lemon, ripe pears and spice, is the epitome of cool elegance and finesse. Quite lovely. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£81
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Scharzhofberg Spätlese [13 18]

2017	Tighter and deeper than the <i>Kabinett</i> , this is closed now, and will need time for the fruit to unfold, but there a steely backbone of spicy minerality and a long salty lemon-tinged finish that promise a great future. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£102
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Peter Lauer Ayl (Saar)

'This small traditional Saar wine producer in Ayl bottles some of the finest, most classic Rieslings in Germany: pure, precise, piquant, racy, mineral and chiselled, but also ripe, concentrated, compact and complex.' Stephan Reinhardt, *The Finest Wines of Germany*. It's all true folks. From relative obscurity when he took over fifteen years ago, Florian Lauer has elevated this estate to one of the foremost in Germany.

Florian's primary goal is for his wines to reflect the place where the grapes were grown. As such, he vinifies each parcel with different soils separately, even from within the same vineyard. To taste them is to see just how transparent a wine can be. It helps that he has very old vines of up to 100 years, and as you would expect, they are vibrant, pure and very exciting.

2017 was a challenge, but ultimately very rewarding. Frost damage to the early bud break was mitigated by vigorous secondary bud growth, but rot problems in September greatly reduced yields. Painstaking work in the vineyard and rigorous selection of individual bunches and even berries resulted in clean, rich and balanced wines. Thanks to the heavy rain in August, the vines sucked up more matter from the soil, meaning that they have very high dry extracts, and are full of flavour. An onset of botrytis in October produced a stunning range of late harvest wines.

Grosse Gewächse will be released in September. What will appear at the auction this year has yet to be decided, but the candidates are: a Kabinett, two Spätlesen, an Auslese, an Auslese GK, an Auslese LGK, and a BA.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Saar Riesling Faß 16 [16 18]- DRY

2017	Fruity, forward and bright, a lean smoky mineral streak and a fresh salty finish deliver a wine punching well above its weight. <i>Drink 2019 – 2023</i>		£45
		Magnums (6-bottle case)	£120

Kupp Kabinett Faß 8 [08 18]

2017	As always a clean, bright and pure wine from the Kupp, with refreshing citrus fruit and a delicious salty mineral seam emerging on the finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£72
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Lambertskirch Kabinett Faß [14 18]

2017	The Lambertskirch vineyard, downriver from the Schonfels, was planted to fruit trees when Florian Lauer purchased it in 2010. He believes it to be a great site, and it certainly has the necessary: a south-facing steep slope of very rocky grey slate. The wine bears this out: it has fresh cool green notes, and a zingy pithy quality, as well as great length. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£78
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Kupp Spätlese Faß 7 [07 18]

2017	Very ripe grapes, but no botrytis, give a smooth, creamy wine with tropical fruit, bright citrus acidity and a fresh long pithy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£102
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Peter Lauer (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Kupp Auslese Faß 10 [10 18]

2017	Some botrytis now, which gives a slight viscosity to the tropical fruit, balanced by vibrant freshening acidity and lovely long yellow fruit-tinted finish. <i>Drink 2020 – 2035</i>	Halves (6-bottle case)	£426
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Schloss Lieser Lieser (Middle Mosel)

Since taking over Schloss Lieser in 1992, and buying it outright in 1997, Thomas Haag has grown the estate from 6.5 to 24 hectares, now owning vineyards in Lieser (Helden), Brauneberg (Juffer and Juffer-Sonnenuhr), Wehlen (Sonnenuhr), Graach (Domprobst), Piesport (Goldtröpfchen and Falkenberg) as well as harvesting a tiny parcel in Bernkastel (Doctor). In all, his holdings are spread across 180 different vineyard plots. He is in the top rank of Mosel producers, and one of the most sought after in Germany, crafting taut, pure wines that clearly express their vineyard origins.

Thomas Haag and his right-hand man Philipp Veser must be the best organised people in the Mosel: they dealt smoothly with the challenges of frost and rot, and because yields are down by a third, the resulting wines are concentrated and quite brilliant

A Doctor Spätlese and Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese LGK will be auctioned in September. No fewer than seven Grosse Gewächse from Niederberg Helden, Brauneberger Juffer and Juffer-Sonnenuhr, Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Graacher Himmelreich, Piesporter Goldtröpfchen and Bernkasteler Doctor will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

The Schloss Lieser Kabinett Collection

2017	2 bottles each of Lieser, Himmelreich, Helden, Juffer, Sonnenuhr and Goldtröpfchen: an ideal way to sample the individual <i>terroirs</i> . <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>	12-bottle case	£122
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Schloss Lieser Kabinett [04 18]

2017	Fresh, vibrant and fluid, this has creamy citrus fruit and a mineral tang on the finish. It is fresh and very moreish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£51
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Niederberg Helden Kabinett [06 18]

2017	A little more depth and precision to this juicy, peachy wine which maintains excellent balance between the pure fruit and mineral flavours all the way to the finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£63
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Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett [07 18]

2017	White peach and floral notes, along with a distinct smoky element, are joined by crystalline slatey minerality and vibrant citrus flavours. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£63
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Brauneberger Juffer Kabinett [08 18]

2017	The fruit is floral and delicate, there is a gentle mineral touch, a vibrant juicy core and a long fine finish. As cool and refreshing as water from a mountain spring. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£63
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Schloss Lieser (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett [09 18]

2017	Pithy grapefruit and floral fruit is supported by fresh lemon acidity and a very elegant mineral layer. The finish is fine and long. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£63
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Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Kabinett [10 18]

2017	Ripe yellow fruit shading to the tropical in a wine with great depth and power, bags of lemony acidity and a strong mineral flourish on the finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£63
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Lieser Niederberg Helden Spätlese [11 18]

2017	Ripe yellow fruit of great elegance and persistence runs through this, backed by a dark minerality and a long dense finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£75
		Magnums	£96

Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Spätlese [12 18]

2017	Heart-breaking elegance and finesse here: the fruit is meltingly fine and floral with a touch of ripe peach, the finish bright and long. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£78
		Magnums	£99

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese [13 18]

2017	There is more power and a more pronounced minerality in this, but no shortage of elegance to the floral and citrus fruit, and a complex sweet/sour/saline finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2038</i>		£78
		Magnums	£99

Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Spätlese [14 18]

2017	The second vintage from a 0.7-ha plot. The texture here is very fine and elegant: intense yellow peach and tropical fruit combine in a wine of depth and persistence. <i>Drink 2019 – 2041</i>		£78
		Magnums	£99

Lieser Niederberg Helden Auslese [15 18]

2017	No botrytis, just very ripe grapes give a smooth yellow-fruited wine with slatey minerality and a long sweet finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>		£120
		Magnums	£135

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese [16 18]

2017	Beautifully elegant and smooth floral fruit, a delicate minerality and a juicy core make this a Sonnenuhr up with the best of them. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>		£129
		Magnums	£150

Schloss Lieser (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Auslese [17 18]

2017	Creamy grapefruit, peach and lemon appear, and then rich yellow fruit, followed by deep cool mineral flavours and a hint of salt on the finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>	Halves	£150
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Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Auslese Goldkapsel [19 18]

2017	20% botrytis gives a luscious edge to this clean, bright and beautifully elegant wine, full of floral fruit, with a smooth slaty mineral layer and a long pure finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2031</i>		£198
		Halves	£240
		Magnums each	£79

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese Goldkapsel [20 18]

2017	35% botrytis, but of such delicacy that the vibrant yellow fruit and floral notes, bright citrus, spice and slate flavours shine through. <i>Drink 2024 – 2031</i>		£198
		Halves	£240
		Magnums each	£79

Lieser Niederberg Helden Auslese Goldkapsel [18 18]

2017	50% botrytis, and the sweetest of the GKs. There is fine, very ripe yellow tropical fruit, balanced by zingy citrus flavours and a powerful pure dark minerality peeking through, which will emerge more strongly over the years as the wine smoothes out. A fabulous wine in the making. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>		£180
		Halves	£222
		Magnums each	£74

Joh. Jos. Prüm Wehlen (Middle Mosel)

Joh. Jos. Prüm has been the benchmark for the Middle Mosel for over a century: its wines are a byword for delicacy, freshness and longevity. In short, they are a joy to drink. The estate comprises 20 hectares, and its principal sites are in the Wehlener Sonnenuhr, across the river from the elegant villa where the family lives and the wine made, and the Graacher Himmelreich; it also has holdings in Zeltingen and Bernkastel. Manfred Prüm took over in 1969, and since 2003 has been handing over control to his daughter Katharina. *The 2017 vintage will be offered later this year.*

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett [08 18]

2016	Packed with ripe white-peach fruit and a smoky dark minerality, this is balanced by vibrant citrus flavours and a long juicy finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2030</i>		£96
		Magnums	£108

Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese [08 17]

2016	Smooth, rich and vibrant, this has delightfully elegant floral and white-peach flavours interwoven with dark mineral notes. There is a long energetic juicy finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2035</i>		£126
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Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese [12 17]

2016	Charm itself: transparent, pure and effortless, each element stands out clearly and combines in a harmonious whole. It is perfumed, floral and playful, with a zinging creamy minerality that makes it taste almost dry. Quite lovely. <i>Drink 2018 - 2035</i>		£144
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Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese [11 18]

2016	All things to all men: delightful ease and charm, but also serious depth and complexity. There is white peach and hints of riper tropical fruit, vibrant citrus acidity and a hugely intense smoky minerality that keeps the wine focussed, pure, and tasting almost dry. It is effortless, ethereal, and while delicious now, will provide pleasure for many decades. (Did I mention that I liked it?) <i>Drink 2025 – 2040</i>		£162
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Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese [05 11]

2009	The ripe 2009 vintage is drinking well now: there are rich floral and yellow fruit flavours, a very fine silky minerality and a long fresh juicy finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2040</i>		£168
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Graacher Himmelreich Auslese Goldkapsel [10 07]

2003	Against many people's expectations, 2003 turned out to be one of the greatest years. Cloyingly sweet at first, with no perception of acidity, fifteen years on the buffer of sweetness has diminished, and a fine gentle acidity has emerged to make them perfectly balanced. This is no exception: smooth, honeyed and fine it is a wine to sip on a warm summer's evening (or any evening for that matter), and contemplate your good fortune. <i>Drink 2018 - 2045</i>		£360
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Willi Schaefer Graach (Middle Mosel)

Now run by Christoph and Andrea Schaefer, this estate is one of the jewels of the Mosel. From just four hectares, they produce an extraordinary range of pure, delicate wines that brilliantly reflect their *terroirs*. Their two main sites are in the Graacher Himmelreich and Domprobst, and nowhere else are the differences between the two vineyards expressed so clearly: the forward, fruit-driven and seductive charm of the Himmelreich, and the deep, complex mineral and fruit tones of the Domprobst. How do they do it? With their tongues: rather than rely on instruments to measure ripeness levels and acidity, they taste the grapes to decide on a harvesting date; during pressing, the juice is tasted to see when it's time to stop, and during fermentation, each cask is tasted repeatedly to decide when the perfect balance of sweetness and acidity has been achieved, and when it should be arrested.

As in most of Germany, there was damage in April, but the real catastrophe came on the 1 August. During the night, a spell of rain softened the grape skins, which were then hit by gentle hail that fell between Graach and Bernkastel. In the morning the damage was not obvious, but by the afternoon the colours of the berries began to turn. Dry weather meant that the affected grapes dried out and fell to the ground, but the effect on yields was dramatic. Further complications came with an onset of rot in late August and September, forcing careful selection during the harvest, which began on 25th September. Fortunately, it was cool for three weeks during picking, which gave more time to select ripe bunches and individual berries. The results are amazing: clear, pure and racy wines that show the Mosel at its best. In short, an excellent vintage.

A Domprobst Spätlese and Auslese GK will be auctioned in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Graacher Himmelreich Kabinett [02 18]

2017	There is a core of beautifully floral, lemony fruit enveloped by delicate and smooth mineral packaging, complemented by a long, peachy citrus finish. As seductive as they come. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£72
		Magnums	£99

Graacher Domprobst Kabinett [03 18]

2017	A little more power, a little more stony flavour, but there is extraordinary elegance in the yellow fruit that has elements of fresh green and even red fruit. The acidity is ripe and gentle, and there is a tangy salty vibrancy to the long finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£72
		Magnums	£99

Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese [08 18]

2017	Cool green notes add complexity and freshness to the floral nose; on the palate there is poise, finesse and balance, and salty/sour/sweet flavours mingle enticingly on the long finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£99
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Graacher Domprobst Spätlese [10 18]

2017	Ripe yellow fruit and cool herbal notes are joined by powerful salty pithy mineral flavours in a crystalline wine that is smooth, juicy and tensile with a very long finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£99
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Willi Schaefer (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Graacher Domprobst Spätlese [05 18]

2017	Smooth vibrant and intense, this has cool, fresh fruit and a strong saline layer that complements the bright ripe lemony acidity. Only 500 bottles of this were made. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£132
		Magnums	£156

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese [17 18]

2017	A little richer than the wines from Graach, the floral fruit and juicy citrus flavours can be picked out clearly against a powerful and elegant mineral background. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£117
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C. von Schubert Mertesdorf (Ruwer)

Carl von Schubert has now handed over control of the estate to his son Maximin (although Carl remains very much in place). Winemaker Stefan Kraml continues to produce some of the best wines in Germany from one of its very finest *terroirs*, a contiguous strip of the three vineyards Bruderberg, Herrenberg and Abtsberg. There is something magical about them: if you have the patience to wait, they acquire a melting elegance that calls you back for more. Our completely impartial advice, for which you will be eternally grateful, is buy more than you think you will need.

In 2017 frost did considerable damage, and yields are half those of 2016. The harvest was early, and since it was warm the grapes ripened quickly, resulting in very little *Kabinett*. There was also a danger of rot, so the pickers finished their job at some speed, which gave only a small quantity of *Auslese*.

Two Grosse Gewächse will be released in September. An Abtsberg Kabinett and Auslese will be auctioned in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Maximin Riesling [02 18] - DRY

2017	A lovely example of Ruwer Riesling: bright, fresh and with typical cool green herbal notes set against apple and citrus flavours. <i>Drink 2018 – 2020</i>		£33
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Riesling Alte Reben [11 18] - DRY

2017	Cool green herbal notes with an edge of dark slate minerality join fresh, juicy pear and citrus flavours in a complex, deep and rewardingly long wine. <i>Drink 2018 – 2025</i>		£66
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Abtsberg 'Superior' [04 18]

2017	The finest grapes of the Abtsberg, fermented with minimal intervention to near dryness. There is lovely purity and intensity to the grassy juicy citrus fruit, and the finish is powerful and long. <i>Drink 2021 – 2031</i>		£108
		Magnums	£138

C. von Schubert (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Herrenberg Kabinett [12 18]

2017	Cool, green and vibrant, this shows elegant citrus and pear notes and a smooth pure minerality that makes it taste almost dry all the way to a fine finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>		£72
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Abtsberg Kabinett [13 18]

2017	A bit more floral than the Herrenberg, and the fruit shades more into ripe yellow, but there is still the typical fresh green tone, ripe lemony acidity and a salty slate note emerging on the long finish. ‘Ça donne soif’, as they don’t say in Germany. <i>Quantities are very limited. Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£78
		Magnums	£96

Herrenberg Spätlese [18 18]

2017	Intense, pure and vibrant: spicy salty mineral flavours mingle with fresh green notes and ripe pear fruit. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£81
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Abtsberg Spätlese [17 18]

2017	A burst of vibrant peach and powerful lemon flavours give way to a fresh smooth salty minerality and an incredibly long fine finish. This will be delightful young, but if you can wait ten years it will be perfectly poised and magical. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£90
		Magnums	£108
		Double Magnums each	£90

Abtsberg Auslese [15 18]

2017	A hint of botrytis on the nose in the form of ripe golden-yellow fruit gives an expectation of sweetness, but such is the intense pithy citrus acidity and salty minerality that it tastes almost dry. A very fine wine, but one that will require patience. <i>Drink 2024 – 2050</i>		£177
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Daniel Vollenweider Traben-Trarbach (Middle Mosel)

Daniel Vollenweider came to the Mosel from his native Switzerland in 1999, with no money but a huge passion for Riesling. He purchased a hectare of a formerly famous, but near-derelict vineyard, the Wolfer Goldgrube, which had very old ungrafted vines, and has never looked back. The estate now comprises 4.5 hectares, and has never produced a sub-standard wine. The Goldgrube is too rocky and steep to be the subject of *Flurbereinigung*, a process that sees fragmented parcels rationalised, roads built if necessary and vines replanted, all to make mechanisation easier. It runs south to west, and its grey and red slate soils produce deep, spicy wines that need time in bottle to show their glory.

2017 was a difficult year, with April frosts and the threat of rot requiring great vigilance. Yields are way down, but the quality...the quality is outstanding!

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Wolfer Goldgrube Kabinett [01 18]

2017	Low yields have given a dense wine with green and yellow fruit, a vibrant mineral edge and very lively lemony acidity that drives to a long finish. This is an absolute delight, one of the best <i>Kabinetts</i> we tried. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£60
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Wolfer Goldgrube Spätlese [02 18]

2017	A small amount of botrytis adds a luscious rounded character to the yellow orchard fruit, kept on the straight and narrow by ripe citrus acidity and a smooth mineral tone on the finish <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£84
		Magnums	£102

Wolfer Goldgrube Auslese 'Portz' [03 18]

2017	Portz is a subplot of the Goldgrube, with ungrafted vines over a hundred years old, producing wines of elegance and depth. It has not been released under a separate label since 2007, but the wait is worthwhile: it is very ripe, supremely smooth and chockful of ripe yellow orchard fruit and barley sugar with an intense long finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2040</i>		£246
		Halves	£252

Wolfer Goldgrube Auslese GK [04 18]

2017	Botrytis is really kicking in here, but it is never overpowering. Instead there is pure, vibrant apricot and tropical fruit of enormous smoothness, and a very long smoky honeyed finish. <i>Drink 2025 – 2050</i>		£294
		Halves	£300
		Magnums	£318

Wolfer Goldgrube Beerenauslese [05 18]

2017	Just when you thought it couldn't get richer, along comes this very luscious wine full of gliding tropical fruit, apricots, spice and smoke, finishing on a vibrant salty note. <i>Drink 2025 – 2050</i>		£900
		Halves	£900
		Magnums	£876

Weiser-Künstler Traben-Trarbach (Middle Mosel)

Like their friend Daniel Vollenweider, Konstantin Weiser and Alexandra Künstler are newcomers to the region, attracted by a love of Riesling. Starting from nothing in 2005, they began building a portfolio of formerly famous sites around Traben-Trarbach that were on the point of being abandoned: steep, inaccessible and uneconomic, as everything had to be done by hand. But the soils were superb, the vines old and ungrafted, and they began to produce a dazzling range of wines which have given them cult status. Their production from 3.8 hectares is tiny. They are not interested in a fruity style, favouring oxidative winemaking that brings out minerality, and the wines need decanting well ahead when young.

Frost and rot took their toll in 2017, and yields are down by 50%. But the wines are some of the best they have made: dense, balanced and fine.

Two top dry wines will be released in September

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Wolfer Sonnenlay Kabinett trocken [08 18] - DRY

2017	Uncompromisingly dry, this playful light wine is full of vibrant citrus acidity, and salty slate flavours. It is cool and quite delicious. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£60
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Wolfer Sonnenlay Kabinett [04 18]

2017	Just a bit of residual sugar and the character changes completely, but the vineyard is still clearly recognisable. Here we find yellow fruit, brisk citrus and cool green flavours and again the lean fine minerality so beloved of the winemakers. Absolutely one of the best <i>Kabinetts</i> to be found in Germany this year. <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>		£66
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Enkircher Ellergrub Spätlese Goldkapsel [02 18]

2017	A smooth, lemony wine with ripe yellow fruit and a fine dark core of salty minerality that runs through to the sweet sour finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2033</i>		£108
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Enkircher Ellergrub Auslese [01 18]

2017	A big hit of fine botrytis that adds smooth elegance and density to the ripe yellow fruit and lanolin mineral flavours. This is lively and long, and has a great future. <i>Drink 2024 – 2045</i>		£156
		Halves	£162

Forstmeister Geltz Zilliken Saarburg (Saar)

Dorothee Zilliken took over the running of this venerable estate in 2016, the 11th generation to do. The majority of the 12-hectare estate is in the Rausch, climbing an impossibly steep hill directly above the town centre. The soil is slate dotted with quartz and pockets of basalt, and its southern exposure ensures it gets a lot of sun. Low yields and painstaking vineyard work, combined with fermentation in old oak casks in a very cool cellar, give a stunning range of classic Saar wines that can take many years to reach their full potential.

In the Saar, vegetative growth is always a little behind the Mosel, so few buds had emerged by the time the April frosts hit, and therefore less damage than elsewhere. The growing season was good, and some excellent noble-sweet wines were made. Low yields have given particularly dense wines this year, with high levels of dry extract.

A Rausch Grosses Gewächs will be released in September. A Rausch Spätlese, Auslese LGK and 6 magnums of 1988 Eiswein will be sold at auction in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Butterfly Riesling [11 18]

2017	Just off-dry, this is fresh, vibrant and lemony, and there is a hint of minerality on the balanced finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£45
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Saarburger Rausch Kabinett [07 18]

2017	An unusually dense <i>Kabinett</i> , made from a mixture of greenish, ripe and over-ripe grapes. The result is a complex structure of ripe yellow orchard fruit with cool floral notes, the ripe citrus flavours intertwining with a fine minerality, and culminating in a powerful juicy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£84
		Magnums	£108

Saarburger Rausch Spätlese [06 18]

2017	Made entirely from ripe, shrivelled grapes that give a thick honeyed smooth wine with ripe but very zingy lemony acidity and a distinct mineral edge on the long finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£129
		Magnums	£150

Saarburger Rausch Auslese [05 18]

2017	Some botrytis in the mix now, adding a creamy note to the bright yellow and honeysuckle fruit; and the structure is compact, powerful and smooth, with a seamlessly fine mineral finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>		£210
		Magnums	£234

Saarburger Rausch Auslese Goldkapsel [02 18]

2017	Shrivelled brown berries give a dark dense viscous wine with dried fruit and brown sugar notes mingling with fresh ripe apricot flavours. There is vibrant lemony acidity and a rumbling bass note of salty slate discernible on the very long finish. <i>Drink 2027 – 2050</i>		£462
		Halves	£471
		Magnums	£178

NAHE

Hermann Dönnhoff Oberhausen

Against many odds, this is a startlingly good collection. As in most of Germany, April frosts were an issue here, with much blackened vegetation, but secondary bud growth was rapid and successful, so the damage was not as bad as feared. Nonetheless yields are down by 35%. Although the harvest was early – they finished in mid-October, around the time they usually start – the nights were cool and the acidity in the grapes did not drop. The result is vibrant wines with more concentration than 2017, but without the power of 2015.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Oberhäuser Leistenberg Kabinett [04 18]

2017	Lots of depth, pithy grapefruit and bright lemon flavours and a dash of minerality make this wonderfully drinkable. <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>		£72
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Oberhäuser Brücke Spätlese [15 18]

2017	A reassuringly similar tasting note to last year's, proof that this wine is an accurate reflection of the place in which the grapes were grown. It is fine, seamless and poised, with dense cool golden-yellow fruit, ripe lemony acidity and a long powerful salty mineral finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£150
		Magnums	£174

Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Spätlese [16 18]

2017	Aristocratic, smooth and elegant: a seamless wine that has vibrant ripe acidity, a fine mineral weave and bursts with citrus and peach flavours. It is powerful and rich, with no trace of fat, and finishes very long. <i>Drink 2019 – 2035</i>		£180
		Magnums	£210

Oberhäuser Brücke Auslese Goldkapsel [17 18]

2017	A light dusting of botrytis gives a luscious edge to this clear, refined wine, dominated at this stage by golden yellow fruit, bright citrus acidity and a pure, delicious finish. <i>Drink 2020 – 2035</i>	Halves (6-bottle case)	£138
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Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Auslese Goldkapsel [18 18]

2017	A little more botrytis than in the Brücke, but there is no sacrifice of elegance. Indeed, it has the typical finesse of the vineyard plus enormous depth and a hint of salty minerals on the long finish. Staggeringly nice. <i>Drink 2020 – 2046</i>		£300
		Halves (6-bottle case)	£150

Schäfer-Fröhlich Bockenau

From his 21 hectares Tim Fröhlich produces uncompromisingly angular wines that display breathtaking energy, precision and finesse. He took over responsibility for making the wine in 1983 at the tender age of 19, and supported by his father, who looks after the vineyards, has elevated the estate to one of the very best in Germany. He principal holdings are in: Bockenau – the flagship Felseneck and Stromberg, but he also has vines in the geologically diverse communes of Monzingen with the Halenberg and Frühlingsplätchen vineyards, and Schloßböckelheim with Kupfergrube and Felsenberg. These are wines that can be drunk young, but the best need years to showcase the *terroir* of their vineyards.

Tim regards the 2017 as a top vintage, one of the most elegant ever. Vegetative growth is always a little behind in elevated Bockenau, so there was almost no frost damage. The grapes were healthy, and the onset of botrytis in October produced some fine late-harvest wines, including a massive 250 Oechsle TBA. *A BA and a TBA, possibly for the auction, were also made. Six Grosse Gewächse will be released in September.*

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Nahe Fröhlich [07 18] – DRY

2017	According to the winemaker, the most elegant estate wine he has ever made. Coming from young vines in top sites, there is lovely precision and elegance in the bright lemony fruit and the long slatey finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2021</i>		£39
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Vulkangestein [09 18] - DRY

2017	From 30-to-40-year-old vines in Felsenberg and Stromberg. Loads of energy is this fresh juicy, mineral-driven wine that has ripe citrus fruit and a long creamy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2023</i>		£75
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Schiefergestein - DRY

2017	From 30-to-40-year-old vines in Felseneck. This gradually unfolds on the palate giving focussed lemony fruit, powerful flinty mineral flavours with a salty edge, and a long juicy finish. Once again, this is easily at a GG level of intensity and elegance. <i>Drink 2019 – 2026</i>		£90
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Felseneck Kabinett

2017	Harvested early from a parcel favoured by the afternoon sun, this year it is delicately fresh and ripe with cool green notes as well as grapefruit, lemon and riper stone-fruit in the background. It is very zingy indeed, and the minerality on the finish makes it taste almost dry. A fabulous <i>Kabinett</i> . <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>		£78
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Felseneck Spätlese

2017	Harvested two weeks later than the <i>Kabinett</i> from 35-year-old vines, this is zingy, cool and green with a lovely spicy mineral freshness and a flourish of ripe yellow fruit on the lemony finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>		£90
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Schäfer-Fröhlich (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Felseneck Spätlese Goldkapsel

2017	As every year, the grapes were picked on the same day as the regular <i>Spätlese</i> , but from older 55-year-old vines in the steepest, south-facing part of the vineyard, giving an altogether more intense wine. There are dark smoky slate notes, clear bright citrus flavours and a cool green spicy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2033</i>		£111
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Felseneck Auslese

2017	50% of very clean botrytis gives richness, but not at the expense of freshness, which it has in spades. There is yellow tropical fruit and a lovely pure minerality that lasts forever. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>	Halves (6-bottle case)	£120
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RHEINGAU

Peter-Jakob Kühn Oestrich

Peter-Jakob Kühn started in 1979, the eleventh generation of his family to assume responsibility. This is one of the few estates in Germany to use biodynamic methods, and he and his family do it with awe-inspiring passion and thoroughness. The conversion was gradual, and started at home: unhealthy food was banned – no white sugar, white flour or processed foods of any kind. They realised that the chemical industry was encouraging an unhealthy dependence in farmers on its products, sidelining nature in the process. So they abandoned herbicides and insecticides, anti-fungal sprays, and cultured yeasts; in 2001 they took the plunge and became biodynamically certified. They are now one of Germany's leading growers.

The estate comprises 20 hectares, with prime sites in and around Oestrich. 90% is given over to Riesling production. The wines are now made by Peter-Bernhard, who has refined the biodynamic methods pioneered by his parents.

2007 was a difficult season. Frost on 28th April caused losses of 25% of the crop, but secondary bud growth mitigated this, and the growing season proceeded calmly. The real blow came on 31st August, when a small but violent hailstorm cut a swathe through the middle of their holdings. Fortunately the weather in early September was fine, the affected berries shrivelled and dropped off, and there was no danger of rot. Yields are low, but the quality is extraordinary.

Some of the rarer dry wines will be released later this year.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Jacobus Riesling [01 18] - DRY

2017	Ripe and expressive, this has vibrant, pithy citrus fruit and a juicy, smooth finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2021</i>		£60
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Rheinschiefer Hallgarten [02 18] - DRY

2017	From an elevated vineyard at 300m, this has exotic yellow fruit, vibrant citrus acidity and creamy mineral middle leading to a juicy smooth finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2023</i>		£69
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Peter-Jakob Kühn (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Quarzit Riesling [03 18] - DRY

2017	From vineyards with silty clay (loess) soils and a high quartz content. It is bright and rich, with clear lemony flavours and a delicate juicy finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2021</i>		£78
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Oestrich Lenchen Kabinett [10 18]

2017	Cool aromatic freshness with a distinct herbal note is accompanied by bright citrus flavours and a rounded mineral-tinged finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2027</i>		£72
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Oestricher Lenchen Spätlese [11 18]

2017	A small amount of botrytis has crept in here, giving a slight honeyed touch to the vibrant yellow fruit, lemony acidity and fresh, spicy mineral finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2029</i>		£102
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Oestricher Lenchen Auslese [12 18]

2017	Full-on botrytis: there is luscious sweet yellow fruit and lots of power, and a very pure, clean and bright progression of flavours across the palate, leading to a very long mineral-tinged finish. <i>Drink 2022 – 2035</i>	Halves (6-bottle case)	£159
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Oestricher Lenchen Beerenauslese [13 18]

2017	Just 45 litres of this extraordinary wine were made. It is smooth, viscous and honeyed, with ripe yellow fruit and notes of camomile and grassy herbs that lend a delicious freshness, along with spicy minerality and ripe acidity. <i>Drink 2026 – 2041</i>	Halves (6-bottle case)	£408
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Robert Weil Kiedrich

One of the grand estates of the Rheingau, Robert Weil has been making first-class wine since 1875. Wilhelm Weil is the fourth generation to run it, and from its 90 hectares, exclusively planted to Riesling, produces a range of superbly crafted wines. The heart of the estate is the Gräfenberg vineyard, accompanied by the sites of Turmberg and Klosterberg.

Kiedrich escaped the April frosts with little damage, and was untouched by the hailstorm that hit its neighbours. Intense vineyard work also spared them severe losses from the onset of rot in the summer. Yields were relatively normal, and for the 29th year in succession, *Auslese*, *BA* and *TBA* were made. *A GG will be released in September*

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Kiedrich Klosterberg trocken [27 18] - DRY

2017	Smooth and delicate, but there is considerable depth here, and powerful mineral flavours on the long finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£114
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Robert Weil (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Kiedrich Turmberg trocken [28 18] DRY

2017	Rich round and elegant, with delicate spicy citrus flavours and a long powerful mineral-rich finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£114
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Robert Weil Kabinett [13 18]

2017	Pithy grapefruit and spice flavours in a pure, light and deliciously vibrant package end on a bright mineral note. <i>Drink 2019 – 2029</i>		£78
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Kiedrich Gräfenberg Spätlese [20 18]

2017	A richer style of <i>Spätlese</i> , rounded and ripe, with bright citrus flavours and honeyed yellow fruit and a pleasant slightly salty finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2031</i>		£108
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Kiedrich Gräfenberg Auslese [21 18]

2017	A very elegant botrytis imparts a honeyed tone to the sweet yellow fruit, balanced by zingy lemon flavours and juicy pithy minerality on the very long finish. <i>Drink 2020 – 2031</i>	Halves (6-bottle case)	£180
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RHEINHESSEN

Battenfeld-Spanier Hohen-Sülzen

Hans Oliver Spanier has always known what he wanted: he took over the family estate in 1991, and almost immediately converted to organic practice, one of the first in Germany to do so, then took it a stage further by going biodynamic in 1995. In 2006 he married Carolin Gillot, who ran Kühling-Gillot, and two of the greatest Rheinhessen estates came together. He makes the wine at both, although they are marketed separately.

Hohen-Sülzen is on the southern-most part of Rheinhessen, and the vines are grown on limestone, which gives them a lifted, citrus character.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Mölsheim Riesling - DRY

2017	A powerful, rich, mineral-driven wine from limestone soils, with bright fine citrus fruit and a long pithy finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£78
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Keller Flörsheim-Dalsheim

‘I make the wines I like to drink,’ says Klaus-Peter Keller, and in the last ten years there has been a considerable shift in style at this estate, moving away from rich, full-bodied wines to lighter, more delicate ones. The key to achieving this is vineyard management: the grapes must not be allowed to get too ripe. Unlike many of his colleagues, he has resisted the temptation to expand: ‘if we enlarged the estate, I would no longer be able to supervise work in the vineyards so closely. The wines would be maybe 3% less good. Perhaps no one would notice, but I would, and I won’t allow it.’ His wines are the epitome of purity, elegance and intensity.

Although they escaped the April frost, a severe hailstorm on 25th August hit Westhofen and destroyed a year’s work in just under a minute: Morstein, Abst. E. and parts of Kirchspiel were affected. Had it continued to rain, the damaged berries would have rotted, infecting the healthy ones along the way, and written off the entire crop. Fortunately the next few weeks were dry, and the damaged berries dried up and dropped to the ground. The vines devoted their energy to the remaining ones, which gained particular aromatic complexity. Cool nights at the end of September fixed the acidity, and although yields were down 80%, the quality is quite astonishing.

A Pettenthal Kabinett, a Pettenthal GG and a Morstein Pinot Noir GG will be sold at the auction in September.

The Grosse Gewächse, the reds and the famous Kellerkiste, this year a 12-pack, containing a selection of the finest dry and sweet wines, will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Riesling – DRY

2017	From vines in the all non-GG vineyards, consisting of 80% limestone and 20% clay soils. It shows the classic citrus flavours from limestone, along with a delicate mineral freshness.		£54
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Riesling von der Fels[10 18] – DRY

2017	From 15-to-25-year-old vines in the GG sites, this year particularly from Kirchspiel. Yields were very low, and the resulting wine is intense, with lots of energy, length and richness.		£90
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Kabinett ‘Limestone’ [05 18]

2017	From vineyards in Westhofen, mainly Kirchspiel, this is a featherlight, stony and citrus-driven wine which is so fresh, breezy and delightful that you will wonder where it went so quickly.		£90
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Nierstein Hipping Kabinett

2017	Lively, fresh and elegant, this is lemony and ripe, with a lovely creamy minerality on the finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2039</i>		£246
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Westhofen Brunnenhäuschen Abst E. Spätlese

2017	This is rich and pure, with ripe golden yellow fruit and a fine mineral backbone, but what seizes the attention is the incredible finesse and elegance. <i>Drink 2021 – 2043</i>		£246
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Keller (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Westhofen Auslese [19 18]

2017	From vines in the Morstein and Absterde. There is a lot of botrytis here, but it does not dominate; rather it supports and intensifies the fine yellow fruit flavours, bright lemony acidity and chalky mineral finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2030</i>	12 halves	£216
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Hubacker Auslese [25 18]

2017	Similar to 2013, a light attack of botrytis was arrested by dry weather, and gives only a delicate touch to this pure, vibrant and bright wine that resounds with energy and finesse. <i>Drink 2024 – 2040</i>	3-bottle case	£228
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Westhofen Abst E. Auslese [22 18]

2017	Ripe, rich and round, with a positive cornucopia of yellow and red fruit. There is great concentration but also Keller's trademark finesse, and it slips down a treat. <i>Drink 2024 – 2045</i>	3-bottle case	£348
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Nierstein Hipping Beerenauslese GK [27 18]

2017	There is peach and exotic tropical fruit such as lychee on show here. It is dense, powerful and yet supremely smooth and elegant, and has a long finish that brims with energy. Very exciting, especially for your grandchildren. <i>Drink 2027 – 2050</i>	6 Halves	£960
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Knewitz Appenheim

Rheinhessen is a land of rolling hills, so the long, very even slope facing due south seems out of the ordinary. Which it is: forty million years ago it was a coral reef in a prehistoric sea. It is almost pure limestone, and this makes the Knewitz wines particularly rich and taut.

Tobias Knewitz took over the estate from his father in 2009, and together with his brother produces superbly crafted Rieslings and excellent Chardonnays, the latter well suited to the limestone soils. The 2016 top wines have just been released.

2017 wines from the best sites will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Riesling [02 18] - DRY

2017	100% limestone soil gives a fresh, vibrant open wine with zingy acidity, bright citrus notes and a balancing mineral backbone. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£39
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Appenheimer Riesling - DRY

2017	Young vines from the Hundertgulden vineyard give rich, rounded yellow fruit set off by chalky angular notes that give leanness and precision. There is a lovely delicate minerality on the long, balanced finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2023</i>		£63
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Knewitz (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Chardonnay – DRY

2017	For those used to Burgundy, this is quite something. Pure limestone soils, all French clones and 25% new oak give a lean, lemony wine with a juicy core, a delightful lightness of touch and lovely purity and finesse on the finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2021</i>		£60
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Goldberg - DRY

2016	From a warmer site, with a slightly higher clay content. There is pure yellow fruit, notes of fresh herbs and a lovely intensity running through to a persistent finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2026</i>		£102
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Steinacker [17 17]- DRY

2016	Steinacker translates as ‘stony field’, and it’s certainly that. The limestone soils are infused with iron oxide, which lends a spicy warmth to the cool green and citrus fruit. It is smooth and rich, and there is delicate fine minerality on the finish. <i>Drink 2021 – 2031</i>		£117
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Hundertgulden [16 17]- DRY

2016	Named Hundertgulden – a hundred guilders – because in medieval times its wine was so valuable. Pure limestone and chalky loam soils give an intense, lean lemony wine with juicy grapefruit and very fine salty mineral flavours that linger on the finish. <i>Drink 2021 – 2031</i>		£117
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Kühling-Gillot Bodenheim

When Oliver Spanier of Battenfeld-Spanier married Carolin Gillot of Kühling-Gillot in 2006, it brought together two of Rheinhessen’s leading estates, and created its most glamorous couple. The wines are marketed separately, but he is the winemaker for both.

The estate’s prime holdings are on the on the ‘Roter Hang’ (red slope) an iron-rich strip between Nierstein and Nackenheim along the Rhine, which include the vineyards of Hipping, Pettenthal, Ölberg, Rothenberg, and Orbel. There are further vineyards in Oppenheim and Bodenheim.

If Prüm made wines in Rheinhessen, this is what they would be like: beautifully pure, restrained, and with the promise of a long life.

Three GGs will be released in September

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Qvinterra Riesling [05 18]- DRY

2017	From five separate villages around Bodenheim, all with red slate soils. There is yellow fruit – pineapple, peach and apricot – rounded intensity and a long ripe finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2021</i>		£42
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Kühling-Gillot (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Qvinterra Scheurebe [08 18]- DRY

2017	A lovely example of Scheurebe: typical pithy grapefruit and peach flavours pair with bright pure lemon acidity and a long dry finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2021</i>		£45
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Oppenheim Riesling [29 18]- DRY

2017	From the Sackträger vineyard, a site classified as GG, but not declared as such because the estate wishes all their GGs to come from the red slopes overlooking the Rhine. Limestone-rich soils give a lemony, pure and lively wine with smooth intensity and a flourish of minerality on the finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£66
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Nackenheim Riesling - DRY

2017	A complex mix of pithy citrus, pear elements and smoke make up the fruit component here, balanced by ripe acidity and a crisp lemony finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£72
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Wittmann Westhofen

Wittmann is based in Westhofen, the heart of southern Rheinhessen, surrounded by some of the region's best vineyards. The Wittmans are not exactly newcomers to the area, having made wine here since 1663, and perhaps this gives them a sense of responsibility for the soils in their vineyards: they were pioneers in adopting organic methods in 1990. A conversion to biodynamism followed in 2004, and Philip Wittmann reports that his wines now have more character and depth. The estate makes wine from a number of varieties, but predominantly Riesling. Most holdings are in Westhofen, but like their colleague Klaus-Peter Keller, they also have vineyards in Nierstein.

2017 was not short of challenges. April frosts were followed by a wet summer, and then a hailstorm took out large chunks of the Morstein and Absterde. The wines are more structured and full-bodied than the 2016s, and lower yields have given great density.

Four Grosse Gewächse will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Weisser Burgunder [07 18]- DRY

2017	A little bit of skin contact adds structure to this fresh, lemon-scented mineral-driven wine, which has clean vibrant fruit and a fresh finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2020</i>		£48
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Riesling [06 18] – DRY

2017	Limestone soils from Westhofen give a yellow-fruited ripe wine with lovely balance and tension. There is fine mouth-watering acidity, a hint of minerality and a long juicy lemon finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£48
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Wittmann (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Gundersheimer Riesling – DRY

2017	From young vines in a vineyard that will be GG in a couple of years. Cool, green flavours are joined by bright acidity and smooth, gentle minerality, and there is a long intense fruit-driven finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£72
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Westhofener Riesling – DRY

2017	Young vines from Morstein and Absterde give yellow stone fruit flavours and some weight. There is balance, ripeness and delicious bright citrus acidity, as well as an elegant mineral finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£81
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Niersteiner Riesling – DRY

2017	From young vines in the Orbel vineyard, whose red slate soils give fresh powerful spicy fruit, lots of fine mineral flavours and a long juicy finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2024</i>		£84
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PFALZ

Dengler-Seyler Maikammer

Matthias Seyler had a background in business, but the girl next door who he married happened to have a wine estate, so he retrained and now they run it together. Maikammer is one of the principal winegrowing villages in the Southern Pfalz, with a history of viticulture dating back to Roman times. At Dengler-Seyler a wide variety of soils allows many different varietals to be grown successfully, and there is minimal intervention in the cellar to allow the *terroirs* to shine through. The estate's prime site is the Heiligenberg: its top wines will be released in the autumn.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Muskateller [07 18] - DRY

2017	Light, summery and aromatic, this is packed with floral and lychee and lime flavours, has a fresh zingy finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2019</i>		£36
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Auxerrois [06 18] - DRY

2017	Bright and crisp, with a creamy roundness and a discreet mineral backbone thanks to a short maceration on the skins before fermentation. <i>Drink 2018 – 2019</i>		£30
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Riesling [04 18] - DRY

2017	A first hit of ripe yellow fruit is followed by greener flavours courtesy of some whole-bunch pressing; the acidity is brisk and integrated and there is a lovely fresh finish. A textbook example of Pfalz Riesling. <i>Drink 2018 – 2019</i>		£30
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Dengler-Seyler (contd.)

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Maikammer Heiligenberg - DRY

2017	Loam-rich soils lend body, but the constant cooling breezes keep it aromatic and zingy, with spicy tropical fruit and good length. <i>Drink 2018 – 2029</i>		£57
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Georg Mosbacher Forst

Sabine Mosbacher and Jürgen Düringer are based in the heart of the best area of the Pfalz, and the estate now comprises 20 hectares. Their wines are never showy, never rich nor heavy, but excel through finesse and elegance. They have now converted fully to organic viticulture, and all harvesting is done by hand.

Everything was earlier in 2017 – budbreak, flowering, *veraison* and harvest, which began on 5th September. The grapes were a little less ripe and the resulting wines are a little fresher, with lower alcohol than in 2016.

Grosse Gewächse will be released in September.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Georg Mosbacher [09 18] - DRY

2017	A cool aromatic nose with notes of menthol is followed by fresh yellow fruit in a balanced, tensile and vibrant package. <i>Drink 2019 – 2021</i>		£42
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Deidesheimer Leinhöhle [26 18] - DRY

2017	A south-facing slope with multicoloured sandstone soil gives a very ripe wine redolent of fresh apricots and tropical fruit, along with pithy minerals and very fine acidity. <i>Drink 2019 – 2026</i>		£63
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Forster Musenhang [28 18]- DRY

2017	A cool, eastern facing site just under the treeline gives a strong bass note of fine stony flavours buffered by bright citrus fruit, and there is a long, chalky finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2026</i>		£69
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Wachenheimer Gerümpel [27 18] - DRY

2017	Sandy volcanic soil gives a smooth, full-bodied wine with clear yellow fruit and a mineral tang on the long finish. <i>Drink 2019 – 2026</i>		£72
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WÜRTTEMBERG

Beurer Stetten im Remstal

The Remstal was traditionally an area dominated by cooperatives, and it was only In1997 Jochen Beurer decided to found his own estate. Not content with that, he also took the decision early on to go biodynamic, and is a key player in reviving forgotten local grape varieties. He eschews cultured yeast, and makes authentic mineral-driven wines from sandstone and gypsum keuper soils.

Württemberg suffered the same problems as other regions in 2017: April frosts did much damage, and the threat of rot meant the harvest had to be brought in quickly. Rigorous vineyard work has produced a lovely set of wines.

PER CASE OF 6 IB

Riesling – DRY

2017	Various types of sandstone soils around Stetten give a floral, fresh harmonious wine with zesty lemon and some tropical fruits. <i>Drink 2018 – 2022</i>		£39
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Kieselsandstein Riesling – DRY

2016	Kieselsandstein is very hard mineral-rich sandstone, and this gives – surprise surprise – a strong mineral kick to the wine. It is spicy and fine, with citrus flavours and a hint of smoke on the finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2025</i>		£69
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Schilfsandstein Riesling – DRY

2016	Schilfsandstein is a softer fossil-rich sandstone frequently used for building in the area. It is not as mineral-rich as Kieselsandstein, and the wines take longer to open. This one is lean and mineral-driven, with a burst of yellow stone fruit and citrus, and a salty blast on the finish. <i>Drink 2018 – 2025</i>		£60
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Gipskeuper Riesling – DRY

2017	Gipskeuper is gypsum with a limestone and mineral content that gives a beautifully textured, floral wine with citrus, yellow stone fruit and even a hint of raspberry, backed by a very fine, long minerality. <i>Drink 2018 – 2025</i>		£60
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Stettener Pulvermächer Grauburgunder [12 17] – DRY

2016	Limestone and sandstone soils produce a rich yellow-fruited wine lent focus by bright lemony acidity and a powerful clear minerality. Will take time to show its best. <i>Drink 2018 – 2023</i>		£87
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E.&O.E. June 2018

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