

*Cellars International, Inc.*

*Rudi Wiest*

S E L E C T I O N S

*Purveyors of Fine Wine*



## 2012 German Vintage Report



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## 2012 Overview



*Mönchhof, the Ürziger Würzgarten vineyard*

**2012** brought very high quality whites, especially Rieslings that make a profound impact on the palate. They are bright and fleshy infused by an expressive underlying mineral core. It is the juxtaposition of this “meat on the bone” verses the mineral influence that makes the 2012’s so exciting. They literally grab you with their nerve and energy putting your palate on notice. These Rieslings offer a dazzling patina of piercing citrus, yellow, red fruit, and sometimes even bordering on tropical fruit. The acids are stable and ripe with nearly 70% tartaric which contributes greatly to the life and energy of the wines.

2012 is also a terroir vintage. It offers wonderfully creamy textures conveyed from the Keuper / Marl and Limestone (Franken, South-Pfalz, Wonnegau / Rheinhessen) to steely wines, with their strong backbone passed on by the various slate components of the steep hills in the Mosel. Included in the 2012’s display of terroir are the red slate and clay soils from the Rothenberg (Gunderloch), Würzgarten (Mönchhof) and Kastanienbusch (Rebholz) as well as wonderfully smoky elements and piercing minerality from the villages of Schlossböckelheim (Schäfer-Fröhlich) and Siefersheim (Wagner-Stempel). There is an inherent crystal-clear transparency that reveals an unmistakable verisimilitude of a whole range of terroirs.

2012 was a vintage that gave us primarily wines up to Auslese with some scattered Eiswein picked in late October and mid-December. There were also miniscule quantities of a Marcobrunn TBA picked at 220 Öchsle. That said, overall there was little Botrytis in ‘12, yielding very bright and vibrant wines and virtually no noble sweet selections.

All regions produced superb wines. However, in Franken at the Fürst and Wirsching estates, 2012 was quite special. We were presented with some of the finest wines we’ve tasted at these estates. 2012 produced some exemplary red wines as well, with fruit that was ripe but not overly so, along with good soft tannins. In fact, Paul Fürst thinks it is one of his best vintages ever. The same holds true for our other leading red wine producers Becker, Dr. Heger Meyer-Näkel and Schnaitmann.

Yields for our Saar estates were lower by 20-25%. In the Mosel the exception was Reinhold Haart where the Piesporter sites suffered from Peronospera which reduced yields by 25%. In most regions the yields were normal to very slightly below the 10-year norm of 64hl/ha. Must weights rarely exceeded 120 Öchsle, and were mostly in the 90 - 100 Öchsle range.

2012 is, in a way, a super classic Riesling vintage. In that sense a great 2004 or 2008!

Capsule of the growers participating in Rudipalooza:

Mönchhof: 2012 is a really terrific vintage at Robert Eymael’s Mönchhof, with high energy, rich and lively Rieslings. Hands down ‘12 is a superb vintage for Robert, and at the top of the heap a grand Prälat Auslese.

Dr. F. Weins-Prüm: We have a nickname for Bert Selbach – “Mr. Consistency” - because rarely misses. In 2012 you will find a great collection of Spätleses and two incomparable Auslesen from the Sonnenuhr and Prälat, with incredibly high Sugar Free Extracts of over 32gm/l.



Schloss Lieser: Thomas Haag continues to impress with yet another great collection of amazing, filigree, mineral-driven Rieslings. Thomas says wines fermented with wild yeast experienced longer fermentation periods. For example, the Lieser “GGs” were still fermenting in June of 2013. In the 2012 fermentation was slow, but one needs to also consider that the cellars were quite cold. Some spectacular Dry Mosel Rieslings are produced here!

Karthäuserhof: Very sleek, muscular Rieslings with a ubiquitous presence of salty minerals in all the wines. Many of the wines offer generous red fruit, even cassis, on the palate. In later harvested Rieslings, even more tropical components such as pineapple are found. These Rieslings are refined and persistent. As always, the dry selections were superb.

von Hövel: Max von Kunow keeps raising bar at his family estate, the quality here seems to get better ever vintage he’s in charge! 2012 is another superb collection. One example is a screaming, juicy Hütte Spätlese picked with a little help from a cold day (in the old days this was a Spätlese Eiswein) at 109 Öchsle. It was selected the same day the Scharzhofberger and Hütte Eisweins were picked on 10/29/2012.



*Hanno Zilliken: Hanno and his daughter Dorothee*

Zilliken: With Hanno and his daughter Dorothee’s hard work there have been significant improvements in Zilliken’s dry style wines. From the stunning “basic” Spätlese Dry to the Rausch GG and the complex, diligent selection along vines that are positioned atop of the Diabas veins. Great wines for sophisticated dining. Of course the fruity style is always top flight.

Schloss Schönborn: The new man in charge of Schönborn’s cellar, Steffen Roell, has put together a fantastic collection. Interesting because Roell didn’t pick the grapes and didn’t take care of the vineyards – he was brought in after 2012 harvest. If what we tasted in 2012 is any guide, coupled with the unsurpassed potential at Schönborn, then Mr. Roell might just make some of the greatest wines in the Rheingau.

von Buhl: Another great 2012 tasting at another estate with tremendous potential. We loved the Jazz and Armand Rieslings. The Jazz Riesling showed its typicity with race and persistence. The Armand was a nervy, high wire Riesling full of tension. There was a refreshing, classic, loose knit Herrgottsacker Riesling and we also discovered a terrific Dornfelder, which we will import. Of the GGs tasted we loved the Ruppertsberger Reiterpfad.

Schäfer-Fröhlich: Tim Fröhlich has crafted a truly remarkable Riesling collection in 2012. Terroir could hardly be expressed with more clarity - starting with the Kupfergrube, Felsenberg and Stromberg and their Porphyry rock soils, to the hard red slate of the Frühlingsplätzchen and the grey / blue slate found in the Halenberg and Felseneck. Even the basic Vulkangestein (50%Stromberg / 50% Felsenberg) for an entry level wine is a super quality dry Riesling.

Gunderloch: The Hasselbach family hit the make in 2012, allowing the terroir of the Rothenberg to really show its stuff. These are some very good Rieslings with amazing presence and persistence. The Rothenberg wines show classic spicy peach fruit, with driving minerals and an unmistakable nuance of almonds. The Jean Baptiste Riesling is the best example we’ve tasted in a many years!