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Riesling Rocks



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Riesling around the world

For many wine lovers, Riesling is the greatest white grape there is. Able to make wines in countless different styles, from chiselled, dry examples, to lusciously sweet, and with an almost unrivalled ability to age, the best examples have offered us some of our most profound vinous experiences.

But Riesling's greatest strength can also be seen as its greatest weakness: it can seem a hard grape variety to pin down, with consumers often unsure of the specific style of wine in the bottle they're looking at.

To try to keep things as simple as possible, in this brochure, we've noted the relative sweetness of each wine under the three headings, dry, off dry, and sweet.

DRY

Dry means exactly that: wines where there's no perceptible sugar on the palate whatsoever.

OFF DRY

In numerical terms, we've designated off dry as up to around 50g/l of residual sugar: in practical terms, these are wines where you can feel some sugar, but with vibrant acidity, it's more discernible as fruitiness and texture rather than real sweetness. These are some of our favourite wines: a style at which Riesling particularly excels. They make the perfect aperitif, as well as a match for lightly spiced dishes. Often with lower alcohols, there's the perfect lighter wines for summer days.

SWEET

Sweet wines, meanwhile, will have more than 50g/l of sugar, and are the perfect accompaniment to desserts, as a dessert themselves, or, with a little age, to more richly spiced dishes, or fattier meats such as roast pork.



The Regions

We've taken a trip around the world's Rieslings, from France to China, with Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand in between.

Riesling is undoubtedly a Germanic grape variety, and it's in the corner of France closest to Germany, Alsace, that it finds its French home. The driest wine region in France, here the Rieslings are generally richer and riper than their German counterparts, and tend, also, to be made in a dry style. We've got examples from Boxler and Zind-Humbrecht, two of the most highly regarded producers in the region, and, indeed, in France.

It's in Germany that Riesling reaches, for many, its apotheosis. But it's here, too, that for many it's at its most confusing, with countless different styles of the grape being produced. What's more, there's huge variation in the regions where Riesling is grown across the country.

Arguably the best known region of all is the Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, where vineyards cling to impossibly steep slate-covered slopes overhanging the respective rivers. The wines of the Saar valley tend to be the most precise and coolest in style, while the Mosel proper gives wines that are still steely and precise, but are perhaps slightly more generous in their youth, balancing remarkable acidity and purity of fruit.

The tiny region of the Rheingau was once considered the finest in Germany, and here, by the banks of the Rhine river, the wines have a bit more oomph than those of the Mosel. That's also the case of the Nahe, a tributary of the Rhine, where there's a little more upfront fruit and richness to the wines.

Rheinhessen, meanwhile, Germany's largest region, is largely known for liebfraumilch, the most famous example of which is Blue Nun. Fortunately, times have changed, and some very serious Rieslings are made from steeply terraced vines grown along



the Rhine river, grown on remarkable red-soiled slopes. Here the wines are rich and powerful, but generally with incredible acidity.

In Austria, Riesling takes equal top billing with Grüner Veltliner. But some of the Rieslings are spectacular: wines to rival the world's finest whites. The Wachau is the most famous region here, with this narrow valley running along the Danube between the cooler Spitzer Graben in the west, to the warmer Loibenberg in the east. Two powerful climatic systems meet here creating tension, which, when combined with the steep rocky slopes and the impact of the Danube, creates perfect conditions for Rieslings.

Less well known is the area of Kamptal, which centres on the town of Langenlois, a wine lover's paradise. It's a complex region geologically, with a mix of volcanic soils and wind-blown loess, with plenty of gravel, too. Schloss Gobelsburg are the pinnacle here, with a history of winemaking dating back to 1171.

Away from its European heartlands, for many it's in Australia's Clare and Eden valleys that Riesling is most at home. Here, Rieslings are generally bone dry, with pronounced lime character, and the ability to age impressively. A husband and wife team reign supreme here, with Jeffrey Grosset of Grosset, and Stephanie Toole of Mount Horrocks, making some of the very best examples. We encourage you to discover them.

Alongside these classic regions for Riesling, we've also included some slightly more esoteric examples that we think offer incredible quality, as well as outstanding value. There are examples from Northern Italy and Hungary, as well as our favourite New Zealand expression of the grape. And we've also got bottles from South Africa, and Australia's Victoria region, made by incredibly dynamic winemakers.

We've even included a Riesling from the extreme Ningxia region of central China, that really impressed us when we tasted it recently.



The prices

One of the most remarkable things about Riesling is that, despite its remarkable quality, prices compared to other noble, long-lived grape varieties are incredibly low. Try finding a bottle of Grand Cru Pinot Noir or Chardonnay for under £30, from anywhere in the world, or, indeed, a legendary bottle of Syrah for the same price.

These are wines to add to your cellar with abandon: delicious already, with the potential, in many cases, to age for decades, we hope you'll enjoy exploring the wonderful world of Riesling.

Best wishes

 Catherine

Robbie	&	Catherine
Toothill		Petrie MW
Buyer		Buyer

2019 Riesling Grand Cru Brand

ALBERT BOXLER, ALSACE, FRANCE



Ask any renowned sommelier who is making the best wines in Alsace at the moment? The majority will answer Domaine Albert Boxler. This is a domaine with a cult following, and the wines are near impossible to find in France. Jean Boxler is one of the most respected winemakers in France, by his peers and consumers alike. His family have been making wines in Alsace since the mid seventeenth century, and his grandfather, Albert, established the small domaine in its current form in Niedermorschwihr, near Colmar, after the Second World War. Jean took up the reins from 1996, and has spent the past 25 years working intensely in the vineyards with his team. Brand is one of Alsace's greatest Grands Crus, with deep granitic soils crafting wines that balance ripeness of fruit and bright, intense acidity. This is surely one of France's greatest whites?

- £ £42 per bottle
- £ £252 per case of 6 bottles
- 2022 - 2036

2018 Riesling Grand Cru Rangen de Thann, Clos St Urbain

ZIND HUMBRECHT, ALSACE, FRANCE



The wines of Olivier Humbrecht are nearly synonymous with Alsace, such is their importance in this eastern corner of France. He's a humble, hardworking winemaker who first made history when he became France's first Master of Wine, and he farms 40 hectares of vineyards biodynamically, where he's famous for very low yields. Rangen de Thann is the most southerly of the Alsace Grands Crus, and the quality of its wines have been documented as far back as the 12th century. The volcanic soil of this Grand Cru produces tension and power in the wine. It is reserved in its youth, but you can feel the coiled energy beneath the surface, as well as the density of the 2018 vintage. It's a stunning, balanced Riesling, from a legendary producer.

- £ £54 per bottle
- £ £324 per case of 6 bottles
- 2022 - 2038

2019 Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Kabinett

DR LOOSEN, MOSEL, GERMANY



Dr Loosen is one of the top producers in Mosel, arguably Germany's most famous region for Riesling. Ernst "Ernie" Loosen took the helm in 1988 with acute focus on one thing: his vines. With the good fortune to inherit vines averaging sixty years old in some of the Mosel's best terroir, he's reduced yields, moved to organic farming and placed great emphasis on the vineyard site itself. Loosen wines are perhaps some of the most iconic in the region. Kabinett is the lightest of Germany's fruity styles of Riesling. Off dry, and coming in at just 8.5% alcohol, it's an utterly delicious wine: the perfect bottling to start - or end - a meal. Kabinett is a style of wine you have to discover, and this is the perfect way to do so.

£ £12 per bottle

£ £72 per case of 6 bottles

🍷 Drink to 2035



Image kindly supplied by Dr Loosen

2019 Saarburger Rausch Riesling Auslese

ZILLIKEN, SAAR, GERMANY



Hans-Joachim (“Hanno”) and his wife Ruth Zilliken mark the tenth generation to make wine predominantly around their famed Saarburger Rausch vineyard, and they’ve now been joined by their daughter, Dorothee. They barrel ferment all of their wines using natural yeasts and traditional “moselfuder casks”, some of which are more than a half-century old. With long, cool fermentations allowing complex flavours to emerge slowly, these are Rieslings to age with the very best. For many, the sweet Auslese category is where German Riesling reaches its pinnacle, with incredible complexity and longevity, and remarkable acidity balancing that ripeness. This is the perfect example: a wine that wows with its explosive fruit yet stunning freshness.

- £ £36 per bottle
- £ £216 per case of 6 bottles
- 2023 - 2045

2019 Kiedrich Riesling Q&A Trocken

EVA FRICKE, RHEINGAU, GERMANY



Eva Fricke is a superstar of the Rheingau, with her 13 hectare estate, that she only started in 2006. Not from winemaking stock - both her parents are doctors - she only discovered an interest in wine, and more specifically farming, when she did an internship at Buitenverwachting in South Africa at the age of 18. She’s worked at numerous top estates, from Château Cissac to Schloss Johannisberg, from Pingus to Castello di Verduno, before settling down as operations manager at Leitz from 2004 to 2011. Since then she’s been fully committed to her own project. She works with parcels of older vineyards across the region, and her 2019s have received incredible critical acclaim. From the vineyards around the village of Kiedrich, this is an elegant, finessed, beautifully balanced Riesling: the perfect way to discover her wines.

- £ £23 per bottle
- £ £138 per case of 6 bottles
- 2022 - 2035



2018 Hipping Riesling Grosses Gewächs

GUNDERLOCH, RHEINHESSEN, GERMANY



Johannes Hasselbach is making stunning wines from some of Rheinhessen's best sites on the Roter Hang, the red slate slopes that overlook the river Rhine. Johannes took over the family domaine (which bears the name of its 1890 founder, Carl Gunderloch) a few years ago, with his father Fritz moving into the background, but remaining ever present to help and support his son. Sadly Fritz passed away in December 2016, but Johannes has continued the upward trajectory: these are stunning wines that offer incredible value for money. Grosses Gewächs are dry wines from the very top sites, and Hipping is one of Rheinhessen's greatest - you may recognise it from the Keller portfolio, too, where the wines sell for many times the price. This is all about texture: it's an utterly delicious dry Riesling, from a talented young winemaker.

£ £26.50 per bottle

£159 per case of 6 bottles

2022 - 2035

2019 Norheimer Kirschheck Riesling Spätlese

DÖNNHOFF, NAHE, GERMANY



In the beautiful Nahe region of Germany, Dönnhoff reigns supreme. Now run by the perfectionist Cornelius Dönnhoff, who's fully taken over from his father Helmut, this charming, generous family makes it one of our favourite estates to visit, anywhere in the world. Spätlese might just be the most underrated of all Germany's styles of wine: sweeter than the juicy, vibrant Kabinetts yet less sweet than the luscious, pudding-friendly Ausleses, it's in danger of being lost. Yet this demonstrates exactly why it shouldn't be overlooked. Juicy, pure, and oh-so-moreish, from one of the Nahe's most historic vineyards that was named after a cherry tree, everyone should have a bottle or two of this in their cellar. And with a few years' bottle age, it will be the perfect match for roast pork, or for Asian cooking.

- £ £19 per bottle
- £ £114 per case of 6 bottles
- 2023 - 2045



Image kindly supplied by Dönnhoff

2019 Riesling Ried Loibenberg. Federspiel

WEINGUT KNOLL, WACHAU, AUSTRIA



With some of the world's most recognisable labels, Weingut Knoll is found in the village of Unterloiben, at the eastern edge of the Wachau. It's run by Emmerich Knoll, the third generation winemaker here, who took over from his father, also called Emmerich. For many, they are the pinnacle of Austrian wine. While the label is memorable, Emmerich himself doesn't enjoy showy wines. These are as elegant, poised, and focussed as any you'll find. Federspiel is a category of Austrian wines generally reserved for lighter styles, and this is fragrant and focussed: this, from the stunning 2019 vintage, is a brilliant way to discover Knoll's wines.

- £ £17 per bottle
- £ £102 per case of 6 bottles
- 🍷 Drink to 2033

2019 Ried Hochrain Riesling. Smaragd

FRANZ HIRTZBERGER, WACHAU, AUSTRIA



Situated at the far western end of the Wachau, where the wines tend to be cooler and more mineral, Weingut Franz Hirtzberger crafts some of the most viscerally thrilling white wines that we've come across. Franz himself is a perfectionist, and his wines show remarkable balance of fruit and vibrant acidity. While he's best known for the legendary Singerriedel vineyard, we think the Hochrain is the hidden gem of the range. It's a wine of opulent fruit and chiselled acidity, that will drink beautifully right away, but that will age spectacularly.

- £ £39 per bottle
- £ £234 per case of 6 bottles
- 🍷 2025 - 2045

2019 Riesling Gaisberg 1.ÖTW

SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG, KAMPTAL, AUSTRIA



Few wineries globally have as impressive a history as Schloss Gobelsberg. A monastery dating back to the twelfth century, remarkably the monks were still producing the wine at the estate as recently as 1995 from their spectacular old vineyards. But in 1996 winemaker Michael Moosbrugger took over the winemaking responsibilities on a long term lease. It was evolution not revolution here, with slow restructuring of some vineyards, and winemaking that remains traditional, but is now more precise. The Gaisberg is sometimes referred to as the baby Heiligenstein, due to the similarities in terroir with the legendary Heiligenstein vineyard, and this, from the legendary 2019 vintage, is complex, pure, and stunningly long.

- £ £18 per bottle
- £ £108 per case of 6 bottles
- 🍷 2023 - 2040

2019 Balaton, Furmint/Riesling

MORIC, HUNGARY



Roland Moric is best known as the greatest producer of Blaufrankisch, in Austria's Burgenland region. But this is his other project, dubbed 'Hidden Treasures', and crafted alongside Villa Tolnay just across the border in Hungary. The Lake Balaton region of Hungary was once highly prized for the quality of its wines, but phylloxera, World Wars, and communism all destroyed demand for this historic wine region. Roland is trying to put it back in the spotlight, and with wines like this, you can understand why. A blend of mostly Riesling with a little Furmint, it's dry, crisp, focused, savoury, and utterly delicious. A real bargain.

- £ £14 per bottle
- £ £84 per case of 6 bottles
- 🍷 Drink to 2026

2020 Langhe DOC Riesling Petracine

G.D. VAJRA, PIEDMONT, ITALY



Riesling may not be the first grape variety you'd expect to find in the rolling hills of the Langhe. But Aldo Vajra was fascinated by the grape variety while at university, and decided to try his hand at making a few bottles of the grape, planting his first vineyard in 1985. Now made from a blend of clones from Alsace, Geisenheim, and the Pfalz, from two separate vineyards, one of which is the legendary Barolo vineyard of Fossati, this is a taut yet generous dry Riesling which, like the Nebbiolos of the region will require patience to show its very best.

- £ £24 per bottle
- £ £144 per case of 6 bottles
- 2023 - 2035

2020 Chi Riesling

JESSICA SAURWEIN,
OVERBERG, SOUTH AFRICA



Jessica Saurwein's winemaking heritage is alluded to by her name: her Austrian forefathers made 'sour wine' for the Austrian court. She started her own estate in 2015, adding the Chi Riesling to the range in 2015. It is from the cool region of Elgin, and reflects Jessica's love for all things Mosel. Indeed, the soils here, at 300m of altitude and 10km from the ocean, are red slate, just like the hillsides above Urzig. It's slightly off-dry (although in German classifications it would be classed as dry), and is a pure, savoury Riesling that's simply delicious. Chi means 'life force', reflecting the energy Jessica seeks in her Riesling, and also refers to Chiuta, the African rain god: Elgin is the wettest part of the Cape.

- £ £16.50 per bottle
- £ £99 per case of 6 bottles
- Drink to 2026

2020 Springvale. Riesling Watervale

GROSSET, CLARE VALLEY, AUSTRALIA



Jeffrey Grosset is synonymous with Riesling in Australia. He started his estate in 1981, and is now widely recognised as Australia's 'King of Riesling', with acclaim even coming from Riesling's German heartlands: we couldn't put together a Riesling offer without including his wines. The Springvale vineyard is Watervale's highest spot, at 460 metres above sea level, and here the red loam soils give a wine that's more open and exuberance than Jeffrey's better-known Polish Hill, but no less complex. 2020 was a tiny vintage here, and we were delighted to secure an allocation of this. Jeffrey prefers to drink his wines young, but don't underestimate the ability to age here.

£ £16.50 per bottle

£ £198 per case of 12 bottles

🍷 Drink to 2035



Image kindly supplied by Grosset

2020 Watervale Riesling

MOUNT HORROCKS,
CLARE VALLEY, AUSTRALIA



Mount Horrocks is run and owned by Stephanie Toole, wife of Jeffrey Grosset, and since taking over this Clare Valley estate in 1993 she's taken it to a position as one of Australia's finest. The Watervale vineyards face north, with red loam soils over limestone, while 2020 was a tiny yielding vintage, but one of impressive quality. This dry Riesling is tightly wound, with amazing concentration of lime fruit and wonderfully vibrant acidity. A brilliant, benchmark Aussie Riesling.

£ £15 per bottle

£ £180 per case of 12 bottles

🍷 Drink to 2033

2019 RS3 Riesling

MAC FORBES,
VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA



While Riesling in Australia is most associated with the Clare and Eden valleys in South Australia, Mac Forbes is making some brilliant examples from the Strathboogie ranges to the east, in Victoria. Mac is one of our favourite wine makers, crafting wines that impress with their clarity and terroir definition, and his Rieslings are the hidden gems of his range. The number on the label is the Residual Sugar here - no one that we know of releases as much information about their wines as Mac - and this, the 2019 RS3 is bone dry, with incredibly vibrant acidity, wonderful minerality, and a long and pure finish. It demonstrates what a brilliant winemaker Mac is.

£ £14.50 per bottle

£ £87 per case of 6 bottles

🍷 2021 - 2035



2019 Riesling

PEGASUS BAY,
WAIPARA, NEW ZEALAND



What started as a weekend hobby, following a gift of Hugh Johnson's legendary book *Wine*, has developed into one of New Zealand's best regarded estates, and a pioneer of the production of Riesling in the country, as well as of the region of North Canterbury. It was Consultant Neurologist, Ivan Donaldson, who founded the estate, and he's been succeeded by his four sons. The Riesling is the country's benchmark, with warm days but cool nights crafting an example that has ripe, intense fruit as well as bright acidity. Off-dry, it's an utterly delicious Riesling, to challenge the world's best.

£ **£13.50 per bottle**

£ **£81 per case of 6 bottles**

🍷 **Drink to 2035**

2018 Ningxia Riesling

KANAAN WINERY, CHINA



The Kanaan Winery has 16.8 hectares of vineyards, of which just 1.3 hectares of sandy soils are planted to ungrafted Riesling vines. In this corner of central China, winter temperatures can reach as low as -20°C, so every winter the team have to bury the vines to ensure they're not killed by the frost. Winemaker Fang Wang spent time in Germany, where her love of Riesling began. Yet this dry Riesling is more Alsatian in style, with beautiful richness of fruit, finely balanced acidity, and a long, saline finish. This is so much more than a curiosity.

£ £16 per bottle

£ £96 per case of 6 bottles

🍷 Drink to 2024



Image kindly supplied by Liberty Wines



2019 Riesling

LAY & WHEELER & EVA FRICKE,
RHEINGAU, GERMANY

Eva Fricke is one of our favourite producers, from anywhere in the world. So when she agreed to bottle a Rheingau Riesling exclusively for us, we jumped at the chance. This comes from vineyards across the Rheingau, from the 2019 vintage - a year when Eva's top wines have received a number of 100 point scores. It's fresh, zesty, and utterly delicious, and we're incredibly proud to put our name to it, alongside Eva's.

£ £13.50 per bottle

££ £81 per case of 6 bottles

🍷 Drink to 2027



01473 313 300 | SALES@LAYWHEELER.COM
WWW.LAYWHEELER.COM/RIESLING

Lay & Wheeler Limited, Holton Park, Holton St. Mary, Suffolk CO7 6NN
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