

FREDDY PRICE

Riesling Renaissance

Photographs by Janet Price

FOREWORD BY HUGH JOHNSON

MITCHELL BEAZLEY

Riesling is the connoisseurs' white wine of choice. Today it is produced around the world and is made with class and distinction. This is the definitive, illustrated reference to the world's most talked-about white grape variety, detailing over 200 of the world's top Rieslings from more than twenty countries and regions.

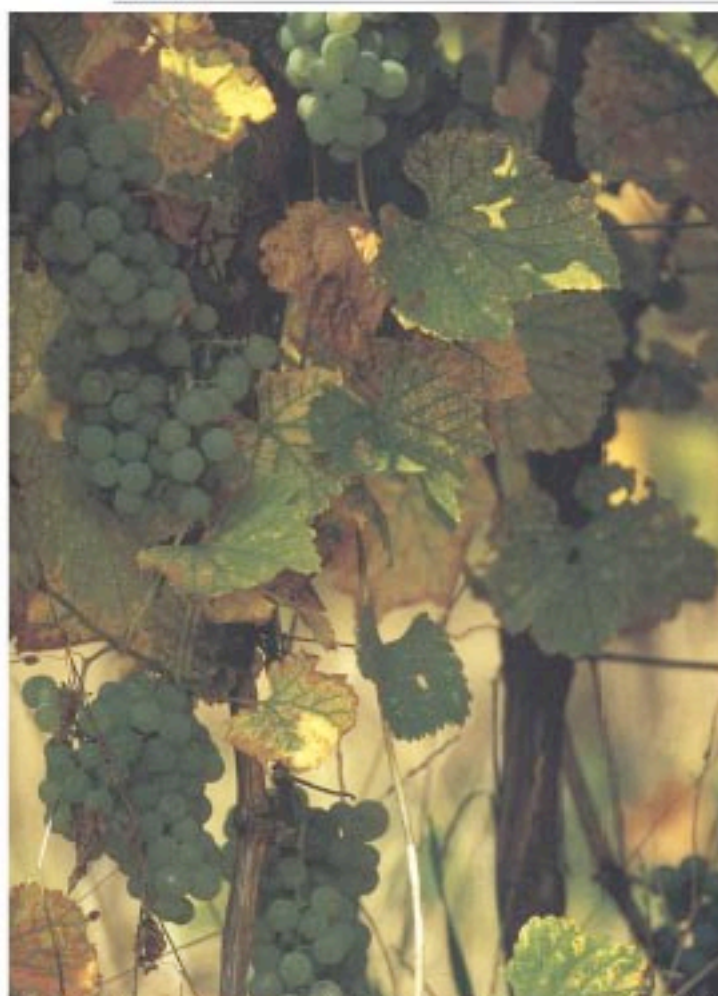
FRANCE - ALSACE

Grand cru

In 1932, a judicial tribunal was set up to decide about the right of a grower to use the name of vineyard as an official appellation on the label. The vineyard in question was Kaefferkopf in Ammerschwihr, which for centuries had been one of the best-known vineyard names in Alsace. However, a less appropriate test-case could hardly have been found. The right was eventually agreed for a limited number of grape varieties, but the growers would not agree to the stipulation and so no permission was granted. In 1990, Kaefferkopf was recognized as one of the fifty-one *grands crus*, but ratification was not given in 1992 because the growers demanded that the whole original area be included. One of the stipulations of *grand cru* is that the vineyard geology must be uniform; in this case one part was granite-based and the other limestone, producing very different wines. It was not until 2004 that this problem was potentially solved - exactly how is still to be revealed at the time of writing.

The finest grands crus for Riesling Alsace

Village	Grand cru	Soil	Exposure	Style of Riesling
Kientzheim & Sigolsheim	Furstentum	Limestone-marl, conglomerate	Southeast	Powerful aromas, fine balance
Kientzheim	Schlossberg	Granite and Devonian shale	South	Richly floral, delicate, distinguished
Katzenthal & Ammerschwihr	Wineck-Schlossberg	Two micas granite	Southeast	Floral, elegant, with fruit
Niedermorschwihr & Habschmuhl	Sommerberg	Two micas granite	South	Perfect Riesling character



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 estate 38 ha
 best vineyards Furstentum GC, Schlossberg GC,
 Mambourg GC, Lieux-dits Rosenbourg, Paterberg

Founded in 1922 by Paul Blanck, the third generation now runs the company. The genial extrovert Philippe looks after external affairs, and his cousin Frédéric is oenologist. They create a multitude of different wines.

My notes are based on two separate tastings - the 1996s in 2000 and the 1999s in 2001. Lieu-dit Rosenbourg 1996 had fine mineral flavours with depth and length, deserving to be kept for a few years, while Lieu-dit Paterberg 1998 was more elegant, with fine fruit and good acidity.

Blanck owns 6 ha of Furstentum GC, where the soil is mainly brown calcareous sandstone. 1998 was quite broad in structure and most attractive, while 1999 was rich and concentrated - almost sensual.

Schlossberg GC is one of the top-dozen Riesling vineyards in Alsace, and the soil is one of the most complicated in structure. The crystalline granite and sandstone scree on the steep-terraced slope forces the roots of the vines to explore deep into the soil to find water and nutriment. It is particularly noticeable that old vines add even more to the complexity