

SPECIAL ISSUE

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100

WINERIES

+

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Robert Weil

GERMANY | RHEINGAU

With its spectacular vineyard holdings and impeccable vineyard care, Weingut Robert Weil remains the Rheingau's leading estate.



WILHELM WEIL



THE 2018 KIEDRICH GRÄFENBERG RIESLING Trockenbeerenauslese marks the thirty-first consecutive vintage that Robert Weil has produced a TBA—an extraordinary achievement that requires more than good weather. Location counts, and Weil's holdings have impeccable pedigree: His 222 acres in Kiedrich are among the Rheingau's most hallowed, including Gräfenberg, a steep, southwest-facing slope that has been planted to vines since 1109. Attention counts too, something current owner Wilhelm Weil lavishes on his vines, supported by the backing of Suntory, the Japanese conglomerate, since 1988. He employs an army of vineyard workers who keep the vines in pristine condition; at harvest time, they make up to 17 passes through the vineyards, tending the vines to make sure only healthy botrytis sets in, and picking each grape at its peak ripeness. Such precision comes through in the clarity and intensity of Weil's wines, from his basic QbA to the sweetest of the sweets. —T.Q.T.

2018 Rheingau Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Auslese (\$164, 98 points) The warm, dry summer of 2018 made for exceptionally clean fruit, Wilhelm Weil reports, and the warm weather allowed the harvest to stretch from mid-September through to November. The team pulled in this wine at 100 degrees Oechsle, the upper end of the Auslese range. The scents alone are worth the price, as heady as roasted pineapple with a spiced brown-sugar glaze; the flavors are just as rich but brighter, with the satiny texture of lemon curd.

2018 Rheingau Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Spätlese (\$90, 95 points) From grapes picked just before botrytis set in, their juice fermented in stainless steel tanks, this wine shines in its clarity. While it's as sweet as an August peach drizzled in wildflower honey, it also has energy and tension, communicated through notes of sweet herbs, citrus acidity and firm minerality. Gorgeous now, this will age well.

2018 Rheingau Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese (\$700/375ml, 93 points) All of Weil's wines tend to fall at the rich end of their Prädikats, and this is no exception: At 274 degrees Oechsle, it's so dense and thick it's almost a syrup. Made from what little juice could be coaxed from completely botrytized grapes, it doesn't taste like riesling so much as it tastes of autumn, of forest floor and the season's very last superripe peaches, of gingerbread and early oranges, all caught in a sunset-red glow. It's a wine to drink by the tablespoon, as it's so intense.

FOUNDED: 1875
OWNERS: Suntory, Wilhelm Weil
WINEMAKER/VITICULTURIST: Wilhelm Weil
ACRES OWNED: 222
ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 55,000 cases
ESTATE GROWN: 100%
IMPORTER: Loosen Bros. USA, Salem, OR

Boutari

GREECE

The winery that put Naoussa and Santorini on the map continues to produce the reference bottlings.



DR. YANNIS VOYATZIS



IT WAS THE LATE 1800s WHEN John Boutari established his winery. Hoping to retain the grape-growing traditions of Naoussa, he bought in grapes from the locals during a time of economic upheaval in Macedonia. The company did the same in Santorini a century later, establishing a winery on the island at a time that rampant tourist development was swallowing up its vineyards. Under the direction of Dr. Yannis Voyatzis, the winery launched a clean, crisp style of wine that led to a viticultural renaissance on Santorini and inspired a new generation of winemakers, such as Haridimos Hatzidakis (see p. 56). Since then, Voyatzis has seen the company through an expansion that's taken Boutari to nearly every major wine-producing area of Greece, creating reference-point wines in places like Mantinia, in the Peloponnese, and in Crete. Yet Naoussa and Santorini remain the company's heart, reflected in the wines that have placed Boutari among our Top 100 Wineries 19 times. —T.Q.T.

FOUNDED: 1879
OWNERS: The Boutari family
WINEMAKERS: Dr. Yannis Voyatzis, Vasilis Georgiou, Alexandros Tzachristas
VITICULTURISTS: Paraskevas Evaggeliou, Dimitris Taskos, Laurent Vives
ACRES OWNED: 125
ANNUAL PRODUCTION: 260,000 cases
ESTATE GROWN: 15%
IMPORTER: Terlato Wines Int'l., Lake Bluff, IL

2013 Naoussa Grande Reserve (\$32, 94 points) Long the reference point for Naoussa, a region in far northern Greece, this is Grande Reserve in top form. The 2013 vintage was a short yield, limited by hail in June, but the grapes that remained enjoyed a warm, dry August and September, developing concentrated cherry flavors and ripe tannins that bear none of the astringency often associated with xinomavro, the local grape. Instead, they offer power in the sense of tension and youth, a driving force beneath the earthy savor of xinomavro and its tobacco- and lavender-scented fruit.

2017 Naoussa (\$23, 92 points) This is old-school Naoussa in the best sense: It's translucent in color and light in weight, though it delivers a wealth of smoky, earthy, herbal flavor over a dried-cherry base. The tartness of the fruit, along with the austerity of the chewy tannins, makes it feel rustic and mouthwatering, directing the appetite toward a mushroom or beef stew.

2019 Santorini Assyrtiko (\$59, 90 points) Not only is this one of the most widely available Santorinis on the US market, it's also one of the friendliest. It's smooth, with notes of pineapple and guava hinting at the ripeness of the grapes. At the same time, it has the intense salinity of the island's wines, which keeps the wine balanced and clean in the end.

ity of his parcels, such as Le Poste, a steep two and a half acres of limestone soils that his father planted to vines in 1963. At a cool elevation of 918 feet, Le Poste yielded a wine that's monumental in size and scope, clearly built to last for ages. It feels all of a piece, with no single flavor taking precedence. There's hints of foie gras and leg of lamb layered into fruit notes of figs and cherries, an enticing play of freshness and funk, light and dark, lift and gravitas. And the flavors last, held up by a structure that promises to carry the wine for many years in the cellar. —T.Q.T. (W&S 10/20) *Craft + Estate/Winebow Imports, NY*

96 | Domaine de la Tourade \$35

2018 Gigondas If you visit Frédéric Haut at his estate, he might take you on a tour of his Gigondas and Vacqueyras vineyards in one of his many VW vans. This wine is a virtual tour of the Gigondas side, a blend of fruit from several parcels, fermented in whole bunches with ambient yeasts and aged in used 50-hectoliter barrels. It shines in its clarity, the power and brightness of its red-cherry flavor boosted by stemmy herbal scents. The tannins are fine and sinuous, giving the flavors a bit of tenacity and playing up the gaminess behind the fruit. Play up that savory aspect with cellar time or braised lamb shoulder. —T.Q.T. (W&S 10/20) *Kindred Vines Import Co., Troy, MI*

96 | Rotem and Mounir Saouma \$107

2017 Châteauneuf-du-Pape Omnia Applying the lessons they've learned working at Lucien Le Moine in Burgundy, the Saoumas make a range of Rhône wines at their own domaine that are unlike any others. Consider this Châteauneuf: Tasted blind, you might mistake it for a Burgundy in its gauzy detail, flinty scents and fine-grained tannins. There's also the flavor, plummy but lighter than typical for the Mediterranean climate, more pink plum flesh than the dark, tannic purple of its skin. At the same time, the wine offers all the Rhône hallmarks—the hot stones, the scrubby herbs, the velvety texture, the general generosity of grenache. Tasting it is a little like seeing a Picasso for the first time, all the parts arranged in a new and provocative way. If you're looking for a traditional Châteauneuf, this isn't it, but if you like fine, filigreed reds that unfurl into kaleidoscopic details, check this out. —T.Q.T. (W&S 10/20) *Vintus, NY*

BEST ROUSSILLON

97 | Dom. Fontanel \$25/500ml

2007 Côtes Catalanes L'Ancêtre Rancio Sec Pierre and Marie Fontaneil sold this 74-acre estate in 2016 to Elodie and Matthieu Collet, a young couple fresh out of oenology school in Montpellier. The Collets, inspired by a cask of 2007 Rancio Sec that the Fontaneils left in their care, began making their own in 2018; in the meantime, they've bottled the 2007 to share with the rest of the world. Pierre Fontaneil based it on the fruit from two vineyards planted in 1908 and 1944 (mostly grenaches gris and blanc, with some macabeu, malvoisie du Roussillon, carignan blanc and other varieties mixed in), aging the wine in oak casks. This golden 2007 remains impressively fresh, with notes of salted cashews, saffron and curry leading toward a center that's plump and juicy with spicy pineapple flavor. Silky and lifted, it feels alive, with profound depths of umami-laden flavor to explore in the company of duck confit or miso-glazed black cod. —T.Q.T. (W&S 2/20) *Haus Alpenz, Edina, MN*

GERMANY WHITE

BEST MOSEL RIESLINGS



95 | Maximin Grünhaus \$70

2018 Mosel Abtsberg Riesling GG Abtsberg is Maximin Grünhaus's warmest site, and its steep blue-slate slopes produced an exceptional dry riesling in the warmth of 2018. It's powerful but not mean (as some GGs can be); instead, it wraps its searing acidity in apricot tones and a brothy savor. Rich and round, it has a driving energy that will preserve it as it ages; or open it now with food at the ready—like a roast chicken *NoMad*-style, with foie gras under the skin. —T.Q.T. (W&S 10/20) *Loosen Bros. USA, Salem, OR*

95 | Selbach-Oster \$33

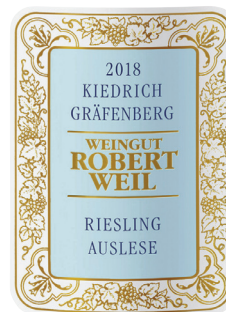
2018 Mosel Zeltinger Schlossberg Riesling Spätlese This is as stunning as the Schlossberg itself, a steep, rocky slope that towers over the town of Zeltingen. It comes on strong and sweet, with flavors of ginger-peach jam; then the acidity works its way in,

adding a clarifying energy. The wine swells with flavor, taking on notes of spice, florals and plump green fig, lasting with crispness and snap. "This feels like happy wine," said one taster, and all of us agreed. —T.Q.T. (W&S 2/20) *Skurnik Wines & Spirits, NY*

95 | Trossen \$46

2016 Mosel Madonna Pur'us Riesling This is not your usual Mosel riesling. It's a natty wine that even the natty-wine naysayers on our panel liked. The Trossens have been farming their vines in the Middle Mosel biodynamically since 1978; they began experimenting with unfinned, unfiltered, unsulfured wines in 2010. This one, from a southwest-facing parcel of blue and gray slate, is bronze in color, with scents that range from pineapple to chicken soup and turmeric. But the flavors are clear and cool, with clean earthiness and leafy herb notes that make it feel vivid and fresh. It's long and ever-changing, a fascinating riesling to enjoy over the course of an evening. —T.Q.T. (W&S 2/20) *Jenny & François Selections, NY*

BEST RHEINGAU RIESLING



98 | Robert Weil \$164/375ml

2018 Rheingau Kiedrich Gräfenberg Riesling Auslese The warm and early summer of 2018 resulted in spectacular wines at Weil. The dry summer made for exceptionally clean fruit, Wilhelm Weil reports, and the warmth allowed the harvest to stretch from mid-September through to November. The team pulled in this wine at 100 degrees Oechsle, the upper end of the Auslese range, when the grapes were shriveled but still had enough juice to create this luscious wine. The scents alone are worth the price, as heady as roasted pineapple with a spiced brown-sugar glaze; the flavors are just as rich but brighter, with the satiny texture of lemon curd. Like all of Weil's wines, it's clean, elegant and precise, but it also offers a generosity and warmth that sets it above all the rest. —T.Q.T. (W&S 6/20) *Loosen Bros. USA, Salem, OR*