

Riesling Showdown

The past few January tastings have featured a friendly varietal competition. Favourite red or white varietals were tasted and “winners” declared. The top white varietal has been chosen as Riesling. If you like your wines racy, flamboyant, austere, luscious, intense, austere or delicate, Riesling is the grape for you. This chameleon can take on all of these personalities and many more. It is not often oaked, so the flavours are varietally pure.

We have decided to feature dry wines, to “level the playing field,” but the featured wines are international in scope and offer vintages from 2002 to 2008. Germany is most closely associated with this grape as well as its geographic satellites, Austria and Alsace. Its popularity has spread to many cool climate regions, including Canada, and New Zealand. All of the wines in this tasting seem to have one thing in common: intensity.

The 2007 Riesling Kabinett, Norheimer Kirschheck, Donnhoff is an example of great terroir, superior winemaking and classic style. This Nahe wine expresses spice and refreshing characteristics to a great benchmark wine. To the west is Alsace, where we have sourced two extraordinary wines. From Zind Humbrecht, known for rich wines that often have significant residual sugar but taste dry, we are featuring the Gueberschwihr vineyard 2005 Riesling. Expect a powerhouse wine full of penetrating flavours of pineapple, mineral and spice. The oldest wine in the tasting is the 2002 Alsatian Zeyssolff Zotzenberg. The Zotzenberg vineyard features limestone, which provides a mineral structure that promotes age ability and delicacy. The great Austrian producer F.X. Pichler produces the 2007 Smaragd Lobner Berg, a harvest style, very ripe, fermented dry, concentrated and mouth-watering.

Next we cross to Canada where we are no strangers to cool climate viticulture. Niagara has produced many great Rieslings, from steely dry to icewine. Some great small-lot producers own the preferred sites in the Beamsville area. Thirty Bench has been growing Riesling for decades. Their “Steel Post” 2008 is an award winner from a small site on the Beamsville bench, showing peach, mineral and citrus flavours. Around the corner on “Vinemount Ridge” sits the perfectly tended tiny vineyard Piccone. Owned by chef Mark Piccone, all of the fruit for the Charles Baker Riesling 2008 originates on this special farm on the very crest of the escarpment. Charles vinifies his limited quantity wine at the famous Straus winery in Niagara on the Lake using state of the art winemaking.

There is Riesling south of the equator. The highly awarded Kim Crawford winery makes small parcel Riesling occasionally, including the 2005 “The Mistress.” Described as finely sculpted and intense, this is a great expression of New Zealand Riesling. The final wine is another micro-batch wine. The famous 2004 Jim Barry Florita Riesling is planted on limestone soil in South Australia in an effort to mirror the best terroir of Germany. The grapes are carefully pressed off in the chilly night air and only 40% of the juice makes it to the final wine. Floral and citrus expressions and great acidity assure us that at the age of 7 years, it will still be perfect.

As always with our tastings, this event will be strictly non-smoking, and we request your cooperation in not wearing any scented after-shave or perfume.

Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2011
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Limit: 122 people

North York Memorial Community Hall
5110 Yonge St. (under library)
North York Centre Subway

Cancellations accepted up to January 7, 2011 — Walter Pylypczuk (647-299-6171 **evenings**). **No reservations by phone, please.** No confirmations will be issued—you will be contacted only if we are sold out. First come basis. Non-members may attend at guest rates, but preference will be given to members.

_____ Tear and Enclose _____

Cheque payable to:
Winetasters of Toronto
c/o Walter Pylypczuk
1263 Gina St.
Innisfil, Ontario
L9S 1T1

Names: _____

Phone: (____) _____ W (____) _____

Cheque Enclosed for:

_____ Members @ 41.00 each _____
_____ Guests @ 49.00 each _____

Yes, I wish to sit at a New Members Table
with an expert to answer my questions.

Total _____

