



WEINGUT JOH. JOS. PRÜM, GERMANY

2014 VINTAGE, EN PRIMEUR

HISTORY

The Mosel flows for 325 miles from the Vosges Mountains in France through Luxembourg and on into Germany, where it eventually joins the Rhine. The vineyards in the Middle Mosel in Germany enjoy a very particular climate, geology and topography which, allied to the influence of the river itself, make for an inimitable set of ingredients.

The fabulous roof terrace at the family home provides a vantage point from which to survey the heart of the Prüm dominions. Straight ahead soars the majestic Sonnenuhr vineyard, rising to some 700 metres, with vines precariously clinging to the vertiginous slope, as part of an intricate tapestry of vineyards which have to be worked today, just as they were by the Romans – painstaking, backbreaking, but ultimately extraordinarily rewarding.

Whilst the Prüm family name has been linked with the world of wine in both viticulture and winemaking since the 17th century, this particular branch of the family began to forge their particular path in 1911, when Johann Josef Prüm, grandfather and great grandfather of today's incumbents, established his own business.

The estate, some 22 hectares, comprises enviable sites of largely ungrafted vines, overlooking the Mosel. The vineyards sweep across a vast amphitheatre from Zeltinger Sonnenuhr to Wehlener Sonnenuhr, Graacher Himmelreich and Bernkasteler Badstube, all flanking the river. Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm's wines are globally renowned for their incomparable balance of power, elegance and purity, as well as their propensity for ageing. The aim has always been the purest possible translation of *terroir*, with the noble Riesling grape at its best, planted on steep, slate slopes, benefiting from both direct and reflected sunshine.

Today, Dr Manfred Prüm and his daughter, Dr Katharina Prüm, manage the estate. Manfred, grandson of the founder, has developed and refined the family philosophy since the late 60s and is now handing over the reins to his eldest daughter, fellow lawyer, Katharina. This inspirational house is in very safe hands.

2014 VINTAGE REPORT

“A mild winter, early start of vegetation, cool and rainy August, very pleasant September and another nerve-wracking harvest resulted in a very classic vintage”.

KATHARINA PRÜM

Last year we arrived to taste the 2013 vintage in torrential rain, there being no sign of the celebrated vineyards across from the home of Manfred and Amei Prüm in Wehlen.

This year we were in much more familiar territory, with the majesty of the steeply rising slopes of the Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyards on the opposite bank. Facing the river, the vineyards of Zeltinger Sonnenuhr stretch to the left, with those of Graacher Himmelreich to the right and Bernkasteler Badstube beyond. It was hot, very hot, yet the river and its constant traffic of cruise boats created a refreshing breeze. This is a very special place.

As always, the lunch was delicious and, sitting on the terrace facing Sonnenuhr, I speculated on how on earth the pickers could work on such a slope. Surely they would be better off with half a leg on the upper side? Later, Katharina demonstrated how they really pick from the bottom of the slope up,

facing the slope, with their backs to the river, leaning on the preceding vine. It looked dangerous enough on a steaming, hot, dry day, but must be murderous on wet, slate shingle. These people work extraordinarily hard in comparison with many other regions and the wines really represent exceptional value and so to the tasting of 2014 ...

We were looking forward, as ever, to an exciting experience, with many more wines on offer than the previous year, when nothing less concentrated was produced than the sublimely ripe Auslese.

2014 did, nonetheless, have its challenges. The start of the growing season was extraordinarily precocious, following a warm winter. Bud-break was early, almost three weeks ahead of normal, although cool temperatures, particularly at night, slowed things down a little. Mid-May brought fine, summery conditions, which returned after a brief 'blip' late in May, so that flowering was quick and even, suggesting an early and generous harvest.

So far, so lovely, but summer then set things back a little. July saw heavy rain initially, before hot and sunny weather returned in the middle of the month. Rain fell on and off but, overall, July was slightly wetter, but also warmer than average and August, in contrast, was distinctly cooler than normal and with more rain.

September, thankfully, was lovely, warmer than usual and with around half of the anticipated rain speeding up the ripening of the grapes, with the attendant lowering of acidity levels.

It is worth noting that the advanced start in the season and early flowering reduced, in part, any negative effects of a poorer than average August.

Rain in October was the final challenge. The Joh. Jos. Prüm team had started early in the month, but experienced repeated interruptions due to this rain. Their response was major investment in the vineyard at harvest, with many more pickers than normal, exercising rigorous selection.

Gazing up at the sun-drenched slopes, the pressure was difficult to imagine, even with our own experience of last year such a recent memory.

2014 was made in the vineyard, facilitated by a very large, experienced team.

If you have never tasted these wines, please dip a toe in the water. It is no coincidence that they feature on most Michelin star wine lists all over the world. Perfect food wines, they are particularly exciting when paired with challenging ingredients.



ALISON BUCHANAN
ASSOCIATE-DIRECTOR BUYING
September, 2015

2014 TASTING NOTES

JOH. JOS PRÜM RIESLING KABINETT 2014

We welcomed the estate Riesling like an old friend. We have missed this wine and indeed all of the Kabinett wines - their gentle, extra ripeness being so attractive. Out of interest, we had tasted a 2014 Kabinett from another estate the evening before we visited Prüm. The wine was delightful, but its almost oily richness, distinctly weird, was completely at odds with the purity of the Prüm style. This 2014 immediately entices, with its lustrous, pale, clear gold colour. The nose, fresh and floral, has a lovely purity and, unusual in a wine, actually smells of fresh, ripe grapes. The palate is crystalline in its attractive balances of light and shade and offers a silky texture and bright, uplifting, long finish. If you have never tasted the Prüm wines, please start here. This wine is simply lovely!

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2015 - 2020)

£100/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£120/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

GRAACHER HIMMELREICH KABINETT 2014

Graacher, on the right of Wehlener Sonnenuhr, facing the slope, enjoys a more south-westerly exposure and has deeper soils than those of Wehlener. The wines tend to be approachable younger and this 2014 looks to be no exception. More closed on the nose initially, it gently reveals floral and mineral notes, a briny element and green apple exuberance. The palate is very floral, fresh and upbeat, with intriguing suppressed energy adding drive and focus to the greater depth of fruit revealed - rather lovely.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 17.5 to 18
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016 - 2025)

£130/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£150/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

WELHENER SONNENUHR KABINETT 2014

We have, in fact, been missing Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett for two years and, as this is a wine we follow assiduously, its absence has been sadly lamented. It returns with a bang rather than a whimper. The purity and precision is astonishing on the nose, honeyed fruit and crushed slate minerals, complemented by citrus freshness. Once again, rather unusually, grape character is revealed on the palate, allied to more exotic fruit, lychees and lime. There is a nobility here, borne of innate tension, but there is easily accessible charm too – lovely balance.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18 to 18.5
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 - 2030)

£150/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£170/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE SPÄTLESE 2014

The first of the Spätlese wines, this has an exceptionally focused nose, smoky, flinty and bright. The palate is concentrated yet weightless, with pretty, lively acidity and a briny, mineral counterpoint, through to an elegant, protracted finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 17.5 to 18
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 - 2029)

£170/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

GRAACHER HIMMELREICH SPÄTLESE 2014

This was so obviously youthful and playful, far from the more serious wine it will become, in time. Both the nose and palate are high-toned and focused, with grape must and gooseberry allied to gently spiced, crisp green apples. On the mid-palate and protracted finish it starts to relax, revealing floral, honeyed, ripe fruit, complemented by crushed slate minerals – supremely energetic!

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 17.5
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016 - 2028)

£175/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

WEHLENER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE 2014

Anticipating a little reticence at this embryonic stage, we were surprised by the rather seductive nose, offering a complex array of ripe, honeyed fruit, grape, lychee and apple, complemented by a citric, marmalade freshness. The palate echoes the aromatics presented on the nose, set within a silken frame. Supremely elegant throughout, with taut precision, this wine has a long, layered, rather decadent finish and a staggeringly lovely balance.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 19
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 - 2032)

£210/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£230/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE AUSLESE 2014

Pale gold and inviting, this wine exhibits vigorous energy throughout. Ripe fruit abounds on both the nose and the palate, grapes and lychee, orchard fruit and physalis, all supported by tenacious, stony minerals. The balance is impressive, the combination of minerals and acidity providing a fine complement to rather hedonistic fruit – really lovely.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 17.5 to 18
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2019 - 2030+)

£215/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

GRAACHER HIMMELREICH AUSLESE 2014

As expected, this offers very concentrated ripe fruit. Grapes and orchard fruit again dominate the nose, with crushed slate minerals, salted notes and delicate spice. This is more four square in style; its innate power held in check by persistent mineral undertones. Beautifully balanced, this wine has a luxuriant quality, perfectly expressed throughout the long, layered finish. A fine example of how ripeness is quite different from sweetness, the succulence here offset by bright vitality.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18.5 to 19
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2019 - 2032+)

£220/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE 2014

One might easily just bask in the nose here, spending an inordinate amount of time trying, unsuccessfully, to unravel and understand the complexities of this wine. There is so much there, orchard fruit, honey, blossom, white peach and slate minerality which provides the backbone to an otherwise fluid, silky, supple, and intrinsically indulgent palate - beautifully poised and elegant.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 19 to 19.5
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018 - 2034)

£240/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£130/CASE OF 12 HALVES, IN BOND UK
£260/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

GK - GOLDKAPSELS

Until 1970, certain truly exceptional Auslese wines were labelled as 'Finest Auslese', but this was prohibited from 1971 by a new law. Unfortunately, the spectrum within the quality classifications was then left rather wide. The term Goldkapsel (gold capsule) is not officially recognised by German wine law, but is used by certain estates to distinguish the highest quality wines within their "special attribute" – Prädikat class (Prädikat wines includes quality levels such as Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese, etc.). It is most often used in the Auslese category. Auslese, on a label, covers wines which are just above Spätlese, through to those just below Beerenauslese – a broad window indeed. These Goldkapsel wines are even more limited than the rest of the portfolio, being partially reliant on one of nature's more mystical occurrences – botrytis.

Botrytis can take a form which attacks grapes and leaves them rotten, but here, so-called 'noble rot' causes the grapes to intensify their concentration as the botrytis absorbs the water in the grape. Such grapes are not a pretty sight, but are intensely concentrated, with high sugar levels. Since there is limited botrytis, these Auslese wines do not quite reach Beerenauslese level, but they are qualitatively different from the wines at the Spätlese side of the quality band. In order to continue to differentiate between these wines, certain growers began to bottle with a gold-ringed capsule. Whilst there is no legal basis for the ranking, it does identify those super-ripe styles, born out of the long, hazardous and angst-ridden wait for an attenuated harvest.

GRAACHER HIMMELREICH AUSLESE GOLDKAPSEL 2014

Pale gold in colour, with flashes of green, this offers a wonderful combination of rich grape must, orchard fruit and piercing minerals on both the nose and palate. Fresh and pure, with razor sharp focus, even crisp, this has a lovely, lovely, complexity. It epitomises the paradox of great German wines, whereby innate opulence is constantly held in check through the underlying seam of acidity and minerals – delectable, upbeat and very, very, long on the finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 19 to 19.5
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2020 - 2035)

£470/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£245/CASE OF 12 HALVES, IN BOND UK
£490/CASE OF 6 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

Wines are scored out of 20. Customers seem to like it and it has the benefit of simplicity.

We will often use a range of scores (eg 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a '+' is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine.

A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.

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