



Katharina Prüm

Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm, Germany 2009 Vintage

The river Mosel glistened under the late summer sunshine as Adam Brett-Smith and I arrived in the small town of Wehen, hotfoot from Luxembourg, after a very early exodus from London. We were there to visit one of our newest partners, the family firm of Joh. Jos. Prüm. Slightly early, we collected our thoughts at the river's edge, often a calming exercise as one conjectures where and whence the goods boats are travelling. The river is always a hive of activity with vessels making their way gracefully up and downriver but, on this occasion, our attention was drawn to the stunningly-sited Sonnenuhr (sundial) vineyard, dotted with tiny colourful figures. Harvest was in full flow.

We looked on in bewildered awe and respect at how this gravity-defying feat is managed – small wonder these are some of the most complex, rare wines in the world. Every year nature presents a new set of opportunities and challenges but the constant is the paradox of an enviable collection of vineyard sites which deliver the very finest but which are extraordinarily difficult to work.

We are honoured and delighted to be able to access some of the fruits of their labours.

The family home, and this is first and foremost a family business, looks up to this revered vineyard, a haven of serenity set apart from the industriousness of harvest. The drawing room is adorned with portraits of the family's ancestors, all of whom have added to a reputation borne of enviable *terroir*. The Prüm family have been known as viticulturalists and winemakers since the 17th Century but in 1911, a family division resulted in the foundation of Joh.Jos. Prüm, founded by Johan-Josef Prüm grandfather and great grandfather of today's incumbents. Their estate is renowned globally for wines which strike an inimitable balance between stunning purity of fruit, true sense of place and extraordinary longevity.

The estate was founded by one Johan Josef Prüm, in 1911- an enlightened and passionate man. Dr Manfred Prüm, his grandson, inherited the Prüm fervour, further developing and refining the family philosophy, since the late '60's. Manfred is now gradually handing over the reigns to his eldest daughter, fellow lawyer Dr Katharina Prüm.

Katharina and Manfred, as their predecessors, aim for the purest translation of their inherited *terroir*, with the noble Riesling grape, at its best, planted on steep, slate slopes, benefiting from both direct and reflected sunshine. The ripening process is a slow one and always something of a gamble, assessing the risk between waiting for optimal maturation against the possibility of rain and possible disease. We were greeted extremely warmly as having brought the sun from London – a charge which is seldom levelled our way – but a sanguine reminder of how every year hangs on a balance.

One point ought to be noted, when discussing wines at this level. They work extraordinarily well with food, transforming, and being transformed by, the right dishes. The family is exceptionally generous in its hospitality and Manfred, his wife Amei and Katharina produce some of the most apt food and wine combinations – with wines which totally bamboozle the taster with their capacity to age and in the way individual vintages and styles evolve, developing markedly distinctive personalities. A dish of freshly picked beetroot, apparently cut with a microtome and served with shavings of parmesan was stunning flying solo, for example, but leapt to a different level when served with a 1978 Wehlener Sonnühr Spätlese. Thus was followed by a delicious fish dish

accompanied by an incredibly youthful 2002 Auslese – which worked beautifully – proof if proof were needed of the advantages of ageing and the importance of an open mind when combining food and wine.

Corney & Barrow were extremely lucky to be offered our first allocation of J.J. Prüm wines in 2009, the result of chance encounter between sales director Oliver Hartley and Katharina Prüm in Singapore, the previous year. The team at Corney & Barrow is delighted to be able to offer this great estate's wines to both new converts and customers who have followed the wines for many years whenever they have been able to find them.

This particular collection from J.J. Prüm was chosen for its variety, integrity and terrific ageing potential.

2009 Vintage Report

2009 saw a remarkably cold winter, with deep frosts in January, as low as -18°C. This served well in killing off latent pests and diseases and allowed for the production of a very rare Eiswein, harvested on the 7th January 2010. The growing season began rather slowly as a result, but as April arrived, around Easter, temperatures rose – almost summerlike. The vines sprang into growth mode, with bud-break by mid-April, now suddenly two weeks ahead of normal. Cooler nights tempered their vigour but they remained in advance due to the warm daytime temperatures and a little rain. May was again summery, giving a further spurt to growth, with flowering starting early in June. Cooler conditions then ensued so that flowering was a little more protracted than usual. June and July brought in quite a lot of rain before August, dry and sunny, arrived in a flourish with true summer conditions – glorious. September continued these fine conditions although with slightly lower temperatures. All was set fair for harvest.

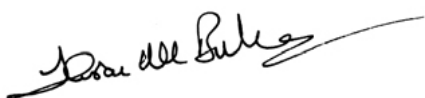
In many wine producing areas such a vintage report would be met with a contented sigh of relief and the start of picking. In the Mosel however October is also critical as the long growing season is fundamental to the character and style of the wines. Generally in Europe the growing season is around 100 days whilst in the Mosel it is around 120. In 2009, October began with some rain but overall the month had above average sunshine and moderate temperatures – ideal pre-harvest conditions.

Picking began on the 15th October and did not finish until 13th November. The grapes were able to achieve optimal ripeness, with good aromatic definition and beautifully poised acidity. The yields were lower at J.J. Prüm than in 2008 and indeed the long-term average but the results are wonderfully exciting with predominantly Spätlese and Auslese quality, some Kabinett and small quantities of Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese and Goldcapsules (GK)**. The wines are very different from 2008, which was defined by its classicism, piercing minerality and its potential longevity. These were wines which would age well but would also necessitate some time before delivering some of their promise. 2009, in contrast, rather wears its heart on its sleeve. It has similar ageing potential and defining minerality but is sufficiently bright, flirtatious and charming to be enjoyed even now – though it would be nigh on sacrilegious to drink the wines so early.

Our tasting dates, as last year's, reflect the fact that many people simply prefer the wines in their most primary phase, preferring that style to wines with a little evolution. We would recommend a little more patience but the wines will reveal their youthful charm from the outset.

With quantities of these wines being very restricted, please do respond as quickly as possible if you are interested in buying.

We will offer the wines on a first come, first served basis.



Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
December, 2010

2009 Tasting Notes

Joh.Jos Prüm Riesling Kabinett 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17+

The grapes here come from Wehlen vineyards, other than Sonnenuhr, with some from Badstube and upper parts of Graacher. Very pale, almost water white, with vague flashes of green-gold, this presents an evocative nose with hints of almond blossom and honeysuckle, underscored by flinty minerals. The palate is gorgeous, luscious and ripe, balancing stone fruit and lychee - almost tropical notes - with orchard fruit punctuated by crushed stone minerals. This is perfectly pitched, poised and elegant and, low in alcohol, makes for a light lunchtime wine or aperitif - very fine. **ABV 9%**

Recommended Drinking 2011 to 2017+

£120/case of 12, in bond UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE

One of the finest vineyards under Katharina's gaze is the Bernkasteler Badstube. Here the vines cling onto less vertical angles and see more of the afternoon sun. The wines have a slightly less dense and electric character which is a little more flamboyant and willing in youth.



Bernkasteler Badstube vineyard
on the left of the Mosel

Bernkasteler Badstube Kabinett 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17+ to 18-

The **Bernkasteler Badstube** slopes are marginally less steep than other parts of the estate, their vines endowed with longer exposure to languid afternoon sun. The wines tend always therefore to be a little more flamboyant than others in the portfolio and in vintages such as 2008 much more overtly charming. In 2009, which is all about charm across the board, it was interesting to observe that the vines had responded by raising their game, adding complexity rather than surplus weight. Pale green-gold, this is as ever enticing from the outset. The nose presents a lusciousness and depth redolent of a pastry shop with citrus, honey and almond notes, orchard fruits and hints of rosewater – unusual in Riesling. The palate mirrors the aromatics presented by the nose adding some more mineral definition. This is a stunning wine, exuberant whilst controlled, rich yet with a refreshing lift of acidity on the finish. **ABV 9.5%**

Recommended Drinking 2010 to 2017+

£140/case of 12, in bond UK

Bernkasteler Badstube Spätlese 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 17+

A shimmering, bright white-gold, this was rather more restrained on the nose when we tasted in November 2010, in the context of the vintage, just hinting at briney minerals and rosewater. We were therefore ill-prepared for the explosive nature of the palate – a fabulous array of white flowers, honeyed notes, rosewater again and lychee, all underscored by minerals reminiscent of crushed shells. Silk-textured and stylish, there is a finely pitched balance between innate opulence and refined purity. This is beguiling even at this very young stage and will give even more pleasure in time. **ABV 9%**

Recommended Drinking 2012 to 2024+

£180/case of 12, in bond UK

Bernkasteler Badstube Auslese 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17- to 17+

Pale green-gold, this is extraordinarily tropical on the nose, given the latitude of these vines. The floral notes, so characteristic of young Mosel, are given a supporting role, allowing the exuberance of lychee, star fruit and physalis centre stage, all complemented by nuts and cream and refreshed by citrus and minerals. The palate delivers similar aromatics. Opulent and leesy, it is silk-textured and generous, constantly refreshed by hints of sherbet and lemon zest. It remains poised and focused throughout and on through a protracted, fine and elegant finish. So much is made about the sweetness of top German wines yet it is the ripeness and richness which ought to be emphasised, borne of late-picked bunches of super-ripe grapes, allowed to remain on the vine until they attain optimum maturity. Even in a year such as 2009 the marginal climate reveals itself in refreshing levels of acidity which complement the richness – a very fine wine. **ABV 7%**

Recommended Drinking 2012 to 2026+

£215/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

WEHLENER SONNENUHR

The Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard plot is the pride of the family's stunning 22 hectare holding. The name literally means the Wehlen's sundial vineyard, which refers to a large sundial located at its centre. With just over 5 hectares of old, ungrafted vines, quantities are very much on the modest side, with the aim being to create wines of real quality, which paint the picture of the vintage, using the soil as canvas. The wines from this *Einzellage* (single vineyard plot) have true personality – they are discreet yet proud, wise wines with a terrific sabre of acidity. Their fine minerality and mouth-watering citrus and stone fruit, all focus on pin-point accuracy.



View of the Mosel from the Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18

Lustrous pale green-gold, this is immediately appealing. The nose is tantalising in its complexity, intense, ripe old vine fruit vying for dominance yet reigned in by mineral depth and refreshed by hints of white flowers. There is a real sense of luminosity and sunshine here on both nose and palate, the latter echoing the initial aromatics – opulent, fragrant and controlled throughout. This is a truly lovely translation of the vintage, poised but generous and refreshingly light. **ABV 9%**

Recommended Drinking 2012 to 2019+

£170/case of 12, in bond UK

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18+

This, the extraordinary, eponymous sundial vineyard is the apogee of the family holdings – a mere 5 hectares of old, ungrafted vines. Quantities are very restricted both naturally, due to the vine age, and by intervention in the vineyard, limiting production in pursuit of quality. The result, year on year, is quintessential Mosel, poised, elegant, intensely mineral and exceptionally fine. The 2009 is a pale green-gold, clinging languidly to the sides of the glass. The nose is astonishing in its vitality, offering citrus zest and lime marmalade high tones, allied to more tropical fruit and complementary minerals – both seductive and assertive, voluptuous and disciplined. The palate is layered and complex with aromatics which echo those on the nose, richly textured and very pure with fruit laced with cream. There is an almost tear-jerking purity throughout reflecting an innate nobility. Much more open than many vintages in this, its infancy, it nonetheless warrants a little patience – only **8% ABV**.

Recommended Drinking 2012 to 2026+

£220/case of 12, in bond UK

£130/case of 12 halves, in bond UK

£280/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17 to 18+

Very pale yellow gold in colour, this is inviting from the outset with an outstanding, delectable nose which combines orchard fruits of such sweetness that it is reminiscent of Tarte Tatin with hints of tangerine zest and complementary nuts and cream – all punctuated by fine crushed minerals. Once again with Sonnenuhr, one can almost sense the sunshine in the glass – so opulent is the wine and yet so disciplined, self-controlled, stylish and elegant. The minerality and fresh acidity which underscore the nose and palate are so beautifully integrated that the combination is orchestral, developing to a crescendo of aromatics which is almost painful in its heightened precision. This is a staggeringly lovely wine which is surprisingly approachable in this its infancy but will develop and enrich further given some bottle age. **ABV 7.5%**

Recommended Drinking 2012 to 2028 +

£265/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

****GK – Gold Kapsels**

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 have a form which attacks grapes and leaves them rotten but here, so-called “noble” rot causes the grapes to intensify their concentration as the rot 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 are not quite Beerenauslese level but they are qualitatively different from the wines at the Spätlese side of the quality band. In order to continue to differentiate these wines, certain growers began to bottle with a gold-ringed capsule. There is however no legal basis for the ranking but it does identify those super-ripe styles borne of the long, hazardous and angst-ridden wait for an attenuated harvest.

Graacher Himmelreich Goldkapsel ** 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18- to 18++

Shimmering gold, this is inviting from the outset. The nose evokes a sense of tropical richness, a honeyed blend of papaya, lychee and cantaloupe melon refreshed by floral, perfumed notes and hints of citrus. The palate mirrors the aromatics presented by the nose, all set within a luxuriously-textured, silky palate which adds compote of Williams pears and crushed slate minerals to the ensemble. It is the balance which is key here, never allowing the taster to lapse into languid reverie as the palate is simultaneously embraced and teased by the combination of innate opulence, focused minerality and refreshing acidity – sublime really. **ABV 7.5%**

Recommended Drinking 2016 to 2030 +

£515/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Goldkapsel ** 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 18 + to 19

Lustrous pale gold straw, this presented a rather more restrained nose when we tasted, a blend of orchard fruit, nuts and cream. The palate however was much more gregarious on attack, offering a blend of lychees, papaya and tangerine - very tropical and wonderfully complex, layered with cream and underscored by fine stony minerals. A bright vein of citrus zest maintains a heightened nervousity throughout which serves both to offset and to emphasise the overall richness. The lavishness and texture feel decadent, wanton even, offset by those ever-present reminders of place, a mineral focus and bright acidity for refreshment. 2009 has delivered such extraordinary levels of ripeness that the wine will show well in youth for those who prefer primary aromatics but really will reward the patient. **ABV 7.5%**

Recommended Drinking 2016 to 2030+

£615/case 12 bottles, in bond UK

£675/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.

14-16 A very good to excellent wine.

16-18 An excellent to outstanding wine.

18-20 An outstanding to legendary wine.

- Wines are judged within their peer group.
- A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread' (e.g. 14 - 16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A + adds further to that potential.
- A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.

**To order please call 020 7265 2430 (London), 01638 600 000
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or 01748 828 640 (Yorkshire)**

Email: sales@corneyandbarrow.com

