



Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm, Germany 2011 Vintage, En Primeur

The wines of Joh. Jos. Prüm are legendary, held in the highest esteem the world over, eminent ambassadors for the Mosel and, by extension, all of Germany.

Many of us at Corney & Barrow had been closet Joh. Jos Prüm fans for years, searching through wine lists for lonely old bottles, relying on the assumption of many that these mature wines would be past their best when in fact they have an extraordinary capacity for ageing. Many a bargain could be had through ignorance - but this is changing. More and more people are realising the value of these wines, appreciating their role in combination with food, admiring their delicacy and finesse and, indeed, their light alcohol levels. Rumours of their longevity have seeped out, further stoking the flame so that older vintages are now not so easy to find.

We were therefore delighted when a chance meeting between sales director Oliver Hartley and Katharina Prüm in Singapore, back in 2008, resulted in our being awarded our first allocation in 2009. The wines are stellar and we are indeed fortunate to be able to introduce them to the uninitiated and supply recent converts as well as loyal, long term followers of the family portfolio.

Our selection is chosen from a comprehensive tasting where we aim for variety of style and a very clear sense of place – and what a place.

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 majesty of the Sonnenuhr vineyard, rising to some 700m, vines precariously clinging to the vertiginous slope, part of an intricate tapestry of vineyards which have to be worked today just as they were by the Romans – painstaking, backbreaking and 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 Johan Josef Prüm, grandfather and great grandfather of today's incumbents, established his own business.

The estate, some 22 hectares, comprises enviable sites of largely un-grafted 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 renowned globally 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 handing over the reins to his eldest daughter, fellow lawyer Katharina. This inspirational house is in very safe hands.

Wine with Food

Riesling can be such a versatile grape in matching food and wine and with such diversity in levels of richness, texture, weight and age, there are so many combinations which can be achieved which really elevate a dining experience to a different level. Challenging elements often play to the strengths of Riesling and to the Prüm wines in particular. They work extraordinarily well, both transforming and being transformed by the right dishes. We are extremely fortunate in having experienced the family's warm and generous hospitality as we have had the opportunity to try some fabulous food and wine combinations – with Manfred, his wife Amei and Katharina producing some of the most apt wines, shown blind, which totally bamboozle the taster with their capacity to age. The way in which individual vintages and styles evolve is fascinating and complex, the wines developing markedly distinctive personalities.

2011 Vintage Report

Winter of 2010/2011 was long and cold with considerable amounts of snow – always a good way to restore the water table. The growing season was then given a jump start when April brought in warmer conditions. Not unlike the conditions we enjoyed in the UK, spring was more like summer precipitating growth, with bud-break occurring mid-April. Temperatures dropped at the beginning of May and it was very dry. Fortunately neither had an adverse effect on the vines and temperatures warmed later in the month, accompanied by a little rain.

Flowering was early, beginning on the 10th May and finishing later in the month, a good 3 to 4 weeks earlier than average. Rain early in June and again in July restored the water supply, compensation for the dry April. Temperatures were rather cool in July and August, slowing down the ripening process. A well-publicised hailstorm on the 26th August caused a great deal of damage but thankfully the Prüm vineyards were only slightly affected and fair weather subsequently minimised the damage. A sunny September followed by a lovely October and good weather through to November promised a fine harvest. The main harvest began on the 5th to 8th October and after a gap in picking, was finished on the 25th November. The beautiful conditions in Spring, cool summer and fair autumn allowed for a very protracted, intensifying hang period and the harvest came in at a very high quality level and in good quantities. The closest vintage in style, in Katharina's opinion, would be 2007, though 2011 is spicier with a more pronounced mineral focus.

The 2011 vintage is characterised by a wonderful articulation of the particularity of the individual vineyard sites, across every degree of ripeness. Often rather reticent in youth, all of the wines are energised and expressive, wonderfully fresh and focused.



Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
August, 2012

2011 Tasting Notes

“Attractive flavours and an impressive balance in the wines already at this early stage in development is striking, promising an earlier accessibility. At the same time, the complexity, elegance and excellent structure indicates a great ageing potential.”

Katharina Prüm, June 2012

Joh. Jos Prüm Riesling Kabinett 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

Almost water white, with delicate silver-green lights, this presents a very fresh, floral nose, rich in briny, crushed shell minerals. The palate, super-fresh and vital, offers delicate orchard fruit complemented by herbal nuances. This provides an excellent introduction to the Joh. Jos Prüm style – an extraordinary balance of finesse, delicacy and underlying steel – lovely wine.

ABV 9.5%

Recommended drinking from 2013 - 2019+

£110/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

£149/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

GRAACHER HIMMELREICH

The Graacher Himmelreich vineyard is south-west exposed, a little less steep and with deeper soils than the Wehlener Sonnenuhr. These soils provided excellent water reservoirs during the 2011 growing season, enriched by the winter snow. Graacher Himmelreich is often regarded as the little brother of its illustrious neighbour upstream, Wehlener Sonnenuhr, yet it often challenges for pole position, especially in hot, dry years. The wines tend towards fine acidity, pronounced minerality and very particular aromatics. Often, the wines become accessible slightly earlier than the Wehlener Sonnenuhr.



Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

Glittering green-gold, richly-textured, this offers an attractive blend of ripe orchard and exotic fruit, honeyed notes and briny minerals. The palate reflects similar aromatics, green apple notes allied to tropical elements, all set within a refined, elegant frame. Silken and lightly honeyed, the 2011 is much more expressive and characterful than it usually is at this early stage but glossy, fragranced approachability notwithstanding; this has steely undercurrents, real breeding and staying power – impressively balanced.

ABV 8.5%

Recommended drinking from 2013 - 2024+

£185/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE

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 have a tendency to be a little more flamboyant in youth than others in the portfolio although in 2011 all of the vineyards are atypically expressive early on.



Bernkasteler Badstube Kabinett 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18 - 18+

The 2011 Bernkasteler Badstube, almost water white, with flashes of green, reveals an appetising nose, heady with herbs and flowers, restrained by refined, flinty minerals. The palate is a delight, extraordinarily pure and focused, grilled exotic fruit tones balanced by an inner tension. Rounded and seductive, a fine sabre of fresh acidity, allied to minerality, gives focus throughout, directing a high-toned, protracted finish.

ABV 9.5 %

Recommended drinking from 2013 - 2022+

£130/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Bernkasteler Badstube Spätlese 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18

Pale gold, with green lights, this provides a compote of fruit on the nose, bright crisp orchard fruit allied to more tropical notes, rich and ripe, with flashes of herbs and stony minerality. The palate is similarly aromatic, steering a resolute course between racy freshness and more languid exotics. The finish is long and gentle, caressing through to an upbeat, fresh finish.

ABV 8.5 %

Recommended drinking from 2014 - 2028+

£175/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Bernkasteler Badstube Auslese 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

There is a very marked difference on the nose at this Auslese level. Although richer, more ripe, by definition, it is in fact more restrained on the nose, fresh and elegant with delicate nuances of herbs and spice, muscovado and barley sugar. The palate rises to the challenge with a fragranced generous, rather tantalising overture, blossoming mid palate to reveal layered complexity which extends through to a prolonged, firm finish – a lovely wine, exquisitely balanced.

ABV 7.5 %

Recommended drinking from 2014 - 2030+

£220/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

WEHLENER SONNENUHR

Situated across the river from the family home, fabulously sited and vertiginous, the Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard plot is the jewel within the family's stunning 22 hectare holding. The name refers to a sundial constructed by one Jodicus Prüm vineyard to allow people a better time orientation. There are 5 hectares of old, ungrafted vines here, which naturally produce very modest quantities and which are further restricted, the better to translate both vintage and terroir. An Einzellage (single vineyard plot) Wehlener Sonnenuhr produces wines which have a marked personality. Discreet yet proud, opulent, with a terrific sabre of acidity, their fine minerality and mouth-watering citrus and stone fruit, all focus on pin-point accuracy.



Wehlener Sonnenuhr Kabinett 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18 - 18+

The Wehlener Sonnenuhr was initially a little reticent on the nose when we tasted in early July 2012, taut and clenched. Gradually the wine opens up to reveal fresh green apples with more exotic fruit as a backdrop, punctuated by herbs, spice and pristine mineral definition. The palate was much more ebullient, singularly advanced and expressive – rounded and silky – with attractive mineral delineation adding tension. Breezy and bright, this is a lovely translation of the vintage and the vineyard.

ABV 9.0%

Recommended drinking from 2014 - 2028+

£160/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

£195/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Spätlese 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18+

Brilliant white-gold, this has an enticing nose, beginning with a surge of minerals, cut herbs, orchard fruit and hazelnut richness, refreshed by lime zest. Orchestral in its delivery, it presents staggering purity and freshness – and yet so deliciously ripe – nuances of gooseberry fool and apple compote to the fore. Lusciously textured, there is nonetheless a seam of steel throughout and a gentle, persistent acidity which directs the palate through to a protracted complex finish – stunning wine.

ABV 8.5%

Recommended drinking from 2015 - 2030+

£215/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 18+ - 19+

Green-gold in colour, there is a sense of warm sunlight in the glass, delicious aromatics enticing on the nose. A blend of orchard and tropical fruit, macadamia nut richness and barley sugar is refreshed by vibrant lime zest. Ethereal beauty and delicacy underpin the palate. Heightened tension prevails but there is richness here too, orchard fruit compote and honeyed nuances, all held in check by persistent, refreshing minerality. This has a lovely, crisp precision – very, very fine.

ABV 7.5%

Recommended drinking from 2015 - 2032+

£260/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

£149/case of 12 halves, in bond UK

£295/case of 6 magnum, 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 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 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. Whilst there is no legal basis for the ranking, it does identify those super-ripe styles borne of the long, hazardous and angst-ridden wait for an attenuated harvest.

Bernkasteler Badstube Auslese Goldkapsel ** 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 19+

This comes from selections made across a number of parcels, harvested in two separate bouts, the first collecting green-gold grapes, the second for grapes attacked by noble rot. Rather pale in colour, it perhaps suggests an ethereal wine. In fact the nose is almost rumbustious, packed with golden, ripe fruit, complemented by freshly cut herbs, white flowers and lemon zest. Complex, there are also hints of fresh rhubarb, caramelised oats, cream and barley sugar. With such a plethora of ingredients, this warrants time to settle but the balance is already stunning, languid opulence refreshed by bright acidity and crushed slate minerals – a truly lovely translation of this vineyard and the vintage.

ABV 8.0%

Recommended drinking from 2017 - 2032+

£475/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

Graacher Himmelreich Auslese Goldkapsel ** 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 19+

Shimmering gold, with green lights, this presents an extraordinary nose. Initially it reveals a blend of stony minerals and wild herbs before opening out to reveal innate opulence and complexity. Tropical fruit, muscovado sugar, nashi pear, hazelnut and delicate spice, all play a role, underscored by pronounced minerality. A gentle smoky character, allied to candied fruit and caramel notes add to the considerable complexity of the palate, all set within a sumptuous texture. Ripeness is key here, rather than sweetness *per se* and a persistent, refreshing acidity prevails throughout, adding vitality and energy – very special.

ABV 7.5%

Recommended drinking from 2016 - 2032+

£510/case of 12 bottles, in bond UK

£275/case of 12 halves, in bond UK

£550/case of 6 magnums, in bond UK

Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese Goldkapsel ** 2011

Corney & Barrow Score 19+

The Wehlener Sonnenuhr was playing hard to get when we tasted it, rather buttoned up and reserved yet it was clear that the stage is set for a stunning *tour de force*, given time. Lustrous pale gold, it demands attention from the outset, becoming a little more grudging on the nose, just hinting at a plethora of nuanced aromatics, set off by a very marked mineral precision. The restrained elements on the nose are set free on the palate, exploding with intensity and unbridled energy. Green apple and lemon, zest and flesh are revealed immediately, setting the scene for caramel nuances, rich nuts, barley sugar, honey and crushed slate minerals. Exemplary balance and bright acidity induces hair-raising promise. These wines last so long and yet in 2011 are deliciously tempting even now.

ABV 7.5%

Recommended drinking from 2016 - 2032+

£565/case 12 bottles, in bond UK

£300/case of 12 halves, in bond UK

£600/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 (East Anglia)

01875 321 921 (Edinburgh) or 01748 828 640 (North of England)

or see www.corneyandbarrow.com

