



## WEINGUT JOH. JOS. PRÜM, GERMANY

### 2015 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. Built by Katharina's grandfather in 1902, it looks straight ahead, over the river to the soaring, 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. It's 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.

#### 2015 VISIT & VINTAGE REPORT

*"A unique combination of ripeness, intense fruit and racy acidity – great contrasts but beautifully in harmony."*

**KATHARINA PRÜM**  
SEPTEMBER 2016

Stansted Airport at 6am on a decidedly autumnal morning. Duty Free shops at full swing. Lads waking up their palates with pints of lager and chip fat sandwiches. Beyoncé squealing at me at full blast while I was still trying to work out if I had actually woken up or not. And, if that were not enough, the prospect of my capacious rear about to be squeezed in to a decidedly un-capacious airline seat called Ryan. It was an inauspicious start to what turned out to be one of the most memorable wine tasting trips of my career.

The weather was perfect when I landed at Frankfurt-Hahn airport, a Cold War era former US airforce base that still feels and looks like exactly that. A brief drive through to the Mosel Valley at Bernkastel –Kues saw off any lingering mist hanging in the valley to reveal a fresh, bright and cool morning.

After a brief chat about Brexit with the delightful Manfred Prüm, we started the tasting in earnest. The 2015 vintage has turned out to be almost perfect, despite some peculiarities in the growing season. A mild winter was followed by a slightly earlier than average bud break in late April. May and June featured wildly fluctuating temperatures between 5 and 33°C with May pretty much dry and June slightly wetter than average. July and early August saw hot sunshine. Late August and September were cooler than average which helped to avoid any rot given some short periods of rainfall. October was also cool but drier than normal which gave perfect conditions for the harvest starting early in the month and finishing on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Due to these excellent weather conditions, all Prädikat levels were harvested, from Kabinett to TBA (Trockenbeerenauslese), including some Eiswein.

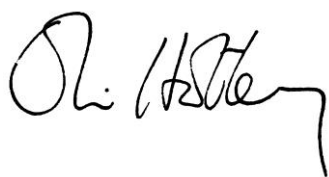
This is a vintage like no other that I have tasted from Prüm just post-bottling and it is, perhaps, the acidity that stands out in particular which makes the Kabinetts almost appear dry in style. I always tease Katharina by asking her to draw parallels with other vintages and, as usual, she was not to be goaded – some similarities with 1990, perhaps, otherwise unique. Where Katharina was quite uncharacteristically open, was that this was a great vintage – admitted with a definite nod and a smile. It might fairly be expected that a vintage with such strong vintage characteristics might overwhelm the differences between each village, but this is most certainly not the case.

In a break with convention, I am not going to write a tasting note for each wine. Such was the accuracy of each wine and the consistency of the vintage qualities, I would risk repetitive Brett-Smithian “debauchery” and Alison-ian “rapier-like acidity” for virtually every wine! What I would like you to think about when imagining how well-balanced these wines are is a graphic equaliser from an old hi-fi set up. Allow me to explain. Imagine having a multi-channel equaliser with each slider representing a different characteristic of the wine. Imagine that they are all set to produce the perfect sound. Imagine then, as you move from Kabinett to Spätlese and so on, that the ripeness and sweetness slider is increased, each of the other sliders moves in perfect harmony with the others so that the perfection of sound remains consistent but with a boost of richness. There you have it. Perfectly straightforward.

After the tasting, a wonderful lunch followed, hosted by Katharina and her mother, Amie, including many ingredients taken from their own vegetable garden, locally shot venison and trout caught in the pools of a nearby monastery. Perfectly matched wines from the family cellar complimented the food and sometimes hilarious conversation. I had arrived an hour earlier than expected due to some confusion over whether or not I was flying to Frankfurt-Mainz or Frankfurt-Hahn. As my arrival was announced, I heard a slightly horrified Katharina exclaim “Herr Hartley??” to her assistant. I was immediately reminded of my school nickname “Hartley Hare” – those of you old enough may remember Pipkins! This, of course, all came out in the wash over lunch and I don’t expect I shall live this one down for some time!

Getting back to the point...a truly outstanding set of wines from Katharina and a great achievement. I cannot recommend these wines more highly.

The brief journey back to my amusingly kitsch airport hotel left me wanting more. After a disappointing *Schweineschnitzel* washed down with a very decent lager (as if the seat on the plane wasn’t snug enough), I sat outside listening to the *Dies Irae* from Verdi’s Requiem on my iPod enjoying some 2008 Bernkasteler Badstube Spätlese – the day had ended as bizarrely as it had started and made the filling of the day’s sandwich that much more memorable.



**OLIVER HARTLEY**  
**SALES DIRECTOR**  
October, 2016

## 2015 TASTING NOTES

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### JOH. JOS. PRÜM RIESLING KABINETT 2015

Bottled in late July at 8.5% vol. this wine will thrill anyone who has tasted other vintages and also any customer new to this estate. For those who tend to find the ripeness of fruit overwhelming in German Riesling, the citrus and green apple acidity of this wine gives a far greater impression of dryness than usual. This is one of this year's "must have" wines for current, guilt-free drinking.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 17+**

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 - 2020)

**£110/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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### BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE

Vineyard holdings to the south-east along the river from the house, looking towards the church in Bernkastel-Kues. From the very first time Adam, Alison and I tasted the range in the Prüm's drawing room, their wines from this village struck us as pretty, charming, approachable and utterly drinkable. The delicate floral and white peach aromas have an almost narcotic effect which make the tasting samples impossible to spit out. 2015 was a particularly successful year for this village and showed particularly well at the tasting. The wines have an Asian, herbal, coriander nose to them with greater freshness than usual. Drink these wines if you are a hedonist or too impatient to wait for the Wehlen wines to mature!

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### BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE KABINETT 2015

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018 - 2030)

**£140/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

### BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE SPÄTLESE 2015

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18+

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018 - 2030)

**£170/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

### BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE AUSLESE 2015

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2020 - 2030+)

**£230/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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### WEHLENER SONNENUHR

Vineyard holdings directly opposite the house and the jewel in the crown of Joh. Jos. Prüm. The wines are stylistically quite the opposite to the wines from the Bernkasteler Badstube vineyard. Taut, mineral, intense, compressed and unyielding in youth, but magnificent with some age. We tasted a 1982 Kabinett from this vineyard over lunch which demonstrated how well these wines age – with similar sugars to the 2015, the 1982 had become dry and shed the obvious puppy fat of the young wine to transform into a svelte, elegant beauty. If you consider yourself patient, cerebral and smoke rare Balkan Sobranies, then buy these wines.

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### WEHLENER SONNENUHR KABINETT 2015

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18+

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2020 - 2035)

**£160/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

### WEHLENER SONNENUHR SPÄTLESE 2015

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 18+

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2020 - 2035)

**£220/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

**£150/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK**

### WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE 2015

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 19

(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2022 - 2040)

**£270/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

**£155/CASE OF 12 HALVES, IN BOND UK**

**WEHLENER SONNENUHR AUSLESE  
GOLDKAPSEL 2015**  
CORNEY & BARROW SCORE 19  
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2025 - 2040)

**£625/CASE OF 12 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK  
£325/CASE OF 12 HALVES, IN BOND UK  
£325/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK**

## **TASTING GUIDE**

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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 (e.g. 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.

## **TO ORDER**

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