



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HIS MAJESTY THE KING
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON

CORNEY &
BARROW

INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS - 1780



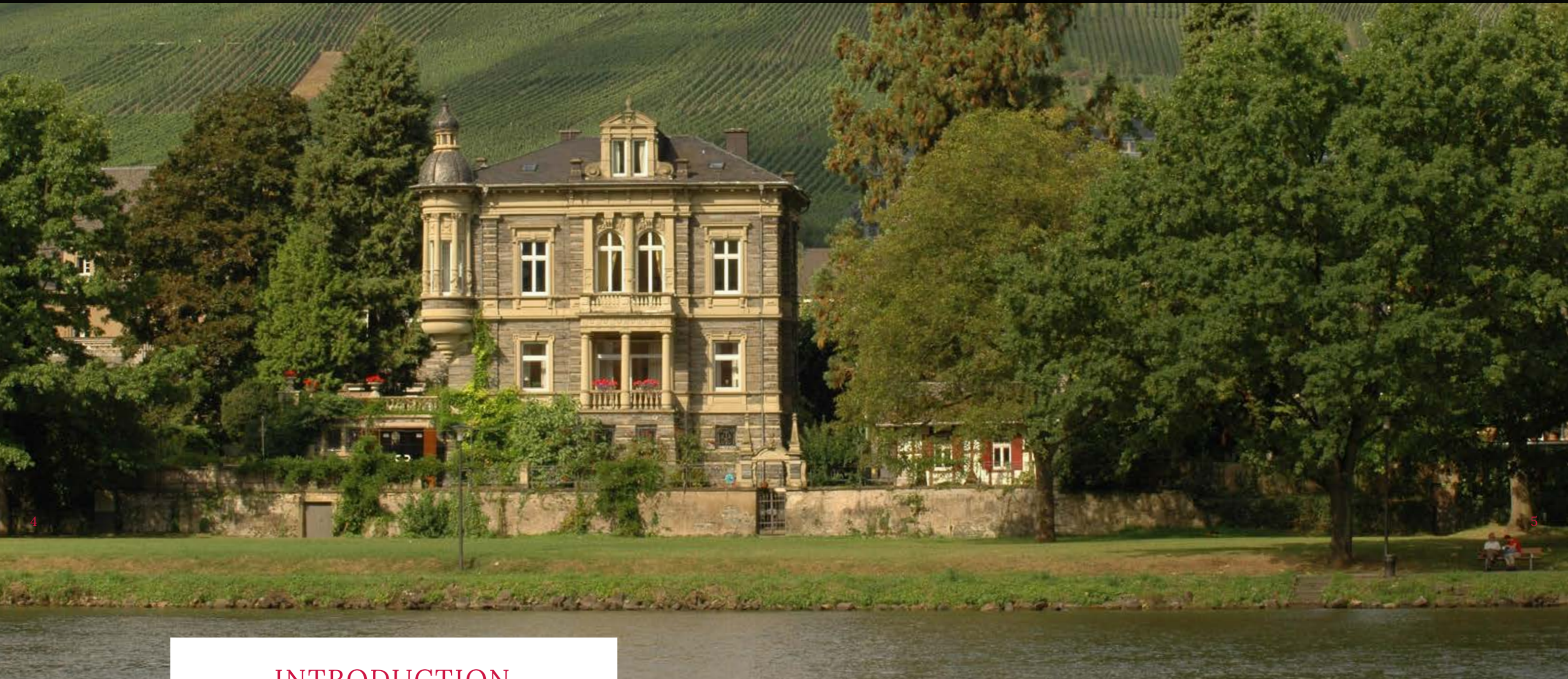
WEINGUT Wwe. Dr.H.
THANISCH, ERBEN THANISCH

2017 VINTAGE, EN PRIMEUR

“A year of beautiful ripeness, with precise acidity and lively energy.”

SOFIA THANISCH
September 2018





INTRODUCTION

There is nothing new about these wines, but last year, they were new to C&B. As we sent out our first release, as recently appointed exclusive agents, it was with the smallest *frisson* of uncertainty as to how it would be received. Well, we sold out in a flash and almost immediately had to go back to Sofia Thanisch, begging for more.



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Following a tip-off from our friend Peter Sisseck, my colleague Alison Buchanan was instrumental in securing this new relationship last year. She wrote a brilliant inaugural offer, which both helped us to sell out and has defined the framework for this year's release.

Weingut Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch, Erben Thanisch. Quite a mouthful, but it makes perfect sense. As is explained in the following section, this is the winery of the widow (*witwe*, or "Wwe") of Dr Hugo Thanisch, as passed down the Thanisch side of the family.

Sofia Thanisch represents the eleventh generation of this remarkable family. She is the fourth woman to manage the estate, having taken over from her Aunt Mechtilde in 1996. Waiting in the wings are her two daughters, Christina and Juliane.

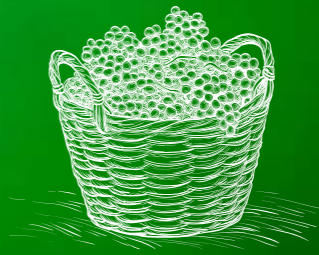
When Will Hargrove and I visited the estate in September, Christina had that month officially started work alongside her mother, following studies at Geisenheim and a period making wine in New Zealand. The succession of this great Mosel estate and its female legacy seems assured.

In addition to the wines offered earlier this year, it includes two fabulous dry Grosse Gewächse ('GG's) and a delicious Auslese from Bernkasteler Badstube, to sit alongside that from its neighbour, the Doctor.

Guy Seddon

Guy Seddon
October 2018

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HISTORY

The estate was founded in 1636, amidst the turbulence of the Thirty Years' War.

The house and cellar, impressively neo-renaissance in style, was built in 1884, on the Kues side of Bernkastel, the left bank of the Mosel.

Fashionable and highly esteemed, increased interest in the region's wines allowed top estate owners to invest in both bricks and mortar as well as cellar infrastructure.

It is recorded that between 1893 and 1908, the wines from Dr Hugo Thanisch's estate attained the highest auction results in the region.



THE VINEYARDS

The view from the top of the Doctor vineyard, looking down at the town of Bernkastel, must be one of the most breathtaking sights in the world of wine. You feel that one false step would send you crashing down the precipitous slope. It would be a terrible waste of good grapes.

The size of the estate is a modest nine hectares, the Thanisch vineyard parcels lying within a stretch of the Mosel which is relatively straight, a run of south-facing vineyards of world renown – within Zeltingen, Wehlen, Graach and Bernkastel.

These sites provide concentration and layered complexity. As we did last year, we have focused on two vineyards, at the varying ripeness levels, the better to get under the skin of the vineyards.

8 We loved the wines of Bernkasteler Badstube. The vineyard is named after historic communal bathhouses – public bathing having been imported by returning crusaders. The soil here, fine slate, makes for wines with racy acidity and long ageing potential.

The Badstube vineyards lie astride the town's most famous vineyard, the Berncasteler Doctor*. This includes parcels which the Thanisch have owned for 200 years. In 1882, the family expanded their holding of the Doctor vineyard – a wise investment. The Doctor has a favoured south/south-west aspect and a precarious 65% gradient. As can be seen from the image below, the snow here melts earlier than on the neighbouring slopes.

The Thanisch family practise sustainable viticulture, coaxing the best out of their mature, largely ungrafted vines, planted on Devonian slate. In the early twentieth century, Riesling from the steep slopes of the Mosel was in extraordinarily high demand, commanding higher prices than first growth Bordeaux. Undoubtedly, the quality is even greater now, making these an absolute bargain in today's world of fine wine.

* Note the different spellings – Bernkasteler Badstube and Berncasteler Doctor. Not a typo, we promise...



The town of Bernkastel with the frozen Mosel in the foreground and the thawed slopes of the Doctor vineyard behind the church spire.





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THE 2017 VINTAGE

“A small harvest, but one of excellent quality, reflecting the richness of the vintage. The wines offer ripe and opulent fruit and presence as well as weight on the palate. With their pronounced acidity, they taste drier than one could expect from the analytics.”

SOFIA THANISCH

September 2018

After a vibrant 2015 and a sensual 2016, the 2017 season delivered a perfect spring, with warm temperatures in March and early April, fostering hopes for an excellent vintage. Unfortunately, the estate was hit hard by frost in the second half of April, after budbreak. This affected the best parcels and destined the crop to be a very small one. This was further compounded by some hail in May.

May and June were largely sunny and dry. However, early July, whilst remaining hot, saw some rainfall, with temperatures dropping markedly at mid-month. July ended at around 20°C. August and September were both rather unstable and humid, with moderate temperatures.

Harvest started on 25th September, the earliest in the history of the estate. Picking started with a small team, more pickers joining in the second week, to help with grape selection. As usual, harvest began in the Kues vineyards on the left bank of the Mosel. In the third week, the team moved to the Bernkastel side, to the Grosse Lage vineyards of Bernkasteler Lay, Graben and the famous Bernkasteler Doctor.

Sorting was absolutely crucial in 2017. Sofia Thanisch describes this as “a really hard but necessary job”. The grapes came in at high must weights, especially those from the Bernkastel vineyards, many falling into the Spätlese and Auslese categories, with 90 to 100° Oechsle. The overall yield in 2017 was 50% less than in 2016.



TASTING NOTES

There are four categories in the notes that follow: the ‘estate’ Riesling, the Badstube wines, the Doctor Prädikat wines and the dry Grosse Gewächse.

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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. For the benefit of simplicity, wines are scored out of 20. 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.

THANISCH ESTATE RIESLING KABINETT

The Estate Riesling comes mainly from vineyards around Kues, on the left bank of the Mosel. Flinty on the nose, although with darting hints of opulence. The palate is, by contrast, more expansively fruited, with plump white stone-fruit kept in check by a wet-stone mineral bite. This finishes very clean, in Sofia's words, "cleansing the palate". Bottled September 2018 – the day before we tasted it, in fact.

Corney & Barrow Score 17
Recommended drinking from 2019 – 2023

£80/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£95/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

Bernkasteler Badstube

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE RIESLING KABINETT

This forms a pair with the next wine, the Feinherb, the only difference between the two bottlings being the length of fermentation. The fermentation here is halted a little earlier, giving a slightly plusher style. This has pliancy and cushioning of fruit, with notes of grapefruit and lychee, offset against precise, zippy acidity. Will Hargrove called this "joyful", and I won't argue. Excellent value.

Corney & Barrow Score 17 – 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2019 – 2029

£90/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE RIESLING KABINETT FEINHERB

This Feinherb, or 'off-dry' style, ferments for slightly longer than the 'straight' Kabinett, resulting in a marginally drier style. A spicy, stony-mineral nose, opening onto a similarly chiselled palate, which slowly reveals quince, tea-leaf spice and yellow flowers. The back-palate is very delicate, with an impressive weight of fruit and extract behind. Hedonists should buy the previous wine; those who value the fine bone structure should go for this. (there is no right answer, it really is a matter of taste...)

Corney & Barrow Score 17+
Recommended drinking from 2019 – 2027

£90/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE RIESLING SPATLESE

Bright lemony zest on the nose, with cheese straw notes. The palate is soft and pliant, with an overt fruit-drive, underpinned by a refined sense of power and a notion of texture. Beautifully harmonious, this is a pick. The mark of this wine's quality is that the dialled-up body and volume does not detract one iota from the nuanced minerality at its core. Stunning clarity of expression.

Corney & Barrow Score 18+
Recommended drinking from 2022 – 2026

£110/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

BERNKASTELER BADSTUBE RIESLING AUSLESE

A new wine to this year's offer, this has a smoky, flinty nose, with a touch of cheesecloth texture, leading into a juicily, plumply-fruited fore-palate which is rich but at ease in its own skin, even at this early stage. The fruit character is shot through with a sharp line of taut acidity. The back-palate is long, the fruit dropping away to reveal a salty mineral bedrock which contributes to a precise finish.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2026 – 2035+

£140/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

The Doctor

BERNCASTELER DOCTOR RIESLING KABINETT

A complex, textured nose of petrol, flinty minerality and firm white stone-fruit, with lemony zest. The fore-palate is powerfully ripe and expressive (this would pass for a Spätlese with ease), yet kept in check by a salty minerality from the mid-palate to the finish. This comes to an admirably precise point, with lingering salinity. Really lovely wine. It had already sold out by the time of our tasting in September 2018, but Sofia had kindly saved a little for us!

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2023 – 2033

£140/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£155/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

BERNCASTELER DOCTOR RIESLING SPATLESE

There is another level of fruit intensity on the nose here. The palate is resoundingly ripe, dense and with a strong sense of salinity. With a little time in the glass, it opens to reveal apples, pears, white flowers and a touch of honey. Most impressive is the drive, the momentum that carries the flavours through to a long, laser-like finish. The equivalent of 360 bottles of this was sold at the traditional VDP auctions in autumn 2018, ultimately going for several multiples of this price.

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5
Recommended drinking from 2023 – 2032+

£180/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£195/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

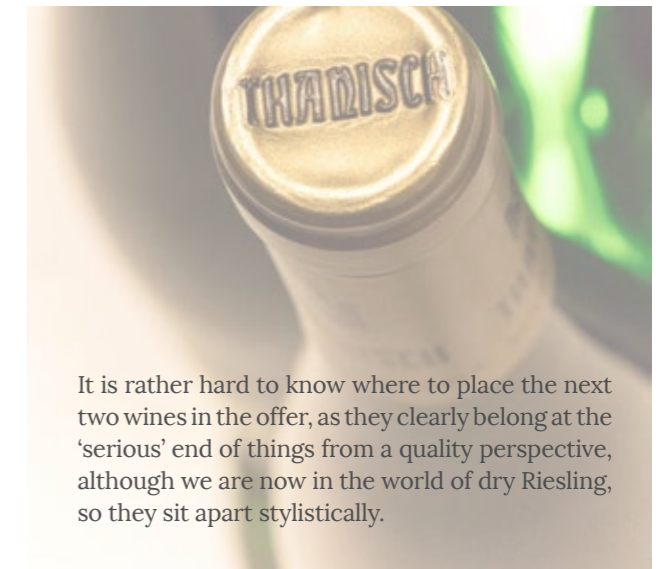
BERNCASTELER DOCTOR RIESLING AUSLESE

In many ways the pinnacle of this offer, this majestic wine has quite lovely, upfront stone-fruit, white peach and pretty white flowers, with an impressive weight and body. It feels drier than its Auslese designation indicates, the taut acidity ensuring drinkability and, as Sofia says, "inviting you to have another glass". Indeed, perhaps this drinkability is the key to this wine: you feel there are no aspirations to the richer BA or TBA levels here, but rather an ease and fluidity. The finish is long, with the resonant fruit persisting.

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5+
Recommended drinking from 2025 – 2045

£295/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£310/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

Grosse Gewächse



It is rather hard to know where to place the next two wines in the offer, as they clearly belong at the 'serious' end of things from a quality perspective, although we are now in the world of dry Riesling, so they sit apart stylistically.

BERNKASTELER GRABEN RIESLING GROSSES GEWACHS TROCKEN

Bernkasteler Graben lies next-door to the Doctor vineyard. A brightly-fruited nose of green apple, lime and herbs, leading into a precise, taut palate which is steely and sternly impressive. This finishes with admirable focus and clipped precision. Give it a year or two in bottle to flesh out.

Corney & Barrow Score 17
Recommended drinking from 2020 – 2026

£155/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

BERNCASTELER DOCTOR RIESLING GROSSES GEWACHS TROCKEN

Only just over one *foudre* is made of this – around 1500 bottles – making it something of a curiosity. A fruit-driven citric intensity to the nose, with quince and a little orange rind. On the palate, it blossoms, revealing swathes of ripe stone-fruit, but crucially, finishing wonderfully taut and precise. A wine of rather majestic austerity which will reward a couple of years of bottle age.

Corney & Barrow Score 17.5
Recommended drinking from 2021 – 2029

£190/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK
£205/CASE OF 3 MAGNUMS, IN BOND UK

To Order

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PLEASE NOTE

These wines are released en primeur. Delivery dates to be confirmed. All prices are quoted in bond UK.





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