

AROUND TOWN

35 Plus Mixer and New Member Party at K Street Lounge with 2 for 1 Drink Specials

Mix and mingle with old friends and new fellow 35 Plus professionals! Call 202-686-5990 for tickets (\$10).

Date: Nov 16, 2007, Time: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM, Place: K Street Lounge at 1301 K Street NW Washington, D.C.

SCOTT GREENBERG *Vine Guy*

Around the world with Riesling

I recently read a wonderful article on the virtues of Riesling, a white grape varietal that emerged centuries ago in the Alsace region of France and the Rheingau region of Germany but can now be found throughout the grape-growing world. The author of the article was making the point that he forgot how much he loved Riesling. He was recounting all of the qualities he adored about the popular varietal: versatility, diversity and stylistic differences.

The more I read the article, the more I felt like it was speaking directly to me. I, too, had somehow misplaced my passion for Riesling somewhere along the way. And then a wonderful coincidence occurred. Cindy and I were checking out The Source, Wolfgang Puck's newest restaurant venture, which is in the recently completed Newseum building. There we met Esther "Malia" Milstead, the incredibly knowledgeable sommelier who recently left the nationally renowned Gary Danko restaurant in San Francisco to run the wine program here. She noticed that we had brought with us a plethora of wine to sample alongside the eclectic menu. Ms. Milstead insisted that we put away our cache and leave our palates in her capable hands. I'm delighted we did.

Malia mused over our course selections and, with a confident smile on her face, disappeared down the stairway toward the glass-enclosed wall of wine on the first floor. She returned with a small carafe of straw-colored elixir just as our "Maryland Crab Two Ways" hit the table. She poured out an equal measure in both glasses

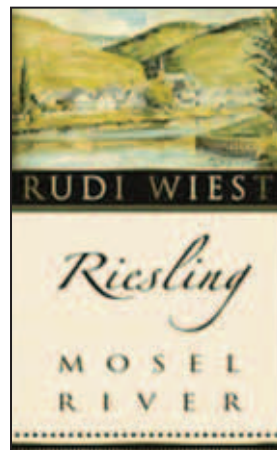
and then stepped back to watch our reaction. As soon as I put my nose to the wine, I was immediately rewarded with scents of citrus, floral notes and a distinctive "saltiness" (tasting of wet or crushed slate) that I associate with Riesling.

A sip of wine and a bite of crab and I was in heaven. While the pairing was superb, I was confident that the wine would shine on its own — and it did. The timing of our encounter with Malia and the article was too much to ignore, so I recently went down to the basement and pulled up all of the Riesling samples that I had benignly neglected. Here are the notes on my favorite Rieslings from around the globe. Retail prices are approximate.

2006 Rudy Wiest Riesling, Mosel, Germany (\$12) This is the wine that Malia served to us at The Source. The notes of tangy green apples and lemon/lime fruit zipped over the tongue, buoyed by hints of crushed stone on the medium body. The abundant acidity kept the flavors light and bright. Obviously, it was a perfect match with crab cakes.

2004 Stratford Riesling, Martinborough, New Zealand (\$20) A beautiful wine featuring citrusy notes of lemon and lime with a hint of roasted almonds on the vibrant nose.

Rich flavors of apricot, white nectarine and orange rind play out over the entire tongue. Crisp acidity keeps the wine in balance while a tad of residual sugar lends some heft to the lengthy finish. Try it with fried oysters.



2005 Anindor Vineyard, Umpqua Valley, Oregon (\$15 — available directly from the winery) This gem from southern Oregon goes to show that Riesling is gaining domestic popularity. Made in an off-dry style, it has a pretty bouquet

of cardamom, cloves and a touch of petrol and layered flavors of nectarine, apricot marmalade with a touch of candied orange on the clean finish. Given the slight sweetness and great acidity, I'd like to try it with General Tso's chicken.

2004 Tamar Ridge Riesling, Tasmania, Australia (\$20) This example hails from a cooler climate region and therefore emphasizes citrus notes and crisp acidity. Flavors of lemon, lime and pineapple fill the mouth while the acidity keeps the fruit in balance on the crisp, bright finish. Hints of tropical fruit and a touch of sweetness makes this wine a good choice to pair with spicier Asian fare.

2006 Chateau Ste. Michelle Eroica Riesling, Columbia Valley,

Washington state (\$25) This joint effort is the result of a collaboration between the world-renowned German winemaker, Ernst Loosen, and the winemaker for Chateau Ste. Michele, Bob Bertheau. Using Washington state fruit, they have produced a Riesling that delivers fresh, slightly spicy flavors of orange, white peach, lemon and lime. Notes of crushed stone and slate blend in seamlessly on the layered finish. A nice, dry-style Riesling to pair with this year's Thanksgiving turkey.

2005 Domaine Weinbach Riesling Cuvee Saint Catherine, Alsace, France (\$45) Of course, no article about Riesling would be complete without including a selection from the famed Alsace region of France. This example is sublime, with scents of lemon zest, peaches and ginger on the fragrant nose. Wonderfully textured flavors of nectarine, melon and citrus glide over the tongue and get a boost at the end from notes of "pumpkin spices" and slate that slide in on the rich finish. A brilliant match with seared foie gras.



Do you have a favorite royalty of wine? E-mail me at scott@vineguy.com.



California's wine grape harvest dragged on a bit but ends up slightly from 2006 levels

By Michelle Locke

BERKELEY, Calif. — Fluctuating temperatures have made for a slow-and-go wine grape harvest in California this year.

The weather warmed up in August, bringing an early start to the picking season, and for a while it looked like harvest would be a speedy session. But temperatures cooled in September, extending the season as growers waited for grapes to ripen.

"It ended up being a fairly lengthy harvest, letting us pick on a slow pace through the first part of November," said Fred Holloway, winemaker at Justin Vineyards & Winery in the Central Coast region. "It was kind of a laid-back harvest."

With picking beginning in August, "it was kind of the harvest that wouldn't end," said Nick Frey, pres-



Workers sift through Cabernet Sauvignon grapes on a sorting table at the Staglin Family Vineyard during harvest in Rutherford, Calif., on Sept. 18. Fluctuating temperatures made for a slow-and-go wine grape harvest in California. — AP

ident of the Sonoma County Wine-grape Commission.

Harvest ended in a bit of a rush

for some growers who had to hustle to get the last of the grapes in before the rains came. Still, the cool

harvest temperatures gave the fruit longer to mature, producing more intense flavors, he said.

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"I think it will be a good vintage," said Frey. "It won't be a huge vintage, but I think the winemakers are justifiably excited about what's in the tank."

Overall, the crop was lighter than normal, according to a release issued Monday by the San Francisco-based Wine Institute.

The institute, the lobbying arm of the industry, said the latest forecast from the California Department of Food and Agriculture is for a crop of 3.2 million tons, up slightly from last year's 3.1 million tons. The two years of lighter crops follow a bumper harvest in 2005 that resulted in a crush of 3.7 million tons. — AP