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12 Jul 2022

WineBarn Germans 2022



The WineBarn's annual portfolio tasting throws up some some real gems, extremely good value from newcomers and reliable brilliance from producers who make beautiful wines year in and year out. Tam managed to taste 110 of them in total.

It's been two years since I last had the opportunity to taste The WineBarn's portfolio. While tasting at some tables was simply déjà vu – the rush of pleasure in tasting wines I have always loved, that have always been high quality and still, thank goodness, are – there have been some changes. Newcomers, for me, were Kranz from the Pfalz (chosen by Prof Peter de Bolla recently), Jakob Schneider from the Nahe and Kochan & Platz from the Mosel.

I was smitten with the Kranz sparkling rosé made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon. I wanted to dash off and buy their entire production of 1,500 bottles. A Cabernet vineyard planted in the wrong place, the vines struggling to ripen, has turned out one of the most scrumptious and unusual sparkling pinks I have ever tasted. Furthermore, we're not talking about a simple Sekt. This is a really complex, structured wine. My mouth is still watering as I write this, two months later.

Kochan & Platz have defied not only our rigid Mosel-is-Riesling assumptions, but also the assumption that Dornfelder is an inferior grape. Their Dornfelder red is another lip-smacking, glou-glou, heart-stealing wine-for-foodies at an equally heart-stealing price.

Jakob Schneider is making wines that were **GV** across the board. If you can't afford the big names, these guys deliver all the Riesling love you could wish for.

In terms of big names, Bercher was on such top form that I could have spent all day at his table, tasting and retasting the wines. They were orchestral. I found Heger a little disappointing. The wines seemed to lack the vitality of many of those around them. From a personal perspective, I'm finding more and more, as German producers reduce new oak and extraction time for their reds as well as white varieties such as Chardonnay and Weissburgunder, it's becoming sharply apparent that those who cling to high-impact oak regimes are looking increasingly old-fashioned and out of synch with the times. This is not a question of blindly following trends: those who have reduced new oak to judicious proportions, or dropped it altogether, are those who are looking to transmit terroir and produce wines with finesse rather than power. And it works.

I keenly felt the absence of the smiling Meyer-Näkel sisters and their stunningly beautiful wines. After the tragedy they experienced last year, who knows when they will be back, but I hope it's not long.

The 110 tasting notes below are grouped by style or grape variety; within that by producer (sur)name and then the wines very roughly in the order of the German quality system, from *Gutswein* (estate wine) to *Grosses Gewächs* (grand cru). You can reorder them if you prefer.

Select sorting option ▼

Sparkling

Allendorf, Riesling Deutscher Sekt Brut 2018

Rheingau

50% of the base wine was matured in large wooden barrels before secondary fermentation. On lees for 12 months. RS 8.3 g/l, TA 6.3 g/l.

Crisp, tense, salty citrus. Not complex but very appetising. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£19.15 The WineBarn

15.5

Bassermann-Jordan, Riesling Deutscher Sekt Brut NV

Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. 12 months on lees. RS 9.8 g/l, TA 7 g/l.

Crisp, lean, appetising. Apples and crispbread. Competent, but there are better Sekts in The WineBarn portfolio. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£23.80 The WineBarn

15

Kochan & Platz, Riesling Deutscher Sekt Brut 2020

Mosel

20 months secondary lees ageing. RS 5.5 g/l, TA 7.3 g/l.

I had to rush, and I mean *rush*, through the tasting with this producer, so this same apology will be repeated on every tasting note. I did not give them enough time. My scores might well be off. Herbal, sweet lime and hemp hearts. Bright and pert. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£17.99 The WineBarn

15.5

Kranz, Rosé Cabernet Sauvignon Deutscher Sekt Brut 2019 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. They planted Cabernet 20 years ago, but it's a cool site and doesn't ripen well. Made by the traditional method and spends 18 months sur lattes. RS 4 g/l. 1,500 bottles.

Gosh, this IS good! Sappy and juicy, and packed with sour cherries, blood orange, raspberry. But there is also a long line of graphite running through the wine, and a peppery molle-leaf bite. SO vibrant; brilliant tension. Mouth-watering finish. What a revelation! Quite unique - I've never tasted a sparkling rosé quite like this. This wine really stole my heart. **VGV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£25.20 The WineBarn

17

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Erbacher Marcobrunn Riesling Deutscher Sekt Extra Brut 2012 Rheingau

RS 5.8 g/l, TA 7.3 g/l.

Nuttiness, and a trace of smoke, a lick of bitter green and reminds me a bit of the green kale and celery juice I had earlier today. Super-refreshing, super-crunchy, and despite what must have been a long period sur lattes, it's not showing a great deal of autolytic development. More whetstone than the broad power I would have expected from a wine with long secondary-lees ageing. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£22.20 The WineBarn

15.5

Whites

Riesling

Aldinger, Rebhuhn Riesling 2020 Württemberg

60% of the fermentation is spontaneous between 17 °C and 20 °C. It stays on the lees until around February. 50% is fermented in oak barrel, 50% in stainless steel. RS 6.5 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l.

Nice prickle on first sip. It reminds me a little of rose-petal, herby, delicately sweet grape water. Light, fragrant, crisp golden apples. Super-refreshing and with a silvery brightness.

GV (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£14.35 The WineBarn

16

Allendorf, Save Water Drink Riesling 2020 Rheingau

Screwcap. RS 9.2 g/l, TA 7.7 g/l.

Bit watery. Green peaches. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2021

-

2022

£13.35 The WineBarn

15

Allendorf, Free Save Water Drink Riesling 2020 Rheingau

Screwcap. Tech sheet specifies <0.3% alcohol. RS 45 g/l, TA 7.8 g/l.

Like an apple- and grape-juice spritzer. Quite refreshing, in fact. Better than the Save Water Drink Riesling with alcohol! (TC)

Drink

2021

-

2022

£10.30 The WineBarn

15.5

Allendorf, Riesling trocken 2020 Rheingau

RS 7.3 g/l, TA 7.9 g/l.

The sample was very cold – maybe a bit too cold for ideal tasting conditions. Tastes like lemon-barley cordial. Dry, tidy, nondescript. (TC)

12%

Drink

2021

-

2022

£16 The WineBarn

15

Allendorf, Roter Riesling trocken 2020 Rheingau

Eight hours of skin contact and 10% whole berries in the tank for five months. RS 6.3 g/l, TA 7.6 g/l.

Nice earthiness and spice. Little bit of texture, and there is a sense of sumac through the crisp apple fruit. It reminds me a little of hawthorn berries. Quite soft and floral. (TC)

13%

Drink

2021

-

2023

£17.85 The WineBarn

15.5

Allendorf, Charta Riesling 2020 Rheingau

RS 9.9 g/l, TA 7.6 g/l.

Smells like strawberries on straw after cool morning rain. Wonderful strawberry fruit on

this wine! Plus a little cheeky kick of purple. Like a wine gum left in the mouth. Gentle spice dustiness. Iris flowers. Dry finish. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£20.20 The WineBarn

16

Allendorf, Winkeler Riesling trocken 2020 Rheingau

Vines on loam and loess, 25–40 years old. RS 7.1 g/l, TA 7 g/l.

Apples and rooibos tea. Slimline with a touch of quinine and grapefruit brightness. Not complex, but there is a nice gentle clench on the end. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£17.85 The WineBarn

15.5

Allendorf, Rudesheimer Berg Roseneck Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2017 Rheingau

This vineyards was given to them 28 years ago as a wedding gift. A south-facing vineyard with two distinct sections: eastern and western. The soils and gradients are quite variable across the site. RS 3.8 g/l, TA 6.9 g/l.

Apple blossom and smoke on the nose. Lean and bone, bone dry. Bones and stones, and stony citrus. Petrol notes developing through a matrix of tiny green flowers carved in smoky metal. Quite dramatic but not the most approachable right now. I wonder if it might be going into a closed phase? (TC)

13%
Drink
2024
-
2027
£37 The WineBarn
16.5 +

Bassermann-Jordan, Riesling trocken 2021 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. RS 7.8 g/l, TA 8.1 g/l.

Fennel, herbs. A (small) fraction more to it than the 2020, but still very far from the best entry-level Rieslings. There are far less well-known producers in this portfolio who are making way better entry-level wines. Is this a producer cruising on their laurels? Overpriced. (TC)

12.5%
Drink
2022
-
2023
£19.85 The WineBarn
15

Bassermann-Jordan, Riesling trocken 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. The website says RS 7.8 g/l and TA 3.9 g/l, but that acidity seems oddly low. An error?

Bit simple. Lime and lean. Nice and sharp on the finish but there are entry-level wines in The WineBarn portfolio that deliver way more than this at 25% less in terms of price. (TC)

12%
Drink
2022
-
2023

£19.85 The WineBarn

15

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Riesling trocken 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Stainless steel. RS 4.3 g/l, TA 7.6 g/l.

Dry and pebbly with a bit of a shine in the mouth. Not complex or long. Very ordinary if well-made Riesling. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£21.65 The WineBarn

15.5

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Leinhöhle Riesling trocken 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. The Leinhöhle is on the western brim of Deidesheim next to Kieselberg and Paradiesgarten, south-facing and close to the forest so it gets a lot of sun during the day and cool wind during the night. On eroded sandstone and loam.

Spontaneous fermentation in old oak. RS 2.8 g/l, TA 8.4 g/l.

Chalky, dry, stemmy, herbal. Correct and well-disciplined. Nice salty finish. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£26.15 The WineBarn

16

Bassermann-Jordan, Forster Jesuitengarten Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Picked end of September. Fermented two-thirds in traditional oak barrels and one-third in stainless steel. The wine was kept on the yeast until bottling in July. RS 0.9 g/l, TA 9.1 g/l.

A tinge of caramel on the nose. Chamomile flowers, white pithy bitterness, grapefruit. Slightly smoky. The mid palate is a bit hollow but the finish has clench and drive. Good structure, but I'd like more depth and intensity for this price. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2023

-

2029

£71.05 The WineBarn

16

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Kieselberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. The Kieselberg is situated on the western brim on Deidesheim next to Hohenmorgen, south facing towards Leinhöhle. On the north side is a 4-m stone wall, bordering Mäushöhle. On eroded sandstone, fine-sandstone gravel and loam. Selective picking end of September. Fermented 50% in traditional oak and 50% in stainless steel. RS 2.8 g/l, TA 8.2 g/l.

Really crunchy, really dry, like a mouthful of iced lime, gravel, sunflower seed hearts, hemp hearts and cumin. Wiry, slim frame. Baobab-like acidity that starts small and then builds and fills the mouth. These Basserman-Jordan wines are only starting to make sense at the GG level. Have they sold out lower down the tier? (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£49.50 The WineBarn

16.5

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Kalkofen Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. RS 1.2 g/l, TA 8.1 g/l.

I prefer the 2015. Gritty and gravelly and dry. Just a bit oddly dilute for a GG. Iron and metal. Sorrel. Doesn't feel balanced between fruit, minerality and acidity. Maybe this is just a root day for Bassermann-Jordan wines... (TC)

13%

Drink

2023

-

2026

£54.45 The WineBarn

15.5

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Hohenmorgen Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. A 2.76-ha vineyard. 40-year-old vines. Fermented in old oak barrels. RS 3.9 g/l, TA 7.6 g/l.

Vegetal, firm, a bit bitter sour. A bit disappointing. Cucumber, lime and salt. Nice finish, though. Good pucker. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

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2026

£65.65 The WineBarn

15.5

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Kalkofen Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2015 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. A warm, east-south-east-facing vineyard on sandy, clay soils with several inlays of limestone (partly eroded). Hand-picked in several tries. Seven hours' of maceration on skins, long slow press, fermentation in stainless steel. RS 4.4 g/l, TA 6.8 g/l.

Nectar and honeyed nuts; soy wax, hazelnuts. Great tertiary development. Body weight and chestnut paste and bay-leaf notes and complexity. Highly competent. Not, compared with some of its peers, as thrilling. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2019

-

2024

£60.90 The WineBarn

17

Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Hohenmorgen Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2014 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic.

Mousy and musty. Faulty bottle? (TC)

13%

Drink ??

£65.65 The WineBarn

??

Bischel, Riesling trocken 2020 Rheinhessen

Fragrant nose, but into the straight and narrow on the palate with lime-and-stone linearity. Quietly conservative, classic, cool, unshowy. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£17.20 The WineBarn

15.5

Bischel, Binger Riesling trocken 2020 Rheinhessen

Erste Lage/premier cru vineyard.

Gravel dust and green peach. So much texture that it almost feels as if it has light tannins. This really coils around the tongue, sinuously green, husky with gravel. Pointed, forward focused, tucked neatly into the parallel tramlines of efficient speed. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£25.95 The WineBarn

16.5

Bischel, Gau-Algesheimer Terra Fusca Riesling trocken 2020 Rheinhessen

From the old vines grown on steep, south-facing slopes of vineyards in Gau-Algesheimer, St Laurenzikapelle and Goldberg. Terra fusca soils are rich in clay and limestone. TA 7.5 g/l, RS 4.5 g/l.

Smells like a ripe honeydew melon. But crisp and grippy on the palate. Lovely tingle and, through the core, a slim augur of gorse-leaf-and-yellow-floral-scented loaminess.

Greengage and sweet lovage leafiness. A white-pepper-spiced finish. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£22.40 The WineBarn

16.5

Göttelmann, Vom Schiefer feinherb Riesling 2020

Nahe

Vines on very old volcanic metamorphic black slate. Spontaneous fermentation slowly over three months in temperature-controlled tanks. RS 15 g/l, TA 6.2 g/l.

White currants, poached pears, dainty. Lips puckered up for a kiss; child-like in its playfulness and charm; a caper of energy. Sweet-pea fragrance, juicy and so arms-flung-wide in its embrace. A wine so immediately beguiling that it would be easy to not notice that there is real complexity here. **VG** (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£15.50 The WineBarn

16.5

Göttelmann, Vom Roten Schiefer Riesling trocken

2020 Nahe

Vines on red slate, high in ferrous oxide. The grapes were picked in the middle of October, spontaneous fermentation. 6,000 bottles produced. RS 5.2 g/l, TA 7.6 g/l.

Perhaps it's power of suggestion, but I found this smelt like red-apple skin. A delicious

earthiness supporting crunchy bright, polished-glass clarity of fruit. A real palate wake up, like a bowl of cool, just-chopped fruit salad. Transmitting terroir with a generous dose of down-to-earth pleasure. **GV** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£16.45 The WineBarn

16

Göttelmann, Vom Schwarzen Schiefer Riesling trocken 2020 Nahe

Black slate. Vines 12–30 years old. Picked second week of October. Fermentation and maturing took place in temperature-controlled steel tanks. 5,000 bottles. RS 5.2 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l.

More linear than the Göttelmann Vom Roten Schiefer; peppermint, green apple, touch of honeysuckle. Pretty, sucky stony, a super-light dusting of stone dust. Tasting this wine is like seeing it through dappled-green spring tree leaves. It has that 'shifting', 'moving', light-through-shape quality with the luminousness of tree leaves in early spring. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£16.05 The WineBarn

16

Göttelmann, Münsterer Dautenpflänzer Riesling trocken 2020 Nahe

Stony vineyards, south facing and very steep (30–50%), on red quartzite slate. Vines over 35 years old. Spontaneous fermentation in stainless steel (although they may finish with inoculated yeasts) and aged in 500-litre casks. RS 5.2 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l.

Mossy, dusty notes with a touch of cumin, gorse, sweet lemon and ripe apples. The wine pixelates in the mouth, first becoming more crystalline in complexity, then swirling into a softer blur of melon and mushrooms. Then this extraordinarily mouth-watering finish. The acidity floods in at the end, triangular and bottle-glass green. Greengage and kiwi. Really builds after a soft tentative start. Great finish! Mouth-filling. **VGV** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

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2028

£17.65 The WineBarn

17

Göttelmann, Münsterer Kapellenberg Le Mur Riesling trocken 2020 Nahe

Spontaneous fermentation in old wooden casks. His top vineyard site, which is a 'clos' surrounded by a wall, hence 'Le Mur'.

Quiet nose. Like a pile of loosely folded, perfectly white linen. White flowers, grapefruit pith, baked apples. A little squiggle of fresh, peppery, liquorice-sweet green herbs. A mouthful of this is like an early morning walk down a long, winding garden path. Fragrant, directional, drawing. Fresh hay, meadow grass, wild flowers, and then an unexpectedly fabulous, outgoing, mouth-filling finale. Layers and layers and a neural network of energy so alive it seemed to hum. My mouth was zimming! Göttelmann is really the hidden gem of The WineBarn collection. **VGV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

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2030

£22.05 The WineBarn

17

K F Groebe, Riesling trocken 2021 Rheinhessen

Friedrich Groebe's eyes shine when he talks about this cooler classic vintage, which came after four or five hot vintages. TA 8.3 g/l.

Cooler than the 2020; more lime, more raciness, feels much longer yet there is significantly less alcohol. 'A perfect vintage', says Groebe, 'back to the rules'. Greengage and shining in the mouth, crystalline. There is a delicate intensity to the citrus notes, an underlay of orange blossom, the finest scratch of stone, quinine bite and this ping-pong juiciness that seems to pick up a crack of salt flakes as it flies across the palate. This is really a joy to taste. (TC)

11.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£18.50 The WineBarn

16.5

K F Groebe, Riesling trocken 2020 Rheinhessen

Most of the grapes come from their vineyard in the Westhofener Aulerde on clay loam with gritty sand. A very small portion of grapes come from their vineyard in the Westhofener Kirchspiel site with a clay marl soil. Picked at the beginning of October and fermented and matured in wooden casks. The young wine is then stored on fine lees until bottling. RS 4.5 g/l, TA 8.1 g/l.

Delicious nose - smells like home-made honey-and-nut granola on fresh apples. So charming, so pretty, so fresh. Loving that cheeky little nuttiness. Pert, like a little sparrow singing its heart out. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£18.50 The WineBarn

16.5

K F Groebe, 1763 Riesling 2021 Rheinhessen

1763 is the year the estate was founded. This is what used to be known as 'Kabinett trocken' but now they are not allowed to put that on the label. From vines 25-30 years old, picked fairly late at the end of September, spontaneous fermentation, RS 10.5 g/l. An exquisite nose. Cherry blossom, apples, tiny elderflowers, lime bonbon, pixelated acidity, shimmering like a dragonfly in the mouth. A tiny dancer on tip toes. Such a joy to taste - there is sheer pleasure in every molecule of this wine. (TC)

11%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£20.50 The WineBarn

16.5

K F Groebe, Westhofener Kirchspiel Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Rheinhessen

Th south-easterly vineyard is on the middle and upper slopes of a hillside. A chain of hills to the west and north of the location protects the vineyards from cold winds. Due to the gradient and exposition of the land, the vineyards enjoy optimum exposure to the sun. Vines are more than 60-65 years old on limestone over clay marl and also some weathered chalky clay. Aged in wooden casks.

Violets, bluebells, like a woodland glade shimmering with butterflies. This is spine-tingling: lacy, intricate, latticed gossamer. Crab apples and vineyard peach. Lime and yuzu and the cool-warm fragrance of lemongrass. Long. Hint of nuts in the finish. There is such massive complexity in this pearlescent, diaphanous tenuity of a wine that it's almost

perplexing. Almost magical. Spell-binding. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2031

£50.20 The WineBarn

18

K F Groebe, Westhofener Aulerde Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Rheinhessen

The parcel of 58-year-old vines that this wine is made from is located in the centre of the original Aulerde vineyard. On clay loam and clay. Picked very ripe in October and aged in traditional, 1,200-litre oak casks.

So different from the Kirchspiel, even though the vintage and winemaking are the same. Broad in the mouth, wider, fans out and is more loose-knit. Yet on the finish, the acidity tightens up very quickly, less charm, snaps into intentional focus. The finish is fantastic: power and fanfare, and mouth-watering. The fruit is succulent, sensuous, but even with the breadth and lavish spread, there is diamond-cutter precision in the acidity. Totally different shape of wine from the Kirchspiel and every bit as glorious. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2032

£50.20 The WineBarn

18

Kochan & Platz, Classic Riesling 2020 Mosel

Clear glass. RS 11.6 g/l, TA 7.7 g/l.

Jasmine and clean lemon-barley finish. Fresh and bright and clean and just a simple,

happy wine. (TC)

12.1%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£13.95 The WineBarn

15.5

Kochan & Platz, Alte Reben Riesling trocken 2020

Mosel

Vines over 70 years old. RS 5.7 g/l, TA 7 g/l.

Dry and very composed. A quiet, subtle wine with a gentle soul. Lovely green-white citrus flavours and a leitmotif of herbs. Lay-lines of acidity drawn with a smudge-green pencil into the finish. Softly *tenuto*. **VGV** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£14.45 The WineBarn

16.5

Kranz, Riesling trocken 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Spontaneous fermentation to start. RS 5.3 g/l, TA 7.7 g/l.

Excellent stuff for an entry-level wine. Sunflower seeds, mouth-drawing kick-ass acidity. Vineyard peach and sorrel and a lick of apple-green fresh fruit. Kiwi fruit and crunchiness. I love this impish, frisky little wine. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£15.55 The WineBarn

16

Kranz, Ranschbacher Rotliegend Riesling trocken

2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Vines on iron-rich red soil. Spontaneous fermentation to start. RS 3.2 g/l, TA 9 g/l.

Smells 'grainy', like pear skin. Wonderful stone dust and salty limes and cumin dust. The wine shows real flinty clench, shaped into flint-carved edges. Amazing focus and precision for a village-level wine, and the fruit is wrapped around a remarkably strong, powerful spine. Racy but so intentional. This is punching above its weight. **GV** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£20 The WineBarn

16.5

Kranz, Ilbesheimer Westerberg Riesling trocken

2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. West-facing Erste Lage/premier cru vineyard on a unique combination of soils and rock - stony loess loam with high lime content. Soils retain warmth at night. Spontaneous fermentation and matured in stainless steel. RS 6.4 g/l, TA 7.4 g/l.

Mango sweetness floods the mouth but comes with a gorgeous salt-and-pepper crunchy spiciness. This is fabulous. Under the opulent tropicality of the fruit (golden, passion fruit) it is dense and strong, weaving in darker, savoury threads of rye and toasted buckwheat and caraway. Another Kranz wine delivering more than you'd expect for the price. I was

rather seduced by this. **GV** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£23.90 The WineBarn

17

Kranz, Ilbesheimer Kirchberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2020 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Terraced, south-facing vineyard. Spontaneous fermentation and aged in old wood barrels. RS 2.5 g/l, TA 7.1 g/l.

So much composure. Driving the mineral line. Quinine and salt, white-knuckle tension, deep-structure power. The oak holds way back, leaving the wine to tell its story. Ripe nectarine. Very exciting, serious, pure and intentional. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£37.80 The WineBarn

17

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Estate Riesling trocken 2020 Rheingau

RS 5.9 g/l, TA 7.2 g/l.

So bracingly clean and wide and blue-white-green, it's like a breath of fresh air. This is just thirst-quenching! Tasting this is like standing under a forest waterfall on a hot day; face, body, mouth turned open to its cool, cleansing, sweet purity. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£16.30 The WineBarn

16

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Hattenheimer

Wisselbrunnen Riesling Kabinett 2019 Rheingau

An 18-ha Grosse Lage on light, tertiary marl soil over deep layers of loess. RS 36.5 g/l, TA 8.3 g/l.

Whimsical, comely nose of rose petals, violets dusted in icing sugar and sweet peas. The palate swirls light, gauzy skirts of Turkish delight, nougat, lime blossom and apple curd, showing a surprising weight of fruit underneath. Ripe guava. It's a delight. Full of pep and flirtatiousness but not without substance. (TC)

10%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£21.30 The WineBarn

16.5

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Hattenheimer

Nussbrunnen Riesling trocken 2019 Rheingau

Has a soft green-leaf breathiness on the nose. Reminds me of birch trees in spring. Like a white envelope, all the flavours seem to be sealed inside. Wet bamboo. White mushroom. Cumin. Quite soft for a Riesling with a comforting sense of gripe water on the finish. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£23.55 The WineBarn

15.5

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Erbacher Hohenrain Alte Reben Riesling trocken 2018 Rheingau

RS 7.1 g/l, TA 9 g/l. A Grosse Lage/grand cru walled vineyard, 60-year-old vines.

Smells of crab-apple jelly and apple-blossom honey. Butterfly-wing laciness of structure through endless notes of honeybush tea and spiced apples. Kumquat fruit sliced into ribbons of acidity. Pin-point delicacy in the finish. This is so, so pretty! (TC)

11.5%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£21.30 The WineBarn

16.5

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Erbacher Siegelsberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2017 Rheingau

The Siegelsberg site extends over the Schlossberg and Marcobrunn sites, in the direction of Hattenheim, where it borders on the site Wisselbrunnen. The soil differs from the Marcobrunn, as it has a lesser proportion of clay. It has a cooler than average temperature mesoclimate and good air circulation. They use wooden presses, and fermentation is in oak barrels, producing around 1,200 litres of wine in total. RS 8.8 g/l, TA 7.4 g/l.

Struck flint and a gleaming, pewter spine. Cumin, caraway, limes in stone. Devastating minerality driving the wine. Salty, unswerving linearity. Powerful, yet at the same time fills the mouth with a heady fusion of elderflower and May blossom. Long fragrance

illuminates the finish. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£41.40 The WineBarn

17.5

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Erbacher Schlossberg **Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2015 Rheingau**

The Schlossberg grand cru site is a monopole of 2.5 ha, on a 4-m thick layer of loess. 75-year-old vines which they replace with mass-selection plant material when vines die. RS 3.9 g/l, TA 7.6 g/l.

Hint of linseed oil. A stormy wine with real clench and grip; complex and contradictory. Violets and iron, mithril and citrus; flowers carved from graphite, and through the centre line, a piercing arrow of acidity. As if the wine had been shot by an archer. Deeply gleaming with tension, strength and tenacity. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2020

-

2030

£65.90 The WineBarn

17.5

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Erbacher Marcobrunn **Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2015 Rheingau**

The Marcobrunn grand cru is 6.7 ha and has five different owners. Heavy loess loam and chalky marl soil with sand. The wine is more on the spicy side (than the Schlossberg,

which is apparently creamier) and the ageing potential is legendary, I'm told. They use an old basket press, so get more tannins, and the wine spends more time on skins. RS 7.3 g/l, TA 7.7 g/l.

Chocolate and mint on the nose. Unusual dark-berried fruit on the palate – blackberry, cassis. Manifest spice and grip with a remarkable seaweed, iodine saltiness. But at the same, deep draughts of freshness in aromatic notes of blackcurrant bud, box leaf and peppermint. Completely different from the Schlossberg. Very, very striking. Commanding. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2020

–

2030

£50.85 The WineBarn

17.5

Jakob Schneider, Grauschiefer Riesling trocken 2020 **Nahe**

Picked early October. Three hours of skin maceration and then spontaneous fermentation to start with, under temperature control. RS 4.9 g/l, TA 7.9 g/l.

This is a delight. For some crazy reason I'm thinking wholewheat lemon-zested lavender-scented shortbread. There is probably no such thing. Salt and ping and lovage and so cheeky. Yum! Tastes like its poing-poinging in my mouth. So vibrant and alive and expressive. **GV** (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

–

2024

£15.45 The WineBarn

16

Jakob Schneider, Melaphyr Riesling trocken 2020

Nahe

From a steep, south-facing slope rich in volcanic rock which warms up quickly. Picked by hand through two selections in the second half of October. Macerated on skins for six hours, gently pressed, temperature-controlled spontaneous fermentation. RS 5.7 g/l, TA 7.8 g/l.

Spiced apples and pears. Touch of cinnamon and white pepper into a fabulous crunch and bite of lime and apples. Kind of broadens gently in the mouth, then purses up for a kiss on the end. Tiny bit of clementine on the end and then a shiver of pepper. I defy anyone to not love this. **GV** (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£15.80 The WineBarn

16.5

Jakob Schneider, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle

Riesling trocken 2020 Nahe

35- to 50-year-old vines on a very steep, 65-degree, south-facing vineyard on slate, volcano rock (porphyry and melaphyr) as well as sandstone. Picked late, in mid October. Long spontaneous fermentation in large wooden barrels and stainless steel. RS 3.7 g/l, TA 8.1 g/l.

Stone-carved apple, lime. A linear, muscular wine that tastes and feels like honey behind sea glass, fennel bulb in long, green-glass corridors and and celeriac sweet earthiness. Real tension pulling the wine long and forward. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2029

£20.90 The WineBarn

17

Hans Wirsching, Iphöfer Julius-Echter-Berg Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2019 Franken

RS 4.6 g/l, TA 7.9 g/l.

Crystalline lime. Marble verticality. Carved in sine and cosine. The angularity of this Riesling is striking after tasting Wirsching's Silvaners. Very composed, linear, forward-focused. Glass-cut fruit. Lithographic lime and green apples tightening into a fiercely arrow-like, unstoppable finish. (TC)

13%

Drink

2023

-

2030

£40.90 The WineBarn

17

Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc)

Bercher, Jechtinger Weissburgunder trocken 2020 Baden

Vineyards on loess and made in stainless steel. He works with lees, a mix of gross and fine, but no bâtonnage. RS 1.9 g/l, TA 6.6 g/l.

Such a lovely wine to start the tasting with! Lightly nutty, fine green acidity and creamy pears. Perfect balance. Frankly scrumptious. The 'drinkability' of this wine is off the scale.

VG (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£15.35 The WineBarn

16.5

Bercher, Burkheimer Feuerberg Haslen Weissburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2020 Baden

From a tiny parcel within the Erste Lage. Haslen was an ancient word for hazelnut - this particular site is so dry and stony that for many years only hazelnuts grew there. High, and volcanic soil. A few hours on the skins, partly fermented and partly aged in used French barrels, for 10 months or so.

Exquisitely fragrant on the nose and then lush and creamy on the palate. The fruit is golden, copious, and yet, despite that, there is aristocratic structure and a long, fine-ground-stone, mineral line and the acidity has citric purity. Minty verbena finish.

Bercher's wines seem to be shining at this tasting! (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£31.75 The WineBarn

17

Dr Heger, Sonett Weissburgunder 2020 Baden

Screwcap. Vines on heavy loess soils. Fermented in stainless steel with 10% in big oak. In colder vintages they use more big oak, although, Heger tells me, with oak you lose elegance, especially with loess soils. RS 3 g/l, TA 6.1 g/l.

Nice fresh nose with a peppermint edge. Crisp apple, fennel, greengage. Nice tingly

acidity with a white-grapefruit edge. Dry-tasting and sprightly. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£16.65 The WineBarn

15.5

Dr Heger, Ihringer Winklerberg Weissburgunder trocken 2020 Baden

Volcanic rocks. Older vineyards, 25 years and older. Fermented in 1,200- and 2,400-litre big oak foudres. RS 0.8 g/l, TA 5.9 g/l.

Quite a spicy nose – reminds me of lovage and a kind of dried-sage spiciness. Fresh green-veg fruit, kohlrabi, Granny Smith apple, cardamom and matcha. A bit salty with vertical density. Good finish. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£25.20 The WineBarn

16.5

Dr Heger, Ihringer Winklerberg Rappenecker Weissburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2019 Baden

The vineyard parcel, which has been nicknamed Rappeneck for many years, lies within the Ihringer Winklerberg site and is a kind of peninsula sticking out of Winklerberg, situated on an exposed point of land on volcanic rocks – a soil of limey and fertile loose rock with higher loess content. Made in 1,200-litre old oak foudres plus two used

barriques. This is the latest release - they keep it for two years in their cellar before release. RS 0.1 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l.

Yellow plum, nectarine, lovage, fennel bulb. Nice grip and tension across the width of the palate. A little nutmeg and allspice define the spicy framework, especially towards the finish, but within that is this dynamic, bold, golden, herb-scented fruit. This will reward further ageing. (TC)

14%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£37.10 The WineBarn

17

Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris)

Bercher, Jechtinger Grauburgunder trocken 2020

Baden

Vines on volcanic soils. Fermented and matured in big oak cask. RS 1.2 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l.
Such fine acidity, beautiful structure. Is this really entry level?! Purity of fruit - hint of rhubarb, limpid, hint of florals but not floral. Pure. **VGW** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£15.35 The WineBarn

16.5

Bercher, Burkheimer Schlossgarten Villinger Grauburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2020 Baden

This vineyard is on loess soil - quite interesting terroir because it's formed over millenia by top soil being blown into volcanic craters and getting trapped there. 'A bit more lean', says Bercher, 'and tends to have a nicer acidic backbone than their volcanic soil, but not as much minerality.' Mostly stainless steel with some oak but no new oak. RS 1.2 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l.

Daphne and bluebell florals, touch of honeysuckle, and then the most gorgeous flood of fruit and sweet acidity. Really ripe orchard stone fruit. Leaves my mouth absolutely zinging with life. This has opened up to be a bit of a showstopper. Touch of cobnuts, something green and creamy - avocado-like, nutty. But the fruit is what is stealing the show. And the energy. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£31.75 The WineBarn

17

Dr Heger, Sonett Grauburgunder 2020 Baden

Screwcap. Vines on loam and loess. RS 3.7 g/l, TA 5.6 g/l.

Jasmine and lactic notes on the nose. Tinned pears and light white peachiness with a tiny bit of spritz giving it lift. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£16.65 The WineBarn

Dr Heger, Ihringer Winklerberg Grauburgunder 2020 **Baden**

Vinified in big oak. RS 0.5 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l. Erste Lage/premier cru vineyard.

Cream-cheesy, pear florals and ripe pomelo citrus. Not the depth of the Ihringer Winklerberg Weissburgunder, but there is a touch of spice and the fruit is rounded, and the finish is as fresh and clean as newly washed, line-dried white cotton sheets. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£25.20 The WineBarn

16

Other white varieties (Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Scheurebe, Silvaner and blends)

Aldinger, Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2021 **Württemberg**

Bottled three weeks ago. 10% in a mix of tonneau and barrique, and the rest is made in stainless steel.

Lovely ripe gooseberry fruit and an electric lime-green energy. Flashes like a whip-crack across the palate, with a touch of struck-flint smokiness. Fine herbaceousness – like a clutch of fresh-picked spring-green herbs. Really lively. Juicy, and great energy. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£26.95 The WineBarn

16.5

Bassermann-Jordan, Sauvignon Blanc trocken 2021 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. RS 8.1 g/l, TA 7 g/l.

Fresh, simple and grassy. Nice acidity. No complaints. But I would not pay twenty bucks for this. A decent wine, but this is where we're starting to pay for the name rather than the wine in the glass. (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£21.40 The WineBarn

15

Bercher, SE Chardonnay trocken 2019 Baden

SE stands for selection. A blend of two single vineyards, one loess, one volcanic. 'More than the sum of its parts.' 100% barrel-fermented and aged, but less than 30% new oak. Some Vosges oak because, Bercher tells me, he likes the nervous green line it gives. RS 1 g/l, TA 6.6 g/l.

I see what he means about the nervous green line. Very light oatmeal and spice on the nose. Long and fine, a silver-gold blade of fruit. Apple, melon, but that's oversimplifying a very elegant wine that is not telling the story of fruit but of shape and drive. A wine with understated elegance, symmetry and synchronicity, and a very precise, long finish. **GV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2029

£29.60 The WineBarn

17.5

Göttelmann Chardonnay 2020 Nahe

From 30-year-old vines, picked mid October. The crushed grapes in contact with skins for 24 hours before pressing. Fermented in toasted 1,200-litre oak casks and then on gross lees for six months with bâtonnage twice a week until May. RS 4.6 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l.

This was the first German Chardonnay I ever tasted (perhaps 17 years ago?), and at the time it was a complete revelation for me. I remember (tasting it blind and not knowing what it was) that I wrote that it smelt and tasted like roasted butternut and pumpkin pie. It's less rich than I remember it. Less custardy. Great spice! But a gentle roundness too. Poached pear, sweet root-veg earthiness: buttered parsnips and a touch of baked celeriac. Amazing spice on this - it draws through the fruit with real length, runs through the spine of the wine, pulling it long, questioning, thoughtful. Quite unique. I love this.

VG (TC)

14%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£16.45 The WineBarn

16.5

Dr Heger, Ihringer Winklerberg Chardonnay 2019

Baden

85% malo and some bâtonnage. RS 0.7 g/l, TA 6.1 g/l.

Dry, dusty cedary Chardonnay. Good length. Mouth-watering acidity - in fact the acidity is the defining shape and movement of this wine. It swirls across and through the mouth,

pulling the flavours and rounded generosity into longer lines. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£29.80 The WineBarn

16.5

Hans Wirsching, St Veit 2021 Franken

Silvaner with bit of Scheurebe and Riesling. RS 5.2 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l.

Sage dust, lime jelly, pineapple. Bounce and pounce! Bit of nettle over the top of sweet lime and lime bonbon. Happy wine! (TC)

12%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£15.35 The WineBarn

15.5

Hans Wirsching, Scheurebe trocken 2021 Franken

RS 6.4 g/l, TA 6.1 g/l.

Bright green and yellow aromas and flavours! Buoyantly cheerful. Tastes like a tropical island festival. Pineapple, green mango, apple mint and lots of thrumming, celebratory liveliness. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£17.15 The WineBarn

15.5

Hans Wirsching, Silvaner trocken 2020 Franken

RS 4.6 g/l, TA 6.1 g/l.

Textbook Silvaner. Borage, cucumber and white pepper. Lick of lovage. Sprinkle of white-peppery stone dust. Electric energy: tap-dancing cross parkour. Clearly entry-level, compared with their other wines, but great fun. (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2023

£15 The WineBarn

15.5

Hans Wirsching, Iphöfer Kalb Silvaner trocken 2020 Franken

Erste Lage/premier cru vineyard. RS 2.4 g/l, TA 6 g/l.

Nuts and lightly white, peppery spice on the nose swooping into milky-green cobnuts and the first hint of honey and honeyed white nuts on the palate. Creamy pears, dukkah, white root, spearmint and something very lightly finely root-veg bitter. Celeriac? A wonderful play of movement and structure on the palate that feels like elliptical dimensions laid over angular dimensions. A three-dimensional matrix of flavour and structure that feels and tastes connected and yet has these interesting, cool spaces between the lines that allow the wine to breathe and the person drinking it to find quietness and places to think. **GV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2026

£18.60 The WineBarn

17

Hans Wirsching, Iphöfer Kronsberg Alte Reben Silvaner trocken 2020 Franken

Iphöfer Kronsberg in one of the top Franconian vineyards, south facing but cooler due to air currents from eastern forests. On Keuper soil which is a sedimentary rock of clays, interspersed with fine and thicker veins of gypsum. RS 2 g/l, TA 6.2 g/l.

Salty but fine cream-linen line. The texture is extraordinarily creamy; heavy silk. Real depth and weight, serious intention. It fans out on the finish but with a sensuous swirl rather than flair. Pomelo pith. Richness but intellectual. Hint of borage in this as well and sheathed within the backbone is a cucumber coolness. Wirsching's Silvaners really are unique wines in their own right, punching way above their price points. We'd be paying a lot more for this complexity, stature and beauty if there was the word Bourgogne on the label. **VG**V (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2029

£24.35 The WineBarn

17.5

Hans Wirsching, Iphöfer Kronsberg Alte Reben Scheurebe trocken 2021 Franken

RS 3.4 g/l, TA 6.2 g/l.

Mango, papaya, lime. Dry, bodacious, full-bodied but well defined. Shapely exuberant fruit. Zap and zest and mouth-watering. Licorice leaf and long, firm persistence on the finish. From my experience of Wirsching Scheurebe's, you'd benefit from tucking it away in a cool, dark cellar for another couple of years. (TC)

13%

Drink

2023

-

2028

£27.80 The WineBarn

16 ++

Hans Wirsching, Iphöfer Julius-Echter-Berg Silvaner Grosses Gewächs 2019 Franken

RS 2.6 g/l, TA 6.5 g/l.

This already has quite an exciting perfume. Physalis, green figs, some dancing florals, mandarin and lime, cashew cream. A wild prickle of Szechuan and then cardamom, then jalapeño, and then long and fragrant through the finish. Densely, intensely complex. A tessellation of flavour and texture, acidity and weight, and yet, as a whole, a formidably complete structure and much more coiled than any of his other whites. Even so, there is a monastically quiet stillness at the heart of this wine, as it waits for its time. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2023

-

2030

£40.90 The WineBarn

17.5 +

Rosés

Friedrich Becker, Petit Rosé 2020 Pfalz

A blend of Pinot Meunier, Portugieser and Pinot Noir from vineyards in Schweigen on the German and Alsatian side on rich sandstone and limestone soil, and vines are between 10 and 50 years old. Grapes were gently pressed after a short maceration period. Controlled fermentation in stainless steel, five months on fine lees and gentle filtration. Bottled in February 2020. RS 9.4 g/l, TA 7.7 g/l.

Just as good as the 2019 although it tastes a wee bit sweeter. Although it doesn't suffer for that extra sweetness. Intense blood orange and streaks of cinnamon and herbs, not unlike a rosé vermouth. I love the robust acidity and bold, supple muscularity. Real gymnast rosé. **GV** (TC)

11.5%

Drink

2021

-

2023

£14.10 The WineBarn

16.5

Friedrich Becker, Petit Rosé 2019 Pfalz

A blend of Dornfelder, Pinot Meunier, Portugieser and Pinot Noir from vineyards in Schweigen on the German and Alsatian side on rich sandstone and limestone soil, and vines are between 10 and 50 years old. Grapes were gently pressed after a short maceration period. Controlled fermentation in stainless steel, five months on fine lees and gentle filtration. Bottled in February 2020. RS 8.2 g/l, TA 7.8 g/l.

Deep pink and just glorious! Salty, sandy, fruit leather, wild raspberries, savoury. Perfect rosé. Such great chew and depth of fruit and substance. Gourmand! Yum. I love the bold gumption of this wine, but that it is also pretty damn classy at the same time. **GV** (TC)

12%

Drink

2020

-

2023

£14.10 The WineBarn

16.5

Reds

Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir)

Aldinger Spätburgunder 2020 Württemberg

Classic fermentation in used barriques.

Very pretty nose. Raspberries and cherry blossom. White pepper. Gentle, charming, pretty, with a tug of texture. There really is great balance in this 'entry-level' Spätburgunder, and surprising complexity; crisp acidity, moreish crunchiness to the fruit. *Gouleyant*. I love this! Surely impossible *not* to love this! **VGV** (TC)

12.5%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£16.99 The WineBarn

16.5

Aldinger, Untertürkheimer Gips Spätburgunder 2020 Württemberg

30% whole bunches (with more in hot years). 20% new oak, 80% used, matured for 12-14 months in oak and then goes into stainless steel on fine lees. RS 2.4 g/l, TA 6.8 g/l. This is delicious! Vivacious fruit spiralling around a long, central, fine spine of beautiful acidity. Well-defined flavours and gorgeously leggy, haut-couture tannins. Elegant and cool and fresh and focused. Real length. **VGV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£26.50 The WineBarn

17

Aldinger, Untertürkheimer Gips Marienglas Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2019 Württemberg

Cold maceration for five to seven days. 50% whole bunches to get tannins, increase ageing potential but also to make it more open earlier on. RS 1.8 g/l, TA 6.6 g/l.

Wow, this nose...! I could smell it for hours. Mushrooms, red-berry skins, hedgerow berries, blood orange, pink pepper, a woody floral character. I love the entanglement of woodland, rocks, herbs and florals. This is like finding a little secret garden with a rocky stream. Absolutely gorgeous. Complex, dense without being thick (layers and layers of tissue paper), concentration without weight. My mouth is tingling with life. This is an absolute standout, and, when compared with burgundy, **VG**V. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£44.50 The WineBarn

18

Allendorf, Q Quercus Pinot Noir 2018 Rheingau

Long fermentation on skins and stems. Two years in barrel, 30% new. RS 0.2 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l.

Lots of oak here. It's the dominant force. Quite drying. Thin strips of red fruit between the broad stripes of oak. An oddly old-fashioned, heavy-handed interpretation of Pinot. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£29.45 The WineBarn

15

Allendorf, Assmannshäuser Frankenthal

Spätburgunder 2017 Rheingau

Aged in second- and third-use barriques. Bottled unfiltered. RS 0.1 g/l, TA 4.9 g/l.

Savoury, super-dry, lean, autumnal. It has a dry-vermouth-like bitterness. Walnut skins. Tough. Wherever the fruit lies in this wine, it is well-hidden. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2025

£31.55 The WineBarn

15.5

Allendorf, Assmannshäuser Höllenberg

Spätburgunder 2019 Rheingau

10% whole bunch. Very gentle manual pigeage once or twice a day. Aged in first- and second-use barrels for 18 months and bottled unfiltered. RS 0.1 g/l, TA 5 g/l.

In total contrast to the two previous Allendorf reds, this is beautiful. Elegant, long, cinnamon-dusted red fruit; grace note, rose petals. Slightly stemmy. Damson and chestnut skins. Complex. The tannins imbue the wine with a silky tension while still bringing a wonderful rubbed-bark texture. Deeply savoury but the fruit is rich and supple. Really, really good. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2032

£60.30 The WineBarn

17.5

Friedrich Becker, Family Spätburgunder 2017 Pfalz

Vines 17 to 41 years old, grown on limestone soil with heavy topsoil on loam and clay. The grapes were hand-picked and destemmed. Before pressing, the grapes were macerated for 14 to 21 days. The juice was fermented in big and small oak barrels. The wine matured on lees for almost 12 months after fermentation oak barrels. RS 0.8 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l.

Oh wow. Smells like a rose garden the morning after a hard rain storm. Bruised petals on stone paths. Dry; rose-petal fragrant in the mouth; an edgy, fine bitterness. Rose-petal silk and earth-textured tannins. Menthol-cool finish. For an entry-level Pinot, this is seriously good. Everything in place. Finesse, fruit and immediate pleasure, but not remotely facile. **GV** (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2020

-

2025

£17.85 The WineBarn

16.5

Friedrich Becker, B Spätburgunder 2017 Pfalz

Vines 17 to 38 years old on limestone soil around Schweigen, on the German side. Hand-picked, hand-selected, destemmed. The juice was fermented in a mix of big and small oak barrels. Before pressing the grapes were macerated for 14 to 21 days. 16 months in small oak barrels. Bottling without filtering or fining. RS 0.3 g/l, TA 5.7 g/l.

Rugged Pinot. Before any sense of fruit, the tannins lean forward with their driftwood biceps and cassia-bark sinews. Strong and athletic, and, at the moment, not giving the fruit a chance to speak. A wine that tastes like sour cherries carved from wet wood and something deliciously lichen-like; fresh mushrooms and wild mushrooms and thyme. Just a little moody at the moment. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2023

-

2027

£24.35 The WineBarn

16 +

Friedrich Becker, Schweigener Spätburgunder 2017

Pfalz

Vines between 28 and 53 years old in vineyards on both the French and German side. Hand-picked, destemmed, fermented for two to three weeks in open-top oak casks. Aged 16 months in oak barriques. Bottled in April 2021 without filtration. RS 1.5 g/l, TA 5.6 g/l. Hint of cranberry and crushed new-green bay leaf. Laurel spiciness and freshness. Lithe, muscled, savoury and peppery. This is thrumming with excitement. There is a certain amount of swagger, but it comes with poise, control, wry finesse. Deeply spicy, deep-red ripe-berried fruit arching through the mouth thanks to vaulted acidity and tensely curved tannins. For just a couple of pounds more, this is so much better value than the 2017 B.

GV (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£27.30 The WineBarn

17

Friedrich Becker, Schweigener KB Spätburgunder

Grosses Gewächs 2017 Pfalz

Jury's out on this one! Very very smoky; sulphur-stone stinky. Quite bloody. Iodine and rust. Maybe this needs many hours of decanting...? Sure, it delivers an impressive cudgel

of impact, but is this what one wants from a Pinot Noir? I may be the lone dissenter, but this, to me, is not what Pinot/Spätburgunder is about. Maybe time will change that. How much time is the question. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2027

-

2034

£81.40 The WineBarn

16 ++

Friedrich Becker, Schweigener Heydenreich **Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2017 Pfalz**

Located above the GG Sankt Paul vineyard. Based on a large limestone rock with a very low horizon of clayey loamy topsoil. Hand-picked, hand-selected, destemmed. Three weeks' fermentation in open oak vats, gently pressed, aged 18 months in small oak barrels. Unfiltered, unfined.

Tight, long, spicy, cedary lines, deep coffee-bean bitterness and deep-coal-mine minerality. Sawdust-dry tannins. Clenched fists of angry texture; dark purple-sweet, rose-petal-tinged fruit. Compact, dense and concentrated. Almost terrifying concentration, and yet I don't get an iota of the thick-set extraction that often comes with this level of concentration. Fantastic texture to those tannins! Like three-dimensional paisley in silk and sandalwood etching. At the moment, it's the texture that dominates. Bu this wine is just a baby. Put it back to sleep... (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2027

-

2036

£167.0 The WineBarn

18

Friedrich Becker, Schweigener Sankt Paul Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2017 Pfalz

The vineyard is south of Weissenburg in Alsace, named after the former outpost of the monastery there. The soil is based on a large limestone rock with a very low horizon of clayey loamy topsoil. Hand-picked, destemmed and fermented in open oak vats before being gently pressed. 18 months in small oak barrels. Unfined, unfiltered.

Pink peppercorns, barrel spices, toasted chestnut, coconut, black olives. The nose is *rococo*, dramatic, and I was a little bit intimidated. Was this going to be a Becker chest-drumming show of power? Quite the opposite, and I was undone. One sip filled my mouth with this exquisitely gentle, pure-throated, nightingale song of sweet, limpid, pink-red fruit. Such a story of contrast! Roses and cherries, dimples and deep, deep pools of glowing fruit. Magical, suspense-filled; a thousand stories in every sip. The liquid version of *One Thousand And One Nights*? But still quintessentially Becker, and all this luminous fruit comes between the towering pillars of great, chewy tannins. It's an awesome wine, and I mean that in every sense of the word. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2034

£81.40 The WineBarn

18

Bercher, Spätburgunder trocken 2019 Baden

Volcanic soil, aged 15 months in traditional large oak. RS 1.9 g/l, TA 5.6 g/l.

All strawberries. A great gush of ripe, sweet, open friendly strawberries that come brushed with the scent of early-morning woodland. Really juicy. A wine that just makes you smile. He says a bit of struck flint and I agree. Mouth-watering. Gossamer tannins. Absolutely delicious. **GV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£17.99 The WineBarn

16.5

Bercher, Sasbacher Limburg Spätburgunder 2017

Baden

A single vineyard, Erste Lage, situated 50–60 m from the river Rhine. On volcanic rocks, 'Limburgit', which has a high ash content. Bercher says it reminds him of dark chocolate: 'this soil always gives darker tones. Feroxide impact.' 18-day fermentation, 15 months ageing in barrel. RS 1.3 g/l, TA 5.6 g/l.

Diaphanous fruit, sour cherries, woodland strawberries, delicate spices, mouth-filling despite its gauzy structure. Beautiful acidity. Real direction and raciness. Long lines. Tiny shadows. Nooks and crannies. I see what he means about the chocolate; it's raspberries rolled in cacao dust. Beautifully stitched into the finish. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£30.70 The WineBarn

17.5

Bercher, Burkheimer Feuerberg Kesselberg

Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2019 Baden

On a south-facing slope, volcanic soils. Was its own single vineyard until 1971, but then no longer recognised by the regulations, until 2013 when the authorities once again allowed them to put the name of the vineyard on the label. One week of cold soak. Spontaneous fermentation in stainless steel and in barrel for one year.

Rose-hip bouquet; really, really fragrant. Silky but textured, in the way that well-pressed, ancient vintage linen becomes silky yet still retains its linen texture. Almost peppery! Nutmeg. Super-fine spices, translucent fruit, long arcs. The fruit is so pure, but there is a subtle, rugged power within the wine. A backbone of acidity and minerality that makes it stunningly persistent. Yet so restrained, so subtle. So refined. You could so easily drink this now, but it will age beautifully. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£49.70 The WineBarn

17.5 +

Bischel, Appenheimer Spätburgunder trocken 2018 **Rheinhessen**

South-facing soils on calcareous soils, 100 m above sea level. Hand-selected, destemmed, spontaneous fermentation in open vats. Hand-plunged. After fermentation, the wine is aged for 18 months in French oak barrels and is then bottled unfiltered. RS 0.1 g/l, TA 6.1 g/l.

Cherry jujubes and Turkish delight on the nose. Spicy perfume that floats through to the palate, bringing rose petals and sandalwood. There is a soft but also softly raspy texture to the tannins and the flavours, which speak of that moment when you bend down to turn over a mossy log in a forest and everything crumples to dark, mycelium-laced, mushroom earth, pianoforte, high with the scent of rain-wet geosmin. The tannins have a stretchy-elastic-yet-rigid feel to them, a cardboard smooth-plane/scratch-edge that plays with the fruit like a cat with a mouse. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£35.15 The WineBarn

16.5

Dr Heger, Sonett Spätburgunder 2016 Baden

Fermented on skins, 18 days' standing time. Matured in big oak and used barriques for 13 to 15 months.

Savoury, cooked strawberries and rose petals. Sour-cherry finish. Astringent tannins. Relatively simple. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2020

-

2023

£17.70 The WineBarn

15

Dr Heger, Ihringer Winklerberg Mimus Spätburgunder 2017 Baden

The hottest vineyard in Germany. Five days' cold maceration and 23 days on skins. Open-top oak fermenters, hand punchdowns, no pumping, unfiltered. One-week maceration after fermentation. Matured in 50% French oak (half new, half used) for 15 months. RS 0 g/l, TA 5.6 g/l.

Vigorous, broad acidity, lots of savoury red fruit, very purposeful wine - heading straight for the finish line. Lots of texture. Hibiscus and tea leaf. Complex, powerful and determined. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£34.65 The WineBarn

17

Dr Heger, Ihringer Vorderer Winklerberg Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2018 Baden

Their Pinot is French clones: small-berried and darker colour. Five days' pre-maceration cold soak and four weeks' maceration. 18 months in barrique. 2018 was exceptionally hot and dry. Picking started very early, on 13 August. RS 0.4 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l.

You can feel the tightness in the tannins here. Very savoury, wood- and autumn-informed wine with the fruit tucked way back and well-hidden for now. Light smokiness, light meatiness. Bitter oranges. Tightly coiled and not ready. Needing quite a bit more time.

(TC)

13.5%

Drink

2024

-

2032

£61.55 The WineBarn

16.5 ++

Dr Heger, Achkarrer Schlossberg Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2017 Baden

The vineyard is in an amphitheatre on weather volcanic soil, which heats up during summer and retains heat. A German clone planted beginning of 60s. Four weeks' maceration and in new oak for 15 to 18 months. RS 0.1 g/l, TA 5.9 g/l.

Wild red-plum fruit. Lovely fruit – lustrous, shapely, concentrated and sensuous. The oak is pronounced, but the rich fruit flares through it. Leafy undertow leading into a dramatic but controlled finish. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£60.50 The WineBarn

17.5

Kranz, Arzheimer am Fürstenweg Spätburgunder 2017 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. They pick everything by hand and destem. Open-top, spontaneous fermentation, hand pigeage, very gentle. 12 months in barriques and six months in bottle.

A burst of strawberry on the nose – fragrant. Detailed and fine. A rare combination of tight weave and ethereality. Rose hips play tag with flint filings, there's a tang of iron oxide and the lift of tiny flowers and then it sighs with graceful surrender into a beautifully fine grip. Poetry. These Kranz wines seem to have turned a real corner in terms of quality. **VGV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£26.70 The WineBarn

17

Kranz, Ilbesheimer Kalmit Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2018 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Spontaneous fermentation. In 2018, I'm told, they had more power, more tension and more tannins. A warmer year.

Dried damsons. Nutmeg spices. Tannins that feel like iron and driftwood draped in brushed velvet. Walnut, smoke, cherry wood and tobacco. Dark-berried fruit. Long and really clings with well-honed muscularity. (TC)

13%

Drink

2023

-

2031

£42.80 The WineBarn

17

Kranz, Ilbesheimer Kalmit Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2017 Pfalz

Certified Ecocert organic. Partially destemmed with some whole berries in the fermenting must. Spontaneous fermentation. Delicate pressing. Aged in French oak for 18 months. Unfiltered. RS 0.5 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l.

My nose fills with the smell of blood, ripe damsons, guava jelly and barberries. My mouth fills with the tang and dustiness of sumac, the fragrance of roses. The fruit tastes like alpine strawberries. The wine is long, very long, and while it soars in the mouth like a murmur of swallows, it also builds with this contradictory yet perfectly coordinated urgency, creating a Zen-like stillness at the centre. Acidity dances through its dusky spaces like fireflies. Far from the grandest Spätburgunder of the tasting, this was, hands down, my favourite. Have the Kranz family pulled back on their oak use? It tastes as if they have. (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£42.80 The WineBarn

17.5

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Assmannshäuser Höllenberg Spätburgunder Grosses Gewächs 2015 Rheingau

In tonneau for five years. No filtration, no fining. Bottled six months ago. RS 0.6 g/l, TA 6.6 g/l.

Check that alcohol! But it's balanced and the wine doesn't feel too hot. Very, very oak spicy – too bourbon-like for comfort. Coffee-toffee, coconut and cherry tobacco. Tastes of a lot of oak extraction, losing the fruit. Quite some power in those tannins... (TC)

15%

Drink

2022

-

2027

£58.65 The WineBarn

16

Other red varieties (Frühburgunder, Dornfelder and blends)

Aldinger, Estate Lemberger 2020 Württemberg

Black pepper and gravelly. Purple. Sloe and elderberries, a firm green streak of bay leaf and box. Firm, slightly drying tannins, clad in fine brushed velvet, and the balance is right there, holding the graphite-dark fruit suspended through the centre by wiry sinews. So very drinkable. **GV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£16.99 The WineBarn

16.5

Aldinger, Hanweiler Berg Lemberger 2020 Württemberg

A cooler site than his other Lemberger vineyards, on marl and iron (apparently gives the wine a bloody taste), surrounded by forest. 50% new oak.

Dark, ripe strawberry fruit. Graphite, redcurrant jam, earthy, pencils, box leaf. Beautiful play of cool dark greens and rich deep reds. Lovely firm grip and hibiscus petals and this is so very elegant, poised, with a ballet-dancer control of its movements and muscle. This is very good! The finish chisels down into a long stony line. **GV** (TC)

13%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£26.50 The WineBarn

17.5

Aldinger, Fellbacher Lämmle Lemberger Grosses Gewächs 2019 Württemberg

Marl and sandstone. A warmer vineyard. Made in barriques, 20% new oak, wide selection of casks. 30% whole bunches. Aged in oak for 16 months. RS 2.4 g/l, TA 6.3 g/l.

Needs decanting. A really interesting nose. Hint of menthol and black, black fruit.

Liquorice root. Very rugged and muscular and compact. Brambly briars, cassis, very inky.

But through that deep-shadowed, dark-textured blackness lies this quiet pool of wonderful cool acidity. Deep, long finish. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2023

-

2033

£51.20 The WineBarn

17

Bercher, Limberg XVII SE 2017 Baden

The 17th vintage of this blend. 40% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Merlot, 25% Blaufränkisch, 10% Pinot Noir. 15 months in barrel. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.9 g/l.

Very spicy, deep blue, violets and indigo. Touch of Cabernet-led bell pepper, and flashes of bright red through the blue sheen of this wine. Powerful tannins. Lovely graphite stoniness. I do think that this is Bercher's best Limberg so far. The balance is impeccable. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£30.70 The WineBarn

17

Bischel, Appenheimer Frühburgunder trocken 2018 **Rheinhessen**

From the Appenheimer Drosselborn vineyard on a slightly warm loess layer with limestone rock beneath, a west-facing slope exposed to the wind. Hand-picked, destemmed, spontaneous fermentation in open vats. Hand-plunged. 18 months in French oak barrels and bottled unfiltered. RS 0.1 g/l, TA 5.1 g/l.

Somehow more 'purple' than the Bischel Appenheimer Spätburgunder. More thick-set (relatively speaking) and the oak flavours seem to transmit into darker, sweeter notes: chocolate, mocha, toasted coconut. Gently-brewed-tea tannin structure that spills into the warm fan of flavours. Firm resolve on the beginning that starts to melt on the finish. A lovely steel-knocker of minerality on the end. (TC)

13.5%

Drink

2022

-

2028

£27.95 The WineBarn

16

Kochan & Platz, Platzhirsch Dornfelder 2020 Mosel

Stainless steel. RS 7 g/l, TA 5.4 g/l.

Cheeky cherry and cherry blossom. This is really fun, frivolous and pretty and juicy. Delicious. Chill?! Exactly the kind of wine I am always looking for when it comes to everyday food (especially chilli dishes) and summer reds... **VG** (TC)

11.5%

Drink

2022

-

2024

£13.40 The WineBarn

16

Sweet wines

Schloss Reinhartshausen, Erbacher Schlossberg Riesling Auslese 2015 Rheingau

RS 113.3 g/l, TA 8.6 g/l.

Creamy; pears and petals. Soft fennel notes turn cumin and caraway towards the end. Mango cream and grapefruit curd fill every corner with voluptuousness and glittering deep-packed acidity. Shining, velvety pillows of fruit hide candied ginger in their folds. Zinging with life. (TC)

7%

Drink

2020

-

2035

£62.95 The WineBarn

17.5

Jakob Schneider, Norheimer Kirschheck Riesling Spätlese 2020 Nahe

55-year-old vines on grey slate. A steep, south-facing slope. Spontaneous fermentation in 50% oak barrels, 50% stainless steel. Bottled in March 2020. RS 75 g/l, TA 8.6 g/l.

This is a study in perfection of Spätlese kaleidoscope. Detail down to the last pixel, diamond-tip-fine sweetness etching the outline of every pixel. Apple crush, granite dust, lime pollen, lime honey, sweet pickled ginger. A melody in a glass. So, so pretty. So long. Jasmine and sweet pea. I could keep tasting this forever... **GV** (TC)

8.5%

Drink

2022

-

2030

£20.90 The WineBarn

17

Jakob Schneider, Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Riesling Auslese 2020 Nahe

45-year-old vines. Whole-cluster pressed. 60% spontaneous fermentation in stainless steel. Bottled April 2021. RS 88.8 g/l, TA 8.6 g/l.

Deliciously nutty. Honeysuckle and sweet cardamom and apple-lime jam and clementine. A tumble of divine super-pretty orange blossom and peppered maple syrup. Buzzing with energy. Spice. So much spice. Long, long spice on the finish. Readers, she swallowed. **GV** (TC)

8.5%

Drink

2022

-

2035

£28.10 The WineBarn

Jakob Schneider, Niederhäuser Klamm Riesling **Eiswein 2020 Nahe**

From 55-year-old vines in a steep, south-facing slope on phorphy rock. Whole-cluster pressing, fermented in a small stainless-steel tank, 60% spontaneous fermentation, bottled in May 2021. RS 210.3 g/l, TA 10.9 g/l. This is the first year they've been able to make this since 2016.

Strikingly long and elegant. So exquisite it's hard to describe. Iris perfume. Guava nectar. Blueberries. Green figs when they're dripping their sticky nectar like wild honey on a hot stone wall. And then this exquisitely fine racy silver wire acidity. Just wow. Sometimes words won't do. (TC)

6.5%

Drink

2025

-

2045

£59.30 per half The WineBarn

18.5

The photo above is of Wirsching's Julius-Echter-Berg vineyard, courtesy of Volker Schrank 2022 and kindly supplied by The WineBarn.