



Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for February 2020. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

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DOMESTIC



SV SENSATION

Almost exactly a whole year ago, Alana Langworthy stood glamorously behind a table at the CellarHand 20th Anniversary tastings. She had wines to show but only having scavenged them from various cellars, maybe a bottle-shop fridge or two. The range – the last release of Alana and Julian's Nocturne Single-Vineyard wines – had all sold out. Almost exactly a whole year ago...

Demand for these wines has been red-hot since day one. Julian and Alana don't hide their light under a bushel. They don't hide much to be fair; they're larger than life, bright, buoyant and bursting with talent. And their wines are exquisitely enjoyable.

In 2019 the Langworthys addressed the demand with the introduction of their sub-regional (SR) range – a trio that drew fruit from the same original site as the SV wines, supplemented with grapes from another vineyard in the same pocket of Margaret River. The move invited more people to dive into the Nocturne story. (It was only partially successful, in that the Chardonnay basically sold out in five minutes anyway!) Finally the long wait is over for the latest edition of the Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon that sit at

the pinnacle of the offering – the pride and joy of the Langworthys’ phenomenal output.

This is the fourth release of these beauties. If the past four years have taught us one thing, it’s this: Don’t hold back!

2018 Nocturne Single-Vineyard Chardonnay RRP \$53

In Margaret River it’s fair to say we’re lucky when it comes to lovely, even growing seasons. Yet sometimes certain seasons stand tall, and the 2018 season may just stand the tallest in my more than 20 harvests. This is single-vineyard Chardonnay from the 0.37Ha Tassell Park site in Treeton. The vineyard is interplanted with gin gin clone and Burgundian 277 clone. Whole bunch-pressed directly to new, one- and two-year-old puncheons, with no settling or fining processes.

Spontaneous fermentation, with the wine staying on gross lees un sulphured until September of that year. In

December the wine was emptied from barrel, settled, filtered and bottled. – **Julian & Alana Langworthy**



2018 Nocturne Single-Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon RRP \$53

This vintage was, as far as great Margaret River Cabernet seasons go, perfect. A moderate amount of early-season rainfall and then warm days and cool nights for weeks and weeks. It was a complete Goldilocks harvest and one that will go down in the history books.

The fruit was picked on 16th March, one of the earlier Cabernet parcels picked that year. While tasting the fruit in the vineyard it was clear that there were great flavours and concentration. Once crushed and into tank, the must exhibited the most amazing colour and silky epic tannin, all at once serious yet joyous. The fruit was simply destemmed and fermented in 4.5-tonne static fermenters. After 12 days on skins and a peak ferment temperature of around 27 degrees Celsius, the wine was pressed to tank and settled briefly, before being transferred to a combination of new (25%) and two-year-old barrels to undergo malolactic conversion. This wine was racked only once in this time and, after 18 months in oak, was emptied from barrel, settled, clarified and bottled.

The Sheoak Vineyard makes expressive, medium-bodied Cabernets. This release is undoubtedly the most serious and best we have made to date. A wine that, if you have the patience, will improve and develop further complexity over the next decade. – **Alana & Julian Langworthy**

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JUBILANT JASON

Massive congratulations to Jason Flowerday of TWR, who’s just been named **NZ Viticulturist of the Year** by **Gourmet Traveller WINE**. This is fitting recognition for an estate that – while tending some of Marlborough’s oldest vines – has recast this region in a fresh, nature-blessed light. The organic-certified, biodynamic farming undertaken by husband-and-wife team Jason and Anna Flowerday yields wines with pristine purity and transparent terroir expression. They’re layered, textured, engaging and delicious to drink.



We're delighted to see the Flowerdays recognised in this manner - and hope that you, too, will share in their success.

2019 TWR Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$29

This 2019 Sauvignon Blanc is a blend from four specially selected vineyards in two different sub-regions of Marlborough. We have focused on this sub-regional. Two of the vineyards are in the upper Awatere – Shamrock & Trelawne Farm - and two are in the Wairau, one being our certified organic home block here in Renwick, and the other is a young block owned by Jason's younger brother Kurt. The growing conditions in the Awatere are characterised by cooler temperatures and slower ripening than in the Wairau, which is all important for flavour

development and ripe acidity. The wines from this sub-region tend to be more restrained in their youth but have great texture, structure and longevity. Our home block and Kurt's experience the warmer days of the Wairau Valley and a bigger diurnal range. These climatic factors combined with our clay loam soil here, results in wines which have great texture and fleshiness and are characterised by riper tropical notes with stone-fruit with a lovely line of minerality. - Anna Flowerday, TWR

2017 TWR Riesling 'D' SV 5182 RRP \$33

This is the best Te Whare Ra 'D' Riesling that I can recall tasting. It has true 'old vine' concentration with citrus blossom and subtle oyster shell flavours. Tantalisingly accessible now but with the potential to develop well in bottle. 95 points. Bob Campbell MW, Gourmet Traveller WINE

2019 TWR Toru SV 5182 RRP \$29

This 2019 Toru has an intriguing nose with notes of mango, fresh citrus, white florals and exotic spices. These lead into a multi-layered palate with flavours of mango, citrus, red apple and lychee with a lingering spiciness. The palate has excellent fruit concentration and weight with lovely creamy texture, plus a mineral edge which gives it great length of flavour. - Anna Flowerday, TWR

2019 TWR Pinot Gris SV 5182 RRP \$33

This wine is finely structured with great purity and length of flavour and a lovely fleshiness. Lifted aromas of nashi pear, raspberry, red apple and white florals follow on to flavours of the same along with savoury undertones which are balanced by fine, supple texture and lingering minerality. This release is a dry style which has concentration, balance and great texture with layers of flavour. - Anna Flowerday, TWR



2016 TWR Gewürztraminer SV 5182 RRP \$43

This vineyard is claimed to have some of the oldest vines in Marlborough. Intense, moderately sweet Gewürz with concentrated Turkish delight and anise flavours. Discreetly luscious with seductive purity,

an ethereal texture and an incredibly lengthy finish. 95 points. Bob Campbell MW, Gourmet Traveller WINE

2016 TWR Pinot Noir RRP \$53

This delivers a very complete and fruit-focused impression with the right balance of fresh red cherries and berries and more savory, woody and lightly earthy notes. The freshness and elegance is impressive. 93 points. Nick Stock, jamessuckling.com

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MOVING ONANNON

Will Byron of Onannon came to visit us in January, with a raft of new and future vintages. Exciting times, with a range on song and so much personality in the pipeline. Will, Kaspar Hermann and Sam Middleton have hit a sublime groove with this venture. "Such a genuine, honest ease to the wines," was CellarHand purchasing manager Michael Jappy's apt summary after the tasting. Rarely is he so articulate.



The two newsiest new things are the exceptionally clean and classy new label on the Mornington Peninsula wines, plus the trio's first-ever Shiraz. It's a delight: bright, perfumed and ultra-moreish.

2019 Onannon Pinot Gris RRP \$39

From a vineyard in Shoreham, made like Chardonnay – barrel ferment and lees stirring early in the piece. Honey, pear and cream. Bit of sweet stone fruit up front. Ginger. Density and nuttiness, savoury finish. - **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2019 Onannon Chardonnay RRP \$39

95, 96 clone Chardonnay from two vineyards. Barrel ferment, lees stirred. Sam, Kaspar and Will pick the fruit "on the up-curve" (i.e. crux of flavour and freshness) – bearing in

mind it's from Tuerong, on the warmer side of the Mornington Peninsula. Good flesh here though; medium-bodied, good weight and sweep of acidity with a crispness to the finish. - **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2018 Onannon Pinot Noir RRP \$39

From three vineyards located in Shoreham, Red Hill and Merricks. About 5% new oak. 10% whole bunches, some post-ferment maceration. Perfumed, bright nose with cherries and stone fruits. Nice, juicy core with a sense of roundness. Orange peel note and some chew to the tannins, which carry the fruit well. - **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2019 Onannon Shiraz RRP \$39

All old barrels. 20% whole bunches. Includes 5% Viognier, which lends a beautiful vibrance to the colour. Elegant, transparent, some spice. Immediacy to its impeccable fruit; very pretty tannins. Nice mouth perfume. Stone fruit feel. Cherry stone tang to the finish. - **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

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SWAN SONG

“Corymbia is one of the most exciting wine projects to emerge from Western Australia in a decade,” wrote **Mike Bennie** in a **Gourmet Traveller WINE** column titled *Points of Difference* “The wines under the Corymbia label have been outstanding,” Bennie continued. “The combination of a distinguished winemaking family, the reinvention of a much-maligned wine region, the unlocking of the potential of a mature vineyard and a general sense of creativity, have all contributed to a strong currency.”

He went on to praise the Chenin Blanc (although the next-release '19 was the subject of his review) as well as the “serious and excellent Cabernet”, which is sadly pretty much sold out.

So the pertinent write-up is reserved for the 2018 Corymbia Tempranillo/Malbec/Cabernet Sauvignon. “It is pitch perfect, medium weight, highly perfumed, and shaped with beautifully ripe tannins,” declares Bennie. “It’s delicious, but there is also a sense of detail and interest. The wine offers layers of red and blue fruits in perfume and palate, underpinned by savouriness.”



2018 Corymbia Chenin Blanc RRP \$32

This is bloody marvellous Chenin Blanc. It was made by Rob and Genevieve Mann from fruit grown on (the late) Tony Mann’s property. Sure, it was a very good year, but it has been handled deftly to capture all those essential goodies from a variety that sings from the Swan. Controlled tropical fruits, with mineral citrus character and a lively fine acidity, are in perfect balance. Just love the palate. 95 points. Ray Jordan, The West Australian

2018 Corymbia Tempranillo/Malbec/Cabernet Sauvignon. RRP \$43

Rob Mann and family (as this comes from the now organic-farmed family vineyard ‘out the back of Swan’) are speeding ahead with fine wine paradigm wines from the region. Kudos. The bold marriage of Tempranillo with Malbec and Cabernet finds itself a medium bodied, perfumed, svelte and tannin hewn guise that many wines from the region miss in boldness and oomph. This is 58% Tempranillo, 38% Malbec, 12% Cabernet.

Highly perfumed, pretty almost floral scents, violets come to mind, whiffs of blueberry/mulberry, green olive, a touch of clove woody spice, sarsaparilla and anise. Just lovely. Medium weight, sinewy feel, succulent and beautiful, fine web of clove-licked tannins, great energy here, bright and lengthy, fine, tight finish here. Has a ‘serious’ feel but also deliciousness. 95 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

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RISING FROM THE ASHES

“Even though we’ve lost a lot, we’ll just battle on and get over it. That’s the deal.” Modesty, quiet determination and a calm sense of perspective: that’s the deal when you’re working with Geoff Weaver. His comments after the Cudlee Creek fire raged through the region on Friday, 20th December speak volumes for this wonderful gentleman of Australian wine.



Geoff stayed to fight the blaze before taking refuge by the dam to watch his car, tractors and sheds go up in flames as fires tore through the Adelaide Hills and scorched more than a third of his “spiritual home” – the vineyard he planted with his late father Henry and his own bare hands, 37 years ago. Thankfully Geoff wasn’t hurt, the vines survived and will be fruitful again in 2021, and Lenswood’s proper cool climate means that the fruit in the rest of the vineyard was not yet mature enough for smoke taint to be an issue.

Geoff’s been out tidying the vines, replacing burnt posts and clearing space for the new sheds. In the meantime, CellarHand returned to the winery all profits made from the sale of Geoff’s wines throughout January.

Our customers have been fantastic in supporting this great bloke and his wonderful wares. Trust us when we say that Geoff and the Weaver family are hugely touched and grateful. In fact, don’t take our word for it – follow Geoff on Instagram and see for yourself. Thank you, and please keep at it!

2019 Geoff Weaver Riesling RRP \$29

Crush, de-stem, gently air bag press. Rack partly cloudy juice to old barrels to ferment. Barrels chilled to stop ferment at 7g/L sugar. We have made this wine in a new way (for us) using old barrels and seven months on yeast lees. My thinking is that our fruit with its naturally high acid levels can benefit from the balancing effect of the extended yeast lees contact plus the small amount of sugar.

Lifted aroma of citrus and lime blossom. Fresh and lively. Fruity with a juicy zest on the palate and a fine mineral edge. It’s a tightly structured yet aromatically lifted wine but with a supple mid-palate and a fine, crisp finish. Delicate, understated and long flavour. - **Geoff Weaver**

2015 Geoff Weaver Museum Riesling RRP \$29

Loaded with floral and citrus scents and flavours, charismatic with ‘mineral notes’, succulent and piercing in texture. The golf clap begins from first whiff and builds to applause. A seriously refreshing, simple-done-well, citrus and green apple orientated Riesling with light, complex waxy texture in tow, and general sense of excitement. I want to drink heaps of this on a warm day kind of vibes. 92 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

2018 Geoff Weaver Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$29

Geoff Weaver’s Sauvignon Blancs have always had a flavour wheel and mouthfeel of their own. A plaited rope of gooseberry, exotic tree fruits and white peaches and cream make this a compelling wine. The Adelaide Hills and sauvignon balance have always given each other a hug. 94 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion

2016 Geoff Weaver Fergus Sauvignon Blanc RRP \$49

Estate-grown, wild-fermented in French barriques followed by 12 months maturation, neither fined nor acidified. A fascinating comparison with Flowstone’s barrel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc. Here the exercise is tighter and more restrained, the accent more on fruit purity than texture and structure. The fruits have as much citrus flavour as tropical, the finish bright and fresh. 96



points. *James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion*

2013 Geoff Weaver Chardonnay RRP \$49

Bunches were chilled to 5 deg before being whole bunch-pressed to French barriques (50%new, 50% second use) for wild yeast fermentation, partial mlf, 12 months maturation. This, as they might say is the cat's pyjamas, with its pyrotechnic display of grapefruit-driven fruit flavours, bright acidity and long finish. It is ambling surely along its development path. Screw cap. To 2023. 96 points. James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion

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IMPORTS

VISIONS OF JOHANNES

"A light breeze of floral and herbal aromas drifting across from a summer meadow. Quite exquisite." I love this line from **Michael Schmidt's** review of the 2018 Pettenthal GG from Gunderloch. It's a mouthwatering image, and one that perfectly captures these sunlit, naturally cultivated slopes above the Rhine.

This stretch from Nackenheim to Nierstein is Johannes Hasselbach's garden. All the wines we bring in



have been squeezed from berries he harvests along this blessed stretch of crumbly red slate, running from the innocent simplicity of the off-dry Red Stone right up to the succulent sophistication of the Grosses Gewächs. It sounds a little facile, but Riesling grapes grown here taste good. The fruit spectrum runs from stone fruits to ruby grapefruit, allied to a herbal lick and a gentle dusting of spice. Acidity is typically ripe, powdery and graceful.

As always Pettenthal and Rothenberg lead the offering from '18. They're excellent, of course, but everything around them is a sure-fire winner, too.

2018 Gunderloch Fritz's Riesling RRP \$23

One of the best renditions in recent memory of this excellent Qualitätswein. The 2018 has excellent stone fruit succulence through the mid-palate with zesty lime, nectarine pit and spice bringing a welcome edge. Fresh and charming. – Ed

Merrison, CellarHand

2018 Gunderloch Red Stone Riesling RRP \$32

Lovely smoky herbal note of the ferment, fruity, smoky and cool. Not particularly long but precise, bright with grapefruit. A great introduction to off-dry Riesling. 16/20 Julia Harding MW, JancisRobinson.com May 2019

2018 Gunderloch Jean Baptiste Riesling Kabinett RRP \$35

From the Rothenberg, Pettenthal and Hipping vineyards. Chervil, lemon and grapefruit peel on the nose express the Roter Hang spiciness. Citrus zestiness with a juicy but tart red apple sweetness in a classic off-dry style that pivots on Riesling's incomparable freshness. Slender-bodied, and dangerously easy to

drink. 93 points. *Anne Krebiehl MW, Decanter Magazine*

2018 Gunderloch Als Wär's Ein Stück Von Mir Riesling RRP \$43

Mostly from a 35-year-old parcel on the Hipping grand cru in Nierstein with some younger-vine fruit from Rothenberg. 24 hours' maceration on fully crushed grapes, minimal clarification; natural yeast fermentation; long time on lees. All stainless steel this year. Tropical fruit nose with peach blossoms. Soft and juicy, but with remarkable elegance. Ruby grapefruit twist, too, especially at end. - **Ed Merrison, CellarHand**

2018 Gunderloch Pettenthal Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$107

On the nose the Pettenthal is still a bit shy, a light breeze of floral and herbal aromas drifting across from a summer meadow. Also still quite gentle on the palate, but already revealing glimpses of citrus fruit and peel, and expertly punctuated by a slightly medicinal notion of green herbs and quinine. Quite exquisite. 18.5/20 Michael Schmidt, JancisRobinson.com

2018 Gunderloch Rothenberg Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$117

Scintillating pink-grapefruit aromas with breathtaking clarity and purity that reaches ethereal heights. The palate has a smooth and supple build with such attractive, fresh and defined, ripe lemons and grapefruit. Measured acidity, great depth and detail. Drink or hold. 95 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

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GIMMELDINGEN GIFT

"Rieslings from Christmann are like balm," wrote **Anne Krebiehl MW** in her acclaimed 2019 book, **The Wines of Germany** "Though they are never loud, there is something subtle and true about them that gets under your skin."

She hits the nail on the head. And you really get the feeling that the wines in recent years – perhaps from 2014 onwards – have resoundingly evolved into the unique experience Steffen Christmann and daughter Sophie dreamed of.



These biodynamically farmed wines have been among Germany's top flight for a good deal longer than that. However, what's particularly notable about the current phase is a sense of total composure to the wines, where complexity is tucked within, unfurling across a palate like a gentle but irresistible wave. The GGs, in particular, are utterly beguiling, including the best Reiterpfad-Hofstück to date.

2018 A. Christmann Riesling RRP \$39

A gently flinty nose here with a wealth of ripe-lemon and pithy-lime aromas. This has a very succulent palate that carves a deep channel of yellow-citrus flavor. Taut finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap. 93 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com



2017 A. Christmann Gimmeldingen Riesling RRP \$53

Concentration and drive are calling cards of this wine, as are edgy texture, green apple and floral scents, green apple and fennel flavours with general 'minerality' in the mix. Zingy, zippy, long and shapely, this feels like high quality wine from the get-go. 94 points. Mike Bennie, The Wine Front

2018 A. Christmann Reiterpfad-Hofstück Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$140

Bitter lemons and orange pith, as well as barely ripe nectarines and loquat. Medium-to full-bodied with raw power to the acidity and crystalline purity to the citrus fruit. Long and mineral on the finish. Drink now or hold. 95 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

2018 A. Christmann Idig Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$164

This is a remarkably mineral and taut style with dried citrus, quartz, ivory and brightly squeezed citrus. Edgy and compact on the palate with subtle, caressing phenolics and vibrant, bright acidity. Long and very citrusy on the finish. Drink now or hold. 96 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

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WITTMANN'S FILLIP

"It's more like gardening than farming. Everything has to look perfect!" says Philipp Wittmann as he leaps from a vineyard wall to clip a stray vine tip before it grows unruly. This isn't vanity, though. Handsome though he is, Philipp is all about performance. It's his duty to coax every vine into the most beguiling wine it can be.

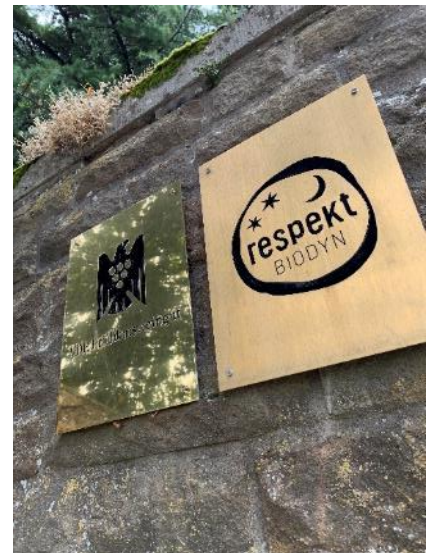
Organically certified since 1990 and biodynamic since 2004, Philipp's parcels of his beloved Rheinhessen are a haven where nature thrives. Limestone rules around his home in Westhofen, whose rocks are the sensory X-factor and texture-lending lifeblood. The Wittmann family owns significant parcels in four grand-cru sites here, with a further GG-in-waiting in neighbouring Gundersheim. "Everything in the Grossen Lagen is treated as GG, regardless of its destination," says Philipp – explaining why everything from the estate wines up tastes so impeccably distinctive. "I should never start to think about the cost of what I do in the vineyard. I always think about what the vines need to do it well."

You have to love perfectionists like this – those who bounce around, energised by their craft and smiling at the joy it affords. While the Rheinhessen is a lovely place to ripen beautiful Riesling berries, there's plenty of work to be done. In a warm and relatively bountiful harvest like 2018, soil health, yield balance and canopy management are key to harnessing the sunshine and warmth. Then, in the cellar, a need for patience and restraint in balancing opulence and freshness, fruitiness and sapidity.

And all the while retaining that purity, so the wine looks as good in the glass as these perfectly manicured vines on gentle German slopes.

2018 Wittmann 100 Hügel Riesling RRP \$29

The fertile hills of Rheinhessen, with its famous wines, are home to Philipp Wittmann. This biodynamic estate's "100 Hills" wine has quickly become a modern classic. It's a juicy-fresh dry white with animating acidity and a fine minerality. Elegant with an invigorating freshness of grapefruit and peach. An essential Riesling for every day.



2018 Wittmann Estate Riesling RRP \$39

*This is a really pretty Riesling with bright lemon curd, orange blossom and lime cordial. Signature minerality and depth for this price point; this is a medium-to full-bodied Riesling with smooth, textural appeal, but a vivacious backbone of acidity. Drink now. 93 points. **Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com***

2018 Wittmann Westhofener Riesling RRP\$74



*Plenty of butter, milk, apricot pie, mangoes, papaya and dried-pear tart. Even a touch of bananas. While the nose is certainly in the tropical zone, the palate is unexpectedly steely with a deep indent of acidity punctuating the otherwise soft and round impression. A contrastive, tense white in the end. Drink now or hold. 95 points. **Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com***

2018 Wittmann Aulerde Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP\$124

*Very intense, lemony notes here with dried honeysuckle, apple curd, bright quince and spearmint. There's a layered, compressed quality to the centre palate, despite the impressive power here, and the acidity drives long and pure. Ripe but well-defined on the finish. Drink now. 96 points. **Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com***

2018 Wittmann Kirchspiel Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP\$149

*This has a super fine nose with an impression of aromatic elegance and finely defined notes of chalk, white pepper, dry spices and a fresh, lemon and lime-peel edge. The palate has pin-point acidity and fine, leaf-like detail. The power is very discreet here and the finish is succulent, dry and uber fresh. Drink or hold. 97 points. **Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com***

2018 Wittmann Morstein Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$177

*Wild yellow flowers blow in a citrusy, salty breeze. Freshly picked nectarines run amok and honeydew melon drips in intensity. Alluring and decadent at the same time with glitzy tension, but ornately spiced stone fruit. The acidity is tempered only by the raw power here. Stoney and tightly constructed, but deep and welcoming. Drink now or hold. 98 points. **Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com***

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BERNKASTEL BOUNTY

Erni Loosen will be hitting Australia later this month and is sure to generate more headlines. He always does, doesn't he? But that didn't seem a very good reason for not including a snippet in this month's missive – not least since there's been a tremendous response to these 2018s, especially at the GG level.

In the course of 2019 we saw a steady outflow of the limited museum stocks we had of Dr Loosen's top single-vineyard dry wines. It seems word is well and truly out that the ridiculously modest price tag on these belie phenomenal precision, complexity and drinking pleasure. "His top single-vineyard wines are up there with the best," Anne Krebiehl MW says in *The Wines of Germany*.

As always, this Mosel estate's offering comes with another bonus: phenomenal versatility. From the simple smasher Dr L through Kabinett and Spätlese, there's so much fun to be had. Ask, too, about Auslese, Beerenauslese and Eiswein from recent harvests!



As 2018 Dr L Dry Riesling RRP \$25

Chalky fresh citrus. Zingy and so crisp that the residual sugar barely shows. Juicy, fresh and quite good value. 16/20. Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com

2018 Dr Loosen Riesling Wehlener Sonnenuhr Grosses Gewächs RRP \$74

Super fresh, flinty and fine aromas of lemon and grapefruit on offer, as well as wildflowers and stones. The palate has a smoothly resolved texture with supple lemon and yellow-peach flavours. Long and even-handed finish. Great depth here. Drink or hold. 95 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

2018 Dr Loosen Riesling Ürziger Würzgarten Grosses Gewächs RRP \$92

Very fresh wildflowers, honey and plenty of spice here with a pithy citrus-fruit edge. The palate has a very composed, detailed and deeply textural feel. Lime-juice flavours are laced with mineral spark and delivered in impressively succulent and spicy mode. Drink or hold. 94 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

2018 Dr Loosen Bernkasteler Lay Riesling Kabinett RRP \$40

Such a fun and juicy thing to drink. It has a tickle of spritz (at least as a young wine), sweet and fresh flavours of citrus and green apple sorbet, a bit of spice, some floral things, a subtle slaty texture and a brisk and tangy finish of fine length. It's hard not to drink it too quickly. 92 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Kabinett RRP \$44

This has such deliciously fresh aromas of white peaches with sweetly fragrant white flowers. The palate has sleek apple-pastry flavours and a fresh, juicy textural kick. Fresh finish. Nice elegance and gentle tension. Drink now. Screw cap. 93 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com

2018 Dr Loosen Wehlener Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese RRP \$66

100% Riesling from blue Devonian slate soils and ungrafted vines with an average age of 60 years. The vineyard is sustainably farmed, according to strict German environmental regulations. Yields were 50 hl/ha. Selectively hand-harvested grapes underwent cool fermentation in stainless steel tanks and traditional Fuder barrels. Half of the juice was fermented with natural yeasts, the other half with cultured yeasts. Fermentation was arrested by chilling.

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NAHE NIRVANA

You'll recall how Dönnhoff pulled it out of the bag in '17. It was a vintage the family had practically written off, after spring frosts decimated the crop. Uneven ripeness across the parcels meant even more passes than usual for the pickers, but the late-season weather yielded a superb if depleted haul from these superb sites in the Middle Nahe.

So how did '18 measure up? It was a year of abundance, with extreme rainfall in May and June setting things up for a bumper harvest. And then it turned sunny and steady. "Even during the very warm and dry summer especially, the old vines didn't show any hints of drought stress," Helmut Dönnhoff told **Stephan Reinhardt** of **Wine Advocate**. "Wherever we had a look, all our grapes were just marvellous, no matter in which vineyard. And the yield was even higher than we expected. The harvest weather was also beautiful, and all the grapes were in perfect condition, as if they were painted."

For his part, Reinhardt says both 2017 and '18 are marked by their amazing clarity, and he couldn't pick between the two. Helmut, too, was extremely happy with the way the latter turned out. "2018 is a very, very good vintage. We got the same concentration and intensity like 2017, but in 2018, this is based on super clear and healthy grapes, whereas the density and structure of the 2017s was due to the heavy reduction during spring frost."



2018 Dönnhoff Estate Riesling RRP \$40

Characterful dry Riesling from vines aged 15 to 30 years old on the steeply sloping vineyards of the middle Nahe region. The vines grow in stony, weathered volcanic soils of porphyry and melaphyr in particular, with certain amounts of slate and quartzite. Fermented and matured in stainless steel vats and large oak barrels. It's wonderfully fresh and well defined, elegant with a tingling minerality. A delicious wine for every day with moderate alcohol and very soothing acidity.



2018 Dönnhoff Hermannshöhle Riesling Grosses Gewächs RRP \$163

High concentration of flavours in this one with dried apple, pear and salt. Full-bodied, layered and very, very dry with a chalky texture at the end. Minerality with power. Drink or hold. 98 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com December 2019

2018 Dönnhoff Oberhäuser Brücke Riesling Spätlese RRP \$89

This is a decadent sweet wine with bright dried peaches, white truffle and light honey. Tropical fruit, too. Full-bodied, dense and layered with beautiful intensity and richness. Sweet finish. 94 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com December 2019

2018 Dönnhoff Oberhäuser Brücke Riesling Auslese Goldkapsel 375ml RRP \$89

This is a very contrastive sweet wine with sliced melon, white peaches and honey. Dried fruit. Full-bodied yet compact and tight,

giving it an agile tension. Fresh and energetic acidity. Salted caramel aftertaste. Great wine. One for the cellar. 1,200 bottles. Drink now or hold. 97 points. Nick Stock, JamesSuckling.com December 2019

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SOUND F.X.

We slipped the 2018 F.X. Pichler Kellerberg Riesling Smaragd into our team's blind tasting of German GGs, and wow. Just wow! What an absolutely smoking wine. It's a reminder that we all need a little more Smaragd in our lives from this member of Wachau royalty. The wines don't come cheap, of course, but they weave together every thread that great wines wear: a stamp of place, a calm authority, intensity, tension, texture, length, kaleidoscopic complexity and – incredibly in the context of such scope and strength - harmony.

2017 F.X. Pichler Steinertal Riesling Smaragd RRP\$124

Very cool and crystalline with a ton of white peaches and citrusy acidity driving the long, radically mineral finish. Long aging potential. Drink or hold. 96 points. Stuart Pigott, jamesuckling.com

2014 F.X. Pichler Steinertal Riesling Smaragd RRP \$117

White peach aromas and flavours, both fresh and penetratingly distillate-like, are accented by fruit pit and smoky Szechuan pepper and wreathed in bittersweet floral perfume. Esterous volatile elements, bittersweet cyanic notes and smoky peppercorns follow throughout a silken-textured, expansive yet exhilaratingly buoyant and energetic palate performance. A crushed-stone suffusion heightens the impression of high extract, leading into a kaleidoscopically complex finish. 95 points. David Schildknecht, Vinous Media

2014 F.X. Pichler Loibenberg Riesling Smaragd RRP \$117

Fresh and distilled mirabelle, red raspberry and white peach combine for an ethereally high-toned and penetrating aroma followed by a lusciously fruity, expansive palate impression. Yet for all of its generous fruitiness, this also reveals mineral elements including shimmering crystallinity and sheer stoniness. A salty, piquant impression of peach close to the core, along with zesty, bittersweet orange and lemon peel, make for a memorably intense yet mouthwatering and far from severe finish. As usual, Pichler raised this wine entirely in tank, successfully counteracting the site's tendencies toward excessive breadth and loss of levity. 94 points. David Schildknecht, Vinous Media



2017 F.X. Pichler Kellerberg Riesling Smaragd RRP\$190

A striking wine that has such intensity, length and complexity, yet somehow manages to deliver a very elegant, pure and focused style. Aromas of ripe stone fruit, white flowers, spice and freshly picked herbs lead to a palate that has a vivid stream of minerals, swathed in ripe peaches and mangoes and coursing through the finish. Impressive in every respect. Drink or hold. 97 points. Nick Stock, jamesuckling.com

2017 F.X. Pichler Kellerberg Riesling Smaragd RRP\$190

How do you begin to describe a wine like this, which busts apart the usual frames of reference for dry

white wine? So many fresh aromas - from white peaches through mint to Amalfi lemons - but so much ripeness and concentration, too. The finish is super long and so delicate, in spite of all the power. Drink or hold. 99 points. **Stuart Pigott, jamessuckling.com**

2017 F.X. Pichler Grüner Veltliner Dürnsteiner Smaragd RRP\$74

Spice, ginger, juicy grapefruit, green banana, creamy vanilla yoghurt smoothness, but bright and fresh too, lively and weighty, then comes the pepper and celery on a long cool finish. Wonderful. 94 points. **Gary Walsh, The Wine Front**

2018 F.X. Pichler Grüner Veltliner Liebenberg Smaragd RRP \$138

Tons of pear tart, mango dessert, earl-grey tea, orange marmalade, white pepper and baked Alaska here. Full-bodied and concentrated on the palate with a glycerol-like texture and lots of ripe-fruit character. The acidity takes on a direct but subtle persona. Drink now or hold. 94 points. **Nick Stock, jamessuckling.com**

2017 F.X. Pichler Grüner Veltliner Liebenberg Smaragd RRP \$138

Lots of green-plum and wild-berry aromas, plus herbal freshness that beautifully balances the considerable power of this unusual Wachau Grüner Veltliner. Great tension through the long finish. From chalk-rich soil, a rarity for the region. Drink or hold. 96 points. **Stuart Pigott, jamessuckling.com**

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IMPECCABLE PIRON

“Enjoy how much better value it is than so many red burgundies.” That’s what **Jancis Robinson** wrote about the 2017 edition of Dominique Piron’s top cuvée. Morgon is Piron’s patch, and the president of Inter-Beaujolais – the body tasked with extolling the virtues of Gamay in its homeland – expresses it to the max. “They seem to have had a string of good vintages in Beaujolais, and I think I like the playful and fruity 2018s quite a lot,” wrote **The Wine Front’s Gary Walsh** about the vintage that landed in Australia at the tail end of 2019. And as is always the case, there’s no time like summer for digging into these fresh, zesty mid-weight reds that express fruit and mineral with such character.

2018 Dominique Piron Beaujolais-Villages RRP \$27

*They seem to have had a string of good vintages in Beaujolais, and I think I like the playful and fruity 2018s quite a lot. Fresh, raspberry and cherry, floral perfume. It’s light and juicy, but sports a bit of ‘mineral’ stuff and fine dusty tannin to keep it on the straight and narrow. Finish is fresh. It’s easy to like. 90 points. **Gary Walsh, The Wine Front***

2018 Dominique Piron Brouilly RRP \$35

*Cherry and spice, new leather and perfume of dried herb and flowers. Medium-bodied, grainy but ripe tannin, a certain stickiness and savoury edge, ample fruit, perhaps some dark chocolate in the mix, and a solid finish. Delivers the goods, and offers depth and enjoyment with it. 92 points. **Gary Walsh, The Wine Front***

2018 Dominique Piron Fleurie RRP \$41

Rich raspberry, floral perfume, sweet spice and a subtle earthiness. Medium-bodied, supple and fleshy and well packed in the tannin department, cool clear acidity, succulence and depth, with ripe silty tannin flowing on a long and satisfying finish. Violet perfume lingering. Charm is laid on pretty thick here. Nice plus plus. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

2018 Dominique Piron Morgon Côte du Py RRP \$46

Dark cherry, baking spice, almost a liquorice richness here, floral and sooty too. Rich and well appointed, distinct 'mineral' feel, all crushed granite and flat soda water kind of thing, floral mouth perfume, depth with clarity, powerful finish, leaning towards raspberry and a slick of earthy tannin and fragrance to close. Yes. 94 points. Gary Walsh, The Wine Front

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