

THE BEST AT THE MARKET, IN YOUR KITCHEN AND ON YOUR TABLE

WINE

A few reasons why riesling rocks

Take a fresh look at an elegant, food-friendly wine made from the noblest of grapes

Nearly a year ago, we ran a couple of columns about the coming of age of riesling. This noble-yet-unassuming white wine — once associated with country-club ladies of a certain age — is suddenly hip and fresh. Young oenophiles drink it up, according to surveys, and Oregon and Washington turn out delicious examples of it.



KATHERINE COLE
WINE NOTES

all over the world, in Michigan, I was impressed and Washington.

So, what more do last fall? A lot, but I'll

Semi-sweet s may surpris

First, the sweet. H vorite catchphrase o insiders: When it co people talk dry, but t sweet. The fact is, m tually love a wine wi sidual sugar in it.

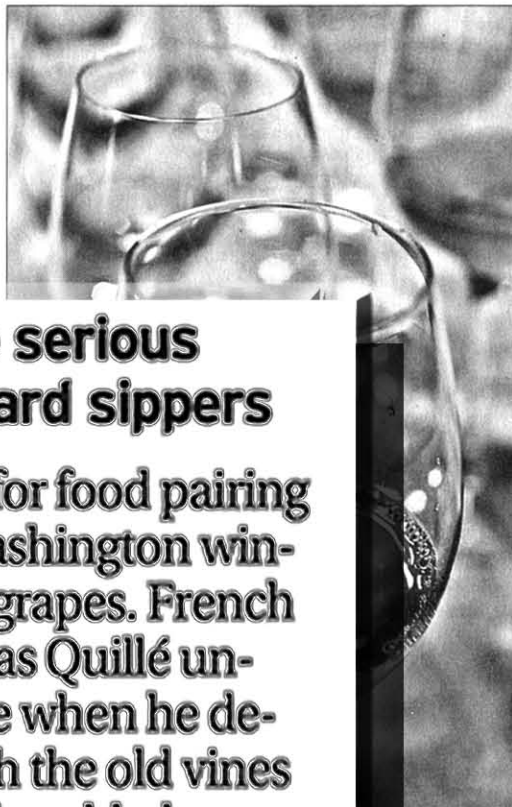
So before you turr up at riesling, consid three factors: 1) Tam and acidity mask sw Riesling is the most t of wine varietals, ma grapes and not muc fact, wine geeks cons to be the noblest of g cause the wine it mal pure.) So it may be t perceiving sweetness more than you are n your favorite red win ing comes in a range nness levels, from total quite sweet. 3) A sweet Riesling can be a surprisingly vibrant accompaniment to food.

A good word to remember at this point is spätlese, pronounced shpayt-layz-eh. This semi-sweet style of German wine is made from slightly raised grapes picked a couple of weeks after the typical dry-wine harvest date. Lovers of riesling consider spätlese to be the litmus test of a German winery's worth.

If you give good spätlese a chance, you'll be surprised by its complexity. It is ethereally light and spritzy, while also rich with ripe fruit notes and clean with minerality. A long, ginger-tinged spicy finish plays against bracing acidity which makes your mouth water for another sip. Oh, and it's not too sweet.

Served alongside spicy ethnic recipes, a spätlese intensifies heat on the palate while its sweetness contrasts with savory

I'm back on the riesling train now because I've just been to the Riesling Rendezvous in Washington. This event gathers riesling producers from all over the world immediately following the



WINE DAVIS/THE OREGONIAN
is elegance and been catching on,

Try some serious single-vineyard sippers

A favorite find for food pairing was made at a Washington winery from Oregon grapes. French winemaker Nicolas Quillé unearthed a treasure when he decided to work with the old vines planted at the unheralded Dauenhauer Vineyard in Dayton to make his 2007 Pacific Rim Dauenhauer Vineyard Oregon Riesling (\$20).

Germany and the rest of the world, a duo of unassuming Northwest bargain bottlings pleased practically every palate in the room.

If you really don't care to try a riesling with some sweetness to it, check out the **2007 Chateau Ste. Michelle Columbia Valley Dry Riesling** (\$8). This wine has a pretty freesia nose and a lovely floral palate with a lasting ginger-flecked finish, but it's bone dry. After tasting it blind alongside a bunch of \$60 wines, I understand why this easy-drinking aperitif is such a huge seller for Ste. Michelle. Find it at any New Seasons Market.

And if you're willing to try something sweeter, run out and buy the **2007 Montinore Estate Willamette Valley Riesling Sweet Reserve** (\$11.50). Tropical flower aromas and flavors of sweet peach and cardamom are strung together on a high wire of acidity. The alcohol

Johnson Creek, Milwaukie and Northwest Best; Haggren Oregon City; Made in Oregon; and QFC Barnes Road.

Montinore is one of the largest wineries in Oregon and was once known more for the quantity than the quality of its output. That has changed in recent years as new owner Rudy Marchesi and winemaker John Lundy have scaled back production and focused on farming their estate vineyards biodynamically. Expect great things from this big producer in the years to come.

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2007 Pacific Rim Vineyard Oregon

is elegance and been catching on, 2007 Pacific Rim Vineyard Oregon (20). It's a German kabinett wine with an intriguingly earthy, herbal and a ripe green-pear palate with a citrus finish. It's dynamic with a soft ripe cheese now and will age gracefully. Find it for approximately \$20 at City Market.

And finally, stay tuned for the arrival of Trisaetum, a new winery on Ribbon Ridge that will focus exclusively on biodynamically grown pinot noir and riesling. Power vintner Josh Bergstrom, best known for his family's Bergstrom label, is managing the cellars and vineyards for this new Willamette Valley operation. The lovely low-alcohol rieslings include a scrubbed-clean, tangerine-tinged table wine and a delicate dessert bottling with accents of lemongrass and preserved Meyer lemons. The winery is slated to open over Thanksgiving weekend although the wines will trickle into stores sooner; check out www.trisaetum.com to learn more.

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