

Robert Parker vintage 2019 + 2018

Christian Hermann is a hidden super star in the Mosel Valley yet, still, much more known abroad than in Germany. The reason might be that the Germans don't really appreciate high-octane Rieslings such as gold-capsuled Auslesen for even higher predicates. Hermann, however, is a master of those noble sweet wines and belongs to the most fastidious selectors of single berries and raisins. Always striving for perfection, his 2019s come very close to completion in almost all sweet-wine categories. Starting with the absolutely fabulous Spätlese from old vines in the Erdener Herzlei up to the potential 100-pointer TBAs from the Herzlei and the Prälat, all of the wines show an energy and piquant nerviness that is unrivaled in the domain's history. However, 2019 wasn't an easy vintage in the Middle Mosel. It was dry and hot like everywhere, and the vines could have easily suffered under the permanent drought. "You have to know each of your parcels very well, namely regarding the water-holding, to handle them accordingly," said Christian. He cultivates no less than 140 different plots in some of the very best sites in the Middle Mosel, and many his plots are extremely old, with vines that are 100 years old or more. This was a big advantage last year because the oldest vines didn't suffer that much, even though the plants are trained on single poles and planted at a high density of one vine per square meter. The cold nights before the harvest have turned the 2019 vintage to a kind of "Saar vintage," finds Christian. The acidity levels are stunning and significantly higher than in 2018 and give the wines fascinating energy and precision that will make the 2019s some of the finest Rieslings of at least the last 20 years. In the end, the vintage was so perfect that you almost only find top-class wines—so, GGs (Grosses Gewächs) and high predicates. Producing classic Kabinett Rieslings with finesse and elegance was a challenge in 2019, yet Christian managed to handcraft a phenomenal Kabinett Fuder from the Ürziger Würzgarten that is, unfortunately, sold as Alte Reben (old vines) exclusively by Moevenpick in Germany and Switzerland. It is doubtlessly one of the finest Kabinett Rieslings produced in 2019 in the Mosel! Even the TBAs, which Christian and his team selected through the entire harvest from September 25 to mid-October, are incredibly savory, finessed, elegant and characterized by an energy they rarely had before. Regarding the botrytis share in his wines, one can generalize that all the dry wines from Dr. Hermann as well as the Kabinett, Spätlese and regular Auslese crus are based entirely on ripe and healthy grapes. The gold-capsuled Auslesen, on the other hand, are made from overripe grapes with perhaps a bit of wet botrytis, while the long gold-capsuled Auslesen are based on particularly concentrated and

tasting berries. "The LGK is more a decision of my stomach than of a certain concept," Christian admits. His decisions in 2019 were all damned right, even though the quantities are 50% lower than in 2018, which in turn brought 30% more filled fuders compared to average years. All in all, 2019 is probably the finest collection of Rieslings I have tasted at Dr. Hermann, and readers should invest their money here for themselves and for their children and even the grandchildren. The 2019s are doubtlessly long-distance runners, although they already taste beautifully charming and finessed. Even though I didn't score a wine 100 yet (due to the early stage I tasted them between April and June, so shortly after the bottling, but also because the electrifying character of the finest wines need to calm down first, which will take some years), perfection is on the horizon in several wines. Namely, the Rieslings from the Erden Treppchen and the Prälat are spectacular. You can serve me any of the wines at any time and I will love them. Did Christian Hermann (or did anyone?) ever select more different styles from the Prälat, the holy temple vineyard of Dr. Loosen where Markus Molitor also picked his first vintage last year? Obviously, competition of the very best producers leads to previously unknown qualities in this small, spectacular, warm and steep grand cru vineyard. For five years now, Christian's has owned two top spots here: one is located in the lower part close to the Mosel where he picks his gold-capsuled Auslese(n), Beerenauslese (BA) and Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA). The other plot lies further up where the grapes stay healthy much longer and are therefore picked for the (dry) Grosses Gewächs (GG), the Spätlese and the regular Auslese. As I was writing this, I received a text message from Christian Hermann saying, "I have three more 2019s to send to you: my Kinheimer Hubertuslay Kabinett, the Löslicher Försterlay Auslese Goldkapsel and the Erdener Prälat Grosses Gewächs have just been bottled. May I?"

