

21 DAYS TO WINE: DAY 14

MINERAL NOTES IN WINE

21 DAYS TO
WINE

WINE: Riesling Mosel Joh. Jos Christoffel Erben 2014

SCENTS: Gravel

SUPPLIES: A white napkin or piece of white paper (to observe), *Optional: a metal dumbbell, sea salt, warm water, pumice stone

REVIEW

In the last episode we talked about the **finish**: Where you feel it and how to describe it?

We also discussed that a long finish does not make a fine wine, but rather, **a balanced finish**, one that is in harmony with the nose and the palate, is what makes a wine truly elegant.

MINERALITY

Minerals are more difficult to identify in wine because we aren't used to smelling them or tasting them. Minerals come across as aromas and flavors as well as sensations.

WHERE DOES MINERALITY IN WINE COME FROM?

The origin of mineral notes is not 100% clear. Some of them develop during the winemaking process, but others seem to be directly related to the soil and the climate where the vineyards are located.

WHAT DOES MINERALITY SMELL LIKE AND TASTE LIKE?

A few examples of mineral aromas:

Salty sea water

Pavement after a summer rain

A match strike

Gravel

On the palate, minerality comes across as **mouthwatering**, especially on the finish.

PRACTICE SMELLING MINERALS:

- If you aren't lucky enough to have the ocean outside your window, try adding sea salt to a cup of hot water. Smell it.
- Wet a pumice stone and scratch it to release some volcanic mineral notes.
- Strike a match for flinty scent.
- Break a piece of chalk in half. That's a chalky limestone note.

- Graphite smells like sharpened number 2 pencils.
- Metallic notes smell like the rust on your hands, or dumbbells in the gym.

MINERALITY AND FOOD AND WINE PAIRING

Intense mineral aromas, flavors, and sensations are an important part of wine tasting. A wine with distinctive aromas of any kind, not just mineral ones, is special and worth noticing. Don't cover them up with heavy sauces.

Minerality on the palate is mouthwatering, even a little salty. Keep that in mind with serving these wines. Choose more delicate cheeses or simple sauces. Let the savory qualities of the wine exalt the flavors of your food.

CAPRESE SALAD

A perfect example of this type of pairing is a classic Amalfi Coast combo: fresh creamy and grassy mozzarella cheese with tomatoes. The local wines are all tinged with heady volcanic aromas and a salty finish. The salt brings out the best in the cheese and the tomatoes while rinsing the fat from your palate.

RIESLING MOSEL
JOH. JOS
CHRISTOFFEL
ERBEN
2014

RIESLING

PRONUNCIATION: *Ree-Sling*

Riesling is a white-skinned, semi-aromatic grape that originated in the Rhine region (Germany).

It not only has distinctive characteristics of its own – most notably, apple, honey, and stone fruit aromas and a waxy, petrol note when it ages – it is also terroir-expressive, which means the wine takes on aspects of the soil and climate where it is grown. The grape ripens very slowly which gives it plenty of time to absorb elements of its environment from the ground below to the wind and the rain.

A RANGE OF FLAVORS AND QUALITIES

Cooler-climate Rieslings, in particular German ones, like the one from the cool and rainy Mosel region that we tasted in this lesson display fresher whiter fruit notes like apple, whereas sunnier, warmer places produce more honeyed, peachy-scented one.

In Germany, Rieslings are classified according to how ripe the grapes were when they were harvested, as this ultimately affects the aromas, the acidity, and the mineral finish. Aged Rieslings display an incredible evolution of aromas, with quiet, stony notes on the nose and the finish, sweet fruit flavors, and searing acidity for balance.

The labels may also include the region and subregion where the wines were grown and produced.

READING RIESLING WINE LABELS

‘Qualitätswein mit Prädikat’

Here are a few words you might find on your German Riesling Label:

Qualitätswein: High quality wine from one of the 13 authorized wine-growing and production regions, among them the Mosel.

Prädikatswein: Superior quality wine, made from one of the 39 sub-regions within the 13 authorized wine production regions. Quality standards of production

also forbid certain manipulation during the wine making process, like **chaptalization** (the addition of sugar to the grapes to further stimulate fermentation).

SWEET VS DRY

Trocken = Dry

Halbtrocken = Off-Dry

WINE CLASSIFICATION

- **Kabinett:** Lighter wines made from ripe grapes. They're usually semi-sweet, but dry on occasion.
- **Spätlese:** Technically translates to 'late harvest,' but refers to grapes picked about a week late, with more concentrated aromas and flavors.
- **Auslese:** Select harvest. Most often they are semi-sweet but on occasion dry.
- **Beerenauslese (BA) and Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA):** Made from overripe grapes, likely produce intensely aromatic and sweet wines.
- **Eiswein:** Made from overripe, frozen grapes. Rare, exquisite and sweet.

Riesling is considered alongside Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc to be one of the most versatile varieties, capable of producing a range of wine styles including sweet, off-dry, and dry while maintaining a balance of acidity, minerality, and finish.

In addition to Germany, Riesling thrives throughout the world including: Austria, Alsace, Italy, Australia, New Zealand, Slovenia, USA (Finger Lakes, NY, California, Washington, Michigan), and Canada.

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TASTING NOTES

LOOK: Pale, green-tinted gold color

SMELL: Chalky minerals, almost like a cool, rainy day, fruity aromas of apple, citrus, and peach

TASTE: Zingy and bright acidity, pretty fruity flavor, and a long mouth-watering mineral finish

DISCUSS

The wine would be lovely with a smooth, washed rind cheese like brie.

Cheers!
ANNIE

WINE NOTES

WINERY

Weingut Joh. Jos. Christoffel Erben is a very small, traditionally family-run property located in the town of Ürzig, nestled in the swooping hillsides of the famed Mosel wine region. They've been in operation for three centuries and some of their vines are approaching 100 years of age.

WINEMAKING

The grapes are crushed whole and kept cool during a slow fermentation to preserve their bright fruit notes and local character.

