

the educated palate by Scott Richardson



SCOTT RICHARDSON

Orlandoan Producing The Best Rieslings In Germany... And America!

A couple of years ago, I was introduced to Mark Wallraff. Mark owns Mosella Wines. Some of you might have tasted his wines at Fleming's or if you frequented The Wine Room on Park Avenue, both in Winter Park.

His wines can also be found at Vines Grille and Wine Bar on Sand Lake Road in Orlando, and a few select locations around town.

When you first meet Mark, you might be tempted to think, "He's a wine producer?" Mark didn't plan on becoming a wine producer. He says it was a result of September 11, 2001. He was stuck in Germany at the time with nowhere to go. No plane was leaving for the U.S. He decided this was fate and created his own wine producing company, Mosella Wines, and began producing the best darn Rieslings and exporting them to the U.S, and more specifically, Florida. I won't bore you with the details, other than to say, if you are someone who is tired of drinking watered down, sweetened up Rieslings, I suggest you try one of Mark's wines and send me a note about what your palate thinks of these wines. Mark spends his time between living in Bernkastel, Germany and Orlando. He makes no apologies for his frankness when he speaks with you about his wines, and other wines that simply don't cut it when it comes to quality. Mark is so particular about his wines that when the grapes are not up to his quality, he doesn't use the grapes to make the wine, unlike some other winemakers in the region. Case in point, in 2009 Mark only made his Black Riesling or Schwarz Riesling, while other winemakers chose to use those "under-par" grapes and export them to the U.S.

Being a red wine drinker myself, I have fallen for his wines. In fact, I don't drink Rieslings anymore unless it is from Mosella Wines. Here are some of my own wine notes on his Rieslings;

My top three Mosella wines start with the 2009 Schwarz Riesling. This wine has a lot going on in terms of complex aromas on the nose and on the palate. There is an earthy component when you swirl the wine and sniff the aromas, along with cherries and raspberries. When you taste this wine, you notice black fruits such as blackberries, black currents, and plums and it is finished off with a chocolate element. This seductive wine pairs well with any meat, especially gamey meats such as lamb. Try it also with shellfish or Ahi tuna. Believe it or not, the Schwarz Riesling complements fruity desserts like poached pears.

Next, we move onto the 2004 Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Kabinett. Kabinett simply means you can let this wine age... and it ages well. When you sniff this wine, it has a mineral note common to many Rieslings. Some wine experts say these wines have an aroma likened to wet slate or wet stones. When you sip this wine, let some of the wine rest in the lower front part of your mouth. Suck in a little air to allow those aromas to fill your mouth. I noticed a lot of tropical fruits like pineapple and a little kiwi followed by pears. This wine has some nice residual sugar, meaning it is not overly sweet, but then there is a little acidity on the front part of



Photos by Scott Richardson

the tongue... beautifully balanced.

My final wine of choice is the 2005 Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese. Within the German wine system, there are six levels of what is called Prädikatswein, the highest quality wines made in Germany. Spätlese is the second level and means "late harvest." It is semi-sweet and a little fruitier than the Kabinett wines. The Himmelreich shows some fantastic fruity characters with lime and other citrus flavors. Have you ever made a fruit salad to enjoy on a hot summer's day? All the flavors of the fruits you put in that fruit salad come through in this wine... it truly is a wonderful wine for autumn, too. Pair this wine with spicier Asian dishes. I would even say you could order your favorite pizza and still enjoy this wine with it.

Wondering if you should drink white wines or even the Black Riesling chilled? Certainly you can chill these wines, but I find when the wine is at room temperature, more of the fruitiness and aromas come out. Try it both ways, pour some wine out into a glass, then re-cork it and chill it. See for yourself.

Mark has been a guest speaker in my wine courses at Valencia College and is often seen at events such as Lake Eola Food and Wine Festival and Bacchus Bash in South Orlando. Mark takes the "stuffiness" out of wine-speak. He is so passionate about how he makes wine and he loves to educate anyone on his wine. His saying is, "God makes the wine, I just bottle it." Good perspective!

When the weather finally starts to cool down this fall, head out to Fleming's, or take a stroll down Park Avenue to try Mosella Wines Rieslings. If you are down by the attractions, stop by Vines Grille and Wine Bar to experience Mosella Wines!

Cheers! ■