

VAN VOLXEM

Wiltingen, Saar (Germany)

In 1999 Roman Niewodniczanski (“Niewo”) took this run-down property and started shaking it up radically. His Saar Riesling and Alte Reben Riesling are creamy and complex wines; the single-vineyard wines have even more depth.

HERMANN J. WIEMER

Dundee, Finger Lakes (New York, USA)

The sleek but intense single-vineyard and reserve wines have great refinement and demand fine cuisine and/or your full attention. However, the regular “dry” bottling is a great introduction to Wiemer and the Finger Lakes.

WIENINGER

Vienna (Austria)

Although best known for his Wiener Gemischter Satz wines made from many different varieties picked together, Fritz Wieninger also makes lush, succulent Rieslings, the best of which (Rosengartl) are usually medium-dry.

TOP 20 MEDIUM-SWEET
RIESLING

“Medium-sweet” is an important category for Riesling, although many of those who drink these wines with great enthusiasm would refer to the style by different names—most important, the German designation Kabinett. When these wines are successful, their natural grape sweetness is balanced by an animating acidity that makes them leave your mouth way cleaner than you might expect from the first impression of aromatic sweetness. Of these hit lists, here is the best value for the money.

SCHLOSSGUT DIEL

Burg Layen, Nahe (Germany)

There’s been a serious commitment to Rieslings of this style here since Armin began shaking things up a quarter century ago. His daughter Caroline continues this; her wines are even more expressive and never too sweet.

DÖNNHOFF

Oberhausen, Nahe (Germany)

The Dönnhoff’s Riesling Kabinett, with its enormous drive and raciness (hold on to your hat!), from the Leistenberg vineyard is the most underrated wine from this famous producer. In contrast, the regular non-dry Riesling is more juicy.

FELTON ROAD

*Banockburn, Central Otago
(New Zealand)*

With its snowcapped mountains and lakes, New Zealand’s most southerly winegrowing region looks made for Riesling. With their juicy and elegant Rieslings, Nigel Greening and Blair Walter have proved that to be true.

CHATEAU FONTAINE

Lake Leelanau Peninsula, (Michigan, USA)

Winemaker Shawn Walters is only interested in making wines that are “rock star shit.” Although the path he took in making the semi-sweet Rieslings here might strike some as rather technical, the result is wines of dazzling intensity and clarity.

DR. KONSTANTIN FRANK

*Hammondsport, Finger Lakes
(New York, USA)*

Frederick Frank is one of many producers to just miss inclusion in my dry Riesling hit list. However, his medium-sweet Riesling Reserve is one of the most imposing and subtle wines from the Finger Lakes. The sparkling Célébr is also a star.

GUNDERLOCH

Nackenheim, Rheinhessen (Germany)

At the dry end of this category, but slightly sweeter than the wines in the medium-dry hit list, is the subtly aromatic (pink grapefruit and rosehips) and incredibly refreshing Jean Baptiste Riesling Kabinett from the Haselbach family.

FRITZ HAAG

Brauneberg, Mosel (Germany)

The ultimate in refinement and delicacy in this category, and already famous for this under Oliver Haag's father, Wilhelm. A whiff of vanilla bean and an almost silky texture in spite of the bright acidity are typical for Haag's Kabinett wines.

REINHOLD HAART

Piesport, Mosel (Germany)

Kabinett is usually described as being light, but the Kabinetts from father-and-son team Theo and Johannes Haart have quite some power and are packed with flavor. Those from the famous Goldtröpfchen site are bursting with black currant aroma.

TONI JOST

Bacharach, Mittelrhein (Germany)

Cecilia Jost was lucky that her parents, Peter and Linde Jost, turned the family winery into the recognized number-one in the small Mittelrhein region, but she has taken the full and juicy style they developed and made it yet more exciting.

DR. LOOSEN

Bernkastel, Mosel (Germany)

The young Ernie Loosen never dreamed of turning the world on to Mosel Riesling's charms, but that is what he's done with great success. His Kabinett wines are at once models of feather-light winemaking genius and a global marketing success.

MÜLLER-CATOIR

Neustadt-Haardt, Pfalz (Germany)

This wine producer who is so committed to dry wines has always made a specialty of discreetly sweet Riesling, which combine the generous style of the Pfalz with a pristine clarity and brightness that have always been in demand.