

'All hail the noble grape!'

Whether choosing a wine to pair with food or to quaff on a sun-bathed terrace, to impress the new in-laws or celebrate a special occasion there is always one grape you can guarantee will deliver... or is there??

The world over Riesling is universally recognised as arguably the finest wine grape, one of the 6 original noble varieties and parent to a plethora of other varieties. Now grown successfully in almost every wine region across the globe, and generally considered the most expressive of its terroir.

So why is it that we cringe at the mere mention of its name? Simple, because we are inherently all anglophiles!

'Don't mention the war!'

There, it's out there! The impact of the second world war cannot be underestimated. On a base level wine merchants were compelled to 'choose sides' and inevitably fell on the side of 'allied' grapes, but more enduringly although less obviously, the economic cost of war led to a relaxation in the laws governing the production and labelling of German wine. In 1971 a law was passed allowing *grosslage* wines to be blended from many different sites whilst removing specific grape varieties from the labelling. This resulted in the UK market being flooded with mass-produced co-operative *zuckerwasser* (*sugar water*) during the 1970's-early 1980's and so it was that the perceived wisdom for consumers came to be that sweetness equalled naughtiness. But the Germans fought back! In recent years introducing the *VDP Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter*, an agreement between 200 top producers agreeing to show geographic origins, grape varieties and single vineyards, and although not official, a welcome return to an assurance of quality.

Pure & simple

Understanding the history & myths behind the grape is only part of it, more understanding why this grape is truly special is the point. Riesling is a variety which thrives at lower temperatures but can also be successful in the heat, its extremely woody vine can withstand relatively low temperatures, it buds early, ripens slowly and fruits late allowing excellent concentration of fruit AND high natural acidity (*tartaric acid*). The resulting juice can produce wines in the most diverse range, from bone dry to extremely honeyed or anything in between and still maintain its distinctive fruit character and fine structure without the influence of oak or *MLF*. This unique ability gives Riesling a stylistic range that no other variety can match without any intervention.

So what are we left with? A grape which can be grown anywhere in the world, can be used to produce any style of wine that can be aged for decades and embodies the environment in which it is grown but requires extreme skill & passion... A labour of love...

Riesling Kabinett Trocken, Sybille Kuntz, Mosel 2015

A truly great entry level dry Riesling! This wine displays a beautiful balance of fruit and acidity with a depth and complexity that is synonymous with German wines. From one of the most beautiful and challenging wine regions, the south facing vineyards on the bank of the Mosel benefit from baking sun during the day and cool breeze from the hills of Minheim to the north. In terms of food pairings this is a dream! Salty sea food, spices, sour cheeses or rich bisques. A wonderful expression of the noblest of noble grapes.