

# *Colorado Cultivar Camp: Riesling*

August 2017

With special expert host

Morten Hallgren, Ravines Wine Cellars



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# Agenda

- All about Riesling
  - History
  - Geography
  - IRF Sweetness Scale
- Masterclass tasting – led by Morten Hallgren
  - Germany, France, Austria, Australia, United States
- Blind comparison tasting
  - Colorado vs. The World



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# All About Riesling

- History
  - Origin
  - Parentage
  - Biology
- Geography
  - Germany
  - Austria
  - France
  - Australia
  - USA



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# History of Riesling

- Originated in Rhine region of Germany
- Documentation of Riesling dates back to early 1400s in Germany, France and Austria.
- Synonyms: Johannisberg Riesling, Rhine Riesling and White Riesling
  - Not to be confused with:
    - **Welschriesling** is an unrelated variety, which is common in Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania which may also be labelled as Riesling Italico, Welsch Rizling, Olasz Rizling or Laski Rizling.
    - **Schwarzriesling** (Black Riesling) is the German name for Pinot Meunier, a grape used in Champagne, but which is also grown in Southern Germany.
    - **Cape Riesling** is the South African name for the French grape Crouchen.
    - **Gray Riesling** is actually Trousseau gris, a white mutant of the Bastardo port wine grape.
- In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, German Riesling prices were comparable to the great wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy
- Back in 1985, just 16% of German Rieslings were produced in a dry style. As of 2016, it's a whopping 46.3%.



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# History of Riesling

- Parentage:
  - Gouais blanc
    - Rare today but widely grown in middle ages
    - the ancestor of many traditional French and German grape varieties.
  - *Vitis sylvestris* x *Traminer*
    - Second parent has not yet been definitively identified.



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# Biology of Riesling

- Riesling is sensitive to climate and soil resulting in distinctly different flavors and aromas.
- Produces a range of wine styles from bone-dry, medium dry, medium sweet and sweet.
- Cool climate variety with hard wood; allows it to be coldy-hardy and frost-resistant.
- Buds can withstand cold winter temperatures.
- Early ripening, but with a long, slow ripening period – allows for selective harvest for desired ripeness.
- Susceptible to Botrytis – resulting in a range of sweet wines styles.



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# Geography of Riesling

- Germany
  - Mosel
  - Rheingau
  - Rheinhessen
  - Pfalz
  - Nahe
- Austria
  - Wachau
  - Kremstal and Kamptal
  - Traisental
- France
  - Alsace
- United States
  - New York, Michigan, California, Oregon, Washington
- Australia
  - Clare Valley, Eden Valley



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# Geography of Riesling

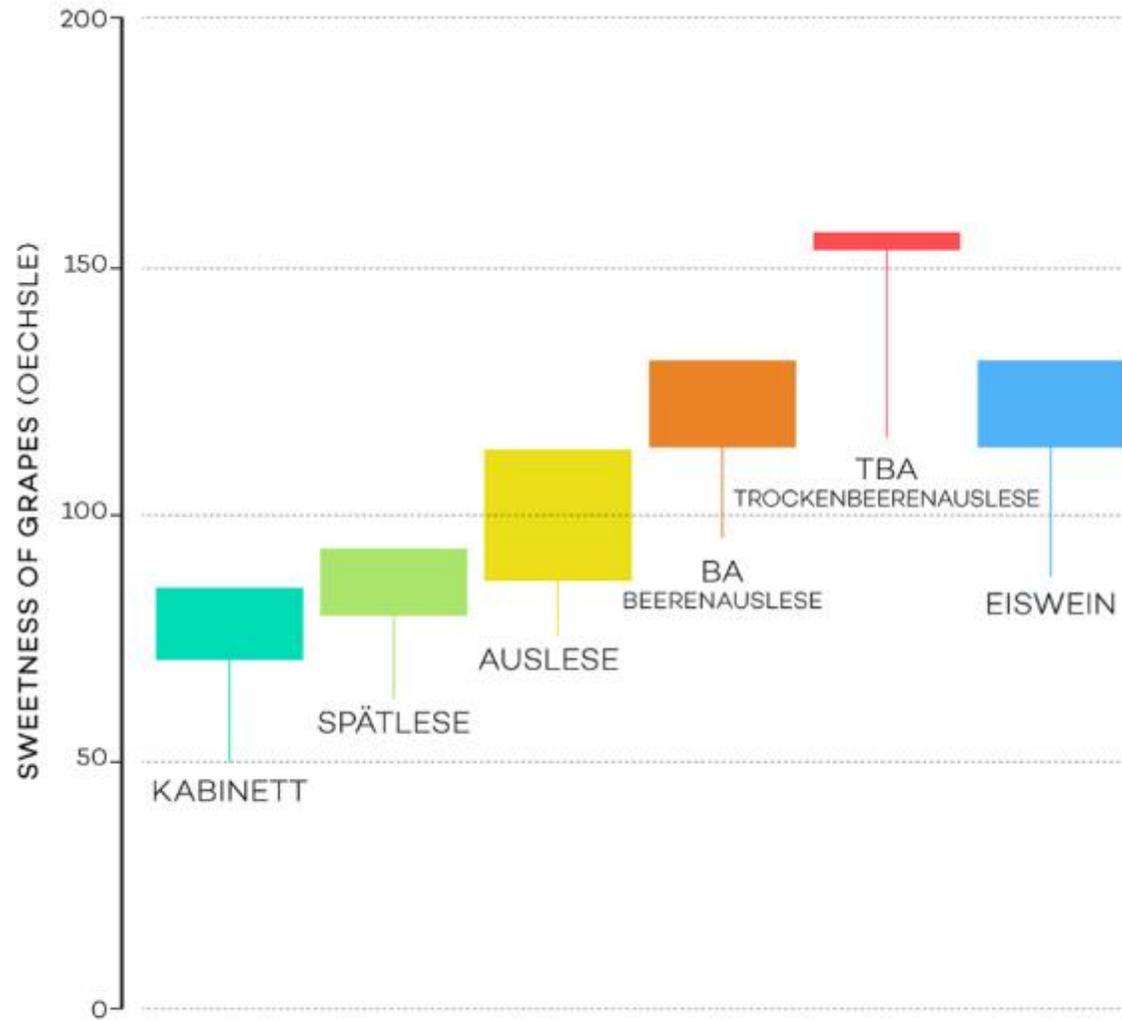
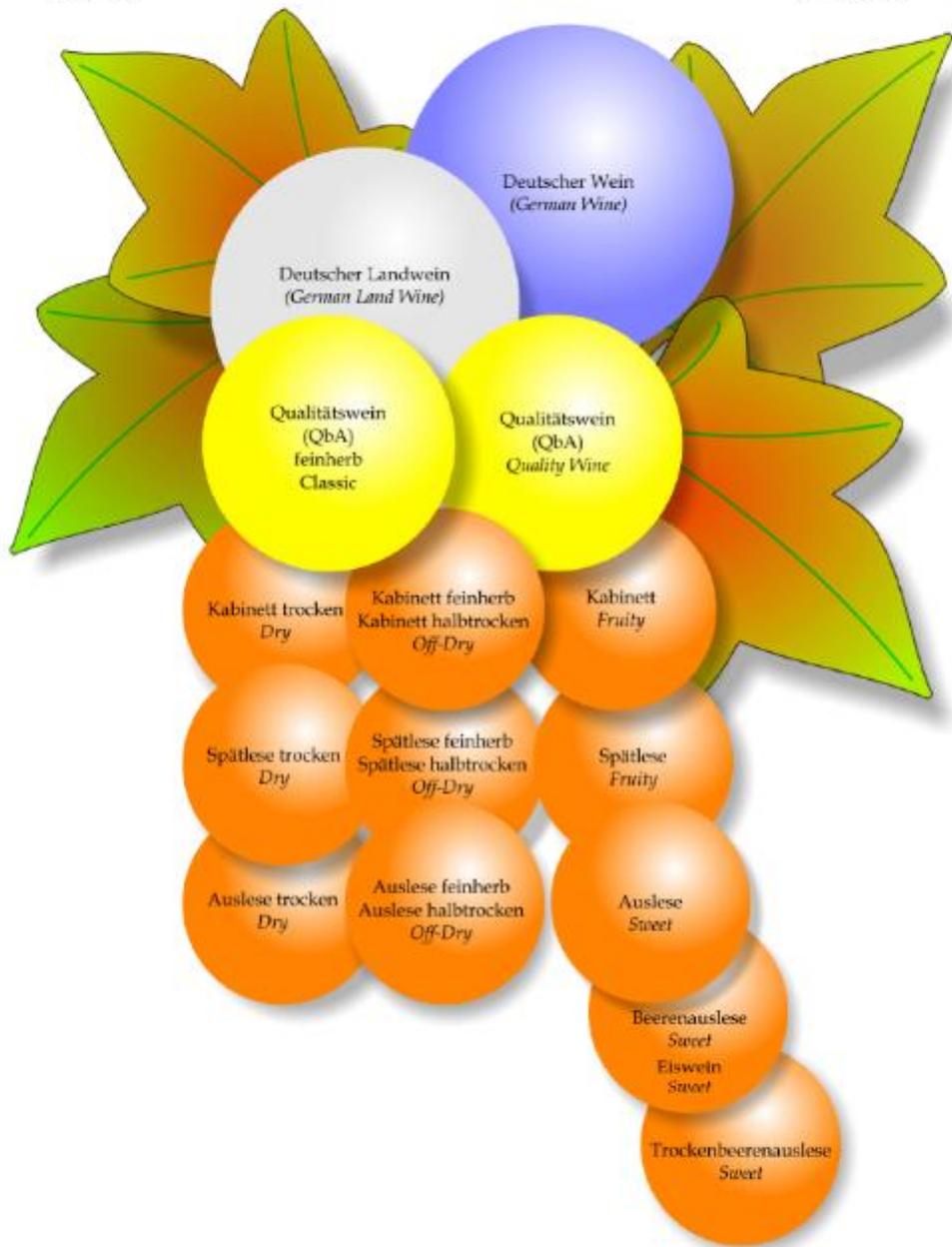
- **Germany Classification:**
- **Qualitätswein/QbA:** A wine that comes entirely from one of the 13 designated wine regions in Germany. An estate's basic wine.
- **Qualitätswein mit Prädikat (QmP):** Translated as "quality wine with specific attributes", this is the top level of German wines. These prominently display a Prädikat (ripeness level designation) on the label and may not be chaptalized. Prädikatswein range from dry to intensely sweet, but unless it is specifically indicated that the wine is dry or off-dry, these wines always contain a noticeable amount of residual sugar. Prädikatswein must be produced from allowed varieties in one of the 39 subregions (Bereich) of one of the 13 wine-growing regions, although it is the region rather than the subregion which is mandatory information on the label.
- **Kabinett:** The lightest and most delicate style of Riesling, made from normally ripe grapes picked early in the harvest.
- **Spätlese:** Late harvest wine, typically with more richness and body than Kabinett because the grapes are allowed to ripen for a longer period.
- **Auslese:** Wine made from very ripe, late-harvested grapes, often with some amount of botrytis (aka "noble rot"). Made in a fruity style with luscious residual sweetness, Auslese is the most concentrated wine, before getting into the realm of the big, sticky dessert wines.
- **Beerenauslese/BA:** Dessert wine made from extremely overripe grapes that are fully affected by botrytis. BAs are very intense and nectar-like.
- **Eiswein:** Another rare dessert wine, similar in concentration to BA, but made from overripe grapes that have frozen solid on the vine.
- **Trockenbeerenauslese/TBA:** Germany's greatest and rarest dessert wine, made from individually selected berries that have been completely shriveled to dried-up raisins by the botrytis mold.



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# German Wine Quality Cluster

Driest ← → Sweetest



## PRADIKATSW EIN CLASSIFICATION



# Geography of Riesling

- **Germany Classification (unofficial):**
- The Verband deutscher Prädikatsweingüter (the Association of German Prädikat Wine Estates, abbreviated VDP), is an elite group of some 200 quality-oriented German vintners who are committed to terroir-driven viticulture at the highest level.
- **Grosses Gewächs** (great growth): a designation used by VDP members (stylized as VDP Grosses Gewächs) in all regions except Rheingau to designate top-level dry wines from sites classified as Grosse Lage.
- **Grosse Lage** (Grand cru): a designation used by the VDP to designate non-dry wines from Grosse Lage sites. The non-dry wines are always of Prädikatswein level with the Prädikat mentioned, e.g. VDP.Grosse Lage Spätlese.
- **Erste Lage** (Premier cru): a designation used by VDP in all regions except Mosel and Rheingau to denote selected sites suitable for Erste Lage wines.



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# Geography of Riesling

- Germany
  - Mosel
  - Rheingau
  - Rheinhessen
  - Pfalz
  - Nahe



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# Geography of Riesling

- Germany
  - **Mosel**
  - 57% of 23,000 acres are Riesling
  - Mosel River is the sinuous spine of the Mosel region, changing direction so often as it flows northeast toward the Rhine that it meanders nearly 250 km/150 miles, to cover about half that distance as the crow flies. Together with its two small tributaries, the Saar and the Ruwer, the Mosel composes one geographical entity.
  - Vineyards carpeting these slopes are among the steepest in the world, with some planted at an astounding 70-degree gradient.
  - Optimal warmth and precipitation in the steep sites and valleys.
  - Clayish slate and greywacke in the lower Mosel Valley (northern section); Devonian slate in the steep sites and sandy, gravelly soil in the flatlands of the middle Mosel Valley; primarily shell-limestone (chalky soils) in the upper Mosel Valley (southern section, parallel with the border of Luxembourg).
  - Purity of fruit, delicacy, high acidity and the unmistakable terroir of the vineyard.

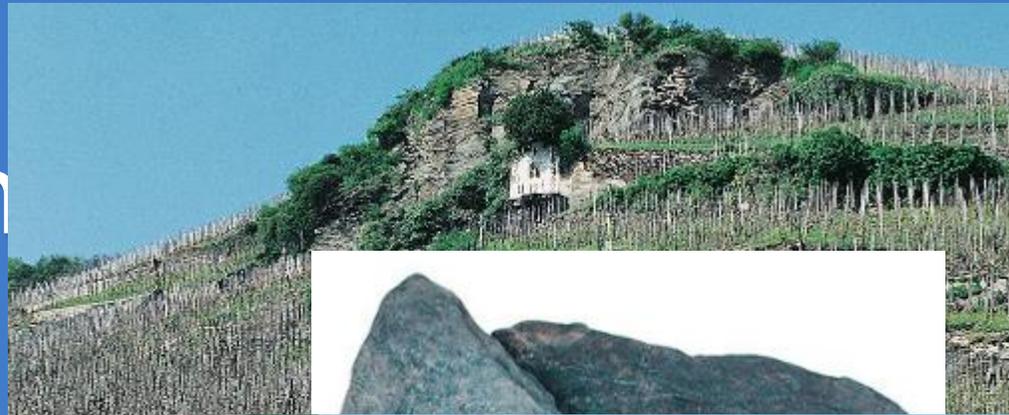


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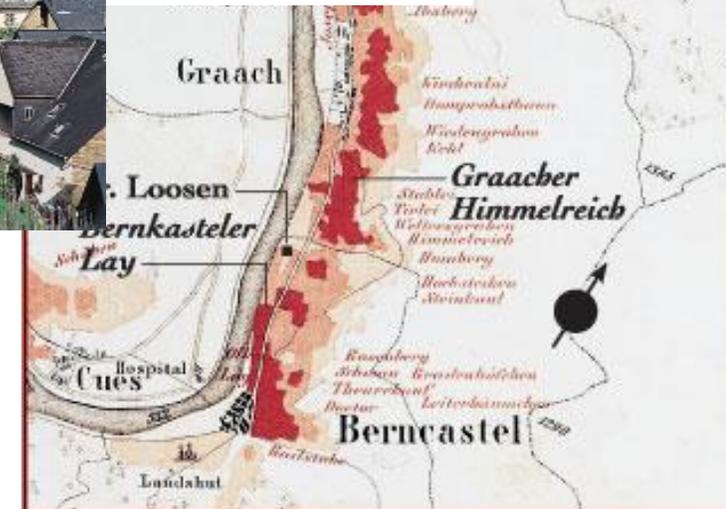


# Geography

- Germany
  - Mosel
    - Bernkastel
    - Wehlen
    - Urzig



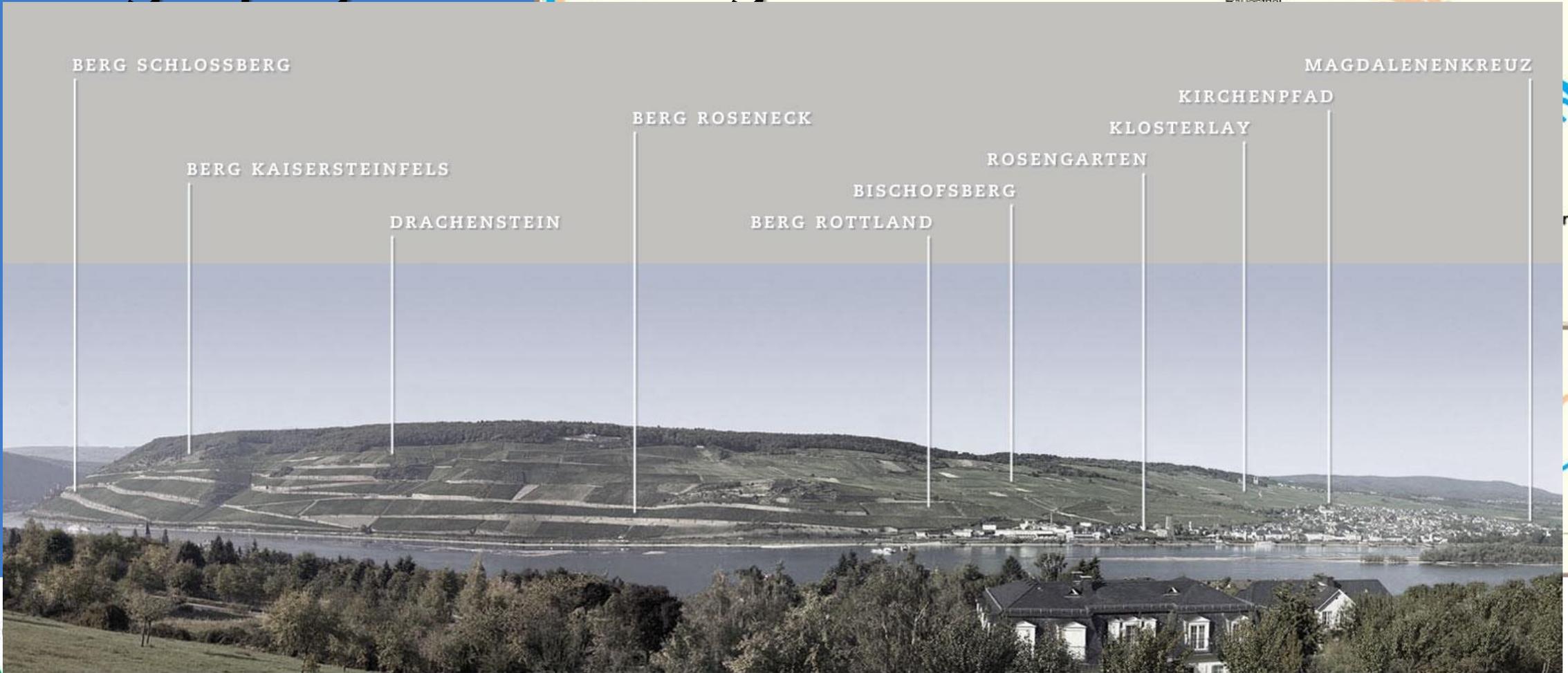
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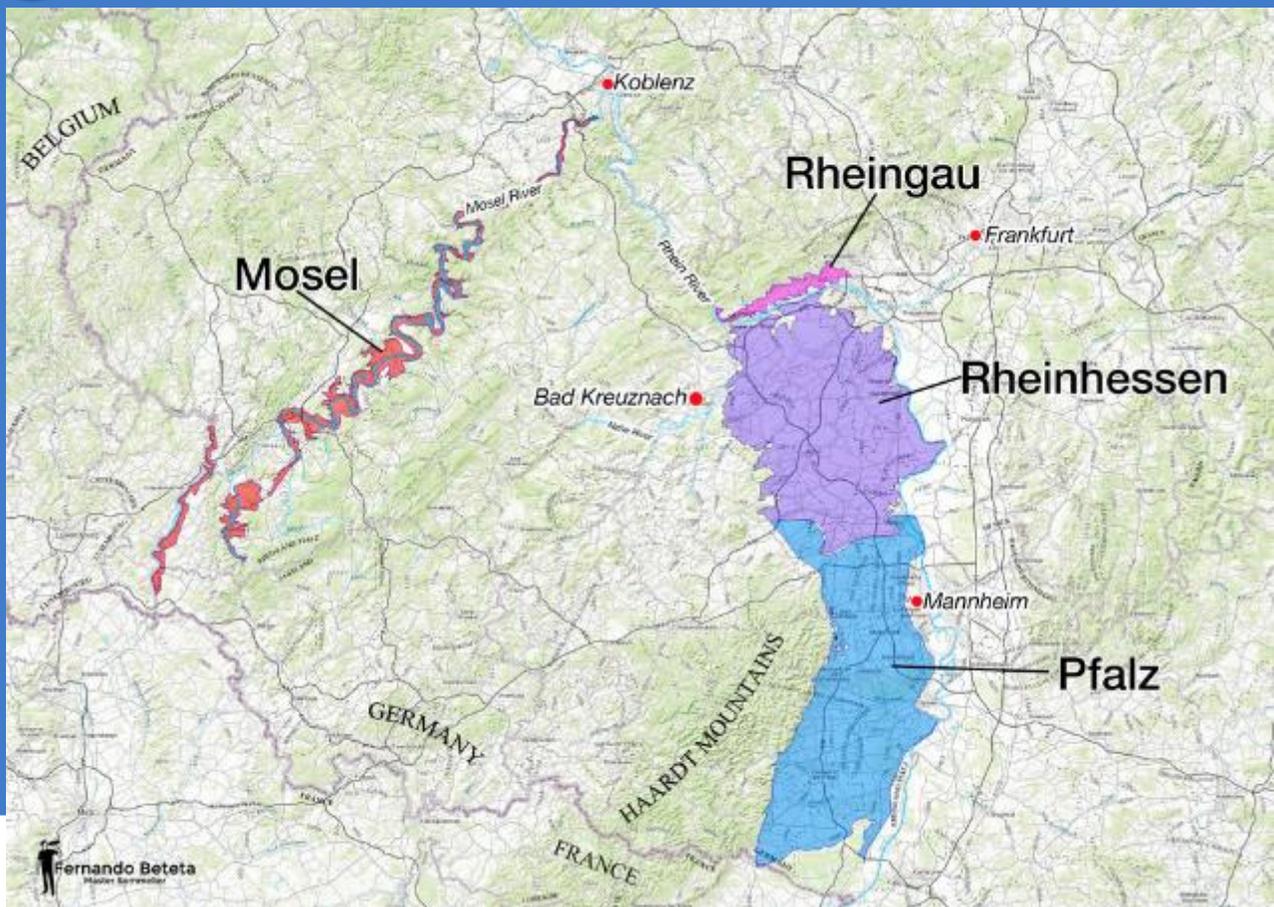
# Geography of Riesling



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# Geography of Riesling

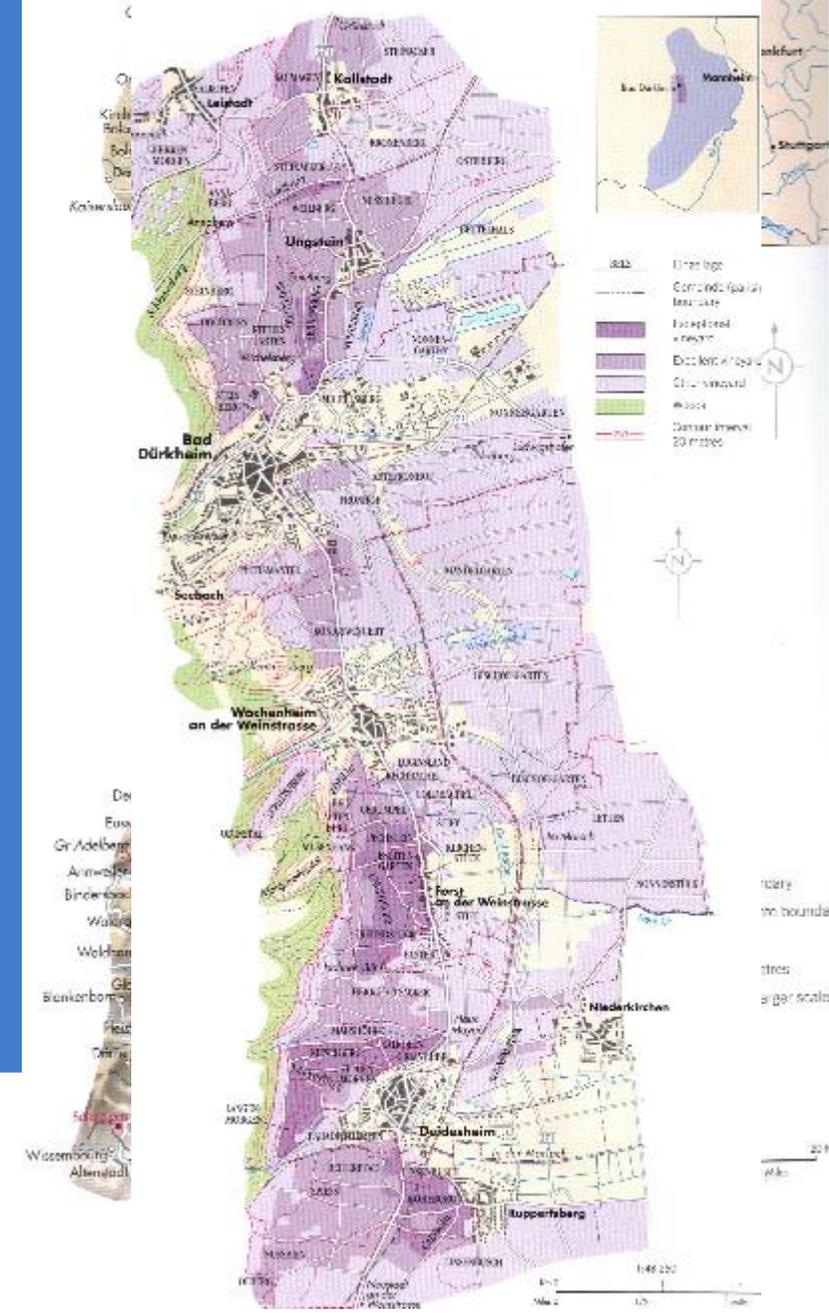
- Germany
  - Rheinhessen
  - Across the river from the Rheingau
  - The largest of Germany's 13 regions
  - Region of extremes
    - being at once the home of Liebfraumilch
    - as well as the Nackenheimer Rothenberg, one of Germany's great vineyards.
  - Riesling is not as widely planted
  - Rheinhessen wines are often characterized as being soft, fragrant, medium-bodied and mild in acidity pleasant, easy-to-drink wines.



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# Geography of Riesling

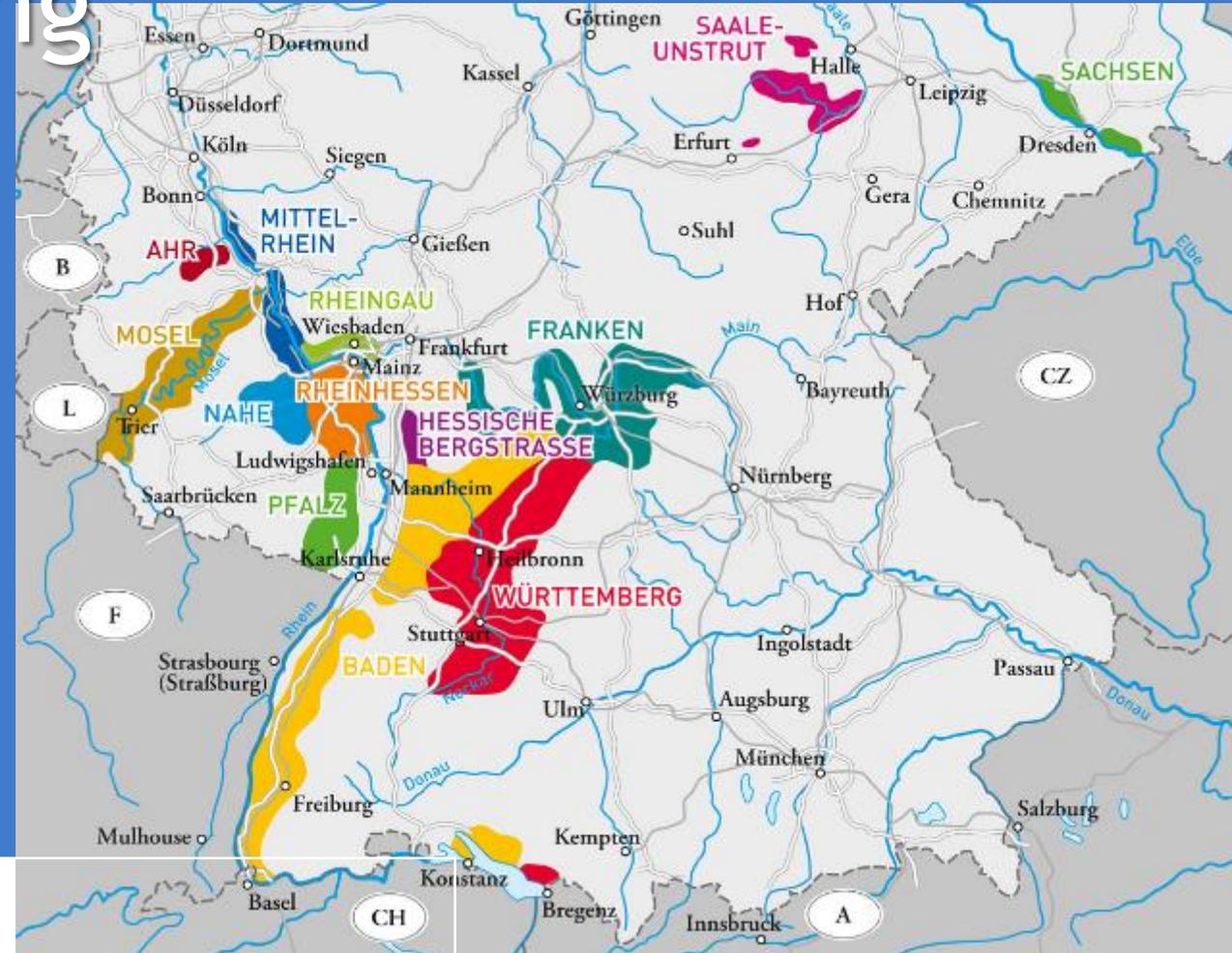
- Germany
  - Pfalz (Palatinate)
  - Germany's second largest wine region in acreage
  - 20% of 57,000 acres are Riesling
  - Haardt Mountains in the Pfalz create a rain shadow effect making it the warmest, driest place in the entire country.
  - Loam is prevalent, often in a mixture with other soil types, such as loess, chalk, clay, colored sandstone or sand.
  - Pfalz Rieslings, many of them top quality dry wines, are among the most opulent, powerful, and complex whites in Germany.



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# Geography of Riesling

- Germany
  - Nahe
  - 25% of 10,000 acres are Riesling
  - Due west of the Rheinhessen
  - Often described as combining the delicacy of Mosel wines with the power and elegance of the Rheingau.
  - The entire rock cycle of igneous (volcanic), sedimentary (sandstone, clay, limestone) and metamorphic (slate) rocks is present in the Nahe.



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# Geography of Riesling

- France
  - Alsace



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# Geography of Riesling

- Austria
  - Grüner Veltliner is King
  - Austria is said to produce dry Rieslings because the region has a perfect climate. Hot sun on terraced vineyards and cool windy nights allow the fruit to develop to full ripeness, which allows winemakers to fully ferment the wine, creating dry Rieslings.
  - Three primary regions:
    - Wachau
    - Kremstal and Kamptal
    - Traisental

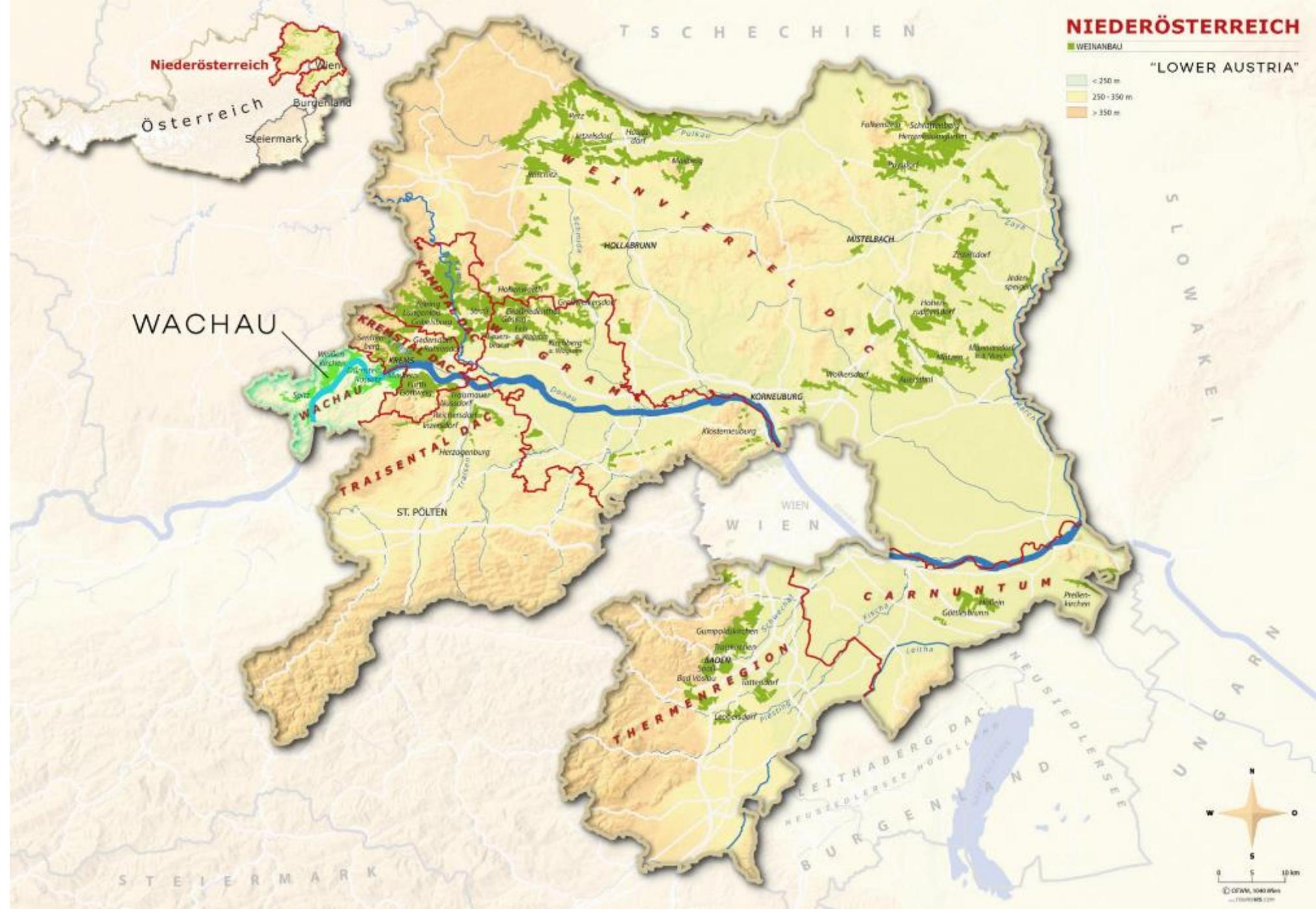
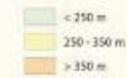


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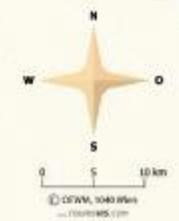
# NIEDERÖSTERREICH

WEINANBAU

"LOWER AUSTRIA"



WACHAU





# Geography of Syrah

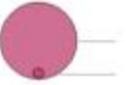
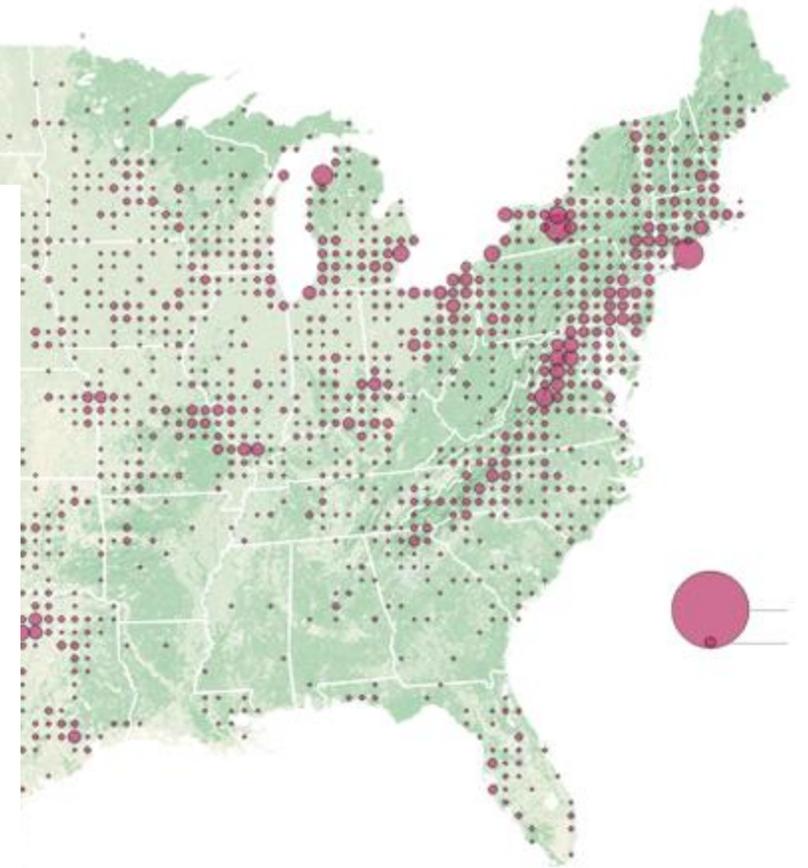


Fig. 16.1

# Geography of Riesling

- New York
  - Finger Lakes
  - 11 north-to-south parallel lakes sculpted by Ice Age glaciers 10,000 years ago.
  - The Finger Lakes region's cool climate, "lake effect" temperature moderation, glacial soils, and sloping topography combine to make it one of the world's finest Riesling-producing areas.
  - More than 1000 acres of Riesling grapes and roughly 130 wineries which produce a total of over 100,000 cases a year.

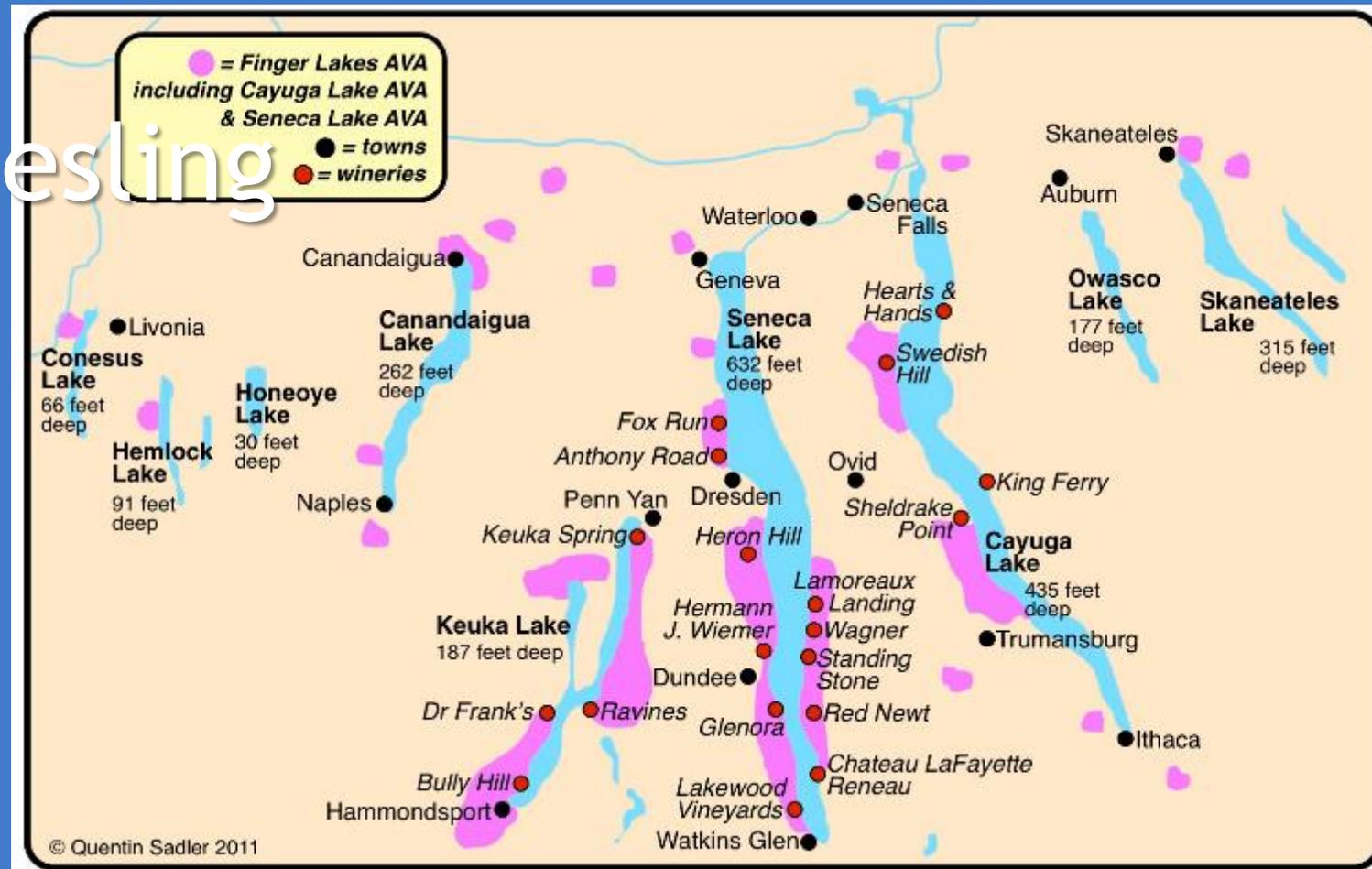


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# Geography of Riesling

- New York

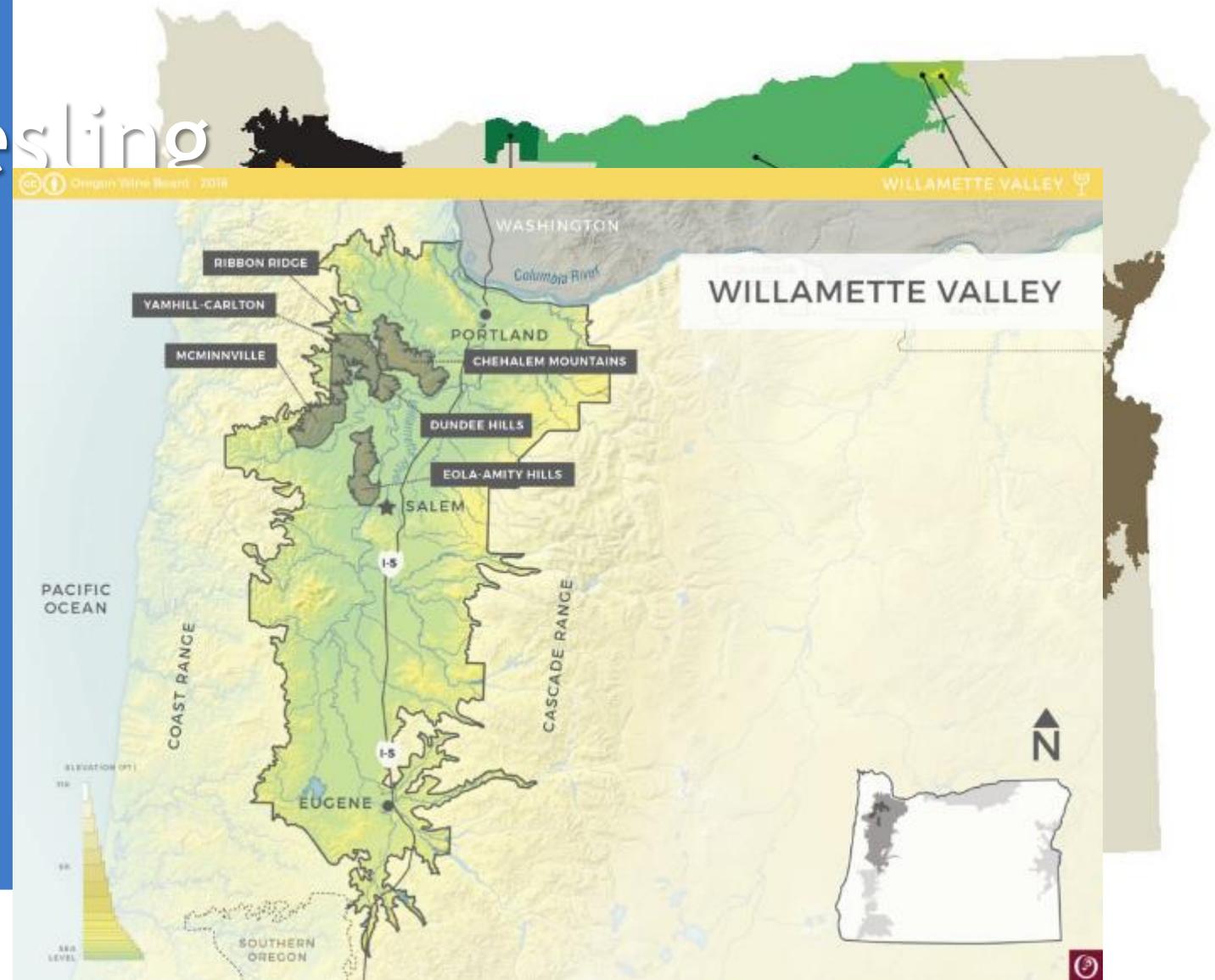
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# Geography of Riesling

- Oregon
  - Willamette Valley
  - Thirty years ago as much as 23% of Oregon's production was Riesling.
  - Although Riesling is a much lower percentage than that today due to the explosion of Pinot Noir in the state, there is even more passion and focus on Riesling
  - Cool climate, acid, ripe-but-not-overripe fruit, low alcohol but with a full range through to botrytis-ed dessert stylings.



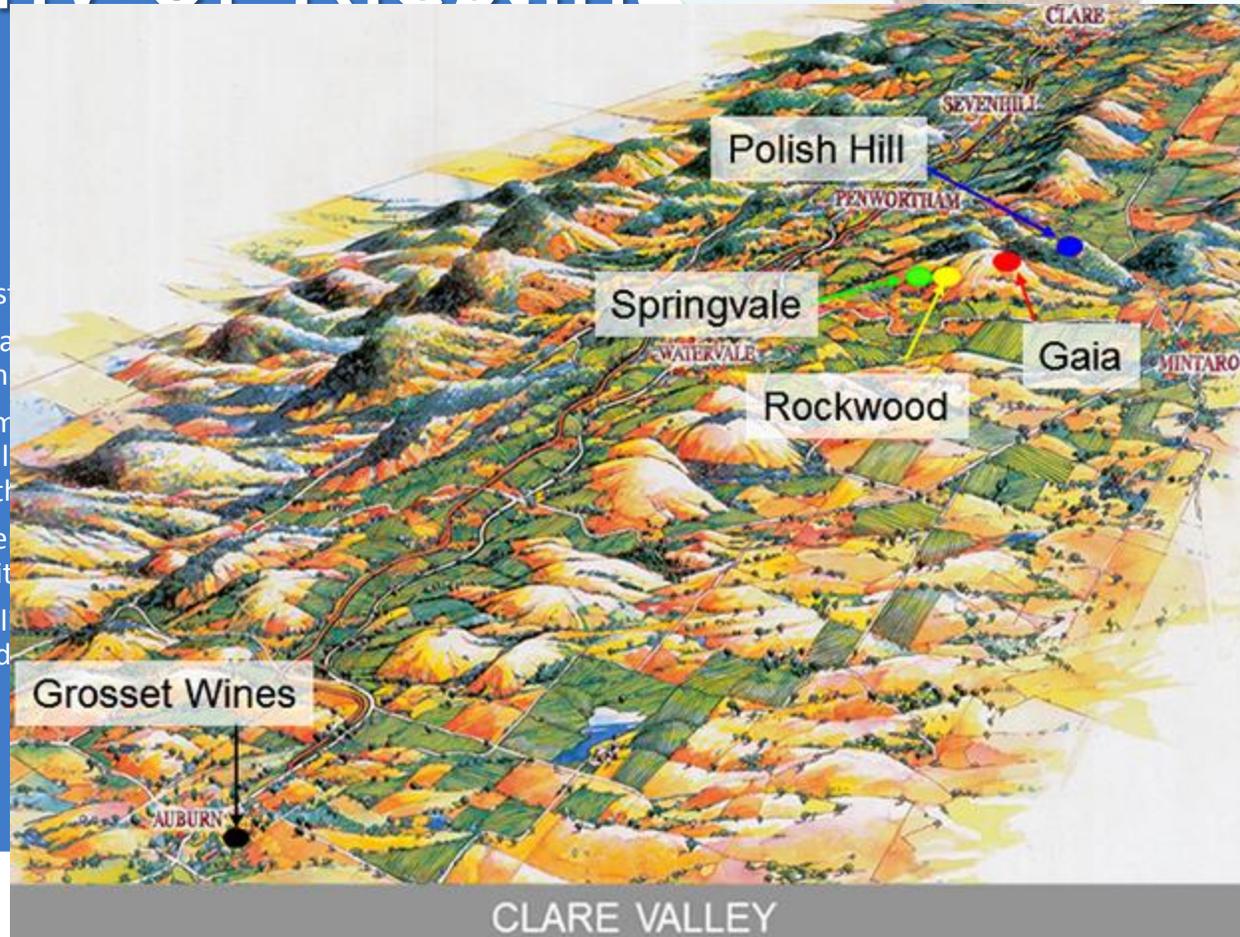
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# Geography of Riesling

- Australia
  - Clare Valley
    - Clare Valley's first Riesling was planted in 1844
    - With a Mediterranean climate, the region is characterized by cooling afternoon sea breezes
    - Red soils over limestone in Polish Hill and sandy loams to the west
    - More than 20 percent of the region's wine is Riesling, and of it, 80 percent is Riesling
    - Clare Valley Riesling is known for its citrus flavors and high acidity



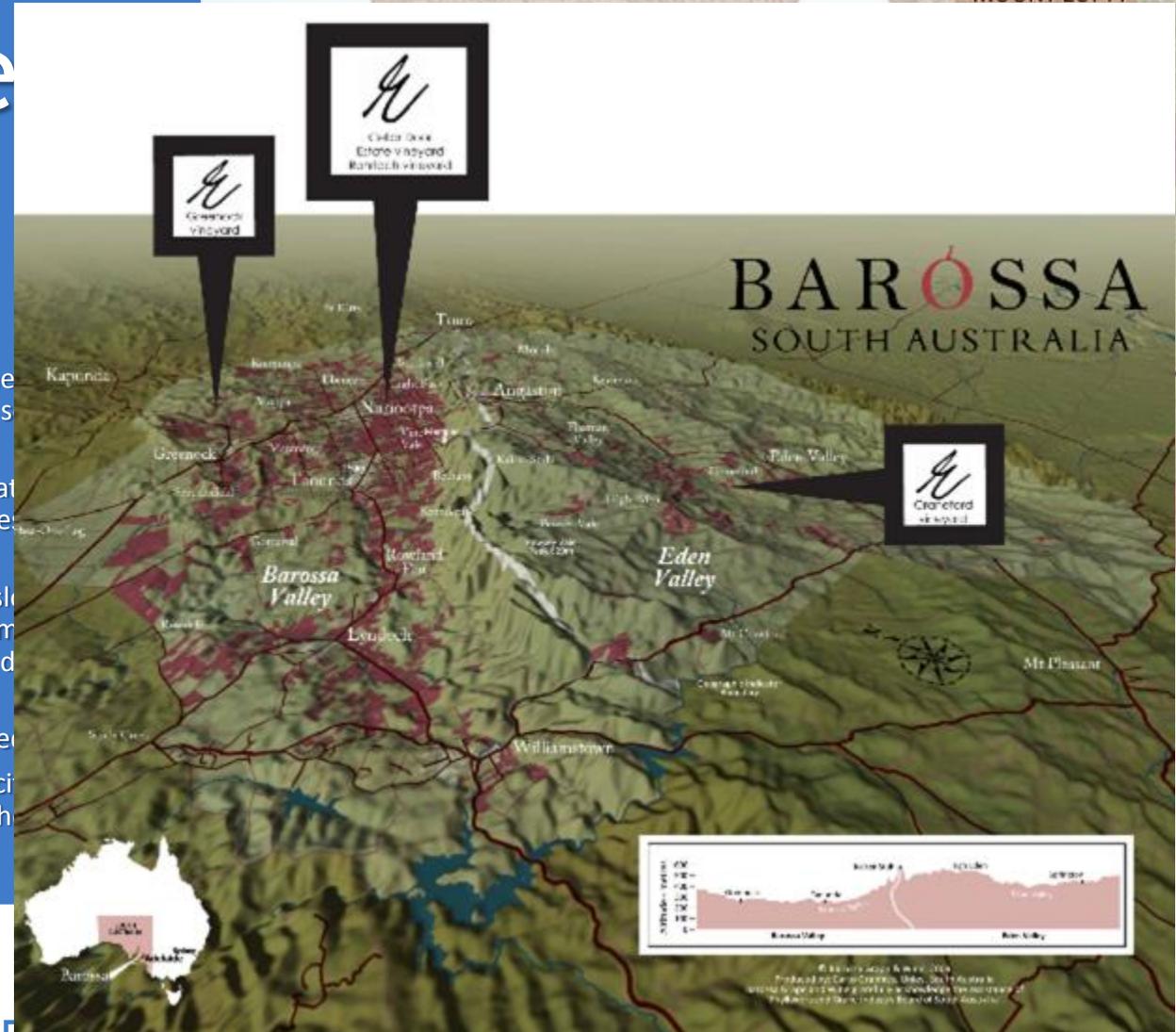
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# Geography of Riesling

- Australia

- Eden Valley

- Viticulture started in 1842 and it bears some of the Riesling vines. It is a prized region for elegant and austere cooler-climate Rieslings.
    - The area is heavily reliant on natural rainfall for water (most is caught and stored on farm), and shallow soils necessitate irrigation practices.
    - Vineyards are typically located on easterly facing slopes to receive only gentle morning sun exposure. Soils range from clay loam to ironstone gravels, quartz gravels and decomposed schist rock.
    - Approximately 30 percent of its vineyards is planted to Riesling.
    - Eden Valley Riesling is typically dry and noted for citrus floral aromas, with intense lemon-lime citrus on the nose and a mineral acidity that adds great palate length.
    - It ages well, taking a decade or more to develop.



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# Sweetness of Riesling

- IRF Sweetness Scale

- **Dry.** All wines carrying this designation will have a sugar-to-acid ratio not exceeding 1.0. For example, a wine with 6.8 grams of sugar and 7.5 grams of acidity would be in the same category as a wine with 8.1 grams of sugar and 9.0 grams of acid. Similarly, a wine with 12 grams of sugar and 12 grams of acid would be classified as dry.
- Notice also that wines that are totally or “near-totally” dry (such as 4 grams per liter) will have a much lower ratio. For instance, a wine with only 3 grams of sugar and a total acidity of 6 grams per liter will have a ratio of .5, and clearly the wine is dry.)
- As to pH: we assume that the range of pHs for most Rieslings is between 2.9 and 3.4. So 3.1 is the “base” pH with which most wine makers will be working. So if the pH of wine is 3.1 or 3.2, it remains in this dry category. But if the pH is 3.3 or 3.4, it moves up to Medium Dry. (And if the pH is 3.5 or higher, the wine maker may wish to move the wine to Medium Sweet.)
- **Medium Dry.** Here the ratio is 1.0 to 2.0 acid to sugar. Example: a wine with 7.5 grams of acid could have a maximum sugar level of 15.0 grams. And if the pH is above 3.3, it moves to Medium Sweet, and if the pH is as low as 2.9 or lower, the wine moves to Dry.
- **Medium Sweet.** The ratio here is 2.1 to 4.0 acid to sugar. Example: a wine with 7.5 grams of acid could have a maximum sugar level of 30 grams. And again, the same pH factor applies as a level two wine: if the pH rises to 3.3, you move up to Dessert, and if the pH drops to 2.9 you move to Medium Dry. And if the pH is 2.8 or below (highly unlikely), the wine could be called Dry.
- **Sweet.** Ratio above 4.1, but using the pH adjustment, a sweeter wine with a ratio of, say, 4.4 might actually be moved to Medium Sweet if the pH is significantly lower.

IRF RIESLING TASTE PROFILE, TECHNICAL GUIDELINES SUMMARY					
	SUGAR TO ACID RATIO	pH		pH	SHIFT DUE TO pH
<b>DRY</b>	< 1.0	3.1 to 3.2	If	= or > 3.3	Med Dry
				3.5 or >	Med Sweet
<b>MEDIUM DRY</b>	1.0 to 2.0			= or > 3.3	Medium Sweet
				< or = 2.9	Dry
<b>MEDIUM SWEET</b>	2.1 to 4.0			= or > 3.3	Sweet
				< or = 2.9	Medium Dry
				< or = 2.8	Dry
<b>SWEET</b>	= or > 4.1			< or = 2.9	Medium Sweet
				< or = 2.8	Medium Dry



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<http://drinkriesling.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/irf-taste-profile-standards-REV-6.23.16.pdf>

# Quiz

<http://www.decanter.com/learn/winequiz/riesling-wine-quiz-test-knowledge-370123/>

# Tasting Benchmark Riesling

15 minute break...

# Benchmark Riesling

- 2013 Franz Hirtzberger **Riesling Singerriedel Smaragd**, Wachau, Austria
- 2015 Ravines Wine Cellars **Dry Riesling**, Finger Lakes
- 2016 Grosset, **Polish Hill Riesling**, Clare Valley, Australia
- 2006 Pewsey Vale Vineyard, **The Contours Museum Reserve**, Eden Valley, Australia
- 2015 Dönnhoff **Tonschiefer Dry Slate**, Riesling Trocken, Nahe
- 2015 Weigut Leitz **Rüdesheimer Berg Schlossberg Riesling "Ehrenfels" Grosses Gewächs**, Rheingau
- 2015 Trisaetum Vineyards **Wichmann Dundee Estate Dry Riesling**, Dundee Hills AVA, Oregon
- 2015 Domain Zind-Humbrecht **Riesling Brand Grand Cru**, Alsace Grand Cru
- 2014 Hermann J. Wiemer **Late Harvest Riesling**, Finger Lakes
- 2009 Joh. Jos. Prum **Graacher Himmelreich Auslese**, Mosel
- 2003 Bassermann Jordan **Deidesheimer Kieselberg Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese**, Pfalz



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# Blind Comparative Tasting

15 minute break...

# Blind Comparative Tasting

Guesses on the wines...

1. Leitz Out Riesling 2015 **Rheingau**, \$12
2. Yellowtail 2015 Riesling **South Eastern Australia**, \$10
3. Plum Creek Dry Riesling 2015 Riesling **Grand Valley AVA**, \$16
4. Bookcliff Vineyards 2016 Riesling **Colorado**, \$16
5. Eroica 2015 Riesling **Columbia Valley**, \$20

*Colorado Cultivar Camp:*  
**RIESLING**

***Thank you very much!!***



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