

Dry German Riesling Grosses Gewächs

From the top-rated vineyards in Germany, these wines are vaunted as the pinnacle of quality – and the focus is shifting from power to finesse, says Anne Krebiehl MW

THIS PANEL TASTING encompassed the whole of Germany – 13 wine-growing regions covering 4° of latitude (from 47.5°N in Baden to 51.5°N in Saale-Unstrut), and every imaginable kind of soil. However, rather than look at all levels of Riesling, it focused in on Grosses Gewächs ('great growth'), the top category of the VDP's private classification. So the wines came only from VDP member-estates, but covered the breadth of German dry Riesling: only the tiny Hessische Bergstrasse and Mittelrhein were missing, as were the easterly outposts of Sachsen and Saale-Unstrut. But certainly the heartlands of German Riesling were well represented.

Grosses Gewächs wines are made from clearly delimited single vineyards that have been classified as Grosse Lage ('grand cru'), and are produced to stringent regulations. All GGs are trocken (dry), which in Germany means no more than 9g/l of residual sugar. Only three of the 95 wines tasted touched this mark, while a further seven were in the vicinity – but they had the acidity to provide the balance. I must emphasise that at these levels sugar acts as flavour-enhancer rather than sweetener, as is amply demonstrated in brut sparkling wines, which likewise come with high acidity and easily accommodate six or even eight grams of dosage while being perfectly dry. All this is to say: if you are looking for dry Riesling, the GGs are your go-to category. Most of these wines were around the 5g/l mark and below, with higher acidities than your average white.

Delicate balance

When GG wines were first made in the early 2000s, it was still thought that an estate's top wines had to show their mettle. The mindset has since shifted from power back towards elegance, with delicate alcohols of 12.5% and below for almost half the wines here. The Germans have discovered what makes their wines truly German: a cool finesse and depth. When the 2016 white GGs were first released last August, the regions that stood out were the Nahe, Rheinhessen and the Pfalz: the Nahe for its uncompromising drive for purity and expression; Rheinhessen for embracing its inherent diversity, from Roter Hang via Wonnegau to its far west, close to the Nahe; and Pfalz for its exemplary restraint and nuance.

German Riesling: the facts (2016)

Total Riesling 23,700ha (of a total 102,493ha under vine)
Riesling plantings by region Pfalz 5,850ha; Mosel 5,395ha; Rheinhessen 4,536ha; Rheingau 2,495ha; Württemberg 2,113ha; Nahe 1,202ha; Baden 1,069ha; Franken 343ha.

Riesling is Germany's most planted grape variety, the 23,700ha planted representing 49% of the world's



Map: Maggie Nelson

Germany: know your vintages

2016 A difficult year: a humid spring and summer affected yields rather than quality, but a long, dry and warm autumn saved the day, allowing great aromatic development. Subtle Rieslings for the long run.

2015 A dry, warm year with a 'gloriously sunny' September gave rounded, sunny, ripe Rieslings. Hailed as a great vintage.

2014 Challenging year with some rain, but stringent selection delivered racy, taut wines.

2013 Tiny vintage, difficult year, selection was everything.

2012 Ripe, balanced, long-lived.

2011 Great in the Mosel, very good in other regions.

Riesling plantings. While 23% of Germany's vineyards are planted to Riesling, the variety accounts for 55% of VDP estate vineyards. According to the VDP, its members are responsible for 12% of Germany's Riesling vineyards and 5% of the world's. The VDP has just 3% of the total German harvest, but this accounts for 7.5% of the total turnover. Grosses Gewächs represents just 5% of production.

Source: Deutscher Wein Statistik 2017/18 and www.vdp.de

Born in Germany and resident in London, Anne Krebiehl MW is a widely published wine writer, consultant and educator, and a DWWA judge ➤

The results

A consistently high-scoring tasting, showcasing the finesse and ageability of dry German Riesling. Our experts tell Tina Gellie why wine lovers need to try them

OUR TRIO OF expert judges were impressed at the quality of wines on show in this tasting, encouraging wine lovers to stock up their cellars.

German Riesling has 'finally come of age', said Sebastian Thomas: 'Five years ago I don't think anyone would have considered doing a Grosses Gewächs tasting, because even as recently as that Riesling wasn't really mainstream. But the GG category has been very successful in a short space of time, and that's very exciting.'

Anne Krebiehl MW was pleased that producers had toned down the wines' power. 'In 2002, when GG was first presented as an official category, winemakers thought, "If this is my top wine, then bigger is better". The GG wines almost got lost in a power play. But German Riesling is powerful not by brawn, but by acidity, ageability and finesse. I'm so happy producers have stopped chasing that misguided idea.'

In terms of regions, quality was very consistent. 'I've never seen so many wines scoring 90 points or more,' said Thomas. 'Of course there were some poorer examples, but there wasn't a single region we thought was underperforming - even those we don't know well.'

In the latter camp was Württemberg, which was 'a real discovery' for Gearoid Devaney MS. 'It was a really solid showing,' he said. 'They probably weren't troubling the higher scores, but the wines were good, in a richer, spicier style.'

There was unanimous agreement that Rheinhessen was the most exciting region, offering a broad range of styles with real energy. 'Lots of balance, elegance and purity,' said Devaney, 'and when I think of Riesling, purity is always the key word.' Close behind was Nahe, whose wines Devaney found had 'good acidity, lovely fruit expression and excellent tension - "wine for grown-ups" was what I wrote in my notes'.

'The GG category has been very successful in a short space of time, and that's very exciting' Sebastian Thomas

Pfalz divided the judges somewhat, with Thomas enjoying them more than Krebiehl and Devaney, who found the toasty oak a bit dominant in a few examples.

Rheingau was criticised for being a bit uneven in fruit weight and oak, as well having 'unsuitable oxidative or natural winemaking elements'. 'We should have seen more from these historic vineyards,' bemoaned Krebiehl. Meanwhile, Mosel was deemed 'a work in progress'.

Thomas explained: 'The wines are good, but the winemakers are still coming to terms with the fact that residual sugar is not what is wanted in this dry GG style. But they'll get there.'

Regardless of the region, the big selling point with these wines was their incredible capacity to age, said Thomas, particularly the 'luscious, perfumed' 2016s and 'powerful, rounder' 2015s. 'Some of the great dry wines of Germany have matured very well, so these GGs have enormous capacity to last - 15, 20, 30 years no problem.'

But drinking them earlier was fine too, assured Devaney. 'It's subjective, but for my palate, I think the sweet spot would be 10 to 12 years from the vintage. Of course they will age beautifully for far longer, but if you pull a cork on one, you're not going to be upset!'

Our experts urged those unfamiliar with or unsure about dry German Riesling to give them a try. 'The producers have really stepped up to the plate,' said Thomas. 'They're making wines that easily hold their own with the best dry whites in the world, and you can really taste that here.'

The scores

95 wines tasted

Exceptional

1

Outstanding

6

Highly Recommended

68

Recommended

16

Commended

3

Fair

0

Poor

1

Faulty

0

Entry criteria: producers and UK agents were invited to submit their latest-release dry Grosses Gewächs VDP Rieslings. One wine per producer was permitted.

Exceptional 98-100pts



Wagner Stempel, Heerkretz, Rheinhessen 2016

Decanter average score: 98/100pts

Individual judges' scores: Gearoid Devaney MS 98

Anne Krebiehl MW 97 Sebastian Thomas 99

£68 Winetraders

Established in 1845, Wagner Stempel is now well into its ninth generation of family stewardship. Current proprietor Daniel Wagner has converted the vineyards to organic production, and has lowered yields. Half of the Heerkretz vineyard, overlooking the village of

Siefersheim, is planted to Riesling, ripening up to two weeks later than its neighbours. This wine is fermented in stainless steel before maturing in medium and large German oak barrels.

Gearoid Devaney MS Fresh and open, with plenty of concentrated lime zest and green apple on the palate, balanced by bright acid and leading to a mineral finish.

Anne Krebiehl MW This is a very subtle wine, only slowly revealing its depth of citrus fruit. It's gentle, delicate and long, demonstrating seamless elegance.

Sebastian Thomas Very elegant and understated, this is gorgeously fine on the palate. The integrated, ripe acidity balances the subtle but juicy mineral character. Very long and fresh. Another sip please!

Drink 2019-2032 Alcohol 13%

Outstanding 95-97pts



Kloster Eberbach, Marcobrunn, Rheingau 2016 96 GD 96 AK 95 ST 96

£70 Boutinot, Nickolls & Perks, WoodWinters

The monks of Kloster Eberbach have been producing wine here for almost nine centuries - at one point in its history it laid claim to being the largest wine estate in all Germany. The Marcobrunn vineyard's existence can be traced back to the end of the 14th century, making it one of the oldest monastic vineyards in the world. It's a south-facing site on deep, calcareous clay-marl soils, farmed using organic methods.

GD Fresh, lively, green apple, citrus, lime skin, linear and focused. Classic style and long, with a pleasing finish.

AK A plump fullness on the nose leads into a palate of concentrated freshness, with easy fruit and a textured mouthfeel.

ST A muted nose, yet very elegant and refined in the mouth with smooth, vibrant acidity and powerful orchard fruits accompanied by notes of spice. A long, bright finish.

Drink 2018-2031 Alc 12%



Kühling-Gillot, Hipping, Rheinhessen 2016 96 GD 96 AK 96 ST 97

£43 Howard Ripley

Although Kühling-Gillot can point to more than 200 years of heritage, it is very much at the vanguard of contemporary German winemaking. Its vineyards are located in the area of Nierstein, overlooking the Rhine, and are run using biodynamic practices. Its plot in the southeast-facing Hipping vineyard is near the top of the slope, where the vines sit on bare rock composed of red slate. The handpicked grapes are fermented using wild yeasts, then the wine is racked to 1,200-litre barrels where it rests on its fine lees until bottling.

GD This shows ripe, juicy fruits with great concentration, and is pleasing and elegant.

AK A touch of reduction, but underneath there's an honest purity. It's a wine that is light but expressive, slender but toned. Very lean, with a cleansing finish.

ST Bright, perfumed floral and citrus flavours are accompanied by a fine dash of smoky minerality. It's fine and ripe, wearing the residual sugar well. Very understated and elegant on the long finish.

Drink 2018-2032 Alc 12.5% ➤

The judges

Gearoid Devaney MS



Devaney is a director of independent merchant Flint Wines. A Master Sommelier since 2009, he was UK Sommelier of the Year 2008. He was head sommelier at London's Capital Hotel when it

had two Michelin stars with Eric Chavot, and he helped open Tom Aikens' one-star Michelin restaurant, where his wine list won awards with the AA and Wine Spectator.

Anne Krebiehl MW



Krebiehl is a freelance wine writer and lecturer. She is the contributing editor for Austria, Alsace and England for Wine Enthusiast and publishes in other trade and consumer

titles including Decanter. She is a judge in the DWWA and other international wine competitions, and has helped to harvest and make wine in Germany, Italy and New Zealand.

Sebastian Thomas



Thomas came late to wine, beginning his career in book publishing. His first wine job was selling to New York restaurants, then on his return to the UK he worked for Laytons, where he fell

head over heels for Burgundy. Lured by Howard Ripley's fabulous range of Burgundy domaines, he joined him in 2000, introducing a portfolio of his other love, German wines.

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*From the 17,263 wines submitted, 8% did not specify the closure type. From the 15,828 wines submitted with an indication of closure, 75% of the wines are sealed from cork closure (natural cork and technical cork). **These figures are based on self-declaration of closure type by submitters and have not been verified. ***www.apcor.pt/en/

Outstanding (continued) 95–97pts



St Antony, Hipping, Rheinhessen 2016

96 GD 95 AK 96 ST 97

N/A UK www.st-antony.de

The limestone from the land around St Antony was once used to smelt iron, but as demand slumped following the end of the World War I, the ironworks' owners moved into wine production instead. The Hipping vineyard plot, on the Roter Hang escarpment, is exposed to the north, bringing cooler conditions which ensure the grapes ripen slowly, helped by its proximity to the Rhine. The vines are tended following biodynamic practices, which extends to gentle, gravity-fed handling in the winery. This Riesling was fermented in a 100-year-old barrel.

GD Bright and open, this has lots of ripe apple and pear on the nose. It's more citrusy on the palate, with well-balanced acidity and alcohol. Elegant and harmonious, with a long finish.

AK Fragrant herbal notes with tangerine and lemon flavours. It's a gentle wine, not overdone. Bright and fresh.

ST Very spicy, with some herbal notes, lovely balance and ripeness. Well integrated acidity leads to a long, juicy finish. Fine and elegant.

Drink 2019-2033 **Alc** 12.5%



Joh Bapt Schäfer, Pittermännchen, Nahe 2016

95 GD 95 AK 95 ST 96

£38.99 **Bibendum**

Established in 1900, this winery is now run by fourth-generation winemaker Sebastian Schäfer, who oversees 8ha of vineyards. The Pittermännchen vineyard is on slate, loamy soil with a high clay content. The handpicked grapes are macerated for 14 hours prior to spontaneous fermentation, then the wine is matured in 1,200-litre barrels on its lees until the end of April.

GD Flavours of green apple and lime are defined by energetic, refreshing acidity and a linear finish. Very harmonious.

AK Gorgeous freshness and tempered balance, with lovely texture. Underneath, the fruit has a pristine apple juiciness. A highly drinkable wine – long, zesty and moreish.

ST Very perfumed and floral, with a fine, understated palate of pure, bright acidity, finely textured minerality, and a long finish.

Drink 2019-2033 **Alc** 12.5%



Geheimer Rat Dr von Bassermann-Jordan, Jesuitengarten, Pfalz 2016

95 GD 96 AK 95 ST 95

£48.20 **The Wine Barn**

The Jesuitengarten vineyard, previously owned by a Jesuit monastery, was acquired by the Jordan family in 1793. It is one of the top sites in Pfalz, boasting soil which is absolutely crammed with minerals. The grapes are hand-harvested in several *tries*, and the must is given time to settle naturally. Wild yeasts trigger fermentation, after which the wine matures on its lees, undergoing regular *bâtonnage*.

GD Fresh and floral, sweet fruit flavours of peach and ripe pear, with good acid and texture. It's harmonious and complex, with a long finish.

AK There's a slightly tropical overtone, with tons of lemon at the core. It's taut and clean, with some texture and a hint of creamy richness. Austere, but so promising.

ST Very pure, juicy and fine. There is bright acidity alongside smooth, ripe citrus and tropical fruit, and a long, mineral-driven finish. Plenty of power and elegance, with lots of energy.

Drink 2019-2035 **Alc** 12.5%



Kruger-Rumpf, Im Pitterberg, Nahe 2016

95 GD 95 AK 95 ST 96

POA **Winetraders**

The Kruger-Rumpf family has been in the winemaking business since the end of the 18th century, although it wasn't until 1984 that it took a major step forward when Stefan Rumpf began to produce his own estate wines instead of selling his crop on. Today, his sons Georg and Philipp run the property. Pitterberg is a steep, south-facing vineyard on slate soils, and at 5.5ha represents the estate's largest plot. The vines here were planted in the 1940s and 1960s, and are tended following sustainable methods.

GD Clean and fresh, showing lots of lime and Granny Smith apple flavours. There's a refreshing acidity and an intense, stony minerality.

AK Gentle apple notes with some reduction lead into a vivid, textured palate of citrus fruit. Taut and pristine, it has a lasting freshness and purity that makes you really want to drink this.

ST Bright, elegant and vibrant on the nose, with a smooth, elegant palate with some weight to it, balanced by good energy and brightness. Fresh and pure on the long finish.

Drink 2019-2034 **Alc** 12.5%

Highly Recommended 90–94pts



Emrich-Schönleber, Halenberg, Nahe 2016

94 GD 94 AK 96 ST 92

£50 **Justerini & Brooks**

A delicate, honeyed nose with lush apple and pear. Ripe fruit sweetness on the textured palate, tension, some minerality, and very bright, pure citrus acidity. A farmyard touch, but beneath is a streak of pure lemon joy, and a powerful finish. **Drink** 2019-2031 **Alc** 12.5%



Battenfeldspanier, Am Schwarzen Herrgott, Rheinhessen 2016

93 GD 92 AK 94 ST 92

£32.50 **Justerini & Brooks**

A reductive nose, but with plenty of citrus and orchard fruit aromas. Lovely density and power, clean lines and an oily mid-palate. Gorgeous fluidity and innately understated, immense balance. **Drink** 2020-2032 **Alc** 12.5%



Dr Bürklin-Wolf, Gaisböhl, Pfalz 2015

93 GD 94 AK 93 ST 91

POA **The Wine Society**

An appealing nose of ripe stone fruits, candied lime and mandarin. It's gentle and smooth in the mouth, with juicy, vibrant fruit and a richness that's ensnared by the very taut body. Refined acidity and a long, satisfying finish. Intriguing. **Drink** 2020-2033 **Alc** 13%



Gutzler, Liebfrauenstift Kirchenstück, Rheinhessen 2016

93 GD 93 AK 95 ST 92

N/A UK www.gutzler.de

Aromas of tropical and stone fruits, bruised apple and lime juice lead into a limpid palate. There's touch of residual sugar, with chalky, mineral notes emerging on the stunning finish. Charm manifest. **Drink** 2019-2032 **Alc** 13%



Kaufmann, Wisselbrunnen, Rheingau 2016

94 GD 94 AK 94 ST 94

N/A UK www.kaufmann-weingut.de

This is aromatic and perfumed, with lemon and Cox apple aromas and freshness. The palate is taut but exotic, rich and textured, with a pleasing energy, viscosity and power. **Drink** 2019-2032 **Alc** 13%



Clemens Busch, Marienburg Fahrlay-Terrassen, Mosel 2016

93 GD 93 AK 96 ST 90

£54.90 **Honest Grapes, Indigo Wines, The Winery**

Pure and clean, mineral and green apple. The palate is light-bodied, with a lovely mid-palate texture. Concentration, poise and richness, a certain earthiness and wet stone minerality. Satisfying, lasting. **Drink** 2019-2032 **Alc** 12%



Fritz Haag, Brauneberg Juffer Sonnenuhr, Mosel 2016

93 GD 92 AK 94 ST 92

£30.20 **Howard Ripley**

Exotic, tropical nose with a note of tangerine peel. The palate is honeyed and oily, with a textured core of zesty fruit. Fine and balanced, long and cleansing finish, ending on a pleasing dark slate note. **Drink** 2019-2031 **Alc** 13%



Haart, Goldtröpfchen, Mosel 2016

93 GD 93 AK 93 ST 93

£27.80 **Howard Ripley**

A very ripe, pure, tropical nose, with some tangy citrus and steely notes. It's taut, light and slender in the mouth, showing good extract with citrus juice and a brisk minerality. Great balance and integration before a long, dry finish. **Drink** 2018-2030 **Alc** 12.5%



Schätzel, Pettenthal, Rheinhessen 2015

94 GD 94 AK 95 ST 93

£58 **Top Selection**

Fresh, floral and fruity on the nose, with ripe pear and apple. Funky yeast plays against pure citrus, while lemon acidity balances the high residual sugar. There's a pleasant minerality too. Edging towards *halb trocken* in style, but excellent. **Drink** 2019-2031 **Alc** 11.5%



Dönnhoff, Hermannshöhle, Nahe 2016

93 GD 93 AK 95 ST 90

£58.10 **ABS Wine Agencies, Nickolls & Perks**

Lovely lemon and tangerine freshness on the nose leads into a pristine, powerful, rich palate with masses of focused pear and green apple fruit, underpinned by zesty minerality and an attractive texture. The long finish leaves you wanting more. **Drink** 2019-2030 **Alc** 13%



Gunderloch, Rothenberg, Rheinhessen 2016

93 GD 92 AK 95 ST 92

£53 **ABS Wine Agencies**

Bright, heady scents of citrus, balmy lemon and stone fruits. The palate is tart but vivid; an elegant, linear style with smooth power and ripe, balancing acidity. Long on the finish. **Drink** 2019-2030 **Alc** 12.5%



Horst Sauer, Escherndorf am Lumpen 1655, Franken 2016

93 GD 94 AK 94 ST 91

N/A UK www.weingut-horst-sauer.de

Apple peel and summer blossom aromas are followed by fresh, pretty candied lime and pear, a firm mineral edge and zippy acidity. It has fine concentration and a long, lemony finish. Taut but gentle. **Drink** 2019-2031 **Alc** 13% >

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts

**Peter Lauer, Schonfels, Mosel-Saar 2016** 93 GD 92 AK 94 ST 92

£32.60 Howard Ripley
Damp earth, Amalfi lemons, green apple and lime pith aromas are joined by a strong mineral slate component. Austere purity with great power, notes of peach and mineral with refreshing acidity, followed by a long, fresh, tangy finish. **Drink** 2020-2033 **A/c** 12.5%

**Prinz Salm, Scharlachberg, Rheinhessen 2015** 93 GD 95 AK 92 ST 93

N/A UK www.prinzsalm.de
An inviting nose of fresh apple, pear and honeysuckle, with sweet stone fruits on the vivid, bracing palate. It's oh-so lively, with lovely finesse and a fine, mineral undercurrent before a long finish. **Drink** 2019-2029 **A/c** 13%

**Schäfer-Fröhlich, Felseneck, Nahe 2016** 93 GD 93 AK 96 ST 91

£53 Howard Ripley
A reductive nose, but beneath are the purest of fruits and a delicate floral note. A vein of plump richness on the palate, utterly juicy and powerful, full of white peach, pear, lemon and apple. Precise and honest, with a long, phenolic finish. **Drink** 2019-2032 **A/c** 12.5%

**Schloss Neuweier, Robert Schätzle, Goldenes Loch, Baden 2016** 93 GD 94 AK 93 ST 92

N/A UK www.weingut-schloss-neuweier.de
Pure, mineral nose of ripe peach, zesty citrus and floral hints. Plenty of tension, with a touch of residual sugar peeking out behind the juicy acidity. Nice intensity and length, with a mineral kick. **Drink** 2018-2026 **A/c** 12%

**Spreitzer, Rosengarten, Rheingau 2016** 93 GD 94 AK 93 ST 93

£16.18 Justerini & Brooks
An open nose with gently perfumed apple notes, rather than strident citrus, with exotic fruit and honey hints. Tons of charm, showing exotic fruit, ginger and an oily mid-palate. Integrated, harmonious and complex, with a long finish. **Drink** 2018-2032 **A/c** 13%

**Staatliche Weinbaudomäne Oppenheim, Rothenberg Nackenheim, Rheinhessen 2016** 93 GD 93 AK 94 ST 91

N/A UK www.domaene-oppenheim.de
A rather muted nose but with some rich fruit. The lovely palate shows white peach and juicy apple, nice balance. Brisk, taut and long, lots of power, refreshing. **Drink** 2019-2031 **A/c** 13%

**Vereinigte Hospitien, Scharzhofberger, Mosel 2016** 93 GD 95 AK 92 ST 93

POA Genesis Wines
A shy but fragrant nose, leading into a very pure and balanced palate that's super-taut and clean. Honeysuckle and yellow peach, spice, juicy mandarin and seamless minerality. **Drink** 2019-2029 **A/c** 12%

**A Christmann, IDIG, Pfalz 2016** 92 GD 89 AK 95 ST 92

£55 Montrachet
An alluring scent of bergamot and a hint of wood leads into a taut, smooth and powerful palate brimming with citrus, lime juice and spicy mineral flavours. There's a bright citrus acidity and mid-palate texture, before a long, phenolic finish. **Drink** 2020-2032 **A/c** 12.5%

**Am Stein, Ludwig Knoll, Stettener Stein, Franken 2016** 92 GD 90 AK 94 ST 93

£42.20 Honest Grapes
Slightly reductive, but with a nose of fresh lemon, stone fruits and orange peel. It's intense, oily and rich in the mouth, with a super-zesty, long finish. Wears the residual sugar well. **Drink** 2019-2028 **A/c** 12.5%

**Domdechant Werner, Kirchenstück, Rheingau 2016** 92 GD 92 AK 95 ST 90

£30-£33 Laithwaite's, Mr Wheeler
Both citrus and apple set the tone on the pure nose. This is precise and perfumed, with honesty and ample freshness. Powerful, smooth and ripe, gorgeous balance, classic and statuesque. **Drink** 2019-2029 **A/c** 13.5%

**Dr Crusius, Bastei, Nahe 2016** 92 GD 91 AK 95 ST 89

N/A UK www.weingut-crusius.de
Ripe, zesty and layered, with rich, powerful intensity of stony minerals, green apple and lime. The mouthfeel is smooth, with good tension and bright acids. Lip-smackingly pure and racy. Gorgeous. **Drink** 2019-2031 **A/c** 13.5%

**FB Schönleber, Jesuitengarten, Rheingau 2016** 92 GD 92 AK 93 ST 92

N/A UK www.fb-schoenleber.de
Juicy, rounded, almost tropical fruit on the nose, partnered by rich, ripe, juicy apples and limes. There's good precision and texture on the palate, with plump, expressive and powerful orchard fruit flavours and a long, rich, spicy finish. **Drink** 2018-2028 **A/c** 13%

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts

**Graf Adelmann, Das Lied von der Erde, Süssmund, Württemberg 2016** 92 GD 90 AK 94 ST 92

N/A UK www.graf-adelmann.com
Bright lemony freshness on the nose and great balance on the palate, displaying stony minerals and precise, lively acidity, energetic orchard fruit, a concentrated core and a smooth, long finish. **Drink** 2018-2026 **A/c** 12.5%

**Joachim Flick, Wicker Nonnberg Vier Morgen, Rheingau 2016** 92 GD 90 AK 95 ST 92

£33.99 The Winery
The floral, fragrant aromas are rich in spice and expression, full of southern charm. It's very elegant, rich in texture and fluid. Glorious, with fine balance and good length. **Drink** 2018-2030 **A/c** 13%

**Karl Haidle, Pulvermächer, Württemberg 2016** 92 GD 92 AK 92 ST 91

N/A UK www.weingut-karl-haidle.de
Lovely aromatics on the floral nose, with smoky spice notes and beautiful expressions of orange and tangerine. Smooth, rich palate with an abundance of stone fruits, ginger and cardamom. **Drink** 2018-2027 **A/c** 13%

**Knebel, Uhlen, Mosel 2016** 92 GD 95 AK 90 ST 91

N/A UK www.weingut-knebel.com
Lush apple, pear and spice aromas evolve into intense, juicy mandarin on the palate. It's rich and rounded with a clear, pure minerality, wonderful ripeness, zesty acid and a long, weighty finish. **Drink** 2019-2029 **A/c** 12.5%

**Künstler, Hochheim Hölle, Rheingau 2016** 92 GD 90 AK 92 ST 95

N/A UK www.weingut-kuenstler.de
A slightly reductive nose has floral hints with ripe, exuberant tropical and stone fruits. The upfront palate is oily in texture, with more stone fruits, good acid and a lovely sinuous, slender body. **Drink** 2018-2030 **A/c** 12.5%

**Münzberg, Gunter Kessler, Pfalz 2016** 92 GD 90 AK 95 ST 92

N/A UK www.weingut-muenzberg.de
A zesty nose of lush pear and apple leads into a crisp citrus palate, aligned with further apple fruit, slightly honeyed, and energy which lifts the powerful fruit notes. Fine and long on the finish. **Drink** 2019-2030 **A/c** 12.5%

**Pfeffingen, Herrenberg, Pfalz 2016** 92 GD 92 AK 94 ST 89

£33.50 Vintners Pride of Germany
The fruit is well hidden, but shows some zestiness. It's taut and austere, but nicely integrated with lemon and lime fruit, good lip-smacking citrus acidity, and a smooth, mineral finish. **Drink** 2019-2030 **A/c** 13.5%

**Reichsgraf von Kesselstatt, Josephshöfer, Mosel 2016** 92 GD 94 AK 92 ST 91

POA The Wine Society
The lovely citrus nose has a hint of tangerine, leading into a linear, pure, focused palate with appealing richness in the middle. Ripe, juicy, lemony fruit in the background, just waiting to burst through. **Drink** 2019-2028 **A/c** 12%

**Schloss Johannisberg, Silberlack, Rheingau 2016** 92 GD 92 AK 91 ST 92

£43.50-£51 Exel, Hallgarten
Floral and aromatic, with an exotic, tropical nose showing mineral hints. Peach, pear and mandarin flavours are joined by a tangy orange peel character and pointed lemon acidity, followed by more mineral notes on the finish. **Drink** 2019-2030 **A/c** 13%

**Stigler, Vorderer Winklerberg, Baden 2016** 92 GD 94 AK 92 ST 89

N/A UK www.weingut-stigler.de
Breezy, fresh and fragrant aromas of citrus and yellow apple. There's a very fruit-focused core to the palate, which shows great concentration and a textural feel. Lemony acidity leads to a mineral-rich, long finish. **Drink** 2018-2026 **A/c** 13.5%

**Van Volxem, Altenberg Alte Reben, Mosel 2016** 92 GD 94 AK 94 ST 89

N/A UK www.vanvolxem.com
Luscious mandarin, apple blossom and lime scents are laced with zesty freshness. Great aromatics are followed by a rich, ripe palate and a long, concentrated finish. Layered and multi-dimensional. **Drink** 2019-2028 **A/c** 12%

**Wittmann, Kirchspiel, Rheinhessen 2016** 92 GD 92 AK 95 ST 90

£44.60 Howard Ripley
A touch of citrus perfume and plump pear and apple fruits appear on the powerful, phenolic nose, then on the palate it shows lovely balance. It's very ripe, with soft but persistent acidity. Elegant, honest and long. **Drink** 2019-2030 **A/c** 12.5% ➤

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



Aldinger, Marienglas, Württemberg 2016 91 GD 92 AK 92 ST 89
 £38.75 The Wine Barn
 Lovely notes of ripe citrus, orange zest, lemon peel, juicy pear and yellow apple. The palate is full-bodied, with distinct woody overtones and bright acidity leading to a long, warming finish. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 12.5%**



August Eser, Oestrich Doosberg, Rheingau 2015 91 GD 92 AK 91 ST 91
 N/A UK www.eser-wein.de
 Lemon, lime, Williams pear and green apple aromas lead into a plump and generous, powerful palate. It's a rich style that will take a long time to settle down. A very clean, long finish. **Drink 2019-2028 Alc 13%**



Bürgerspital, Würzburger Stein Hagemann, Franken 2016 91 GD 90 AK 93 ST 90
 N/A UK www.buergerspital.de
 A lovely note of lemon balm on the nose, joined by fragrant floral notes. Lush fruit in the mouth with a ripe core of peach and aromatic fruit. Lovely balance, and a zesty, herbal finish. **Drink 2019-2027 Alc 13%**



Dautel, Steingrüben, Württemberg 2016 91 GD 91 AK 91 ST 91
 £36 Delibo
 A reductive nose but with an abundance of fruit and structure underneath. Smooth and fine on the palate, it has citric depth and ripe, elegant, juicy citrus fruits and mineral notes in what is a fairly rich and weighty package. **Drink 2018-2024 Alc 13%**



Freimuth, Unterer Bischofsberg, Rheingau 2016 91 GD 91 AK 91 ST 90
 N/A UK www.freimuth-wein.de
 Fragrant stone fruits and juicy pear aromas make this an approachable style. Rich, with juicy and ripe fruit in the mouth, it has an exotic tropical element and nice texture. Very much on the fruity side but not overblown. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 13%**



Fürst Hohenlohe Oehringen, Verrenberger Verrenberg, Württemberg 2016 91 GD 89 AK 93 ST 92
 N/A UK www.verrenberg.de
 Citric perfume, summer blossom and apple freshness lead into a very rich, slightly oily palate. A bit of spice, mineral touches and a long, pure finish. **Drink 2019-2028 Alc 12.5%**



Graf Neipperg, Schwaigerner Ruthe, Württemberg 2016 91 GD 92 AK 92 ST 90
 N/A UK www.graf-neipperg.de
 Touches of fern and grass on the nose. The palate is rich, ripe and long, with noticeable spice and lovely plump fruit. Good acid and an elegant finish. **Drink 2018-2023 Alc 13%**



Grans-Fassian, Apotheke, Mosel 2016 91 GD 92 AK 92 ST 88
 N/A UK www.grans-fassian.de
 A pretty, floral nose here, with hints of tropical fruit and nectarine. It's concentrated on the palate, with a good mouthfeel and lipsmacking acidity. There's balancing minerality and a feeling of ripe zestiness towards the finish. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 13%**



Groebe, Kirchspiel, Rheinhessen 2016 91 GD 90 AK 93 ST 90
 £43 Delibo
 The honeyed nose shows touches of lemon, while the palate displays incisive freshness with clean and precise lines, and delightful fruit concentration. Balanced and textured, with a long, powerful, juicy finish and a mineral kick. **Drink 2019-2030 Alc 13%**



Hans Wirsching, Iphöfer Julius-Echter-Berg, Franken 2015 91 GD 91 AK 94 ST 89
 £30.99 The Wine Barn
 Floral, zesty and rich on the nose, the vivid palate is round and powerful but balanced, with good viscosity. Notes of green apple are lifted by bright acidity before a long finish. **Drink 2019-2028 Alc 13.5%**



Jürgen Ellwanger, Schnaiter Altenberg, Württemberg 2016 91 GD 89 AK 92 ST 92
 N/A UK www.weingut-ellwanger.de
 A rich and smoky nose with pithy lime notes, minerals, oak moss, earth and a lovely, pure citrus fragrance. It has an appealing chalkiness on the oily palate along with ripe stone fruit, spice and juicy acidity. **Drink 2019-2026 Alc 13%**



Leitz, Berg Kaisersteinfels Rudesheim, Rheingau 2016 91 GD 92 AK 92 ST 90
 £50.20 ABS Wine Agencies
 Aromatic scents of piercing, ripe lemon and honeysuckle. Oak flavours come through as pine resin on an ample palate with clean lines. Notes of apple skin, lime juice and minerality peeking through. **Drink 2019-2024 Alc 12%**

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



Markgraf von Baden, Durbacher Schlossberg K Klingelberger, Baden Ortenau 2016 91 GD 89 AK 94 ST 91
 N/A UK www.markgraf-von-baden.de
 Taut, lean and zesty in its tangerine and lemon peel expression. Green apple notes are driven by spiky acids. Weighty but balanced, with a juicy mineral finish. **Drink 2018-2030 Alc 13%**



Maximin Grünhaus, Abtsberg, Mosel 2016 91 GD 92 AK 91 ST 91
 £30.20 Howard Ripley
 Lush stone fruits are laced with fresh limes, apple skin and ripe, almost tropical fruit. Generous and full but refreshing, thanks to the acidity. There's a pleasing mineral hit on the ripe, lemon oil finish. **Drink 2018-2028 Alc 12%**



Schloss Lieser Thomas Haag, Niederberg Helden, Mosel 2015 91 GD 90 AK 92 ST 91
 POA Justerini & Brooks
 Aromas of fresh white flowers, limes, green apples and a touch of passion fruit. Very pure, lean, racy and angular, with a citrus mid-palate and a pleasing minerality on the long finish. Clean-cut style. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 12.5%**



Schloss Vollrads, Schlossberg, Rheingau 2016 91 GD 90 AK 94 ST 90
 £29.40 Carruthers & Kent, Exel, Liberty, Nickolls & Perks
 A lifted, lemony nose leads into an open palate that's vibrant, concentrated and brimming with citrus fruit, green apple, pear and white flowers. It's tangy, racy and textured, with a mineral edge. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 13.5%**



Siegrist, Sonnenberg, Pfalz 2016 91 GD 90 AK 94 ST 90
 POA Amathus
 An uncompromising wine, streamlined and austere yet ripe and bone dry. A taut, textured mid-palate has pure lemon, lime and green apple, plus a smooth, underpinning minerality. This needs time. **Drink 2020-2030 Alc 12.5%**



Von Othegraven, Altenberg, Mosel 2016 91 GD 90 AK 92 ST 90
 POA The Winery
 A tropical nose of mango, passion fruit and minerals. It's quite extracted and textured on the palate, showing tangy citrus fruits, zestiness and a slender virtue, the phenolics keeping it going until the powerful finish. **Drink 2018-2029 Alc 12.5%**



Wegeler, Berg Schlossberg, Rheingau 2016 91 GD 89 AK 92 ST 91
 N/A UK www.wegeler.com
 The medicinal, herbal nose is lifted by notes of Cox apple and peach. It's textural and balanced in the mouth, with upfront fruit and a citric backbone. An easy style of Riesling. **Drink 2019-2029 Alc 13%**



Weltner, Hoheleite, Franken 2015 91 GD 92 AK 90 ST 90
 N/A UK www.weltnerwein.de
 Ripe fruit and spice aromas are joined by a chalky line and a hint of dandelion. The viscous palate has very ripe fruit and plenty of texture. Smooth and long. **Drink 2018-2026 Alc 14%**



Wöhrwag, Untertürkheimer Herzogenberg, Württemberg 2016 91 GD 90 AK 91 ST 91
 N/A UK www.woehrwag.de
 A rich and spicy style, with ripe stone fruits and fresh, juicy acidity - it's all at full volume here. Vivid and full, but balanced, with nice length. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 13%**



Diel, Goldloch, Nahe 2016 90 GD 90 AK 92 ST 89
 N/A UK www.diel.eu
 A touch of bruised apple freshness on the honeyed nose. There's some reductive funkiness throughout but this is rather joyful, with gorgeous apple freshness, length and texture. **Drink 2019-2030 Alc 12.5%**



Dr Loosen, Erdener Prälat Alte Reben, Mosel 2015 90 GD 89 AK 92 ST 89
 £75.35 ABS Wine Agencies
 Perfumed and aromatic, showing citrus zest and citrus blossom on the nose. The palate has a kind of herbal, grassy tinge, alongside sweet peach and tangerine flavours. Slender and layered. **Drink 2018-2027 Alc 13%**



Graf von Bentzel Sturmfeder, Schozacher Roter Berg, Württemberg 2016 90 GD 90 AK 90 ST 89
 N/A UK www.sturmfeder.de
 An elegant, perfumed nose of rich stone fruits leads into a plump, rich palate - maybe a little warm - with a lot of weight to the fruit, and a long finish. **Drink 2018-2026 Alc 14%**

Highly Recommended (continued) 90-94pts



Heitlinger, Schellenbrunnen, Baden-Kraichgau 2015
90 GD 89 AK 91 ST 90

N/A UK www.weingut-heitlinger.de
Very ripe, with fresh apple and pear aromas. It's full-bodied, with a backbone of fluid freshness and pleasant, pithy citrus flavours. It has clean, mineral lines, lemony acidity and good length. **Drink** 2018-2026 **Alc** 13%



Johannishof, Hölle Johannisberg, Rheingau 2016 90 GD 88 AK 92 ST 89

£25 The Wine Society
An aromatic Golden Delicious apple nose, then the palate is quite uncompromising, with brisk citrus acidity and delineated juicy, pristine fruits. There's mid-palate freshness leading into a clean finish. Expressive in its own way. **Drink** 2018-2032 **Alc** 11.5%



Juliusspital, Würzburger Stein, Franken 2015 90 GD 90 AK 92 ST 89

N/A UK www.weingut-juliusspital.de
Big, powerful and rich, with pear skin, lush apple and white peach and an oily texture beneath. Clean, zesty and taut, with a long finish. **Drink** 2018-2029 **Alc** 14%



Karl Schaefer, Herrenberg, Pfalz 2015 90 GD 90 AK 92 ST 89

£16.80 FortyFive10°
Ripe but zesty, with quite a restrained nose. It's nicely balanced, with good concentration of ripe, juicy fruit. The lively acids and fine minerality add another layer of complexity. **Drink** 2018-2028 **Alc** 13%

'They'll age beautifully... but if you pull a cork on one, you're not going to be upset' Gearoid Devaney MS



Nik Weis St Urbans-Hof, Laurentiuslay, Mosel 2016 90 GD 90 AK 90 ST 90

£45 Inverarity Morton, The Wine Barn
Wet stone, dandelion and lemon aromas. Rich, textured palate with stone fruit sweetness, a touch of residual sugar followed by delicate mineral and tropical notes. Lemon oil softness on a long finish. **Drink** 2018-2028 **Alc** 12.5%



Okonomierat Rebholz, Kastanienbusch, Pfalz 2016 90 GD 89 AK 91 ST 90

£48.60 Justerini & Brooks
Very lemony, with fine lime zest too, wrapped in a mineral texture. It has an understated, austere appeal of gentle apple and lovely lemon zestiness. Linear, with a delicate mineral note. **Drink** 2018-2028 **Alc** 12%



Prinz von Hessen, Winkler Hasensprung, Rheingau 2016 90 GD 86 AK 95 ST 88

POA Conviviality
A subtle nose of gentle citrus. Very fluid and very juicy, with an attack of lime, red apple, tropical fruit and citrus, then grassy notes, a subtle oak influence and spice. Ample charm and real length. **Drink** 2019-2028 **Alc** 12.5%



Winter, Kloppberg, Rheinhessen 2016 90 GD 89 AK 89 ST 93

£28.99 Matthew Clark
Subtle, fresh notes of herb, citrus and stone fruit on the nose. The palate is fine and juicy, with green apple and lemon peel alongside very pure, bright acidity. Good length on the very dry finish. **Drink** 2019-2030 **Alc** 12.5%

Recommended 86-89pts

Wine	Score	GD	AK	ST	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Heymann-Löwenstein, Röttgen, Mosel 2016	89	89	89	88	A lifted, lemony nose with a slate note. Flavours of stone fruits and Golden Delicious apple, some residual sugar, but good balance and vibrant acidity.	13%	2018-2027	£37.25	Berry Bros & Rudd
Johann Ruck, Iphöfer Julius-Echter-Berg, Franken 2015	89	88	90	88	Ripe aromas of apple, pear and vivid citrus. Well-balanced sweetness and acidity, powerful, bright, ripe fruit and some herbal notes. Fine minerality.	13%	2018-2026	N/A UK	www.ruckwein.de
Milz-Laurentiushof, Leiterchen, Mosel 2016	89	90	90	88	A floral, honeyed nose; tight, juicy palate of exotic fruit flavours with peachy undertones. A softer style, some pithy minerality peeking through at the end.	13%	2018-2024	N/A UK	www.milz-laurentiushof.com
Rudolph Fürst, Centgrafenberg, Franken 2016	89	89	91	86	Bright, fresh apple and zesty lemon aromas are followed by lime juice notes on the palate, delivering refreshing acidity and a soft, lemon oil finish.	12%	2019-2027	£41.50	Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies
Bergdolt, Klostergut St Lamprecht, Reiterpfad, Pfalz 2015	88	89	85	89	Very pure, though the alcohol is noticeable. Exotic, powerful fruit a little muted now, but may balance the alcohol out in time. Fine mineral structure.	13%	2020-2027	N/A UK	www.weingut-bergdolt.de

Recommended (continued) 86-89pts

Wine	Score	GD	AK	ST	Tasting note	Alc	Drink	Price	Stockists
Burg Ravensburg, Husarenkappe, Baden-Kraichgau 2015	88	87	89	88	Rather rounded, rich and mellow, with ripe stone fruit flavours. It's powerful but lacks a little charm. Medium length.	14%	2018-2025	N/A UK	www.weingut-burg-ravensburg.de
Gut Hermannsberg, Hermannsberg, Nahe 2015	88	86	91	88	Has juicy fruit, charming on the surface but with serious intent. Lots of power, yet some elegance, fruit is holding its own against the oak. High acidity.	12.5%	2018-2026	N/A UK	www.gut-hermannsberg.de
Heid, Stettener Pulvermächer, Württemberg 2016	88	88	88	89	A rich, fruity, spicy style with good balancing acidity, though possibly lacking a bit of finesse.	13%	2018-2023	N/A UK	www.weingut-heid.de
Reichsrat von Buhl, Freundstück, Pfalz 2015	88	83	92	88	Full-on aromas of passion fruit with luscious vanilla. A very modern, out-there style combining sweet, creamy oak with pleasant juicy fruit. Not for everyone.	14%	2018-6508	£49.95	Farr Vintners
Rings, Saumagen, Pfalz 2016	88	88	90	86	Stone fruit, citrus and floral aromatics followed by plenty of oak on the palate - too much for the delicate, pretty fruit. All rather modern and international.	13.5%	2018-2031	N/A UK	www.weingut-rings.de
Zehnthof Luckert, Maustal, Franken 2016	88	83	93	89	A little woody, with rounded tones of banana, spice and toast, but there's bright lemon acidity and the ripe citrus edge of Riesling. Modern and mellow.	13.5%	2018-2027	N/A UK	www.weingut-zehnthof.de
Baron Knyphausen, Hattenheimer Wisselbrunnen, Rheingau 2015	87	84	90	86	A rich, heavy, honeyed and grassy nose. Palate is quite sweet and powerful, with lemony concentration and some green notes. Arguably lacks finesse.	13%	2018-2025	N/A UK	www.baron-knyphausen.de
Barth, Hassel, Rheingau 2015	87	85	88	87	Displays some new oak influence and lots of power, some cidery, natural wine elements, although Riesling freshness comes through in the end. Not pristine.	12.5%	2018-2030	POA	The Winery
Peter Jakob Kühn, Doosberg, Rheingau 2015	87	85	93	84	An advanced nose of camomile. Palate is rounded and oak-kissed, with bright fruit beneath and a juicy mid-palate, Riesling lemon acid coming through.	13%	2018-2035	£44.60	Howard Ripley
Von Winning, Ungeheuer, Pfalz 2016	87	84	90	88	The oak and wine are only just getting to know each other here, but there's also bright acidity and a smooth finish. Needs time.	12.5%	2021-2029	POA	Humble Group
Balthasar Röss, Nussbrunnen, Rheingau 2016	86	83	88	87	Juicy fruit with plentiful pear notes, but it's very creamy: flavours of banana bread and cooked apple. Thickly textured and lacking a bit of precision.	13%	2018-2030	POA	Berkmann

Commended 83-85pts

■ Allendorf, Jesuitengarten, Rheingau 2016 83, 13%, 2018, £28.70 The Wine Barn ■ Arnold, Randersacker Pfülsen, Franken 2016 83, 13%, 2018-2023, N/A UK

www.arnoldwein.de ■ Georg Müller Stiftung, Wisselbrunnen, Rheingau 2015 83, 13.5%, 2018-2035, POA The Sampler

Poor 70-75pts

■ SA Prüm, Wehlen Sonnenuhr, Mosel 2015 75

My top three

Gearoid Devaney MS

■ Geheimer Rat Dr von Bassermann-Jordan, Jesuitengarten, Pfalz 2016 I was very happy to see a wine from Basserman-Jordan among my top picks: I have been following the wines for a long time and it is an estate steeped in the history of wine in the Pfalz. This wine was complex, elegant with so much potential. Enjoy! **96 Drink** 2019-2035

■ Kühling-Gillot, Hipping, Rheinhessen 2016 From red shale soils on one of the top terroirs in Nierstien, this wine was excellent and shows the depth of quality of dry wines in Rheinhessen right now. Definitely a wine I will source for my own cellar. **96 Drink** 2018-2032

■ Dönnhoff, Hermannshöhle, Nahe 2016 A wine that I have bought for my own cellar and it never disappoints. From the best vineyard in the Nahe, full of black slate and good south-facing aspect and one of Germany's great winemaking families. **93 Drink** 2019-2030

My top three

Anne Krebiehl MW

■ Wagner-Stempel, Heerkretz, Rheinhessen 2016 A cooler site than Höllenberg, Wagner-Stempel's other GG site. Gentle and complete, its seamless elegance shows what this part of the Rheinhessen can do. **97 Drink** 2019-2032

■ Krüger-Rumpf, Im Pitterberg, Nahe, 2016 I have to highlight one Nahe wine. My tasting note really encapsulates what German Riesling is all about: a wine that's transparent, racy and refreshing, something that you simply want more of. **95 Drink** 2019-2034

■ Schloss Neuweier, Robert Schätzle, Goldenes Loch, Baden 2016 From a tiny, steep 1ha vineyard on granitic soils, restored in 1993. A sunnier, rounder Riesling than Rheingau and Mosel; immense juiciness, zesty tension, purity and length. **93 Drink** 2018-2026

My top three

Sebastian Thomas

■ Wagner-Stempel, Heerkretz, Rheinhessen 2016 I had heard good things about this estate, but never tried its wines. Tasting the flagship Heerkretz was a revelation: it was understated and astonishingly fine. **99 Drink** 2019-2032

■ St Antony, Hipping, Rheinhessen 2016 It is a pleasure to taste this long, supremely elegant wine bursting with spicy, herbal flavours, fresh orchard fruit and zesty citrus. **97 Drink** 2019-2033

■ Karl Haidle, Pulvermächer, Württemberg 2016 It is not hard to sell your wines if you are in the Remstal: local demand is so great that not many wines leave the area. Yet many excellent wines are produced, among them those by the charming Moritz Haidle, who sidelines as a rapper. This has clear minerality and a pure weighty finish. **91 Drink** 2018-2027

NB: the tasters' top wines are not necessarily their top-scoring, rather those which, on learning the wines' identity, they feel are the most notable given their provenance, price or other factors