



Rick's Grape Skinny



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“Within the wine bottle’s depths rests its soul

Where it patiently awaits its escape – to exclamations of adoration!”

(Sivad, The Bard of Hopewell)

Austrian Wine, the Other Love of Mozart and Beethoven!

At long last...I’m finally honoring the requests from hundreds of you who’ve been nagging me to write about Austrian wines -- and wanting to know how to pronounce *Grüner Veltliner*, *Weissburgunder*, *Blaufränkisch*, *Müller-Thurgau*, and *Zweigelt*...in Austrian!! OK, so there were only six who were actually interested in knowing the proper pronunciation – but hey, if nothing else, I’m here to serve...so stay tuned and we’ll get to that “*Austrian pronunciation*” lesson in just a bit.

Meanwhile, here’s a HELLO for those that don’t know all that much about Austrian wines -- which is most of us -- and that is: AUSTRIAN WINES ARE PHENOMENAL!! And, if you don’t believe me...take the word of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart – who was born in Salzburg -- or the German-born Ludwig van Beethoven – who is buried in Vienna. Aside from being two of the world’s greatest composers and musical geniuses, they were also world class aficionados. OK...lushes if you must...’cuz those boys did indeed know and enjoy their Austrian wines!!

The Principal Wines of Austria

Keeping in mind the proximity of Germany to Austria – not to mention their many shared cultural attributes – it should come as no surprise that Austrian wines bear many similarities to German wines.

Key Austrian Whites

Grüner Veltliner *Riesling*
Müller-Thurgau *Weissburgunder*

Key Austrian Reds

Zweigelt *Blauburgunder*
Blaufränkisch *St. Laurent*

White wines *Grüner Veltliner* and *Müller-Thurgau* are distinctive autochthonous grapes that are both über flavorful and noted for their mouthwatering acidity. *Weissburgunder* on the other hand is known most everywhere else in the world as *Pinot Blanc* and is reminiscent of Burgundian *Chardonnay*.

Similarly, in red wines, *Zweigelt* and *St. Laurent* are indigenous Austrian grapes – with *Zweigelt* somewhat resembling *Gamay*-based *Beaujolais* and *St. Laurent* being more *Pinot Noir*-like in nature. In Hungary, the luscious *Blaufränkisch* is known as *Kékfrankos* -- and as *Lemberger* in Germany and the US. *Blauburgunder* by another name is *Pinot Noir*...except in Germany where it’s affectionately known as the *Spätburgunder*.

Austria also shares much of the German system of Classifying Wines...and for those that are exported, there are typically two categories – *Qualitätswein* and *Prädikatswein*. And just like German wines, the common levels of increasing ripeness are *Kabinett*, *Spätlese*, *Auslese*, *Beerenauslese*, *Trockenbeerenauslese*, and *Eiswein*. Two uniquely Austrian classifications are *Ausbruch* (which denotes the addition of botrytised juice) and *Strohwein* or *Schilfwein* (which distinguishes wines made from grapes dried on straw mats). And, like Germany, their Sparkling Wine is called *Sekt*.

Oh Yeah...those Pronunciations!

(Remember...Austrians speak German!!)

Grüner Veltliner = Groo'-ner Velt'-lee-ner
Müller-Thurgau = Moo'-lair Toor'-gow
Zweigelt = Zvy'-gelt
Blaufränkisch = Blou-frahn'-keesh
Weissburgunder = Vice'-buhr-goon'-der

Gern geschehen! (You’re welcome!)

Beaujolais Nouveau Release is Nov. 19, 2015!
Pick your party and laissez le bon temps rouler!



Toast of the Month



“Le Beaujolais Nouveau est arrive!”
(Traditional French Toast to Welcome Beaujolais Nouveau)

A Festive and Spirited Flight!

Reds

Gamay

Georges Duboeuf Beaujolais Nouveau 2015
Fruity, Soft as Silk and Dazzlingly Delicious!
(Beaujolais AOC--Romaneche-Thorins, FR)/\$12-\$14
Duboeuf's Gamay-based *Beaujolais Nouveau* is a perennial American Thanksgiving favorite and one of the best wine values you'll find...period! Look for the 2015 release on the traditional **third Thursday of November -- which falls on November 19th** this year. And if you want to be sure that you get a few bottles, be sure to call your retailer and pre-order your allocation. For those who've never experienced the traditional *Beaujolais Nouveau*...it's time to party hearty and enjoy one of the wine world's greatest and most fun traditions. And just think, about 3 weeks before you open it, those grapes were still on the vine!! Yes, it's that new! Lest there be doubt, *Beaujolais Nouveau Day* claims to be *the #1 Wine Celebration in the World!!*
<http://duboeuf.com/>

Blend

Gnarly Head 1924 Double Black – 2013
Inky Dark, Bold, Bodacious, & Bursting with Flavor!
(N. California Appellations – Manteca, CA)/\$10-\$12
Gnarly Head Winery is a part of the Delicato Family Vineyards – a portfolio of more than 20 labels – among them some of the most respected wines in America. This *Limited Edition 1924 Double Black* is an homage to Founder Gasparé Indelicato and the year in which he planted his first grapes. As it turns out, it was smack in the middle of Prohibition – so the best that old Gasparé could do was to sell grapes to locals who were making wine for

personal consumption...or to sell on the Black Market! This very special release is typical of the varietals he grew and the “field blends” that were crafted from some of the gnarliest vines in California! A marriage of Old Vine Zinfandel, Merlot and Syrah...this deep, dark and delicious wine is one of the most flavor-packed quaffs you'll find...anywhere! And don't forget, once it's gone...it's gone...so get it while you can! Oh...and careful folks...it's a whopping 15% ABV!
<http://www.gnarlyhead.com/>

Whites

Grüner Veltliner – *the Signature Grape of Austria!*
Familie Bauer 2013

Smells Like Flowers...Tastes Like Total Happiness!
(Wagram Region – Wachau, AU)/\$13-\$15
One of my all time favorite white wines, *Grüner Veltliner* – or *Groovy* as it is affectionately known – is Austria's most-planted grape...and it's also Austria's most important wine! To boot, it's one of the most versatile food wines you'll ever find -- and Chefs love it...because it doesn't mask or fight with the kind of delicate and subtle elements of flavor that are characteristic of today's contemporary cuisines. Famous for its trademark crispness and acidity, its up-front fruit evolves into layers of restrained spice. And the finish won't let you forget what you just drank! For what it's worth, it's not uncommon to find *Groovies* in 1 liter bottles!!
www.familiebauer.at

Blend

X Winery Knock Out White 2012
A Dazzlingly Delicious Darling!
(North Coast Appellations – Napa, CA)/\$14-\$16
Whoa Nellie! Trust me, there's been no holding back on this splendid blend of 60% *Verdelho*, 22% *Viognier*, 10% *Chardonnay*, and 8% *Sauvignon Blanc*. This is a mouthwatering wine that is nothing short of Springtime in a bottle! The name of the winery “X” stems from the title that owner/founder Reed Renaudin assigned to a Business Project while working on his MBA at Cal Poly – San Obispo. That endeavor ultimately spawned the birth of this highly acclaimed boutique winery...renowned for only making blends. Reed is also known for breaking all the rules – along with being one of the Valley's most refreshing – and promising -- free spirits. As Mr. X says, his focus is only on making wines that people like to drink...plain and simple!
<http://www.xwinery.com/>