WINERY REFLECTIONS

AUGUST KESSELER
February 5, 2024



August Kesseler boldly stands out as one of the Rheingau's most unique and impressive wine producers.

Based out of the village of Assmannshausen located on the Rhine River, August has proudly championed Spätburgunger (Pinot Noir) since he took over his family's winery nearly a half century ago. He firmly believes that the perilously steep southwest-facing slopes and meager slate soils of his home village rival the Grand Crus of Burgundy as the best terroir for Pinot Noir on earth, and the wines he and his team shape from their epic 40 hectares of vineyards certainly grant merit to his claim.

We had the immense pleasure of sitting down with August himself for an immersive guided tasting of his wines and we were absolutely flabbergasted at how awe-inspiringly delicious each wine was. We tasted through 19 individual bottlings, including a selection of Pinot Noir as well as Riesling, and could wax poetic for days about the experience.

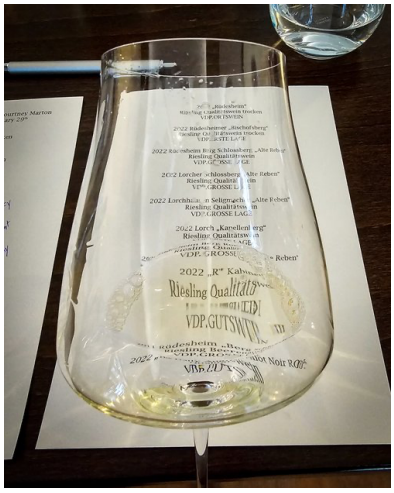
First in the tasting came Pinot. True to his Burgundian style August believes that wines should be tasted in order of acidity (from high pH to low), so upon arrival we dove right into reds. We worked our way from entry level bottlings to village wines, and then eventually to August's "Cuvée Max" that is the flagship of his lineup.

Those familiar with German Spätburgunger are already well aware that it is one of the most elegant and delicate expressions of Pinot Noir on earth, and the wines of August Kesseler are a perfect testament to this. Each possesses ethereal finesse eerily reminiscent of classic Burgundy while simultaneously boasting complexity and depth of flavor that holds up to the greatest domaines of the Cóte de Nuits. Experiencing a three vintage vertical of "Cuvée Max" was unquestionably the highlight of the Pinot portion of the tasting and showed how expression of terrior and vintage variation can result in a series of wines that are familiar yet all contain truly distinct personalities. For us the 2019 bottling was the standout, as its gorgeous aromatics and silky yet feather-light mouthfeel captured flawlessly the irresistible charm that only world-class Pinot can present.

After working our way through August's range of Pinot's we moved over to Riesling. Riesling is of course Germany's most recognizable and iconic grape, and despite his deep affinity for Pinot August also manages to produce some of the greatest Riesling in the entire Rheingau.







The diversity and quality of August's Rieslings is honestly hard to do justice to in words. From bright and crisp, to ripe and juicy, to earthy and mineral, this lineup has it all and firmly captured our attention and imagination. There were many standouts, but for the sake of brevity we must highlight the 2022 Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg "Alte Reben" (Old Vine) as among the greatest expressions of this noble grape that we have ever tried. Intensity, precision, focus, depth, elegance, and finesse; the list of wholy accurate descriptors that could be given to this wine are virtually never-ending. It simply must be tried to be fully understood, and we're sure glad we had the chance to do so.

While August's wines are absolutely breathtaking we have to give a shout out to the man himself for being an absolutely amazing host. August's initially stern German disposition quickly broke down to reveal his passion and love his craft, and his kindness was unexpected yet greatly appreciated.

For anyone visiting the Rheingau, you absolutely MUST visit August. For those in the states, many of these wines are imported and are absolutely worth seeking out!