

GERMAN WHITES NO RIESLING

Germany is associated very strongly, especially beyond its borders, with Riesling. But Riesling alone does not adequately represent a country where consumers love to match food with less racy whites such as Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder, or Silvaner. **Stephan Reinhardt** introduces a tasting shared with **Andreas Larsson** and **Jancis Robinson MW** to identify some of these less celebrated but equally worthy wines

Around two thirds of the total vineyard area in Germany (66,112ha [163,366 acres], or 64.5 percent) is planted to white grape varieties, of which Riesling now dominates, with almost 23,300ha (57,575 acres). The most dramatic changes over the past 20 years, however, have occurred among the Pinot varieties: Grauburgunder/Pinot Gris (5,316ha [13,136 acres], +2,745ha [6,783 acres] since 1995) and Weissburgunder/Pinot Blanc (4,639ha [11,463 acres], +2,509ha [6,200 acres]) continue to gain ground, and even Chardonnay (1,608ha [3,973 acres], +1,280ha [3,162 acres]) is a winner in the dynamic German wine scene (whose superstar is, of course, Spätburgunder/Pinot Noir, which is cultivated on 11,775ha [29,096 acres], +4,168ha [10,300 acres]). The losers of the big change (which is often connected with climate change) are well known: early-ripening varieties such as Müller-Thurgau (still second in terms of area under vine but with a loss of 10,525ha [26,000 acres] since 1995), Kerner (-4,298ha [10,620 acres]), and Bacchus (-1,616ha [3,993 acres]), as well as good old Silvaner (-2,423ha [5,987 acres]) and Scheurebe (-2,134ha [5,273 acres]).

For this tasting, I assembled 44 top wines—mostly Silvaner, Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder, and Chardonnay, but also including excellent representatives of Gutedel (Chasselas), Scheurebe, (Gewürz-) Traminer (+60ha [148 acres]), and Grüner Veltliner (still very rare in Germany) as wild cards.

The Pinot family

Early-budding and ripening Grauer Burgunder (or Grauburgunder, Pinot Gris) gives small bunches and grapes with high sugar levels paired with a rather low to moderate acidity. Germany's third most planted white grape variety is very prominent in Baden (where it is classified for Grosses Gewächs), Rheinhessen, and the Pfalz. Medium-range wines, fermented in stainless-steel or used barrels, are very popular in Germany, while more expensive wines aged in new barriques often reflect the ambitions of the winemaker more than anything else. In general, these are rich and powerful wines that can be dominated by their long yeast contact for their first one or two years, but the finest of them can age surprisingly well.

Weisser Burgunder (or Weissburgunder, Pinot Blanc) is both classic and pop in Germany. Its acreage is steadily growing (it now ranks fifth among the most planted white varieties), and the style ranges from buoyant, medium-bodied wines without any malolactic fermentation, to noble, rich, Burgundian-styled wines fermented and aged in small and often new barrels. There is no wine region in Germany (not even Saale-Unstrut, Sachsen, or Hessische Bergstrasse) where Pinot Blanc is not cultivated successfully, though Baden and the Pfalz produce many of the finest examples. Did you know that the Weissburgunders from the Nahe and Mosel can be outstanding? The tasting notes below should make you curious.

When a German producer cultivates Chardonnay, he is serious—and only very rarely hoping for a quick success. Because Burgundy is right next door, many German wine producers have the highest respect for Burgundian Chardonnays, which are clearly an object lesson in how good and complex Chardonnay can taste. The climatic conditions, especially in Baden but also in parts of Franken or the Pfalz, are quite similar to those in Burgundy, as is the limestone on which Chardonnay yields its finest wines. Discover for yourself the wines from Pinot godfathers like Fürst, Huber, or Knipser, and see how close (or not) their wines come to those of Burgundy.

Silvaner and aromatic varieties

In Franken—which is, after Württemberg, the most ignored major German wine region abroad—Silvaner rules, and it has done ever since 1665, when Abbot Alberich Degen introduced the unknown grape variety to the Cistercian abbey of Ebrach as Östareiche Rebe. As we know today (thanks to DNA profiling), Silvaner (or Sylvaner) is a natural cross of Savagnin x Österreichisch Weiss, and its origin is probably the eastern part of Austria. Rheinhessen (2,371ha [5,858 acres]), Franken (1,406ha [3,474 acres]), and the Pfalz (800ha [1,976 acres]) are the world's most important Silvaner regions today, along with Alsace (1,446ha [3,573 acres]). But no other region identifies so closely with Silvaner as Franken does, and the *Bocksbeutel* is the most prominent symbol of what is widely

described as *Frankenwein*. Late-ripening Riesling plays a minor role in the continental climate of Franconia, where the early-ripening Müller-Thurgau, as a kind of *Zechwein* (quaffing wine), and the middle-ripening Silvaner, as a more serious table wine, play the main roles.

Silvaner was always described as an extremely aromatic and juicy grape variety, though the resulting wines are always rather subtle and discreet in their expression of aromas and flavors. Silvaner is therefore often described as a variety that reflects its origin more than it does its own varietal characteristics. Indeed, this is why Franken produces some of the finest Silvaners. Here the grape is often cultivated in the best vineyards and gives dry, full-bodied, firmly structured, mineral wines with stunning aging potential. Here, too, the variety is classified (along with Riesling, Pinot Blanc, and Pinot Noir) for Grosses Gewächs production. Silvaner is grown on three different main soil types here: Fresh and zesty wines with herbal flavors come from the red sandstone soils around Klingenberg and Miltenberg, whereas the most prominent Silvaners are grown on clay-limestone soils around Würzburg and Volkach. These wines are quite aromatic, complex, and powerful, being characterized by flinty aromas, as well as a lingering salinity. Still underrated but offering finesse, as well as power and great aging potential, are the wines from the Steigerwald area, where the weathered Keuper soils around Iphofen

AVERAGE AND RANGE OF SCORES		
	Average	Range
Tasting	15.5	11-18
AL	14.5	11-18
SR	15.5	13-17.5
JR	15.5	14.5-17

STEPHAN REINHARDT'S TOP WINES

Keller Silvaner Feuervogel Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 17.5
Franz Keller Chardonnay Kirchberg A Baden 2013 17.5
Franz Keller Schlossberg Grauburgunder A Oberbergen Kaiserstuhl Baden 17
Kranz Ilbesheimer Kalmit Weisser Burgunder Trocken Pfalz 2012 17
Rainer Sauer Escherndorf am Lumpen 1655 Silvaner Trocken GG Franken 2013 17
Schäfer-Fröhlich Weisser Burgunder S Trocken Nahe 2013 17
Schäfer-Fröhlich Weisser Burgunder R Trocken Nahe 2013 17
Weltner Sylvaner Hoheleite GG Trocken Franken 2013 17
Wittmann Chardonnay Trocken S Rheinhessen 2013 17
Ziereisen Jaspis Gutedel 10 4 Alte Reben Badischer Landwein Baden 2011 17

and Castell give full-bodied and very elegant, reductive-styled wines with white-fruit aromas and herbal flavors. Thanks to their elegant and fine acidity and their mineral taste, Silvaners from Franken—from young, medium-range wines, to mature Grosse Gewächse—are great food wines and sometimes rightly compared with Chablis.

In Rheinhessen, Silvaner is more or less a hangover from the times of mass production. On fertile clay soils, this vigorous variety can produce excessively high yields if the grower does not intervene. The finest examples come from the limestone formations around Westhofen (where Riesling and Pinot Noir are extremely strong competitors), as well as from the Rotliegend soils of the Red Slope around Nierstein and Nackenheim. Daniel Wagner of Wagner-Stempel has for years been providing compelling proof that volcanic soils can also yield characterful Silvaner.

Wines from aromatic varieties such as Gewürztraminer, Scheurebe, Muskateller, or even Sauvignon Blanc deserve their own more focused treatment. But for this tasting I thought it worth including at least a few of the most prominent representatives of Traminer and Scheurebe (Germany's answer to Sauvignon Blanc)—just to see how they played in this concert of Germany's finest white wines after Riesling. And don't miss a very special Gutedel, from the most prominent grape variety in the Markgräflerland in Baden, near Basel in Switzerland.



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Am Stein Stettener Stein Silvaner GG Trocken Franken 2013 (SC; 13% ABV) **16.5**

AL | Quite characteristic Silvaner nose of wheat beer/yeast, nuts, and almonds, with citrus and white stone fruit. Good grip on the palate, fine extract that gives freshness rather than acidity per se, white stone fruit, citrus zest, and some nutty notes, with a clean and long finish. **| 16**

SR | Intense yellow color. Lovely on the nose, where ripe-pip and tropical-fruit aromas are intertwined with mineral and leafy tobacco notes and white pepper. Very attractive, pure, and fresh, with some dusty limestone flavors. Full-bodied and very elegant, this extremely well-balanced and refined wine is lovely to drink now but can age for a decade and more. Delicious. **| 16.5**

JR | Bright gold. Broad, fully ripe whitecurrant fruit. Then very tense on the palate, with great acidity and precision. Essence of Silvaner! Drink 2013-17. **| 16.5**

Keller Silvaner Feuervogel Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 (13% ABV) **16.5**

AL | Quite tropical nose at first, fresh pineapple and yellow fruit, some notes of chestnut and hazelnut. Fresh palate, with good weight and extract, juicy yellow fruit and grapefruit notes, pure and long finish, combining ripe fruit and a mineral notion. **| 16**

SR | Intense citrus color. Lovely, clear, fruit-intense, and mineral on the nose, where dried Mediterranean flavors (thyme, sage) add a certain very stimulating something. Full-bodied, slightly creamy, and well concentrated on the palate, this firmly structured wine is still more than a little bit closed and still does not fly. But it is certainly willing and potent enough to do so in a couple of years. Tightly woven and very mineral, the finish is stringent, vital, and very persistent. This is a great personality asking for more time in the bottle. Not necessary to come back to it for the next 4 or 5 years, but this is surely a long-distance runner that will deserve the higher score I will give it later. **| 17.5**

JR | Mid-gold. Broad, earthy nose. Some forest-floor notes. The nose is very expressive, even if the fruit is rather less opulent than in some examples. Lightly chewy finish. Drink 2015-18. **| 15.5**

Holger Koch Grauer Burgunder * Baden 2013** (12.5% ABV) **16.5**

AL | Pure and ripe nose, with notes of peach, apricot, and citrus. The palate is nicely restrained, combining ripe fruit with a fresh acidity and mouthwatering freshness: a more northern style, Pinot Gris made like Riesling, or at least resembling it due to its freshness, minerality, and salivating finish. Very nice. **| 17.5**

SR | Citrus color. Very aromatic and fruit-driven on the nose, indicating herbal flavors intermixed with ripe and sweet white-peach aromas. Full-bodied and salty on the palate, this is a powerful though very pure and linear Grauburgunder, with a creamy texture and complex length. Still very

young, but with good aging potential. **| 16**

JR | Extraordinarily Alsatian on the nose because of its pungent, perfumed appeal. But on the palate it is much lighter and drier than most Alsace examples. Very lively and complete. A good compromise and very confident. Notably livelier than most Pinot Gris—actually almost Friuli in its build. Distinctive and successful. Drink 2014-17. **| 16**

Schatzel Nierstein Silvaner Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 (SC; 12% ABV) **16.5**

AL | Bright golden color. Beautiful nose, intense and pure in a reductive style, with flinty notes, hazelnut, and white stone fruit, quite like white Burgundy, with generous fruit and good weight, but classically bone-dry, with well-defined freshness, grip, and very persistent mineral finish, very appealing and potent. **| 18**

SR | Golden-yellow, with a greenish shimmer. This wine has a very special nose, which we find much more often in Burgundy than in Silvaner Land. Rich and ripe fruit aromas are intermixed with herbal and iodine flavors, on a pure, mineral, and transparent background. This is a very inviting and complex nose, and it develops every second. On the palate it does not have the power and concentration of some of the others in this tasting, but it is a very authentic personality. It is fresh and piquant, salty and very pure, not that rich or intense, but firm, tense, and very delicate. The aging potential is very good (6-10 years). It's an excellent partner for lunch and dinner. **| 16.5**

JR | Mid-gold. Reductive, struck-match aromas. Lots of tension and acidity on the palate of a wine that is less varietally expressive than some. A tad simple, even if clean and bracing. Very high in acidity and a bit short. Drink 2015-18. **| 15**

Weltner Silvaner Küchenmeister GG Trocken Franken 2007 (glass stopper; 13% ABV) **16.5**

AL | Very intense aromatically, offering stony notes, minerals, chestnut, smoke, and ripe stone fruit, fairly complex and inviting, leading to a fresh and salivating palate, with layers of stone fruit, well-integrated extract and freshness, lively and concentrated, with both power and freshness, ripe and *digeste*, with excellent length and potential. **| 17.5**

SR | Very intense in its golden-yellow color, this is the most fruit-intense but fine Silvaner of this tasting. Buff leather and herbal/greenish flavors frame the yeasty ripe fruit aromas, which echo tropical flavors such as pineapple rather than domestic pip fruits. Very spicy, this is obviously more mature than most of the other wines but still demands a decanter. Medium- to full-bodied, this is a fruity and elegant wine (now with dried pip fruits), with a vivid acidity and a nice mineral structure, though it probably does not have the depth and complexity of the finest Sylvaners in this tasting. Still, this wine is on a trip, and I would come back to it in 2 or 3 years. **| 16**

JR | Mid-gold. Smells as though there is some light and by no means unattractive oak influence. Really quite mature, with the acidity relatively in

the background. Well into its tertiary phase and relatively full-bodied. Drink 2012-15. **| 15.5**

Kranz Ilbesheimer Kalmit Weisser Burgunder Trocken Pfalz 2012 (14% ABV) **16**

AL | Slightly restrained nose, youthful fruit, some citrus and earthy notes. The palate has a good bite and extract, some zesty/bitter notes, dry, with low RS and vibrant acidity, quite persistent on the finish, with hints of stone fruit, nuts, and citrus; there might be a hint of neutral oak contributing to the texture as well. **| 14.5**

SR | This is another very pure and complex Pinot Blanc, with clear and bright fruit aromas along with some caramelly-yeasty and deeply mineral flavors. This wine seems to be richer, more intense, and more powerful than some others, an impression confirmed by the palate, since it has to manage a rich and seriously powerful, mineral wine that demands a decanter and several hours, if not a complete day, for aeration. The finish is very complex and tight, so the potential should be excellent here as well. This is one of the most impressive wines beyond Riesling so far, and it is certainly something completely different. **| 17**

JR | Mellow nose, with no sharp corners. Tastes quite sweet but with some grunt and interest. Well sculpted. Persistent. And with real refreshment value, too. Excellent balance with very well-managed phenolics. Drink 2014-17. **| 16**

Rainer Sauer Escherndorf am Lumpen 1655 Silvaner Trocken GG Franken 2013 (SC; 13.5% ABV) **16**

AL | Youthful nose with moderate ripeness; pear, citrus, and almond notes, with a hint of minerality. The palate has medium weight and a small hint of citrus bitterness contributing to the freshness; rounded finish, gentle and juicy, with medium to long finish. **| 15**

SR | Bright lemon-yellow color. Very elegant on the nose, with a subtle mix of white fruits and yeasty flavors, this is a very delicate *sur lie* style and paradigm Silvaner. On the palate it is a firmly structured, minerally-salty, tense, and terroir-driven Silvaner. Its fruit expression on the palate is subtle but adamant, and finally intense and persistent, like its mineral nature. A great German Silvaner. **| 17**

JR | Not that communicative on the nose. Firm fruit with good structure, though it seems a bit introvert at the moment. Marked acidity. Drink 2015-18. **| 15.5**

Fritz Wassmer Grauer Burgunder R Trocken Baden 2012 (14% ABV) **16**

AL | A slightly more Burgundian style, with some new oak, finely toasted notes, nuts and ripe citrus. Good grip on the palate, noticeable but integrated wood, fresh citrus and stone fruit, with discreet spices, clove and vanilla, rather warm and unctuous on the finish, with some complexity and good potential. **| 17**

SR | White golden in color, this is a lovely aromatic Pinot Gris, though it is still quite yeasty, sweet, and

powerful on the palate, which is also elegant and quite persistent. However, it's a little bit saturating in the end. **| 15.5**

JR | Deep gold. Round and sweet—almost more like a Pinot Blanc. Good energy on the palate, but a little bit sweet and very far from a sophisticated savory white Burgundy. More like a turbocharged Pinot Blanc. Nice wine, well balanced, very long. But nothing like white Burgundy. Drink 2014-18. **| 16**

Fritz Wassmer Schlossberg Staufen Chardonnay Baden 2012 (14% ABV) **16**

AL | Very enticing nose, a bit different from the rest, with grapey, floral, and exotic fruit notes; I have to add mineral and complex to the equation. The palate has good grip and structure, with balanced extract/bitterness, good purity of fruit, not really noticeable oak, and a long spicy finish. Good distinction and personality here. **| 17.5**

SR | Intense yellow in color (and obviously unfiltered), this Pinot Gris displays nicely yeasty, herbal, and brittle aromas and is invitingly clear. The palate is rich and piquant if not racy (which has not been the case for many years in Germany's Rulaender country), but the creamy texture finally makes this a somewhat saturating wine, with some oaky flavors on the finish. This might well deserve a better score in a couple of years. **| 15**

JR | Deep gold. Peachy nose with a certain sweetness but also some dullness. Fades away pretty fast on the finish. Messy finish but good substance. Drink 2014-17. **| 15**

Weltner Silvaner Hoheleite GG Trocken Franken 2013 (SC; 13.5% ABV) **16**

AL | Intense, pure, and floral nose, combining a stony/mineral sensation with yellow fruit and ripe citrus. The palate has good grip, it gives a fresh and salivating sensation, not high acidity per se, but bone-dry, with good extract and a quite long, nutty finish. **| 14.5**

SR | Pale yellow, with a greenish hue. The deep, multilayered nose of lovely clear and spicy-herbal aromas, with white-fruit scents, leads into a very elegant and beautifully aromatic palate, with a stimulating salinity and vibrant acidity. White-peach flavors dominate the palate of this full-bodied and persistent wine, which is made in a reductive but very potent style. I would store it for three or four years, then drink it over the following decade. **| 17**

JR | Very pale greenish straw color. Lovely, broad, honeyed nose yet with some delicacy, too. Still youthful and high in acidity. The palate seems to lag behind the nose. Quite drying on the finish at the moment. Still to develop to its full potential but very promising. Bone-dry. Drink 2015-19. **| 16**

Wittmann Chardonnay Trocken S Rheinhessen 2013 (13.5% ABV) **16**

AL | Pure nose, aromatic and floral, with hints of ripe stone fruit. Well balanced on the palate, with

opulent fruit that's restrained by a healthy dose of freshness; a clean and fresh finish, with no influence of oak, leaving this a well-balanced and enjoyable wine. **| 15.5**

SR | Intense citrus color with a greenish shimmer. This wine has a very subtle though seriously deep and limestone/smoky aroma of herbs, minerals, caramel, and stone fruits. Full-bodied, complex, and persistent, this firmly structured, tense wine shows a lovely purity and elegance on the palate. It is a very Burgundian wine, not in terms of the winemaking but by nature. Very food-friendly and with its best years—many of them—still ahead of it. Very promising. **| 17**

JR | Pale greenish gold. Very lively and fresh. Halfway between Mâcon and the Côte d'Or, this is a confident wine with real structure and grip that does not depend on residual sugar. It's definitely German, being more perfumed than the average white Burgundy, but has great poise and intention, as well as potential for future development. Excellent persistence. Drink 2015-19. **| 16**

Bürgerspital Würzburg Würzburger Stein Silvaner GG Trocken Franken 2013 (SC; 13% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Pure and intense nose, with a perfume of yellow plum, citrus, and almond paste. The palate is quite restrained (in a positive way), with a salivating freshness, ripe citrus, and stone fruity notes; it starts out firm and fruity but finishes more on the dry, firm, and mineral side, with good length and purity. **| 16**

SR | Bright citrus color. Attractive bright fruit aromas (white-fleshed nectarines or peaches) along with some nicely yeasty and herbal scents on the nose, open to an elegant, quite intense palate, while the finish reveals slight animal flavors. The finish is quite citric but elegant. This is a concentrated wine, which is obviously not on top form. **| 14.5**

JR | Mid-gold. Broad nose, with notes of talcum powder and honey. Racy but not tart. Juicy and satisfying. A super-refreshing blend of fruit and acidity. Drink 2014-17. **| 16**

Dautel Weissburgunder S Trocken Pinot Blanc Württemberg 2013 (13.5% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Gentle oak influence and finely toasted notes on the nose; hints of stone fruit and some nutty notes. The palate is close to dry, yet with a few grams of RS, well-integrated oak and sufficient freshness, and a medium to long finish; rather southern in style, with high ripeness, but well balanced and enjoyable. **| 15**

SR | Quite reductive and yeasty on the citric nose, as on the palate, which is firmly structured but still closed. This medium- to full-bodied wine has good grip, and there is the potential for good development. I find it difficult to score at this stage, however. **| 16**

JR | Very broad and slightly sweaty on the nose, but not without interest! Good acidity but very introvert on the palate. Extremely tightly clenched at the moment. Drink 2016-18. **| 15+**

Bernhard Huber Chardonnay Schlossberg R Baden 2012 (13.5% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Intense but not obtrusive oak on the nose, some clove, vanilla, and sweet citrus. A fresh palate underlined by a vibrant acidity; the oak is there but not dominating, some nutty and roasted notes, more fruitiness toward the finish, yellow plum and citrus; quite long on the aftertaste. **| 15.5**

SR | Intense yellow in color, this Chardonnay offers a rich and yeasty/caramelly bouquet of very ripe fruit flavors. Full-bodied, ripe, and fruit-intense, like a stereotypical New World Chardonnay, this is a powerful, well-structured, and mineral wine, with a piquant and citric freshness. But there is not the energy today to make you drink the bottle. **| 15**

JR | Smoky reductive nose. Edgy and with real attack. Dry finish, and one of the German Chardonnays most like a Burgundy. Real flavor here but also a certain brutality: a heavy phenolic imprint. Drink 2014-18. **| 15.5**

Okonomierat Rebholz Siebeldingen Im Sonnenschein Weisser Burgunder Trocken GG Pfalz 2013 (13% ABV) **15.5**

AL | The nose leans toward the stony and mineral, resembling Silvaner, with some earthy notes, almond, nuts, and ripe citrus. The palate has good bite, young and intense with good extract, balanced bitterness, ripe fruit and moderate acidity. The finish is still *digeste* and salivating, with notes of salty almonds and lemon zest: appealing in a Franconia/Silvaner style. **| 16**

SR | Intense citrus color, obviously unfiltered. Very clear and complex on the nose, still yeasty but deep and aromatic and very promising. The palate is elegant and fruity but unspectacular; the acidity is quite fresh but a little bit too citric now. **| 14**

JR | Mid-gold. Broad, expressive, and evolved on the nose. Good balance and some real tension. Some of the sweetcorn character of ripe Pinot Blanc, although bone-dry on the finish. Probably at its peak but no hurry. Drink 2013-16. **| 16**

Seeger Oberklamm Grauer Burgunder GG Baden 2013 (13% ABV) **15.5**

AL | The nose offers, plum, stone fruit, and some honeyed notes. Quite broad and luscious palate, but bone-dry, with well-preserved freshness, generous fruit, very forward, with good drinkability and a lush finish. **| 16**

SR | Citrus-colored, this Pinot Gris displays a deep, dense, ripe, and very herbal bouquet, which is full of flowery meadow and leads to a full-bodied yet pure and very mineral, energetic wine full of power and transparency and clarity. The finish is quite long and as herbal as the nose. Still young, this wine should have an excellent aging potential but still seems extremely young. **| 16**

JR | The oak is a bit prominent on the nose of this wine. Sweet and spicy. Then lots of acidity. Not very integrated. Perhaps this wine is just too young? Chewy and youthful. Quite painful to taste now. Drink 2016-18. **| 15+**

J Storrlein & Krenig Randersacker Marsberg Weisser Burgunder Franken 2013 (SC; 12.5% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Pure aromas of pear, quince, and some stony notes, in a slightly cooler style. Good freshness on the palate, close to dry, with low RS and a balancing acidity; elegant fruit and a salivating, quite long finish. **| 15.5**

SR | White fleshed stone-fruit aromas dominate the nose of this yellow wine, which is intense and precise on the palate but still very young, fruit-driven, and quite reductive. Firmly structured, and with an aromatic yet slightly drying (mineral) length, this full-bodied wine should be stored for another three years or so. **| 15**

JR | Pale greenish gold. Delicate nose. Quite a bit of restraint and tension, with a very salivatory effect. Beautifully made, with good potential for development, but still pretty inexpressive. The phenolics are very well handled. Drink 2015-17. **| 15.5**

Martin Wassmer Chardonnay Castellberg Baden 2013 (13.5% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Quite deep and evolved color. Quite intense nose, suggesting dry spices, pepper and clove with some oak and stone fruit. The palate is rather structured, with some bitterness that's well integrated, fresh with stone fruit, some new oak and a long, intense finish. A rather assertive style but it keeps together. **| 15.5**

SR | The dark straw yellow, almost orange color, is one of a matured wine, but this deep, herbal, and slightly spicy-flavored wine is still very young. The palate, however, is extremely rich and powerful (and almost brandy), and I do not believe that this slightly sweet and bitter wine will age very well. It already seems to be at its peak. Drink now. **| 15**

JR | Pale apricot! This does smell like the famous orange wine! Skin contact and lots of life. Perhaps quite a brave move? But the result is a wine with real energy, a slightly ginger-beer quality and some light sweetness but not too much weirdness. Long and fresh. This is a style that stands out in a range of more conventional German Chardonnays, but I suspect it may mask vineyard character and may just get a little tiring in the long term. But it certainly throbs. Drink 2014-16. **| 16**

Martin Wassmer Grauer Burgunder Castellberg Baden 2013 (13.5% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Quite ripe and perfumed nose, sweet pear and plum aromas. Opulent fruit but bone-dry, with a good sensation of freshness, juicy stone fruit on the finish, quite persistent, with a slight hint of oak on the aftertaste. **| 14.5**

SR | Intense yellow in color and obviously unfiltered, this rich Grauburgunder offers an intense fruit and yeasty flavor that indicates some greenish/nutty aromas. Full-bodied and rich on the palate, this is a powerful and fruit-intense wine with good length, but at least at the moment

it lacks the transparency and purity that would make you drink this complex though not fully developed wine. **| 15.5**

JR | Mid-yellow. Smoky and appetizing on the nose. Pungent and quite rich but with strong acidity, too. Not the concentration of a great Alsace example, but polite and well made. Dry, wet stony, and stone-fruit finish. Just a bit muted and stodgy. Chewy end. Drink 2014-16. **| 17**

Weegmüller Bürgergarten Alte Reben Gewürztraminer Pfalz 2013 (SC; 13.5% ABV) **15.5**

AL | Very intense and spicy nose offering rose petal, dry spices, cardamom, and yellow plum: quite typical Gewürz. Rich and opulent on the palate, with a plethora of spicy yellow fruit, viscous texture, but well-preserved freshness and a spicy finish. **| 15**

SR | Guns and roses on the nose, this is what you expect from Gewürztraminer. This full-bodied wine is deliciously elegant, aromatic, and juicy, and the texture is quite oily. There is a nice piquancy and freshness on the palate, which helps reduce the power. **| 16**

JR | Deep gold. Very obviously Gewürz on the nose, but determinedly not sweet. Smoky (almost smoked meat) character, no flowers. Correct and not oily. Just a little bit phenolic. Fun and very different from most Gewürzes in that it is bone-dry. Impressive persistence. A very particular style. Drink 2013-15. **| 15.5**

Bercher Burkheimer Feuerberg Haslen Weissburgunder GG Trocken Kaiserstuhl Baden 2013 (13.5% ABV) **15**

AL | The nose is quite aromatic and grapey, made in a Riesling rather than in a Burgundian style, with floral and grapey fruit, an off-dry palate, fresh acidity, and notes of pear and fresh grapes; forward, juicy, and generous. **| 13**

SR | Medium-intense citrus color. The nose is very clear, intense, and focused, marked by yeasty/mealy and citric flavors, whereas the fruit aromas are still discreet but adumbrated. On the palate, this is a full-bodied, juicy, and firmly structured, mineral Pinot Blanc that is still taking its hesitant first steps. Vibrant and full of potential, I would recommend to store it for at least 3 years. **| 16.5**

JR | Smells of wet stones. Lots of ripe fruit on the front palate. An interesting, finely etched Pinot Blanc that is rather like a cross between a premier cru Chablis and a Pinot Blanc. A satisfying mouthful already, with a tiny suggestion of some residual sugar, but there is no hurry to drink it. Good persistence. Drink 2014-17. **| 15.5**

Weingut Bergdolt Klostergut St Lamprecht Mandelburg Weissburgunder Trocken GG (13% ABV) **15**

AL | Youthful and fresh nose, with citrus, peach, and some smoke, albeit not oak. The palate

ANDREAS LARSSON'S VERDICT

One thing remains very clear: Riesling is king, or queen, or whatever term you prefer. Despite other great efforts and very interesting wine styles, very few would be able to compete with its versatility, aromatic expression, structure, purity, and longevity.

In my book, the clear runner-up would be Silvaner, due to the fact that it doesn't pretend to be Riesling but, rather, performs very well in its own traditional bone-dry, full-bodied style. If there is any wine that I've been buying more of for the restaurant and, consequently, imbibed more of recently, it would be Silvaner from Franconia. Even if the aforementioned region remains the role model, my top wine in this flight hailed from Rheinhessen, which clearly also has the potential to produce great Silvaner. Grauburgunder was another good performer.

That's a tricky variety for me: fairly easy to get aromatic and fruity in lighter styles with some residual sugar, but more demanding to make bone-dry with preserved freshness, without overripeness or obtrusive oak. We saw a few of those in this tasting, offering rather Burgundian interpretations, yet with that extra weight and fruitiness that the variety boasts.

Chardonnay and Weissburgunder, most of the time, resemble each other in Germany; I suppose when you put Chardonnay on the label, you just make a little more effort with the wine. There's clearly a demand for it, and when winemakers finally learn to retreat from the greasy, vanilla-scented, rather vulgar oak infusions and make it as exemplary as the Wassmer Chardonnay, there should be a great future for it in Rheinhessen, Baden, and Pfalz.

TOP WINES

- Schatzel Nierstein Silvaner Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 **18**
- Holger Koch Grauer Burgunder *** Baden 2013 **17.5**
- Fritz Wassmer Schlossberg Staufen Chardonnay Baden 2012 **17.5**
- Weltner* Sylvaner Kuchenmeister GG Trocken Franken 2007 **17.5**
- Fritz Wassmer Grauer Burgunder R Trocken Baden 2012 **17**
- Am Stein Stettener Stein Silvaner GG Trocken

- Franken 2013 **16**
- Bürgerspital Würzburg Würzburger Stein Silvaner GG Trocken Franken 2013 **16**
- Keller Silvaner Feuervogel Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 **16**
- Okonomierat Rebholz Siebeldingen Im Sonnenschein Weisser Burgunder Trocken GG Pfalz 2013 **16**
- Seeger Oberklamm Grauer Burgunder GG Baden 2013 **16**

is on the lighter side, fresh and vibrant, with a salivating acidity, clean and fresh, with a medium length. **| 13.5**

SR | Intense citrus color; this is a serious, well-concentrated, though still fresh and pure Pinot Blanc, with some leafy and attractive yeasty aromas along with mandarin. The palate is thrilling, very lively and piquant, pure, quite mineral, and rather reductive in its white peach flavors. The finish is firm and very salty and indicates a substantial wine with very good aging potential. This full-bodied, tense wine should be aged at least 2 or 3 years more before drinking but has the potential still to be going strong in 8 or 10. **| 16.5**

JR | Pale yellow. Muted reductive nose suggests quite a bit of substance underneath. Sour note. Bone-dry and lots of extract. This is an ambitious wine that is more youthful than most. I'd guess it may well be worth aging. It is certainly distinctive. Drink 2016-18. **| 15.5+**

Dönnhoff Weissburgunder S Nahe 2013 (13.5% ABV) **15**

AL | Fresh nose of pineapple and sweet citrus with some nutty notes; quite lightweight, with a hint of bitterness and nuttiness on the palate, then ending with a clean and fresh finish of moderate length. **| 13**

SR | Golden-yellow in color, the wine offers a pure and delicate bouquet of ripe aromas (honeydew melon) along with some very delicate spicy/mineral flavors. Full-bodied, elegant, and pure on the palate, this is a very complex and powerful wine, which is transparent and salty, extremely well balanced and very persistent, though it is still quite reductive on the palate. Overall, this is impressive in its power, purity, and length. The aging potential should also be quite good here. **| 16.5**

JR | Very honeyed and broad and interesting on the nose; even a hint of cumin. Then pretty tightly laced on the palate. Racy and complete. Many more layers than most of these Pinot Blancs. Delicacy plus breadth and length. One of the most elegant. Drink 2013-16. **| 16**

Fürst Karthäuser Chardonnay Trocken Franken 2013 (13% ABV) **15**

AL | Youthful and fresh nose of ripe citrus, mineral, nuts, and discreet oak. Rather elegant palate, more northern and cool in style, with elegantly restrained fruit, brilliant freshness, well-integrated wood and a long, clean, and persistent finish: a really fine combination of Germany and Chardonnay. **| 15.5**

SR | A golden-yellow citrus color leads to an intense aroma of fully ripe fruit of different origins, but there is also a slightly sickly scent that I do not find attractive. The wine is powerful and almost bitter on the palate, and it does not develop length or tension but tries to impress on the first attack. Not a success for me. **| 14**

JR | Mid-gold. Light, polite on the nose. Pretty and relatively delicate. Edge of greenness. Awfully taut and bone-dry on the end. Just not quite enough fruity core in the middle. Drink 2014-17. **| 15**

Gunderloch Nackenheim Silvaner xt Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 (SC; 13% ABV) **15**

AL | Some notes of wheat beer, sweet fruit, candied citrus, and fresh almond on the nose. Medium weight on the palate, balanced freshness, quince and pear notes, with moderate extract and length. Rounded and juicy, with appealing fruit on the finish. **| 14.5**

SR | Very subtle on the nose, which displays lovely lemon aromas along with herbal and other bright fruit scents. Quite fruit-intense on the palate, this is a Silvaner you can already enjoy now. It is elegant and well balanced, but lacks the complexity and length of the very best. **| 15**

JR | Pale straw color. Light but extremely pure nose, with broad fruit impact on the palate. Evolved and satisfying, with masses of juicy varietal fruit. A relatively complex rendition, with a beginning, middle, and end. Drink 2014-17. **| 16**

Dr Heger Ihringer Winkleberg Grauburgunder Trocken GG Baden 2013 (13% ABV) **15**

AL | Fresh nose of pear, quince, and white pepper. The palate is nicely rounded with some spicy notes, good extract, and youthful fruit, hints of fleshy pear, and a rather long finish, with fresh, pure fruit. **| 14.5**

SR | Pale straw color. Clear and aromatic on the nose, with some herbal, mealy, and citric aromas. Powerful and full-bodied on the palate, this is a very vibrant and mineral-scented, elegant, and straightforward wine, perhaps from volcanic soils (Kaiserstuhl?). Still young, but delicious to drink from 2016 to 2020. **| 16**

JR | Notably pale. Rather sulfur-muted on the nose. A sweet start, with lemon cough-drop aromas but altogether a bit too stolid. There's some good fruit buried down there, but it's difficult to extract. Drink 2015-17. **| 14.5+**

Franz Keller Chardonnay Kirchberg A Baden 2013 (13% ABV) **15**

AL | Still a youthful nose with a slight reduction, some new oak dominates, slightly roasted with citrus and nutty notes. The palate feels rather cool and northern, with pronounced acidity, restrained fruit, and somewhat dominating oak at present, but it should soften and shed the oak with further aging. **| 13**

SR | Clear and minerally fresh on the nose, this citrus-yellow and citrus-scented Chardonnay shows a lovely, smoky purity and focused fruitiness on both nose and palate. Very well structured, piquant, and fresh, this is a serious, very Burgundian German Chardonnay, full of immediacy and tension. It is full-bodied and complex and very salty on the finish and the lingering aftertaste. Great purity and persistence. Very stimulating. **| 17.5**

JR | Pale greenish straw. Hot toasty nose—at odds with that cool color. Masses of acidity and rather low-key overall impact. Sour finish. Hard work. Drink 2015-17. **| 14.5**

Franz Keller Schlossberg Grauburgunder A Oberbergen Im Kaiserstuhl Baden (13% ABV) **15**

AL | Youthful and pure nose of fresh fig and plum; the palate has good freshness, rather ripe fruit, but still a youthful medium-bodied structure, average length, with gentle fruit in a fresh clean profile. **| 14**

SR | Very clear and still, with a *sur lie* character, this has a serious, herbal, and almost dusty/smoky character and is surely one of the finest and most thrilling Pinots in the tasting. It is still very young and is not at all ostentatious or showy, but as a full-bodied wine, it is full of life, vibrancy, elegance, and aging potential. Very good length. **| 17**

JR | Pale greenish gold. Smells a bit reductive, with hints of the fermentation vat still. Lots of acidity and tension but not quite enough opulence. Hard work. A bit mean. Drink 2014-17. **| 14.5**

Holger Koch Weisser Burgunder * Baden 2013** (12.5% ABV) **15**

AL | The nose is fairly exotic resembling Viognier with both tropical, fruit, yogurt and floral notes. The palate has good volume but is still more restrained than the nose, with a fresh backbone, some roasted notes, yellow fruit, and quite a long, fresh finish. **| 14**

SR | Fresh, mealy, and herbal on the nose, which displays pure Champagne-like apple, yeast, and citrus flavors. The palate is very pure, vivid, and elegant, too, and there are no signs of bigness or fat at all. This is a chalky-flavored, citric, fresh, pure, and elegant Pinot Blanc that is far away from being developed. Indeed, add the bubbles, and you drink Champagne. Without bubbles, you just have a very delicate and subtle Pinot Blanc with complexity and length, but it does not shout. Like it a lot. **| 16.5**

JR | Deepish gold. Broad, amorphous nose. Slight suggestion of oak savor, but overall pretty delicate. Green fruit flavors, but a little mild overall. Well made, but it tastes as though the fruit just wasn't all that exciting in the first place. Rather jagged finish. Drink 2015-17. **| 14.5**

Rudolf May Silvaner Rothlauf Franken 2013 (SC; 13.5% ABV) **15**

AL | Bright straw color, slightly earthy and stony nose, more nutty and almondy than fruity, with some citrus/mandarin notes; the palate is bone-dry with good bite, ground almond, and a balanced bitterness; discreet fruit but rather good length and nice, appetizing, salivating finish. **| 14**

SR | Pale yellow in color, this Silvaner offers a subtly fruity nose with herbal and discreet pear aromas, along with some lovely yeasty notes. On the palate, this is a full-bodied and richly textured wine, but still very elegant, with a ripe acidity and a nice mineral background. Quite powerful but elegant and quite long. Very good wine, with good, if not very good, aging potential. **| 15**

JR | Mid-straw with slight spritz. Lightly honeyed straw on the nose, too, though with the high acid that Chenin Blanc would have. Very ripe grapes and a confident, broad, honeyed fruit quality on the palate. A fine, quite evolved wine, with lower

acid than some. Just very slight bitterness on the finish. Drink 2013-16. | **15.5**

Schäfer-Fröhlich Weisser Burgunder S Trocken Nahe 2013 | **15**
(13% ABV)

AL | Quite floral and ripe nose of yellow fruit, yogurt, and orange zest; the palate has a hint of residual sugar that's balanced by a fresh and vibrant acidity and medium length; generous and forward in a juicy, uncomplicated style. | **13**
SR | Welcome to Pinot Blanc in a very pure, fresh, and aromatic but substantial style. Citrus colored, this full-bodied wine is very aromatic and fruit-driven on the palate, displaying a mixture of ripe fruit flavors along with attractive yeasty notes in a very elegant and balanced way. This wine is very pure and refined and full of life, full of tension, purity, and finesse. A great Pinot Blanc (from slate?), which seems closer to Riesling than to those Pinot Blancs that imitate Burgundian Chardonnays. This is a Pinot Blanc culture of its own. Very fruity but also mineral and piquant, albeit in a very delicate and elegant way. The length is terrific. Drink it now or until 2022. | **17**
JR | Spicy white-pepper nose. Quite rich and broad on the nose, and then it tightens up on the finish. Very lively and racy on the palate. Lots of tension and potential. Seems very slightly sweet. Long. Drink 2014-17. | **15.5**

Wagner Stempel Silvaner Siefersheim Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 (13% ABV) | **15**

AL | Ripe citrus, mandarin, and some tropical-fruit notes, more fruit and less stone/mineral; quite ripe, the palate is bold and luscious, with a slight sensation of sweetness, moderate acidity but good extract and balance, tropical fruit and candied-citrus notes; rather long aftertaste. | **15.5**
SR | Straw yellow, this Silvaner offers a very elegant honeyed/yeasty nose, with fine bright fruit aromas that make me wish for lobster right now. Fruit-driven and energetic on the palate, this is a full-bodied, quite lively wine, with a fruit-intense aftertaste and some salty minerals. I would recommend to store it for another three years or so and to drink it in over a decade or even a little bit more. | **15.5**
JR | Bright straw color. An unexpected oak note. Just a little oak oiliness masks the pure fruit flavor. This fades quite fast on the palate, too. Just a little watery. Drink 2015-16. | **14.5**

Ziereisen Jaspis Grauer Burgunder Alte Reben Badischer Landwein Baden 2011 (13% ABV) | **15**

AL | Slightly evolved color, quite intense new oak, dry spices and tropical-fruit hints. The palate is more restrained than the nose, with a good level of freshness, present but not dominating oak, generous fruit, fig, pear, clove, and vanilla on the finish, ripe and unctuous, yet fresh in style. | **14.5**
SR | Almost orange in color. A rich and yeasty, creamy wine, with ripe honeydew melon aromas along with lovely mineral, smoky, and herbal

flavors. The palate, though, is less dramatic but elegant, balanced, and still driven by oak and *bâtonnage* flavors. This full-bodied wine should age for at least another two years. | **16**
JR | Pale orange. Fun, different, edgy, perfumed, a bit phenolic and sour. It so nearly works but doesn't quite. A bit of a lack of fresh fruit in the middle. An awfully good try, though... Drink 2014-16. | **15**

Ziereisen Jaspis Gutedel 10 4 Alte Reben Badischer Landwein Baden 2011 (12% ABV) | **15**

AL | Youthful nose displaying quite generous amounts of oak, slightly Burgundy-like, with notes of citrus and roasted nuts; a rather young palate, bone-dry, with fresh acidity, vanilla, and a slightly bitter sensation from the oak; a bit raw on the finish, but still young and unresolved; should soften with further aging. | **13**
SR | White gold in color and obviously unfiltered, this offers a fascinatingly Burgundian and naturally flavored bouquet of ripe white- and yellow-fleshed fruits, underlined with lovely herbal (hedge mustard) and perfectly ripe fruit aromas. It is intense and subtle at the same time—and the most fascinating nose of all the wines up to this point in the tasting. The palate is stunning, too, since the taste is extremely mineral, pure, and quite iodine. Whatever grape this is does not matter, since its job is to express the terroir rather than its own varietal characteristics. There are not that many grape varieties that have that potential. This could also be a Jura wine, but it is more delicate and svelte than most of those. The finish shows an almost iron-like minerality. This is not a big wine, but it is fascinatingly pure, complex, and authentic. | **17**
JR | Deep gold. Peachy wine that is almost Rhône-like. Very ample on the nose, with low acid, and the oak element is (just) not too intrusive. All its appeal is on the nose, however, and it falls away on the finish. A wine to admire for its ambition rather than to love for its composition. Drink 2014-15. | **14.5**

Bürgerspital Würzburger Stein Chardonnay R Trocken im Barrique gereift Franken 2013 | **14.5**
(SC; 13.5% ABV)

AL | Quite nuanced nose, with some nutty, roasted, and ripe-fruit notes. The palate stays within the medium-bodied segment, close to dry with a small hint of RS, balanced acidity, discreet wood, and moderate length. | **12.5**
SR | Toffee, vanilla, white chocolate, and super-ripe fruit aromas characterize the nose of this Chardonnay, which is powerful and rich, quite yeasty still, and with a certain citric purity on the palate, which is still somewhat isolated. There is a good mineral backbone and freshness here, but everything has still to come together and to harmonize. Today, this wine is quite alcoholic and saturating. | **15.5**
JR | Big and broad. Lightly sweet and round, with (just) enough savor to keep it interesting. Sweeter than most white Burgundy, and being the first

Chardonnay I taste after a run of Pinot Blancs, it does seem more substantial. Really juicy edge to this. Drink 2014-17. | **15.5**

Fürst Centgrafenberg Weisser Burgunder R Trocken Franken 2013 (13% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | The nose is offering some new oak, roasted notes, and ripe fruit; rather southern in style, with a bold texture, rounded acidity, abundant yellow fruit, well-integrated oak, and some creamy and lactic notes on the finish. | **14.5**
SR | Paper aromas detract from this Pinot Blanc. This is a medium-bodied, very typical German Pinot Blanc, quite fruity but also yeasty and slightly herbal, with a citric, smoky, even slightly sickly taste. The acidity still seems not fully integrated, and the finish is slightly astringent. | **14**
JR | Deeper gold than most. Broad in its impact. An edge of pineapple in this wine (and it's been a long time since I tasted the once-ubiquitous pineapple!). Slight spritz and decent enough balance but a lack of grunt. It's beautifully well mannered, but I'm not sure it's really got enough to say. Drink 2014-17. | **15**

Dr Heger Ihringer Winkleberg Weissburgunder Trocken Baden 2013 (13% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | A cooler interpretation in an aromatic Riesling/Traminer style, with green herbs, lime, citrus, and grapey notes. The palate is on the lighter side, with fresh acidity and zesty fruit, and a clean and fresh finish of moderate length. | **13.5**
SR | This is a very clear and yeasty wine that fails to attract me because it seems a little too technical for my personal taste. Ripe apple, pear, and melon flavors lead to a correct and citric wine, which is quite reductive and rather lean. It is still well done, though—or to be fair, very well done. | **15.5**
JR | Fresh popcorn nose. Lively acidity and gentle, broad fruit but without great savor. Another well-made wine that leaves me wanting just a bit more flavor. Slight saltiness. Drink 2014-16. | **15**

Künstler Grüner Veltliner Rheingau 2013 (SC; 12.5% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | Intense aromas, youthful and vibrant, with some spicy and peppery hints, yellow fruit, grape and citrus; the palate has good bite, ripe and bold fruit, but a dry and salivating freshness with generous fruit on the finish. | **15.5**
SR | Golden yellow with a greenish hue. Ripe and juicy fruit aromas (pears, mango, peaches) on the nose lead to a medium-bodied, slightly salty wine, which shows a little bit of CO₂ and a citric acidity initially. Quite elegant but still very closed and slightly aggressive in its citric taste. | **13**
JR | Pale yellow with a slight spritz. Not overwhelmingly varietal by any means. Lightly white pepper and lots of acidity—much more than there would be in most Austrian examples. Finishes quite tart and hard. Clean, but with a lack of fruit and character. No persistence. Drink 2015-17. | **14.5**

Markus Molitor Wehlener Klosterberg Pinot Blanc* Mosel 2011** (13% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | Very opulent nose of tropical fruit, pineapple, honey, and roasted oak; a southern and warm interpretation, with bold texture, sweet yellow fruit, a good dose of residual sugar and mild acidity; ripe and tropical in style, with discreet oak and abundant fruit on the finish. Easy to like; hard to love. | **13.5**
SR | Intense citrus color. Dense and quite Burgundian on the nose, where ripe and sweet honeydew melon aromas mingle with toffee, yeast, and vanilla aromas. The wine is very sweet and rich on the palate and lacks the transparency, finesse, and stimulating salinity of the finest examples here. The finish is somewhat clunky and does not strongly invite a second sip. | **15.5**
JR | Pale yellow. There's a hint of wet wool on the nose that is a bit worrying. Also quite a bit of apparent sweetness. This wine seems a bit old-fashioned. Cheese, old socks, and astringency. Just not refreshing enough, but not industrial. There's a heck of a lot of effort in here... but it's weak on the finish, too. Drink 2014-15. | **14.5**

Schäfer-Fröhlich Weisser Burgunder R Trocken Pinot Blanc Nahe 2013 (13% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | Young and fresh nose resembling fresh herbs, grass, lemon, and lime; light- to medium-weight on the palate; some bitter and herbal notes, lemon zest, and some lactic notes on the finish; slightly simplistic. | **11**
SR | Pale citrus color. Lovely, clear, smoky, and intense on the nose, quite wild and mineral, echoing the Schaefer-Fröhlich Riesling style, with ripe apple scents and a slaty spiciness. On the palate, this medium- to full-bodied wine is very elegant and complex, characterized by its deliciously delicate and yeasty creaminess. Again, this is not a big wine, but it is elegant and very focused, with its very own personality. Juicy and elegant and very well balanced—just lovely. | **17**
JR | Light, slightly dull nose, and signs of low-level TCA (suppressed fruit). The second bottle was very slightly more expressive on the nose, with a chalky hint, and much more so on the palate. Creamy texture. Very accomplished (that's to say, imperceptible) oaking. Neat, but in a minor key. Slight spritz. Good length. Drink 2014-16. | **15**

Dr Wehrheim Birkweiler Mandelberg Weisser Burgunder Pfalz 2013 (13% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | Grapey and aromatic, with hints of green fruit, pear, quince, and grapefruit. The palate is generous and well balanced in a forward, fruity style, with a slight dose of residual sugar, youthful fruit, and juicy, rounded finish, rather resembling Riesling stylistically. | **14.5**
SR | Citrus-colored, this wine offers quite a yeasty nose, with ripe, intense, and concentrated fruit aromas in the background. On the palate, there is much more fruit and less creaminess than expected, which isolates the acidity a little bit.

The wine seems slightly unsettled at the moment, which makes it difficult to score. I believe this has a good character and just needs another 2 or 3 years to come into balance. | **14.5**
JR | Light, introvert nose. A light touch, emphasizing refreshment factor. By no means a heavy Pinot Blanc trying to be a Chardonnay, but an appetizing apéritif style. A streak of green. Not an attention-grabber, but a well-made, confident wine in a certain style. Drink 2014-16. | **15**

Hans Wirsching Iphofer Julius-Echter-Berg Silvaner GG Trocken Franken 2012 (14% ABV) | **14.5**

AL | Quite ripe nose of yellow fruit and some herbal camomile notes. The palate has quite a pronounced bitterness, some spicy and herbal notes with honeyed fruit, rather ripe and round, with moderate acidity and a warm finish. | **14**
SR | Intense citric color. Very clear and aromatic on the nose. Not very complex but elegant and fruity on the palate, this full-bodied wine finishes with a nice piquancy. Still somewhat closed, it has an aging potential of six to eight years, maybe longer. | **14.5**
JR | Mid-gold. Evolved honeyed nose, with some damp-straw character. Reasonable tension on the palate, with some persistence, but overall just slightly soft. Drink 2013-16. | **15**

Knipser Chardonnay Trocken Pfalz 2013 (13.5% ABV) | **14**

AL | A quite woody nose, roasted, with some hints of smoke and sweet orange. The palate is still youthful and raw, with pronounced oak, young fruit, zesty notes, and a fresh acidity; rather on the long side, but still with a rather dry and sturdy finish, thanks to a lot of wood. | **12**
SR | Bright gold in color, this Chardonnay opens with a clear aroma of white peaches and nectarines, along with tropical flavors and physalis and a certain spiciness. Full-bodied and firm, the wine is still nascent and unusually aromatic and fruit-intense (white and yellow peach) on the aftertaste. A little too loud for now, at least for my taste, but with the potential to age and to shed some of the more obvious stone-fruit aromas. | **15.5**
JR | Very light nose, with a low-key pungency and lots of chewiness. Not exactly beautifully balanced. The phenolics are a bit dominant, and there's a sour, chewy note on the end. Heavy and a bit sweet. Drink 2015-17. | **14.5**

Hans Wirsching Iphöfer Kronsberg Scheurebe Alte Reben Franken 2013 (SC; 14% ABV) | **13.5**

AL | Aromatic nose, slightly artificial, with tutti frutti honey and candied-fruit notes; a hint of residual sugar on the palate, balanced by fresh acidity; generous and tropical, yet with slightly candied fruit and a moderate finish. | **12**
SR | Very pale in color, this is a very reductive, aromatic, 100 percent Scheurebe, with a lovely concentration of white peaches and nectarines along with citrus flavors. Lean and piquant on

the palate, this is a fruit-driven, medium-bodied, dry wine, which is quite closed and citric at the moment. | **13.5**
JR | Pale straw. Very opulent but not fat nose. Bone-dry. I wouldn't mind a little more residual sugar in this. But it is still very well made and well sculpted. Quite a presence in the mouth. Drink 2014-17. | **15.5** ■

JANCIS ROBINSON'S VERDICT

I could happily have enjoyed more Scheurebe. The Grüner Veltliner was a little muted and disappointing, but there were many fine Silvaners. I enjoyed seeing the honeyed-straw element to many of them, and they seemed in very different stages of evolution. None was seriously disappointing, though the Wagner Stempel wine suggested that Silvaner and oak do not make a great mix. A couple of wines—the Rudolf May Silvaner and Keller Silvaner, for example—were just a little high in phenolics at this stage. The Pinot Blancs varied considerably in how dry or sweet they tasted. Very good texture, most of them; I'd have loved to taste them alongside some white Burgundies in the same price range and suspect the German Pinot Blancs would have been more refined in terms of texture, even if possibly less interesting in terms of flavor. Hardly any suggestion of oak at all—in stark contrast to how these wines used to be. Great winemaking, but is the fruit interesting enough? The Chardonnays were extremely varied—but did seem a notch more interesting than the Pinot Blancs—even if myriad different styles and rarely showing too much oak.

TOP WINES

Martin Wassmer Grauer Burgunder Castellberg Baden 2013 17
Am Stein Stettener Stein Silvaner GG Trocken Franken 2013 16.5
Bürgerspital Würzburg Würzburger Stein Silvaner GG Trocken Franken 2013 16
Dönnhoff Weissburgunder S Nahe 2013 16
Gunderloch Nackenheim Silvaner x.t. Trocken Rheinhessen 2013 16
Holger Koch Grauer Burgunder *** Baden 2013 16
Kranz Ilbesheimer Kalmit Weisser Burgunder Trocken Pfalz 2012 16
Okonomierat Rebholz Siebeldingen Im Sonnenschein Weisser Burgunder Trocken GG Pfalz 2013 16
Fritz Wassmer Grauer Burgunder R Trocken Baden 2012 16
Martin Wassmer Chardonnay Castellberg Baden 2013 16
Weltner Sylvaner Hoheleite GG Trocken Franken 2013 16
Wittmann Chardonnay Trocken S Rheinhessen 2013 16