



Mosel Fine Wines

"The Independent Review of Mosel Riesling"

By Jean Fisch and David Rayer

2017 Vintage Report

About Mosel Fine Wines

Independent publication on Mosel Riesling (and beyond!) with reports on vintages, Estates and wines at maturity.

Covering every year up to 1,000 wines from the current vintage from all leading Estates of the region, of which the best make it into the Issues.

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Recommended Wines

Weingut Ernst Baltes

(Ayl – Saar)

Baltes is a tiny (0.3 ha) Estate based in Ayl in the Saar. It has been recently taken over by the younger generation, Sebastian Baltes, who runs it as a part-time activity together with his father. Its holdings are situated in Saarburg (Kupp) and in the different hills of Ayl. The wines are fermented with ambient yeasts. This happens usually in stainless steel, but, quantity permitting, also in traditional Fuder. The style of the Estate is one of presence and power (certainly by Saar standards).

2015er	Ernst Baltes	Ayler Kupp Riesling Feinherb N°1	01 16	91
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The 2015er Ayler Kupp Feinherb, which carries the N°1 on the label, is made from selections in the main hill of the Ayler Kupp and the Rauberg side hill and was fermented down to 27 g/l of residual sugar. An initial touch of reduction quickly gives way to a very pure, zesty and undercooled nose showing minty herbs, smoke, green apple, sea breeze and anise. The wine proves light-weighted on the palate, where a fine creamy side is superbly wrapped into grapefruit driven acidity. The long finish is pure, fresh and animating. One would never guess the level of residual sugar as the sweetness is already superbly integrated and the wine tastes in fact just off-dry. This is a great success. 2019-2030

2016er	Ernst Baltes	Saar Riesling Feinherb N°1	01 17	90
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The 2016er Saar Feinherb, which carries the N°1 on the label, is made from grapes harvested in Ayl and Saarburg and was fermented down to 31 g/l of residual sugar. It delivers a beautifully fresh nose of grapefruit, mint, spices, white flowers, green apple, verbena and smoke. The wine proves rather ripe and loaded with ample yellow fruits including peach, nashi and yellow melon with a hint of strawberry juice on the palate. The finish is quite focused and racy thanks to a tickly acidity kick which cleanses the previous feeling of smoothness. This still needs a couple of years to integrate its mid-palate sweetness. 2020-2026

2017er	Ernst Baltes	Saarburger Kupp Riesling Spätlese N°3	03 18	89+
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The 2017er Saarburger Kupp Spätlese, which carries the N°3 on the label, is made from selections of ripe berries including a small percentage of botrytis on 80 year-old un-grafted vines and was fermented down to fully fruity levels at 69 g/l of residual sugar. This exhibits a ripe nose of candy floss, canned yellow peach, toffee, pineapple, candied grapefruit, a hint of apricot and smoke. The wine is delicately smooth and fully juicy as plenty of ripe and a touch of exotic fruits bring Auslese presence and intensity to the whole structure. With air, the finish develops a quite racy and mouthcleaning acidity, and there is quite some refreshing complexity in the after-taste. This is a very good fruity Riesling which could well turn out as superb at maturity if it gains in finesse. 2027-2042

2015er	Ernst Baltes	Ayler Riesling Fass 3 N°2	02 16	89
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The 2015er Ayler Fass 3, which carries the N°2 on the label, is made from clean grapes harvested in the main hill of the Ayler Kupp and the Rauberg side hill and was fermented down to 13 g/l of residual sugar. This offers a quite aromatic and rich nose of canned yellow peach, pineapple juice, almond cream, green apple, minty herbs and spices. The wine is nicely juicy, creamy and fruity on the palate, whereas the finish already shows superb signs of freshness with candied citrus, grapefruit and minty herbs. This needs another couple of years to further integrate its light touch of residual sugar. 2020-2030



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2017er	Ernst Baltes	Ayler Riesling Trocken N°2	02 18	89
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The 2017er Ayler Trocken, which carries the N°2 on the label, was harvested from clean grapes in the main hill of the Ayler Kupp and the Scheidterberg and Rauberg side hill and was fermented down to 8 g/l of residual sugar. The nose directly catches one's attention as powerful notes of lime, grapefruit, fresh pineapple, smoke, anise, spices and herbs burst out of the glass. The wine is driven by flavors of pear, citrus and grapefruit on the powerful and intense palate. The finish is very long and punchy, yet also slightly hot (the wine does have 13% of alcohol) and quite tart. This needs another year in the bottle to tame its intensity and will then best be enjoyed with food for lovers of aromatic and powerful dry Riesling. 2019-2022

2015er	Ernst Baltes	Saarburger Kupp Riesling Spätlese N°3	03 16	88+
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The 2015er Saarburger Kupp Spätlese, which carries the N°3 on the label, is made from selections of ripe berries including a small percentage of botrytis harvested on 80 year-old vines and was fermented down to fully fruity levels at 64 g/l of residual sugar. This is quite reductive at first and still marked by SO₂. After some extensive airing, the nose delivers a ripe and fruity nose of guava, apricot, pineapple, canned peach, pear and melon. The palate is all about a nice creamy and honeyed structure. At this stage, the fine acidity only comes timidly through in the smooth and long finish. This will need quite time to come around its reduction and integrate its sugar, and there is upside potential. 2025-2035+

2017er	Ernst Baltes	Saar Riesling Feinherb N°1	01 18	88
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The 2017er Saar Feinherb, which carries the N°1 on the label, is made from grapes harvested in Ayl and Saarburg and was fermented down to 26 g/l of residual sugar. This initially comes over as quite bold as notes of wood fire, toffee and smoke dominate at first some more elegant scents of freshly cut herbs, canned yellow peach, quince and pear puree. The wine is quite intense on the palate as it shows ripe fruits as well as good structure and intensity. This all leads to a long, smoky and almost dry tasting finish. This needs extensive airing to show more refinement, so it is best left alone for another couple of years. 2020-2027

2016er	Ernst Baltes	Ayler Riesling Fass 3 N°2	02 17	88
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The 2016er Ayler Fass 3, which carries the N°2 on the label, is made from a selection of grapes harvested in the main hill of the Ayler Kupp and the Rauberg side hill and was fermented down to 14 g/l of residual sugar. A whiff of volatile pimps up the quite aromatic and pungent nose made of smoke, nutmeg, pine, roasted pineapple, toffee and prune. A nicely creamy side paired with quite some structure gives weight and presence to the wine on the palate, and this despite a comparably moderate 12% of alcohol. The finish shows more freshness with mint, herbs and spices, and is very long and intense. This will please lovers of more baroque wines and those partial to slightly more advanced and less fruit-driven flavors. Now-2023

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