Knoll, Sch□tt Gr□ner Veltliner Smaragd 2009 Wachau

19 May 2011 by Jancis Robinson

From €20.92, $44.50, 39.50 Swiss francs, £30 and 267 Danish krone

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Let us not forget just how tremendous the best Wachau winemakers such as Emmerich Knoll are and how brilliant their best wines are. Fortunately, we seem to have emerged from a period 10 years or so ago when they seemed to be competing to grow the ripest grapes and make the headiest wine. This topnotch Grüner Veltliner (13.5% alcohol) is beautifully balanced and would make the most delicious treat at the dinner table.

Emmerich Knoll, Schütt Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2009 Wachau is so complex - and is stuffed with the dill and white pepper notes that are so characteristic of Austria's signature grape when yields are limited and the grapes grown on a really interesting site such as this directly south-facing slope above the village of Oberloiben on the river Danube (see this detailed map) - that it deserves real attention. This is a wine well constituted for serving with even quite complicated food. No sipping aperitif, this.

Emmerich Knoll the third is one of the Wachau's nobility, the label (taken here from Cellartracker.com) one of the wine world's most eye-catchingly baroque. The family have 15 hectares of prime vineyard, planted mainly and equally with the two great grapes of Austria's most famous wine region, the Wachau. What I have been quite surprised by is how relatively easy it is to find this very smart wine.

I came across it when tasting a substantial range of new additions to the Fine Wine range of the UK's Majestic, who charge £30 a bottle for it. But when I investigated its listings on wine-searcher.com, I also found it in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands, the US, with several other British merchants by the case, as well of course as in Austria. It is least expensive in Germany and Austria but is not, in my view, ridiculously overpriced for a serious dry white wine that is already delicious but has real potential to age.

See, for example, the results of a blind comparison between mature Grüner Veltliners and some very smart white burgundies and top Chardonnays from around the world, published here way back in 2002 in Grüner Veltliner v Chardonnay - a knockout contest. Incidentally, and not irrelevantly, while searching for this old article I also came across another published in 2002 called Whatever happened to white burgundy?

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