It's Riesling Week

21 Jul 2011 by Tamlyn Currin

For those who didn't already know, Riesling Week starts tomorrow! Wines of Germany are, quite rightly, on a mission to change the perception of German wine. Jancis has, in her words, been banging this particular drum for a long time, and several people on our Members' forum feel quite passionately about the topic, as evidenced by Riesling – a niche product and What German wine have you drunk this week?.

Although this is the first Riesling Week to be celebrated in the UK, it's old hat in the US. In fact, they have not only had Riesling Week for the past six years but this year they get a whole '31 Days of Riesling', which started on 1 Jul 2011. Lucky you Statesiders! We are a little bit behind here.

Whether you are celebrating a week or a month of Riesling, this is the perfect excuse to dig out the gems in your cupboard or (if you've drunk them already) go shopping.

Wines of Germany UK lists a rather tempting line-up of participating UK restaurants and wine merchants on their website, a list which includes The Ledbury. It's worth noting that although not on their list, The Winery (Maida Vale, London) specialises in German wines, and Howard Ripley and OW Loeb have a very strong selection. The Wine Barn also has a best-kept secret stash of incredibly rare, often old, one-off bottles - it's worth contacting Iris Ellmann, who goes on treasure hunts round Germany to find them, if you want something extremely special.

Wines of Germany in the US has a spectacular list of restaurants involved in their 31 Days of Riesling, including starry names such as The French Laundry, Daniel and Per Se. They are also running it in conjunction with a much larger project called Summer of Riesling, which is the brainchild of Paul Grieco, co-owner of Hearth restaurant and Terroir wine bar in NYC. He's managed to get 150 top restaurants to feature three Rieslings by the glass all summer (along with balloons, stickers and t-shirts). C'mon, Brits! Why aren't we doing this too? (Although perhaps balloons, stickers and t-shirts might be a step too far for our stiff upper lips...)

What we do have is our very own Riesling Revolutionary. Having just launched his own website, 27-year-old Alex Down is on a one-man mission to convert the heathen. He's managed to garner video clips featuring Oz Clarke, Jancis and Kevin Zraly, along with his entry (on Riesling, naturally) for the Young Wine Writer of the Year 2010. Although the content is a little light at the moment, I am sure it will gather pace and fury. Bravo Alex!

JR.com is a wealth of information on Riesling. Instant expert has some background on the grape variety and the online *Oxford Companion to Wine* has no less than 187 entries related to this topic (type Riesling in the search box and select Oxford Companion from the drop-down list). Brian Croser recently wrote What makes great Riesling, and if you click on the Riesling tag or type Riesling into the site search you will find hundreds of articles devoted to the subject. For tasting notes on well over 6,000 Rieslings, go to our Tasting notes search and type Riesling in the search box, or go to Tasting articles by region and click on Germany to find the extensive tasting articles on this particular German speciality. To further whet your appetite, Richard Hemming has just got back from Alsace and will soon be reporting on his finds from that part of the Riesling world. I also have a rather special new Riesling to tell you about from South Africa, of all places (see Howard Booysen's pretty little Swartberg baby in Young guns blazing).

In the meantime, to get you started, below is a small selection of Rieslings that have starred most recently as a Wine of the week, and below those a few Rieslings from around the world that have won a place in our hearts this year (although there are many, many more). To find out who stocks these wines, click on the Find this wine link that appears in each article or tasting note.

Wines of the week
Hugel, Jubilee Riesling 2005 Alsace
Robert Weil, Kiedrich Turmberg Riesling trocken 2009 Rheingau
Flick, Hochheimer Hölle Riesling Spätlese trocken 2009 Rheingau
Van Volxem Riesling 2008/2009 Saar
Dry River, Craighall Riesling 2008 Martinborough
Grosset, Polish Hill Riesling 2009 Clare Valley

Jacob's Creek, Reserve Riesling 2009 South Australia

Our round-the-world highlights

Sybille Kuntz, Gold-Quadrat Riesling Spätlese trocken 2009 Mosel
Emrich-Schönleber, Monzinger Halenberg Riesling Auslese 2009 Nahe
Bassermann-Jordan, Deidesheimer Kieselberg Riesling Beerenauslese 2001 Pfalz
Franz Künstler, Kostheimer Weiss Erd Riesling Erstes Gewächs 2009 Rheingau
Wittmann, Westhofener Brunnenhäuschen Riesling Grosses Gewächs 2009 Rheinhessen
M Chapoutier, Schieferkopf, Lieu-Dit Fels Riesling 2009 Alsace
Weinbach, Faller & Filles, Schlossberg Cuvée Ste Catherine L'Inédit Riesling 2009 Alsace Grand Cru
Bründlmayer, Zöbinger Heiligenstein Riesling 2008 Kamptal
F X Pichler, Unendlich Riesling 2005 Wachau
Larry Cherubino, The Yard Panoo Vineyard Riesling 2009 Porongurup
McGuigan, The Shortlist Riesling 2005 Eden Valley
Ch Ste Michelle, Waussie Limited Release Riesling 2009 Columbia Valley
Staete Landt Riesling Auslese 2008 Marlborough