

## Riesling Crawl Answers

### Fritz Favorule

#### 1. If you were hanging off a cliff with nary a chance of survival, which grape would offer the best chance of rescue and why: Riesling or Chardonnay?

So how did I get here? Hanging off a cliff, five fingers from certain death? Last thing I remembered was crawling through Brooklyn looking for Rieslings – on tap no less! Now I have two grapes in front of me, some whacko Italian restaurateur screaming “Pick one!” and time and fingers running out. Oops, four fingers.

Enough. Let’s get existential and deal with this. Thanks to signs behind each, I know one is Chardonnay, the other Riesling. Down below I see two Google Maps icons, marked “R” and “C.” Great, pick a grape and get free directions to life’s terminus. Only three fingers.

If I pick the Chard, what do I get for my last wish? A broad, inoffensive, fruit without any strong flavor of its own? A wishy-washy morsel that will bend and hue to whatever garagista wannabe is crushing it? The damn thing is an empty headed blonde.

At least Riesling has backbone, some pride in its hood/ terroir. It tells *you* how it will taste. Minerality, acidity, passion! Put some rocks in my glass and let’s get stoned. I am Riesling, hear me roar.

Calm down, one finger left.

That’s great, but doesn’t really help, does it? However looking below, I see someone next to each marker. Next to C is... Robert Parker! Arms outstretched, saying “I’ll catch you.” Next to R is a big net and... OMG! It’s Queen Sonja - holding a glass of a QmP TBA. Duh! Give me that Riesling and off we go!

**2. Germany is the home of Riesling and is considered by many to be the finest practitioner of the dark arts of the Riesling grape. Austria is relatively new to the pantheon of great Riesling expression. And Alsace rests comfortably and confidently in the middle, at least stylistically. Please differentiate the Riesling expressions between these three giants of the wine world.**

From the Yankee's corporate pinstripes to the passion of Red Sox Nation with small-market Minnesota in between. The ascetic beauty of a Calvin Kline sheath passing a Mizrahi/Target dress before settling into a Buatta Chintz sofa. Vampires who... stop! I refuse to succumb to the momentary cultural popularity and creative vacuity of vampires. Too easy, plus trendy is the antithesis of Riesling.

Anyway, you get the point – Germany-Alsace-Austria, left-center-right (right-center-left?). Germany's steep hillsides give you aromatic elegance, delicate fruit, botrytis and refreshing acidity. Want high alcohol and definitive structure? Adios. Germany is soft florals, emotion and gothic script.

Austria is at the other end. Drier, fuller bodied with lots of minerality and acidity, their Rieslings have a racier character and enough structure for a skyscraper. But if you want sugar, add two cubes of your own. Imagine Jeremy Irons in that S&M movie, sexy but extreme.

As for Alsace, welcome to Middle Earth. Alsace is fully ripened fruit turning to alcohol. It's the Vosges' granite producing a rich, medium bodied wine of elegance and grace. Alsace is the French making a German wine. It's Olivier Humbrecht making women swoon when his accent pronounces the phrase "bee-o dee-na-mic."

But the past is past and not the future. Micro climates and terroir aside, many wines are converging in a compromise of economics. Germany is becoming drier. Alsace is becoming sweeter. Rieslings are moving from unique styles rooted in their roots, to muddled styles rooted in the marketplace. And that would really suck.

PS Gentlemen,

Hope you enjoyed my Riesling Crawl answers, witty yet informative, no? I tried to follow your instructions carefully, even talking a pot-shot at Mr. Grieco. I would have done more but for the very fat and juicy target of Mr. Flaherty. Here is a well meaning, studied man requesting, even imploring the use of proper grammar and punctuation. And what do we get – "practitioner?" C'mon Paul, I can understand not knowing the correct spelling, but at least turn the spell-check switch to "on." Of course, I guess that is to be expected given your judging committee members. Next time, get a grammar expert to help. Why not try that guy William STRUNK Jr.? You know, the CO-author of *The Elements of Style*? Jeez - though I will give you partial credit for effort.

On another more serious matter, I have to say the crawl was great fun. And whether or not I win, you have certainly spread the gospel to at least one person. I dragged my girlfriend Lynn on several of these pilgrimages, she being an acolyte of the ABC school of wine – Always Buttery Chardonnay. Well, last week she is out with her gal pals when one of them puts a glass of white in front of her, saying "Try this. I just love it." Lynn, now properly indoctrinated in wine manners, swirls, sniffs and tastes and then announces "I love Rieslings!" astounding her friends as well as somewhat herself. When asked how she knew she said "The apricots and petrol on the nose." Ya gotta love it.

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