

# My Favorite Riesling Volume 8.

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## **RIESLING, *KAPPELWEG*, ROLLY GASSMANN, 2004, ALSACE**

WELL-KNOWN MODERN ALSATIAN WINEMAKERS LIKE MARCELL DEISS AND ZIND-HUMBRECHT MAKE EXPLOSIVE, HIGH-IMPACT, HIGH-RESIDUAL SUGAR WINES. THEIR WINES ARE CONSISTENTLY PRAISED AND REWARDED. WHILE THIS STYLE IS VERY MUCH IN VOGUE, ROLLY GASSMANN (WHO HAS NO *GRAND-CRU* SITES) HAS BEEN MAKING WINES SINCE THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY THAT ARE STYLISTICALLY COMPARABLE TO THE MODERN ALSATIAN MASTERS.

WITHOUT THE STAR-POWER OF MARCEL DEISS OR ZIND-HUMBRECHT, ROLLY GASSMANN PRODUCES WINES THAT ARE A BALANCED EXPRESSION OF SWEETNESS, BODY, AND ACIDITY. IF THOSE THREE THINGS COULD BE REPRESENTED VISUALLY, THEY'D BE A PERFECT EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE. WITH THE CLASSIC ALSATIAN RIESLING FLAVORS OF CANNED PEACHES, GOLDEN DELICIOUS APPLES, GINGER AND ELDERFLOWER, AND A FINISH THAT CLEANSSES WITH MINERALITY AND STONINESS, ROLLY GASSMANN WINES ARE A FINE BRIDGE BETWEEN TRADITION AND THE HIGH-IMPACT MODERN STYLE. BUT REALLY, THEY'RE JUST DAMN DELICIOUS.

I DISCOVERED ROLLY GASSMANN WINES IN 2007 WHEN I MET YVES GASSMANN IN RORSCHWIHR, ALSACE AT THE THEIR TASTING ROOM, WHICH IS INSIDE THE BACK OF A CHURCH MONASTERY. MONASTERIES IN ALSACE ARE AS PREVALENT AS STARBUCKS IN MIDTOWN MANHATTAN, SO THE TASTING ROOM LOCATION WAS AN AUTHENTIC TOUCH. ROLLY GASSMANN'S VINEYARDS ARE IN RORSCHWIHR AND BERGHEIM AND ARE LIMESTONE AND MARL-HEAVY. LIKE MANY ALSATIAN PRODUCERS, ROLLY GASSMANN USES BIO-DYNAMIC PRACTICES, BUT IS NOT CERTIFIED BIO-DYNAMIC.

WITH HIS BROKEN ENGLISH, YVES GUIDED ME THROUGH THEIR ENTIRE PORTFOLIO. ROLLY GASSMANN TYPICALLY HOLDS THEIR WINES FOR RELEASE LONGER THAN MANY ALSATIAN WINEMAKERS, SO THE CURRENT-RELEASE TASTING INCLUDED WINES THAT HAD MORE AGE ON THEM THAN WINES FROM COMPARABLE HOUSES. YVES SUGGESTED TO ME THAT THE SOIL COMPOSITION THERE CAUSES THE RESIDUAL SUGAR IN THEIR WINES TO DOMINATE FOR SOME TIME AFTER BOTTLING. AS A *SOLUTION* TO THIS, THEY CELLAR THEIR WINES LONGER, IN AN ATTEMPT TO TEMPER AND SUBDUCE THE NATURAL SWEETNESS. BECAUSE OF THIS COMMITMENT TO AGING THE WINES LONGER, ROLLY GASSMANN WINES DRINK WELL WITH SOME SERIOUS VINTAGE ON THEM. YVES ALSO SHOWED ME BOTTLES CELLARED FROM THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY THAT HE BELIEVED COULD BENEFIT FROM MORE AGE AND NEED TO "SLEEP LONGER". IN FACT, YVES SAID THAT ABOUT EVERY WINE WE TASTED. IMAGINE THAT. FOR RIESLING!