10-Years-After Retrospective: 2008 Fruity / Sweet Wines Today – Ripe Racy Classicism

While the 2007-2006-2005 trio was about sweet wines, 2008 is about fruity Kabinett and Spätlese
The three vintages before 2008, namely 2007, 2006 and 2005, are all modern-day remakes of some of the greatest ever vintages in the Mosel, respectively the 1953, the 1949 and the 1959 (readers will find a detailed account in the Mosel Fine Wines Issues No 34, 30 and 27). The legendary status of the 1953-1949-1959 trio was essentially defined through their sweet wines and this was also the case for the 2007-2006-2005 trilogy. 2008 is fully complementary to this. As we reported early on, the sweet spot of the vintage are the lightly fruity-styled wines, i.e. Kabinett and Spätlese. While the finest do not have the depth and complexity of some of the greatest wines from the 1990s, they are the closest examples to those vintages. This is also reflected in our highlights, which are heavily tilted towards Kabinett and Spätlese wines. This does not mean that 2008 is a write-off for sweet wines. 2008 proved a great vintage for Eiswein and yielded a few stunning Auslese made from highly selected fruit (and hence usually auction bottlings or equivalent). The issue is not quality, it is quantity. Hardly any of these sweet gems was produced.

2008 has developed into a bigger and ripper version of the 1998, the under-rated vintage from the 1990s, with some of the structure of the 1988. Stylistically, the cooler 2008 vintage actually turned out more varied than one may have expected early on. Some wines are simply racy, with the lemon, orchard fruits, mint and cassis side of the greater wines from the 1998 or the 1988 vintages. Other wines, in turn, prove quite ripe and remind us more of 2002 or 2000. The fact that there was some sunburn during the summer and that the grapes enjoyed a quite long hang time comes through in the style. Even in the best wines, the acidity is balanced by a slightly ripe side which we also often find in the 1998 vintage. However, the slender body, racy acidity and ripe fruit make the finest fruity wines from 2008 completely irresistible. If there is one weakness of the vintage, one would put it to a certain lack of depth which make out the truly finest wines. But this is really nitpicking, as we thoroughly enjoyed doing these tastings and would happily start again anytime!

Overall, Mosel has the edge over Saar and Ruwer, with a few Estates producing some of their finest collections ever. The vintage has clearly favored the Mosel, as it suited better the required ripeness of acidity. There are however true gems in the Saar and Ruwer (Geltz-Zilliken and von Schubert did produce some stunning Eiswein and Spätlese), yet these are not widespread. In the Mosel, the success was much more consistent. Four Estates stand out for the sheer quality of their collection: Schloss Lieser, Markus Molitor, Willi Schaefer and Weiser-Künstler. The density of quality at these Estates in 2008 is remarkable. But also other Estates produced some stunning successes. Let us mention the superb Auslese from the Goldtröpfchen by Reinhold Haart and the stunning Spätlese from the Prälat by the now defunct Weingut Dr. F. Weins-Prüm. But also Matthias Knebel produced a stunning Spätlese in 2008 as did the Merkelbach brothers.

Most of the wines are starting to become enjoyable now. Unlike 2007, 2006 and 2005, which were rich and ripe vintages, 2008 starts now to be quite fun to enjoy. Only some bigger Auslese or auction Spätlese can still prove on the reductive side. While most wines can be enjoyed now, most have just started to open up. We would always opt to open the 2008s well in advance in order to give them time to gain from airing. In fact, we have been doing these extensive retrospectives now since 10 years, there were few occasions were the wines were so much fun to taste than for the 2008 vintage.

A look back to finish: We were quite upbeat about the vintage when young … about it turned even better than in our dreams. 2008 was the first vintage which we covered in full details and, of course, we had a look back at how our expectations have materialized. Despite being among the most optimistic critiques regarding the potential of the 2008 vintage, we still underestimated it. Readers who have followed our advice back in 2009 are therefore in for even better wines than what they could expect!
10-Years-After Retrospective: 2008 Fruity / Sweet Vintage Highlights

### 2008 Vintage Highlights – Sweet and Noble Sweet Wines *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Wine Type</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Geltz-Zilliken</td>
<td>Saarburger Rausch Riesling Eiswein</td>
<td>01 09</td>
<td>Auction 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Fritz Haag</td>
<td>Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese GK #13</td>
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<td>Auction 96</td>
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<td>Willi Schaefer</td>
<td>Graacher Domprobst Riesling Auslese</td>
<td>11 09</td>
<td>Auction 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Reinhold Haart</td>
<td>Piesporter Goldtröpfchen Riesling Auslese</td>
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<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>von Schubert</td>
<td>Maximin Grünhäuser Herrenberg Riesling Eiswein</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Knebel</td>
<td>Winninger Röttgen Riesling Beerenauslese</td>
<td>16 09</td>
<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Schloss Lieser</td>
<td>Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Auslese GK</td>
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<td>94</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Markus Molitor</td>
<td>Zeltinger Schlossberg Riesling Auslese ** (Golden Label)</td>
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<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Schloss Lieser</td>
<td>Brauneberger Juffer-Sonnenuhr Riesling Spätlese</td>
<td>13 09</td>
<td>Auction 93+</td>
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</table>

* Mainly Auslese GK and upwards but also any Spätlese or Auslese if it is an Auslese GK in all but name.

### 2008 Vintage Highlights – Fruity Wines **

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Wine Type</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Erdener Prätzel Riesling Spätlese</td>
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<td>Weisser-Künstler</td>
<td>Enkircher Ellergrub Riesling Kabinett</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Ayler Kupp Riesling Spätlese Alte Reben</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>Brauneberger Juffer Riesling Spätlese *</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

** Mainly Kabinett and Spätlese but also any Auslese if it particularly light and elegant in style.
10-Years-After Retrospective: 2008 – Tasting Notes ( Mosel )

We had the opportunity to re-taste 100 Mosel Riesling from the 2008 vintage over the last few weeks. Besides Mosel wines, we also included some tasting notes from other regions in Germany as additional reference points in a separate section.

A.J. Adam
Bastgen
Blees-Ferber
Clemens Busch
Jos. Christoffel jr.
Stephan Ehlen
Karl Erbes
Geltz-Zilliken
Fritz Haag
Reinhold Haart
Dr. Hermann
Karlsmühle
Karthäuserhof
Kees-Kieren
von Kesselstatt
Knebel
Le Gallais
Peter Lauer
Schloss Lieser
Dr. Lippold
Loersch
Meulenhof
Merkelbach
Markus Molitor
Egon Müller
von Othegraven
Joh. Jos. Prüm
S.A. Prüm
Johann Peter Reinert
Max Ferd. Richter
Josef Rosch
Willi Schaefler
von Schubert – Maximin Grünhaus
Schwaab-Dietz
Günter Steinmetz
St. Urbans-Hof
Wwe Dr. H. Thanisch - Erben Thanisch
Van Volxem
Vollenweider
Wegeler
Dr. F. Weins-Prüm
Weiser-Künstler

Neumagen-Dhron
Osann-Monzel
Leiwen
Pünderich
Ürzig
Erden
Saarburg
Brauneberg
Piesport
Erden
Mertesdorf
Eitelsbach
Graach
Morschel
Wingen
Ayl
Lieser
Ürzig
Wehlen
Kanzem
Kanzem
Wehlen
Metteltracht
Leiwen
Graach
Ürzig
Sünderich
Brauneberg
Morscheid
Wehlen
Kanzem
Kanzem
Wehlen

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Weingut Egon Müller zu Scharzhof
(Wiltingen – Saar)

2008er Egon Müller Scharzhofberger Riesling Spätlese 04 09 91+

This Scharzhofberger Spätlesse AP 4 (there were two different bottlings made in 2008) offers a rather reduced nose of grapefruit, lemon, lemon grass, licorice and herbs. The wine is still quite backward on the palate, where the acidity adds structure and focus to the wine. The finish is still remarkably abrupt and almost non-saying. This still needs quite some years to develop its full balance. 2023-2038

Weingut von Othegraven
(Kanzem – Saar)

2008er von Othegraven Ockfener Bockstein Riesling Spätlese 16 09 Auction 92

This offers a superbly complex nose mixing ripe yellow peach, grapefruit, earl grey and a touch of quince with fresher scents of flinty smoke, flowers and herbs. The wine feels quite youthful and the fruit sweetness and creaminess give it real Auslese presence. A superbly integrated acidity cleanses the palate and gives quite some freshness to the finish. The after-taste is very persistent and full of lime and spices. Now-2033

Weingut Joh. Jos. Prüm
(Wehlen – Middle Mosel)

2008er Joh. Jos. Prüm Graacher Himmelreich Riesling Auslese 05 09 92

This bright-colored Auslese offers a beautiful nose of pear, licorice, herbs and fine spices. The wine proves beautifully balanced on the palate and leaves an elegant and playful silky feel in the long and beautifully smooth finish. This is a textbook Auslese by JJ Prüm which now starts to be extremely nice to taste. Now-2033


This offers a gorgeous nose of white peach, minty herbs and fine spices all wrapped into some bacon infused notes from residues of spontaneous fermentation. The wine is beautifully light and balanced on the palate and leaves an airy and superbly lively feel of herbs, white flowers and fine spices in the long finish. What a gorgeously beautiful Kabinett to drink mindlessly on a sunny day! Now-2038


This bright-colored wine develops a delicately ripe yet youthful nose of pear, white flowers, bacon (from reduction), fine herbs, licorice and spices. The wine proves delicately smooth and creamy, with rather moderate and well-integrated acidity on the palate. The finish has the complex delicacy of an Auslese with the refined playful side of a Spätlesse. Now-2033


Reductive notes of sulfur only gradually give way to superb notes of grapefruit, minty herbs, smoke, grilled pineapple, almond cream and a hint of mango. While the nose is more reminiscent of a Spätlesse, the palate clearly offers the full smooth and creamy presence of an Auslese. This is only timidly freshened up by some earthy spices in the finish at this stage. This still needs a couple of years to shed some of its reduction and develop its full complex potential. 2023-2038


Signs of reduction (struck match) give way to superbly floral nuances, yellow peach, smoke, almond cream, and minty herbs after airing. The wine is beautifully balanced on the palate with juicy yellow fruits, peach, guava and a hint of melon. The finish is delicately smooth and long. This still needs a few couple of years to shed its reductive side and fully shine. 2023-2038