

## Stephen Tanzer's Wine Cellar Nov/Dec 2003

Prager, Weissenkirchen. Toni Bodenstein's riverside home and winery were inundated in the summer of 2002. Replacements and renovations (including some improvements to gravity feed and gentler handling of fruit and young wine) had proceeded to remarkable degree by the time I visited, but the more lasting effects of massive erosion and nearly 100 collapsed stone abutments- above all in the great, steep Achleiten and Klaus vineyards- are neither measurable nor reparable in the short term. Nevertheless, it was impossible for Bodenstein to suppress his inherent optimism, and the collection he bottled this year offered sufficient grounds for an upbeat attitude. (Vin Divino)

**2002 Grüner Veltliner Federspiel Hinter der Burg (\$23):** Fine green herbs, roasted beets and peppery mineral nuances in the aroma. Subtle brothy, herbal flavours and a silken patina; starting to hint at creaminess yet delicate, clear and bright in the finish, with an expressive dash of white pepper. As fine a Grüner Veltliner Federspiel as I can recall at this estate. Potential 2 stars.

**2002 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Weitenberg (\$38):** Lime, black fruits and sea salt in the nose. Subtly creamy and relatively gentle yet clear and bright for all that. Subtle saltiness clings in a creamy, refreshing, strikingly long finish. As a rule of thumb. The chalkier the soil, the more fruit-dominated the wine, Bodenstein maintains, citing Weitenberg and Hinter der Burg as examples. Potential 2 stars.

**2002 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Zwerithaler (\$41):** Pepper and iron-filing pungency in the nose. Ripe and juicy in the mouth but with a touch of (perhaps just youthful) angularity. Finishes strongly, with flavours of lentil. Lemon, sweet roasted red peppers and subtly pungent mineral suggestions. This is from 55- year -old vines in a parcel next to and geologically akin to the Klaus. 1 star.

**2002 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Achleiten (\$41):** Expressive but subtle aromas of lentil. Citrus and pit fruits. In the mouth nut oils, roasted lentil and a riesling- like suggestion of apricot and apricot pit. Creamy and polished in texture and with very clear, long finish mingling nut oils, apricot, and a hint of coffee. The more typical overtly wit stone minerality of the site is covered over by the wealth of fruit and sweet nuttiness, but rest assured such rarefied, subtle fruit expression is only possible given appropriately stony foundations, 2 stars.

**2002 Riesling Federspiel Steinriegl (\$30):** Lime, mint gooseberry nut oil aromas give this Riesling a startlingly sauvignon -like presence. A quite brothy richness in the mouth with salty accents suggests a dominance of mineral elements. In the intense finish, gooseberry returns, along with mineral salts and a green tomato jelly note. Very much „green“ wine without being at all under ripe. Fascinating Riesling one wants to take immediately to the kitchen. 1 star.

**2002 Riesling Smaragd Hollerin (\$44):** Apple blossom, subtle lemon zest and site-typical black fruit notes in the nose. Purple plum character on the palate. Silky and refined, with a pure balance of plum, citrus and mineral salts in the finish. Not the last word in complexity but beautifully poised and lang. 1 star.

**2002 Riesling Smaragd Kaiserberg (\$45):** Smoked meat and yellow plum on the nose. Fascinatingly smoky, meaty concentration on the palate, with a marrow, fatty suggestion pf deep richness. Sweet herbal nuances waft throughout. Like some exotic oriental soup. Long herbal and mineral traces. 1 star.

**2002 Riesling Smaragd Klaus (\$49):** Low-keyed, dusty mineral notes in the nose. Luscious and fat in the mouth, with an almost syrupy suggestion of pit fruits, but then it takes a stony turn and ends on a long interplay of plum fruit and adamant minerality. There is an abundance of material here that needs time to express itself. Potential 2 stars.

**2002 Riesling Smaragd Achleiten (\$49):** Lemon, apricot tangerine and iris bouquet. Lovely interchange of fruits, florals and wet slate and mineral salts in the best manner of this great site. Offers faintly creamy textural suggestions yet all the while the acids give this clarity, cut and lift. Delicate and refined yet long. Finishing with persistent flavours of apricot, flowers and minerals. 2 stars.

**2002 Riesling Smaragd Wachstum Toni Bodenstein (\$51):** Apple and linden blossom in the nose. Sweet floral perfume, vanilla and tiny-berry concentration of pit fruits and honey make for an extraordinary palate impression. Creamy in texture yet bracing, with a rich sweetly suggestive yet vibrant finish, 2 stars. Also recommended: 2002 Riesling Smaragd Steinriegl

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**Weitenberg (\$38):** Lime, black fruits and sea salt in the nose. Subtly creamy and relatively gentle yet clear and bright for all that. Subtle saltiness clings in a creamy, refreshing, strikingly long finish. "As a rule of thumb, the chalkier the soil, the more fruit-dominated the wine," Bodenstein maintains, citing Weitenberg and Hinter der Burg as examples. Potential 2 stars. **2002 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd**

**Zwerghaler (\$41):** Pepper and iron-filing pungency in the nose. Ripe and juicy in the mouth but with a touch of (perhaps just youthful) angularity. Finishes strongly, with flavors of lentil, lemon, sweet roasted red peppers and subtly pungent mineral suggestions. This is from 55-year-old vines in a parcel next to and geologically akin to the Klaus. 1 star. **2002 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Achleiten (\$41):**

Expressive but subtle aromas of lentil, citrus and pit fruits. In the mouth, nut oils, roasted lentil and a riesling-like suggestion of apricot and apricot pit. Creamy and polished in texture and with a very clear, long finish mingling nut oils, apricot, and a hint of coffee. The more typical overtly wet stone minerality of the site is covered over by the wealth of fruit and sweet nuttiness, but rest assured such rarified, subtle fruit expression is only possible given appropriately stony foundations. 2 stars. **2002 Riesling Federspiel Steinriegl (\$30):**

Lime, mint, gooseberry and nut oil aromas give this riesling a startlingly sauvignon-like presence. A quite brothy richness in the mouth with salty accents suggests a dominance of mineral elements. In the intense finish, gooseberry returns, along with mineral salts and a green tomato jelly note. Very much "green" wine without being at all underripe. Fascinating riesling one wants to take immediately to the kitchen. 1 star. **2002 Riesling Smaragd Hollerin (\$44):**

Apple blossom, subtle lemon zest and site-typical black fruit notes in the nose. Purple plum character on the palate. Silky and refined, with a pure balance of plum, citrus and mineral salts in the finish. Not the last word in complexity but beautifully poised and long. 1 star. **2002 Riesling Smaragd Kaiserberg (\$45):** Smoked meat and yellow plum on the nose. Fascinatingly smoky, meaty concentration on the palate, with a narrow, fatty suggestion of deep richness. Sweet herbal nuances waft throughout. Like some exotic oriental soup. Long herbal and mineral traces. 1 star. **2002 Riesling Smaragd Klaus**

**(\$49):** Low-keyed, dusty mineral notes in the nose. Luscious and fat in the mouth, with an almost syrupy suggestion of pit fruits, but then it takes a stony turn and ends on a long interplay of plum fruit and adamant minerality. There is an abundance of material here that needs time to express itself. Potential 2 stars. **2002 Riesling Smaragd**

**Achleiten (\$49):** Lemon, apricot, tangerine and iris bouquet. Lovely interchange of fruits, florals and wet slate and mineral salts in the best manner of this great site. Offers faintly creamy textural suggestions yet all the while the acids give this clarity, cut and lift. Delicate and refined yet long, finishing with persistent flavors of apricot, flowers and minerals. 2 stars. **2002 Riesling Smaragd Wachstum Toni**

**Bodenstein (\$51):** Apple and linden blossom in the nose. Sweet floral perfume, vanilla and tiny-berry concentration of pit fruits and honey make for an extraordinary palate impression. Creamy in texture yet bracing, with a rich, sweetly suggestive yet vibrant finish. 2 stars. **Also recommended:** 2002 Riesling Smaragd Steinriegl.

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