

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Zwerithaler

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 90

Drink -

Cost: \$66

Bodenstein's 2007 Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Zwerithaler comes from another site planted with old vines of diverse clonal origin and condition. "You can't really call it a vineyard," he says, "more like a hospital ward!" Persimmon, beet root, brown spices, and white pepper run all the way through this darkly-hued, bone dry (1.5 gram residual sugar) Veltliner. Smoky notes and subtle but insistent fruit skin tartness invigorate, and a palpable sense of extract puts an impressive, stony floor beneath the flavors, leading to a long, pepper and crushed stone dusted finish. I suspect this will be worth hanging on to for 6-8 years at least. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation.

Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Federspiel Hinter Der Burg

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 90

Drink 2009 - 2013

Cost: \$30

The 2007 Gruner Veltliner Federspiel Hinter der Burg (at only 12.3% in alcohol) is dominated by lentil and herbs; subtly creamy and glossy in texture yet refreshing, with pepper, beet root, coffee, and wet stone in a long finish. This impeccably balanced Federspiel – not picked until well after the middle of October, incidentally – will prove versatile over the next 3-4 years at least. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Achleiten Wachstum Bodenstein

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from , Weissenkirchen, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 93

Drink -

Cost:

The 2007 Gruner Veltliner Wachstum Toni Bodenstein represents the first harvest from un-irrigated high terraces – until recently scrub and woods – in Achleiten (to be labeled as such next vintage) that Bodenstein densely-planted with more than 120 different clones and selections from all over the region, and which are being trained to single posts in the ancient manner (“Stockkultur”). Pungent orange zest, rhubarb, tobacco, and wood smoke mingle with roasted pumpkin and toasted nuts on a strikingly creamy, yet also sappy and invigoratingly juicy palate. For all of its concentration, and palpable sense of extract, this finishes with remarkable levity and elegance, not to mention length. At 14.2%, this is the highest in alcohol of any of this year’s collection, yet there is no taste-able trace. It also had very low acidity (with the result that even its very slight residual sugar legally disqualified it for Smaragd), and that, too, is not noticeable as any deficiency. Who knows how it will age – but why not let it try for a decade (if you can locate any)? This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn’t risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Achleiten Stockkultur

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from , Weissenkirchen, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 92

Drink -

Cost: \$78

The 2007 Gruner Veltliner Achleiten Stockkultur – technically halbtrocken (and thus, not Smaragd) – was low in acid last year, then turned around and exhibited the highest acidity of any Gruner Veltliner in this year’s collection. As Bodenstein points out, he didn’t go to the enormous effort of reviving this genetically diverse collection of ancient vines (detailed in issue 177) anticipating predictable results, on the contrary, he did it in order to be amazed – and this wine amazes! Lime and rhubarb inform a sappy, bright, pungent palate with smoky toasted nut, bitter coffee, and wet stone low tones. This is opulent in texture yet bright, and practically savage and unruly compared to the Wachstum Bodenstein bottling, finishing with a near landslide of low-toned and mineral characteristics. More impressive than it is fun to drink for now, it deserves to be re-visited within the year and probably has a decade’s aging potential. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn’t risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation.

Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Liebenberg

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from , Weissenkirchen, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 91

Drink 2009 - 2016

Cost: \$62

New to the Prager collection is a 2007 Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Liebenberg, from 50 year old vines in a mica-schist site, with a genetic diversity and around 25% pole-trained vines – a sure sign of generations of genuine vine selection that sparked Bodenstein’s imagination. Pungent lemon and grapefruit zest, persimmon, and a salinity that begins already in the nose, offer contrast to this wine’s honeyed, nut oil, and ripe peach richness. Polished and refined, with an oily slick and pungent spice that point toward botrytis, this finishes with impressive clarity a positively sizzling counterpoint of pepper and shimmering, crystalline minerality (metaphorically, at least!), with citrus and ripe peach. For all of its richness and pungency, it displays graceful elegance and levity, tinged with faint warmth. This should be worth following for at least 5-7 years. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn’t risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Weissenkirchen Achleiten

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from , Weissenkirchen, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 91

Drink 2009 - 2018

Cost: \$58-\$70

The Prager 2007 Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Achleiten features a Chenin-like citrus oils, quince, and stone interplay, a broth-like suffusion of mineral character, and finishes with added notes of mint and coffee. As with the Zwerithaler, relatively low acidity lends itself to a low-toned cast, yet this finishes very clear, with some of the dynamic pure fruit and mineral interplay such as one has come to expect from this great site. It should be worth following for 7-9 years. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Weissenkirchen Weitenberg

A Gruner Veltliner Dry White Table wine from , Weissenkirchen, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 89

Drink -

Cost: \$58

The Prager 2007 Gruner Veltliner Smaragd Weitenberg leads with high-toned distilled pit fruit esters and snap pea aromas, segueing into a glossy, richly fruited palate, all of which seems to be typical for this clay-rich, water-retentive site. Melon liqueur laced with grapefruit zest and herbs make for a lush, yet at the same time invigorating impression. It's hard to think about cellaring any wine this forward, but I suspect 4-5 years would do absolutely no harm. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Federspiel Steinriegl

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 87

Drink 2009 - 2011

Cost: \$30

The Prager 2007 Riesling Federspiel Steinriegl is one of those Rieslings from this vintage that seem to be reverting to its Muscat family roots, with pungent herbs and citrus zest in a pungent nose and bracing, tart palate. The finish here – aside from its pungency and citric sass – seems poised between stony and metallic. It won't make you forget last year's – more like long for it – and I would plan to utilize this with appropriately fresh, high acid dishes over the coming 18-24 months. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Smaragd Achleiten

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 95

Drink 2009 - 2019

Cost: \$70

A site-typical concentration of fresh white peach, buddleia, iris, lime, and pungent mineral suggestions greets you from the glass of Bodenstein's 2007 Riesling Smaragd Achleiten. This also displays the amazing, Achleiten-typical interplay of pit fruit, citrus, nut oils, and stony, savory, mysteriously pungent elements that taste as though they must have been mined from the earth. A certain cool restraint, yet amazing subtle length puts me in mind of the supernal 1997, once that wine hit its stride. I would expect 8-10 years of wonder. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Smaragd Hollerin

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 90

Drink -

Cost: \$68

Here we go again: like last year's rendition (or this year's Kaiserberg) the Prager 2007 Riesling Smaragd Hollerin is so ester-rich it is almost spiritous in intensity, and marries a glossy, glycerin-rich palate of pit fruits, bitter blue and black fruits, pungent citrus oil, and bright lime citricity. In addition, there is a carnal, meaty, musky, saline and savory streak here that puts me in mind of red Burgundy or Jurancon. This wine is practically spooky, and should be a thrill to follow for at least 4-5 years, though whether it will achieve elegance and refinement I doubt. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation.

Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Smaragd Klaus

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 94

Drink -

Cost: \$66

The Prager 2007 Riesling Smaragd Klaus exhibits a saline, citric, bittersweet peach and peach pit melange that positively sticks to the gums. This brash, high-strung wine hasn't got the elegance of Achleiten, but time in bottle will bring some refinement. The finish here is exceptionally transparent, even if it's hard to express just what mineral stuff you are glimpsing. However else you describe it, this is classic Klaus. It reminds Bodenstein of his 1993, which when set alongside, even now tastes almost a bit too sassy and bright for its own good, and for my money (which it wasn't, I realize) not in the same league. Expect the 2007 to reward at least a decade's cellaring. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Smaragd Steinriegl

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 93

Drink -

Cost: \$65

Bodenstein's 2007 Riesling Smaragd Steinriegl certainly makes me believe in the power of suggestion (if not in any direct communication from rocks) because knowing that this site is unusual for its marble content, this is a metaphorically marble-lined wine if ever it existed: cool, polished, and mysteriously reflective of ripe melon and pit fruits, and shimmering with spice, pepper, and mineral pungency. Is it sticking to my tongue or my tongue to it? And talk about "extract sweetness" (as one is apt to do, in German anyway): this has it in spades. I'd plan to follow this for 6-8 years. Incidentally it was harvested mid-November, in what Bodenstein says was a rain-free week. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Smaragd Wachstum Bodenstein

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 95

Drink 2009 - 2019

Cost: \$78

Hyacinth, lime, honey, and white peach emanate from the glass of 2007 Riesling Smaragd Wachstum Toni Bodenstein. One sip will convince you that this sappy wine of enveloping richness could only come from an exceptional site. Furthermore, your powers of imagination would have to be dead, I suspect, not to start babbling about rocks and stones, because they seem to pave the bed on which this torrent of fruits and flowers flows. Suggestions of tart blueberry skin and pungent lime zest enliven a long, rich, buoyant finish. This harbors huge phenolic intensity yet is almost soothing in its opulence; is dense, yet refreshing. Follow it wherever it leads, for at least the next 8-10 years. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700

2007 Prager Riesling Smaragd Durnstein Kaiserberg

A Riesling Dry White Table wine from , Durnstein, Wachau, Niederosterreich, Austria,

Review by [David Schildknecht](#)

WA # , #181 (Feb 2009)

Rating: 89

Drink -

Cost: \$58

High-toned lemon oil, wood smoke, and distilled pit fruit esters emanate from the glass of Prager 2007 Riesling Smaragd Kaiserberg. This penetrates like a flying arrow, sleek and polished in texture but rather spare on the mid-palate, then leaving behind bright lime, mirabelle, blueberry, smoke, and wet stone. I cannot recall another Riesling Smaragd here this extreme, and wonder whether it will fill out with time, and how much time one might give it. This was one of our most expensive and laborious harvests ever, says Toni Bodenstein, adding that if the mere two bottlings he does of Federspiel had not this year represented a full 50% of his production, the attention and selectivity necessary for the quality of all the other wines would not have been possible. Bodenstein notes that he didn't risk long skin contact this year, as he did not want to risk losing tartaric acidity to precipitation. Importer: Vin Divino, Chicago, IL; tel. (773) 334-6700
