

SPERLING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sperling Vineyards, Kelowna BC, Canada

DECANTER 95 pts - Sperling Vineyards 2015 Old Vines Riesling Estate Bottled in Decanter Wine Awards 2019

Notes about the 2019 competition: 17,000 wines entered; 480 won gold medals.

From Canada there were 322 entries winning a total of 11 golds, however four of these were Icewines. Canadian non-icewines won a total of 7 golds, and Sperling Vineyards Old Vines Riesling 2015 was the only Gold medal winning still wine from British Columbia.

About Sperling Vineyards Old Vines Riesling

Long recognized as one of Kelowna's top vineyard sites, Sperling Vineyards Riesling Wies clone 21, one of the oldest plantings in Canada, was established in 1978. The 2018 vintage marked 40 years of fine Riesling growing on the family estate, on the limestone benches of Kelowna.

Past vintages have garnered international attention throughout the history of this fine winemaking family:

Vinous, Ian D'AGATA in November, 2017 ".....What I like most about the 2009 is its remarkable balance, and how young it still is...." (see full story attached) and

Decanter, Andrew Jefford in 2018 about the 2009: "...Behind the lime and apple folded together with honey and custard there was a bolt of acidity and a clean, pure and pristine edge..."(see full story attached)

This fine and age-worthy Old Vines Riesling is one of a few white wines included in "**Icon**", John Schreiner's collection of British Columbia's finest cellar-able flagship wines.

Here are some of the comments and reviews of previous vintages, all having garnered 92 to 94 pts:

Rick Vansickle about the 2014 – 94 pts.

..."among the top three tasted from Canada...A gorgeous and inviting lemon, lime, lanolin, gunflint minerality, bin apple, honey suckle and subtle sweet petrol notes emerging.... A truly wondrous Riesling."

BC Lieutenant Governor's 2018 Gold - 2014 Old Vines Riesling

David Lawrason about the 2011. 92 pts. (note – he also gave the 2010 92 pts.) This vintage delivers another riveting riesling from a 1.67 parcel of old vines planted on a southwest facing ridge in East Kelowna. When tasted beside the 2010 in the summer of 2012 it was more youthfully reserved with considerable grapefruit and lime on the nose and palate, but there is some pear, petrol and honey as well. It is mid-weight with great acid tension and energy. The length is excellent. Best 2013 through this decade. Tasted August 2012.

Canadian Wine Awards 2015 Gold - 2012 Old Vines Riesling.

About Sperling Vineyards:

“Sperling Vineyards has been four generations in the making:

1860s - land is cleared, settled and farm established

1920s - vines planted and vineyard established

1930s to today - commercial wine & table grape production

1978 - Riesling Weiss Family cl. 21 established

1980s - new plantings focus on vinifera varieties, particularly pinot varieties

2008 - family wine label and winemaking established

2015 - organic certification pursued

2017 - organic certification achieved

Through the vision and partnership of Ann and Susan Sperling, along with their husbands, Peter Gamble and Paul Richardson, the family lands and vines have become a vinous reality producing elegant wines of character.

Daily dedication to every task in the vineyard, winery and commercial operations is over-seen by niece-daughter Jill with her husband Rickard Branby.

The high elevation slopes and mineral rich soils on the east benches of Kelowna come to life via our old vines and carefully crafted wines.”

Limited Offer

To mark the 40 year history of fine Riesling grown on our family estate, we are making some very limited verticals available for a limited period:

Verticals Available:

“History Flight” 12 bottles spanning the history of Sperling Vineyards Old Vines Riesling \$575*

Includes: 2 x 2015; 2 x 2014; 1 each of 2016, 2017, 2018, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2009, plus 200 mL 2008 Icewine. 3 available.

“Tasting flight” 3 bottles each of 2015, 2014, 2013, 2012 Sperling Vineyards Old Vines Riesling \$475*

14 available

*no discounts, no substitutions

Representation:

Winery - Direct - info@sperlingvineyards.com

BC – Lower Mainland & Fraser Valley: Lifford

Brett LeBourveau - BrettL@lifford.com

Mark Shipway - MarkS@lifford.com

Susan Marquis - SusanM@lifford.com

BC - Victoria & Vancouver Island: Lifford

Corine Wood - corinew@lifford.com

BC – Interior - Cat & Co Wine Company

Cat Noer: catcowineagency@gmail.com

AB – Origo Wines Ltd.

Tonya Lailey: tonyalailey@gmail.com

ON – Cru Wine Merchants

David Foran: davidforan@cruwinemerchants.com

PQ – Delaney Vins & Spiritueux

Isaac Delaney: isaac@delaneyvs.ca

For more information or to arrange a tasting, please contact:

Ann Sperling: ann@sperlingvineyards.com

Jill Branby: jill@sperlingvineyards.com

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Andrew Jefford

'It's finally coming: the magic word "sec" on labels of Alsace wine'

WILL IT BE the recently harvested 2016 vintage? Or will it be 2017? We don't know yet, but it's finally coming: the magic word 'sec' (meaning 'dry') on labels of Alsace wine. As an obligation, not an option.

The Association des Viticulteurs d'Alsace has handed the dossier over to the Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (formerly INAO). Since the issue is a 'simple' one, an affirmative is expected before long – perhaps in 2017, with the rules being retrospectively applied to wines from the 2016 harvest.

How will it work? If you see Sec on an Alsace bottle, it will mean a maximum of 4g/l of residual sugar. Sometimes. Mostly, though, it will mean a maximum of 9g/l, providing that the acidity is at least 7g/l. That's fair enough: the human palate isn't a mass spectrometer. It gauges flavour as a whole, and the impression of dryness or sweetness is comprehensively modified by acidity.

Beyond those figures, Alsace wines may be labelled Demi-Sec (4-12g/l if the wine has less than 8g/l of acidity, or 9-18g/l if it has more than 8g/l of acidity), Moelleux (12-45g/l, regardless of acidity) and then Doux (45g/l or more, regardless of acidity). How will all this play out in practice?

I recently tasted 105 Alsace white wines from lieux-dits – so wines with some ambition to them; wines which are not grands crus, but which are nonetheless intended to have a sense of place. The kind of bottles *Decanter* readers might hunt down.

I checked their analysis figures. Of the 53 Rieslings, almost all would be labelled Sec; there would be seven Demi-Secs, and one Moelleux. In every case where the residual sugar was above 4g/l, the acidity was actually higher than the sugar level. In some cases, it was double: definitely dry. There were only three Sylvaner and Pinot Blanc wines, but all would be Sec, as were the two wines conceived as Edelzwicker or Gentil styles, of which more in a moment.

Of the 28 Pinot Gris wines, though, just eight would be Sec, and six Demi-Sec; 14

What I've been drinking this month

Appropriately enough, I've also been enjoying the **Sperling Vineyards, Old Vines Riesling 2009** grown in the Okanagan Valley of Canada's British Columbia province by Ann Sperling – which, I jotted down, 'had a kind of Vouvray balance but with Riesling flavours'. Behind the lime and apple folded together with honey and custard there was a bolt of acidity and a clean, pure and pristine edge. By Alsace rules, it would be a high-end demi-sec (18g/l of sugar and 8.75g/l of acidity): the perfect description.

When you get to the 15 Gewurztraminers, none would be Sec, 12 would be Moelleux and three Doux. The four blended wines made as field blends (including two from Marcel Deiss) would also fetch up as three Demi-Secs and a Moelleux. There weren't any Muscats.

Provided producers knuckle down and use all four categories and not just the obligatory 'Sec', I think this initiative will finally eliminate the corrosive ambiguities which have dogged Alsace since the region was lifted into the richness of its present-day spectrum of expression thanks to climate change, improved viticultural practices and a non-interventionist quest for terroir.

Alsace will come to be seen, I hope, as the source of some of Europe's most satisfactorily balanced and food-friendly Rieslings, quivering with possibilities for terroir differentiation.

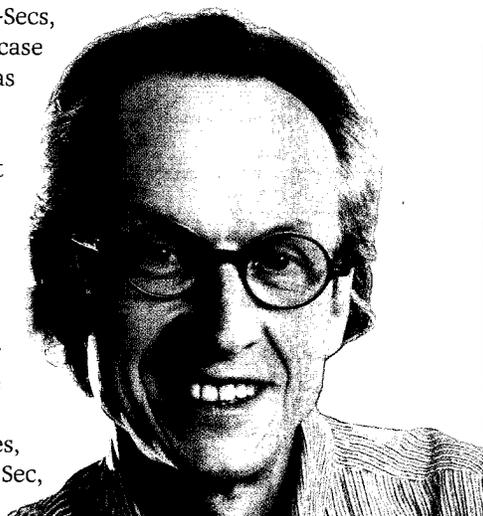
Sylvaner, Pinot Blanc, Edelzwicker and Gentil blends, too, will be recognised as fine gastronomic dry white table wines of increasing ambition. These blends have huge potential, as Hugel has discovered (sales have gone from zero to 40,000 cases in less than 15 years for its Gentil).

The difference between the blends? Edelzwicker can be a non-vintage blend of any approved Alsace variety in any proportion, co-vinified if wished; whereas Gentil has to be a vintage wine containing at least 50% of Riesling, Muscat, Gewurztraminer and/or Pinot Gris, with the rest coming from Sylvaner, Chasselas, Pinot Blanc/Auxerrois, separately vinified and blended later.

In contrast to this dry cohort, Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer will be viewed in exactly the same way that Chenin Blanc is viewed in the Loire: as noble varieties capable of a wide range of expressions, from drily intense to richly succulent. Crucially, though, the usage cue should be there on the label.

Alsace is a genuine rival to Burgundy. Centuries of historical neglect have held it in check. It takes time to get the legislative framework into place that both enables growers to perform at the highest level, and for drinkers to understand that potential. Now we're getting there. ▣

Andrew Jefford is a *Decanter* contributing editor and the Louis Roederer International Columnist of 2016 for this and his 'Jefford on



Cellar Favorites



2009 Sperling Riesling Old Vines Okanagan Valley
Ian D'Agata, November 2017

Sperling's 2009 Riesling Old Vines is a lovely Okanagan Riesling that is aging gracefully. What I like most about the 2009 is its remarkable balance, and how young it still is.

2009 Sperling Riesling Old Vines Okanagan Valley British Columbia

BY IAN D'AGATA | NOVEMBER 20, 2017

Sperling's **2009 Riesling Old Vines** is a lovely **Okanagan** Riesling that is aging gracefully, offering suave aromas and flavors of Granny Smith apple, quince, peach and a light diesel fuel note, all complicated by a deft touch of aromatic herbs and zingy lime. What I like most about the 2009 is its remarkable balance, and how young it still is: a Canadian Riesling that is showing delightful age-worthiness. I am a huge fan of Ann Sperling and her wines. In addition to her winemaking talent (she also makes the wines at Niagara's Southbrook winery and a beautiful Argentine wine called Versado from old vine Malbec with her wine colleague husband), this magnificent 2009 Old Vines Riesling Okanagan Valley speaks of the truly old vines it is made from: BC's oldest Riesling vines (along with those of Tantalus winery), planted back in 1978. The 2009 is a wine that offers not just striking taste sensations, but also a lesson in the importance of old vines (and deep roots) for all those who care to listen. **92/Drink now – 2021**

Related Articles

- Cellar Favorite: 1983 Prunotto Barbaresco Riserva (Nov 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 2007 Antinori Tignanello (Nov 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 2002 Domaine Dujac Clos de La Roche (Oct 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1978 Domaine de la Romanée-Conti La Tâche - Grand Cru (Oct 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1996 Domaine Armand Rousseau Chambertin Clos de Bèze (Oct 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1978 Bruno Giacosa Barolo Riserva Speciale Villero (Oct 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1964 Dom Pérignon - Original Release (Oct 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1989 Giuseppe Mascarello & Figlio Barolo Monprivato (Sep 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1970 Bodegas Vega Sicilia Único (Sep 2017)
- Cellar Favorite: 1971 Dom Ruinart (Sep 2017)