

Home > News & Features > Tasting Highlights

12 Lush White Wines

From Austria comes enticing Grüner Veltliner and a collection of the underrated—and underpriced—Gemischter Satz whites from Vienna

Kim Marcus

Posted: February 19, 2010

Austria can deliver when it comes to food-friendly and well-priced whites, led by the country's most widely planted grape, Grüner Veltliner, which provides lush texture and typical notes of grapefruit, lentil, mineral and more.

In addition to Grüner Veltliner, the country grows a host of other cool-climate white varieties as well, from the well-known Riesling and Gewürztraminer to more offbeat grapes such as Welschriesling, Gelber Traminer and Weissburgunder (the Austrian name for Pinot Blanc).

This set of wines highlights varietal Grüner Veltliner bottlings as well as a relatively new group of wines called Gemischter Satz, which is the name given to traditional white field blends made within Vienna (Wien in German). That's right, you read correctly: Vienna is home to about 1,700 acres of vineyards that historically served to quench the thirst of patrons in the local wine gardens. But today, producers are ramping up the quality of their Gemischter Satz wines, though many are still bargain-priced because of their lack of renown.

CHRIST Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Gemischter Satz 2008 Score: 89 / \$24

A lush style, with plenty of juice and richness to the ripe grapefruit, lentil and cream flavors. Offers a refined finish of white cherry and spice. Grüner Veltliner, Weissburgunder, Riesling and Welschriesling. Drink now. 400 cases imported. —*K.M.*

ROTES HAUS Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Am Nussberg Classic 2008 Score: 89 / \$22

Ripe, spicy aromas and flavors are very creamy, leading to tropical fruit flavors, with baked peach and cinnamon notes, which linger on the smoky finish. Grüner Veltliner, Weissburgunder and Traminer. Drink now. 400 cases imported. —*K.M.*

CHRIST Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wien X 2007 Score: 88 / \$28

Creamy and lush, with peach cobbler, baked apple and pear flavors. There are lovely notes of star fruit and spice on the rich finish. Drink now. 100 cases imported. —*K.M.*

HAJSZAN Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Gemischter Satz Weissleiten 2008 Score: 88 / \$24

A creamy style, with plush ripe peach, cream, smoke and spice, followed by almond and mineral on the finish. Grüner Veltliner, Welschriesling, Weissburgunder, Gelber Traminer, Gewürztraminer, Nueburger, Frühroter Veltliner, Zweigelt, Pinot Noir, Riesling and Müller Thurgau. Drink now. 300 cases imported. —*K.M.*

ROTES HAUS Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Am Nussberg 2008 Score: 88 / \$27

Ripe and lush, with baked peach, pear and apple butter flavors. There's lots of mineral and smoke on the rich finish. Drink now. 100 cases imported. —*K.M.*

WIENINGER Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Herrenholz 2008 Score: 88 / \$25

Rich, ripe and smoky, with plenty of power and structure behind the ripe peach, ruby grapefruit and lentil flavors. Creamy finish. Drink now. 100 cases imported. —*K.M.*

ZAHEL Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Schloss Schönbrunn Gemischter Satz 2008 Score: 88 / \$21

This medium-bodied white offers zesty citrus flavors, including Meyer lemon and ruby grapefruit. There's good length on the rich, spicy finish. Grüner Veltliner, Weissburgunder, Riesling and Chardonnay. Drink now. 100 cases imported. —*K.M.*

COBENZL Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Classic 2009 Score: 87 / \$17

There's lots of cream and spice in this medium-bodied white. Notes of lemon curd fill the finish with touches of richness. Drink now. 400 cases imported. —*K.M.*

COBENZL Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Junger 2009 Score: 87 / \$17

A bright, fruity white, with fresh-cut peach and apple flavors that are accented by notes of spice and touches of honey. Grüner Veltliner and Weissburgunder. Drink now. 400 cases imported. —*K.M.*

HAJSZAN Grüner Veltliner Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Nussberg 2008 Score: 87 / \$25

Medium-bodied, with well-structured flavors of peach, apple sauce and spice. Features lots of cream on the ripe finish. Drink now. 200 cases imported. —*K.M.*

WIENINGER Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Gemischter Satz 2008 Score: 87 / \$18

Crisp, almost austere, with citrus and green apple flavors that extend with spicy notes on the mineral finish. Grüner Veltliner, Welschriesling, Weissburgunder, Chardonnay, Neuburger, Traminer, Sauvignon Blanc, Zierfandler and Roter Veltliner. Drink now. 500 cases imported. —*K.M.*

ZAHEL Qualitätswein Trocken Wien Gemischter Satz 2008 Score: 87 / \$18

A refined white, showing plenty of crisp acidity behind the fresh-cut apple, citrus and spice flavors. The crunchy finish features hints of fresh-cut grass. Grüner Veltliner, Riesling and Chardonnay. Drink now. 400 cases imported. —*K.M.*