

2012 Rosenhof Chardonnay TBA

Neusiedlersee, Austria

The Rosenhof estate is set amidst one of the most beautiful European sceneries where Father and son team Vinzenz and Reinhard Haider are able to balance extreme levels of sugar and acid without losing the fruit in the process. The remarkable confluence of weather, soil, grapes, and family tradition make it difficult to believe that fermented grapes can taste this way. Along with Tokaji in neighboring Hungary, this wine region is one of only a handful in the world where the grapes are affected by noble rot on a regular basis. The family business started here in 1947 with both a farm and vineyards. By 1969 the focus was almost exclusively on viticulture with the addition of a hotel and restaurant featuring authentic Pannonian cuisine. If there was ever an argument that sweet wine isn't just for dessert, the Pannonian flavors of Hungarian, Serbian, Slovakian, and Austrian influences melt into one of Europe's heartiest savory pairings. Once (overly) satiated, choose to stay in one of the comfortable rooms offered by the family.

VINEYARDS

With 35 hectares under vine with Lake Neusiedlersee on one side and with many smaller, shallow lakes on the other, this special natural microclimate is called 'Seewinkel.' With warm Pannonian summers followed by mild autumns, the sandy, gravelly and humus-rich soils ensure that grapes will ripen and accumulate enough sugar before any fungus takes hold. Once the grapes are ripe and healthy, spores penetrate the skin of individual berries causing them to dry out and concentrate their sugars and various acids. What starts as individual 'botrytis nests' on healthy berries soon covers the entire bunch causing the clusters to shrivel like raisins. Lake Neusiedl also acts as a temperature buffer for the wine region and provides warmth and humidity during the night. The growing season is therefore incredibly long (up to 250 days) and rarely endures a spring frost.

WINE MAKING

Late harvest wines are made predominantly or exclusively from nobly-rotten grapes requiring several pickings. The Beerenauslese (BA) is by far the most common sweet wine while the wine to be harvested last is the Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA) which is made practically only from nobly-rotten raisin-like berries. These berries must have a very high sugar content (at least 30 °KMW or roughly 36 Brix) which means that one third of the must consists of natural sugar. Eiswein (ice wine) as the name suggests, are harvested (usually at night) when the grapes are completely frozen through while on the vine. The minimum temperature for harvest is -7°C (19°F). As the water in the grapes freezes, the sugars and other solids do not. When pressed, the result is a highly concentrated nectar coupled with electric acidity. Risky, rare, labor intensive, and delicious.



NOTES & PAIRINGS

This is a big wine in a little bottle. More acidity and residual sugar than the Welschriesling TBA from the same vintage. Sometimes the noble rot can be the dominant flavor and obscure the varietal nature of the grape, but that is certainly not the case here. Weighty like a new world dry Chardonnay with the tartness and acid backbone of the old world. Caramelized apple, white peach, and a sweet smokiness coupled with zero oxidative notes and freshness. This will certainly age but drinks incredibly well right now. Pair with anything pungent and fatty.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Rosenhof
APPELLATION: Neusiedlersee (Lake Neusiedl)
VINTAGE: 2012
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Chardonnay
CLIMATE: Warm Pannonian
SOILS: Sandy, gravelly and humus-rich
EXPOSURE: Southern



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