



2010 Max Ferd. Richter Weissburgunder Trocken

A Weissburgunder Dry White Table wine from Mosel Saar Ruwer, Germany

Review by David Schildknecht
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Rating: 88
Drink 2012 - 2016
Cost: \$23

The Richter 2010 Weissburgunder trocken displays Riesling-like fresh lemon and apple though also a hint of Pinot Blanc-typical [sweet com](#) and textural schmaltz, backed by palpably high extract. A pungently smoky and biting radish-like aura points toward the extreme condition of ripe but high acid berries under assault from botrytis. There is unmistakable classic Mosel wet stone character underlying this bottling's juicy, bright finish. I would monitor it carefully but tentatively anticipate at least 3-4 years of useful table service. Unlike its Riesling siblings, incidentally, this Pinot Blanc was not de-acidified. "The last time I had acid levels as high as in 2010," reports Dirk Richter, "was in 1980, and I don't need to tell you that vintage was a disaster even by then-prevailing standards. What's more, that was the last time I had de-acidified. Even in challenging years like 1981, patience at harvest and the right upbringing of the young wines – maceration, later bottling, encouraging tartrate precipitation, etc. – sufficed to deal with high acids. In many cases this year, we double-salt de-acidified twice, in must and then again in wine – after having done nothing for thirty years; I couldn't believe it was happening! But it was the only way to [remove](#) a sufficient share of the malic. The finished wines are still plenty high in acidity, but I did not want to repeat my experience from 1990, in which I bottled wines with as much 11 grams acid. The second year, they started to taste sour, and that never left them even as their textures eventually creamed-up. I think that two years from now many de-acidified wines will start fatiguing whereas our best will be coming into their own." In 2010, needless to say, the grapes were essentially ripe – indeed all met the admittedly weak legal minimum for Auslese – but as Richter notes "I had to keep revisiting parcels again and again taking just what had properly ripened because the condition of bunches was so heterogeneous." Precautionary levels of sulfur combined with the naturally low pH levels of 2010 material are, he speculates, the reason why he ended up having to yeast most of his musts this year to achieve satisfactory fermentation. Richter reports having managed to pick-out 20 and 30 liters respectively of B.A. and T.B.A. but at such pathetically small levels he felt it made more sense to blend them back selectively into the vintage's Auslesen. "I'm laying everything on the table," he noted with his usual candor when we began tasting, "some are quite good, some are meager, but I'll let you judge for yourself." Importer: Langdon-Shiverick Cleveland, OH; tel. (216) 861-6800
