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ALSACE GEWURZTRAMINER A LOW-ACID LOVE AFFAIR

After an uncommonly high-scoring tasting, Andrew Jefford and co-tasters Charles Metcalfe and Jancis Robinson MW are convinced that Alsace's much-maligned variety deserves much greater respect, its depth, breadth, and terroir expressiveness a match for any white wine style in the world

This tasting surprised us. Charles Metcalfe gave one wine a score of 97 ("great wine of spellbinding beauty and resonance, leaving the drinker with a sense of wonder"), and so did I; together, we found a further nine wines meriting scores of 93 or above ("outstanding wine of great beauty and articulacy"). Jancis Robinson MW was less enthusiastic than this but by no means unenthusiastic, with ten wines scored at either 92 or 93 (and among those ten, the two contrasting wines that Charles and I scored at 97). This is an uncommonly lofty crop of scores for our Savor series of tastings.

The surprise lies in the fact that our subject was the often-derided Gewurztraminer. Perhaps the time has come to say, clearly and unambiguously, that Alsace Gewurztraminer is one of the world's fine white wines, as distinguished and beautiful in its own way as are white Burgundy and Sauternes. Stylistically, indeed, it might almost be said to lie midway between the two. Alsace Gewurztraminer, moreover, expresses its sites and summarizes its region as memorably as does Riesling, though in highly contrastive style.

The variety is the fruit of genetic strangeness—or more accurately, it illustrates the limits of using genetics to understand varietal character. Savagnin Rose is a color mutation of Savagnin, and Gewurztraminer is an aromatic mutation of Savagnin Rose (according to *Wine Grapes*, authored by Jancis Robinson herself, with Julia Harding

THE TIME HAS COME TO SAY, CLEARLY AND UNAMBIGUOUSLY, THAT ALSACE GEWURZTRAMINER IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S FINE WHITE WINES, AS DISTINGUISHED AND BEAUTIFUL IN ITS WAY AS WHITE BURGUNDY AND SAUTERNES

MW and José Vouillamoz). Genetically speaking, in other words, Savagnin and Gewurztraminer are "the same variety," despite the fact that the greatest wines made from each are as comprehensive a contrast to one another as any in the wine world. To complete the strangeness, this polyvalent variety is now known to be close kin to Pinot Noir. Other than to acknowledge a shared potential for grandeur, it seems kindest to forget these links.

Accepting it for what it is Gewurztraminer's lilac-colored grapes have been harvested in Alsace since the 18th century, though this name only appears for the first time in the latter half of the 19th century; nowadays, it occupies around 3,150ha (7,780 acres), or around 20 percent of the total vineyard area. These are by far the largest plantings in the world; few other locations can boast more than 800ha

(2,000 acres). Nowhere else, moreover, does Gewurztraminer perform with the conviction it shows in Alsace, though it's probably also true to say that only in Alsace do growers fully understand and accept the variety's weird nature.

It's not an easy variety to grow: It often has problems at flowering and ideally requires a long growing season with alternating periods of heat and cooler weather. "It needs lots of sun and warmth, but it also needs to ripen as slowly as possible," summarizes Olivier Humbrecht MW. Choosing the perfect moment at which to pick it is a challenge. He continues, "My father used to say that once it's ripe, you need to wait for a month before it's actually ready to harvest. It needs that time to get beyond the 'bottled perfume' stage to being a real wine." Its thick skins are an advantage when it comes to waiting out the full length of a summer, though these skins tend to thin and refine as the season advances. Botrytis is welcome at the end of the season, though not essential; this, indeed, is a wine that can vary from cleanly dry to unctuously sweet, and even the sweet versions need not necessarily be botrytized. It likes the sunniest and best-exposed sites of the region, and its soils of choice are limey marls, though it will flourish on other soil types, too. When grown in granite soils, its characteristic flamboyance becomes muted—to the extent that Philippe Blanc says that Gewurztraminer grown on granite is "anti-Gewurztraminer."

The most notable characteristic of the variety is that its acid levels vary

between low and invisible. Many of the difficulties of Gewurztraminer outside France spring from growers' reluctance to accept that fact, since to endow Gewurztraminer with a bright acid balance by early picking or adjustment is to denature it. Where, then, does its balance come from? A resonant, haunting bitterness is certainly one factor, and tannin another, though the tannins may be embedded in the wine's glycerol and sugars to such an extent as to be impalpable. Aromatic wealth itself is a further source of balance. It is, too, one of those varieties capable of exhibiting the ballast of "mineral" flavors, as some of our notes suggest. Since it requires a long hang-time for full flavor development, and since its sugar levels rise easily, it is usually a heady white: 13.5% is normal.

The permitted Alsace yields are often too high to make quality Gewurztraminer (the official limit is 80hl/ha for the Alsace AOC and 55–66hl/ha for grand cru AOCs), and the main clones planted during the 1970s, clones 47 and 48, are overly fertile, with big bunches and grapes. Lower yields and quality plant selections, therefore, are essential to avoid the confection, vulgarity, and triviality that can dog the variety here. Gentle pressing, no skin contact, and a slightly warmer fermentation temperature than for Alsace's other whites are the main winemaking requirements. Sweetness levels vary greatly, as you will see from our notes, and will dictate the use to which the wine is put.

The top addresses and sites

The two wines that won single scores of 97 were crafted by two of the region's greatest wine growers and vinifiers, Olivier Humbrecht MW and Jean Boxler, but it is no surprise to see how well the wines of Meyer-Fonné performed, since few can match Félix Meyer in terms of the sumptuousness, creaminess, subtlety, and density of his Gewurztraminer. These are all great addresses. Dopff Au Moulin may be best known for Crémant, but its Grand Cru range is outstanding, too, especially the Sporen Gewurztraminer; while few long-term observers of the Alsace scene will be surprised to see the Cave de Turckheim achieve a top-six finish. This is one of France's outstanding cooperatives and an ever-reliable source of benchmark wines at every level.

It's also worth noting the grand cru names that emerged at the top of our lists. Sporen in Riquewihr provided two of the top six: Its gentle, southeast-facing clay marls always feature among Alsace's greatest Gewurztraminer sites. Hengst in Wintzenheim rivals it: another marly, gently sloping site overwhelmingly planted with Gewurztraminer. Ammerschwihr's Kaefferkopf is a more complex site with calcareous sandstone soils, recognized since the 14th century for its quality potential, and the Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer holdings are in old vines, planted in 1965. Turckheim's Brand is one of the region's sunniest sites—but one that has granite soils; note the cleanness and freshness of

profile identified by all three tasters here. Hunawirh's Clos Windsbuhl, finally, does not lie in a grand cru vineyard, though the vines are close to Rosacker and Schoenenbourg, a protected, relatively high location with thin soils of limestone and clay and some rocky outcrops. The site merits promotion, as the scores achieved by the 2010 Zind-Humbrecht Clos Windsbuhl Gewurztraminer underline.

AVERAGE AND RANGE OF SCORES		
	Average	Range
Tasting	88	70-97
AJ	88	74-97
CM	88	70-97
JR	89	84-93

ANDREW JEFFORD'S TOP WINES	
Albert Boxler Gewurztraminer Brand Grand Cru 2015	97
Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Vieilles Vignes Sporen Grand Cru 2015	95
Domaine Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer Hengst Grand Cru 2013	95
Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Kaefferkopf Grand Cru 2015	94
Albert Boxler Gewurztraminer Réserve 2015	92
Domaine Muré Clos St Landelin Gewurztraminer Grand Cru 2013	92
Ostertag Gewurztraminer Fronholz A l'Orient d'Eden 2016	92
Domaine Schoffit Gewurztraminer Rangen Clos Saint-Theobald Grand Cru 2015	92
Cave de Turckheim Gewurztraminer Brand Grand Cru 2013	92

Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Kaefferkopf Grand Cru 2015 | 93
(13.5% ABV, 37g/l RS)

AJ | Pale to mid-gold-yellow in color. Very attractive, very present, very assertive but engaging scents of honeydew, peach, tangerine, and litchi, with a fine spice mist drifting over all. There's also a fine vegetal complexity: jasmine, but the leaf as well as the blossoms. Mouthwatering and enticing; fine complexity. On the palate, that excitement is maintained: It's an excitingly lush, deep, creamy effort, with superb depth, poise, and finesse. Despite the sugar of 37g/l, the very final breath after the wine has gone is still full of breeze and lift and purity. A generous Gewurztraminer, but one of glorious finesse, too. Hats off to whoever grew and vinified this spellbinding wine. | 94

CM | A very golden color compared with most of the other 2015s. Rich, opulent, and sensual, and already showing perfume and aromas. Exotic and opulent, this is very much of a whole, with lovely flavor intensity and excellent balance. And this will develop much further with more time in bottle. | 92

JR | Coppery straw. Light nose. Very rich and dense on the palate, which is quite subtle and layered. Intense. Vibrant and long. Very attention-grabbing. Really serious stuff. I love the seriousness of this. Very rich but not just sweet. Drink 2017-24. | 93

Domaine Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer Clos Windsbuhl 2010 | 93
(13.5% ABV; 60g/l RS)

AJ | Full yellow-gold. A lovely scent: walnuts and white mushrooms, with a bacon hock in the background somewhere. Mature but enticing. Luscious, full, gratifying, and intense on the palate: rounded, vivid, vigorous, with ample acid balance but ample Gewurz style, too. A first-rate effort here. Absolutely ready now. | 91

CM | Mid-gold color. Dark, honeyed, toasty, and maturing beautifully. The aromas add

COPPERY STRAW. LIGHT NOSE. VERY RICH AND DENSE ON THE PALATE, WHICH IS QUITE SUBTLE AND LAYERED. INTENSE. VIBRANT AND LONG. VERY ATTENTION-GRABBING. REALLY SERIOUS STUFF. I LOVE THE SERIOUSNESS OF THIS. VERY RICH BUT NOT JUST SWEET

litchi and lemon zest to the toast. The palate is almost painfully intense, with high acidity, a lean, lemony-toasty side, and great richness and weight as well. It's all larger than life and may just need more time to settle down. But the length is fabulous, the intensity superb, and the potential longevity amazing. | 97

JR | Dark apricot color. Rich and vibrant and with sweet apricot fruit. Good sturdy freshness. Still admirably youthful. A bit bitter. Drink 2016-20. | 92



Dopff Au Moulin Gewurztraminer Sporen de Riquewihr Grand Cru 2015 | 92
(12.5% ABV; 55g/l RS)

AJ | Still a relatively pale gold. This is a very enticing, very becoming glassful of scent: so delicately spiced, so vivid and vibrant, so pure. Sweet fruits (apricot and peach), soft spices, fresh cream, and the hint of the white truffle to come... Fine work here. On the palate, it is certainly generously sweet yet also richly aromatic, with plenty of depth and aromatic power: fine Gewurz. It doesn't have the absolute saturation (perfume, variety, terroir) of the very best, but it's a benchmark late-harvest style of wine of resonant classicism that leaves the mouth clean, fresh, and poised. | 91

CM | Mid-gold color. Lean, lemony, toasty aromas. The palate is restrained and taut, with high acidity, toasty, candied lemon peel flavors, and sweetness well balanced by the acidity. It's young and vigorous, and I'm sure it has more to come. Give this another five years, then look again. | 94

JR | Pale yellow-straw. Interesting and subtle combination of richness and raciness. Lip-smacking, with the sugar very well covered. Long and very lively, despite the sugar. Drink 2016-20. | 92

Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Vieilles Vignes Sporen Grand Cru 2015 | 92
(13.5% ABV; 41g/l RS)

AJ | Mid-gold. Very ginger-sweet and rich, yet with an aromatic architecture to it as well: luscious, spicy, full, almost truffley. That fungal complexity is what really brings the interest to this fine aromatic profile. On the palate, this is evidently an outstanding effort: dense, rich, saturated, powerful, a great roar

of spice-furnace succulence, with a splendidly "mineral" aftertaste that takes us way beyond mere fruit and fruit sugars. Truly fine wine; truly unique. No acidity at all, but splendidly balanced nonetheless, with those extracts, that "mineral" note, and the divine faint bitterness that is another Gewurztraminer birthright. *Chapeau!* | 95

CM | This has a very fresh, lemony aspect to the aromas. The palate is fresh, and the sweetness disguises the youth. There's enough acidity to balance the sugar, though this is high. It's like a big, floppy puppy at present, eager to please and a bit out of control. I'm not entirely sure the sweetness may not outbalance the rest, though. | 87

JR | Mid-golden straw. Very little on the nose. Full-bodied and opulent. Immediately makes me think of enjoying this with a range of spicy dishes please! Attractive bitter finish. So full and bursting with life. Lots of grip and masses of ripe fruit. Sweetish and gorgeous! So long and intense. Clean and absorbing. Truly spicy. Drink 2017-24. | 93

Cave de Turckheim Gewurztraminer Brand Grand Cru 2013 | 92
(13% ABV; 28.1g/l RS)

AJ | Bright mid-gold. A lovely scent: billowing jasmine and ginger cream, but there's a freshness and poise and precision to this that is very winning. Very hard not to sip if you've just smelled this. Splendid wine on the palate, too: deft, creamy, and long, and with so much scented jasmine in here you might almost imagine it contained 30 percent Viognier. That superb aromatic profile helps it carry its sugars with great grace and lift. A complete charmer. Leaves the mouth fresh and clean—and keen for the next sip. | 92

CM | Light, floral, rose-petal aroma. This seems quite simple, but in a very attractive, appealingly floral way. Acidity is fresh and buoyant, the flavor is floral and appealing, and the sweetness is beautifully balanced. Probably not a wine to shut away in the cellar but instead to enjoy soon. | 91

JR | Deep gold. Savory and pungent. Exciting and sleek, with the sweetness a minor ingredient. Rich but not sweet. Great satin texture. Very clean and fresh. Drink 2016-23. | 93

Domaine Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer Hengst Grand Cru 2013 | 92
(13.5% ABV; 45g/l RS)

AJ | Mid- to full gold. Bottle 1: Creamy, rich, succulent, and decadent, though with a touch of oxidative tang. Bottle 2: A lighter color, and no evidence of oxidation. Friendly and plenty of honeyed fruit charm. Vivid, deep, supple, honeyed, and rich on the palate, and from a very good site, I would say, with great depth and penetration, plenty of peach skin and apricot skin, as well as the fruits themselves, and with an

almost burned mineral note, too. An outstanding, very serious Gewurztraminer: long, balanced, resonant, and refined. | 95

CM | Golden-colored, and pleasantly mature. This has creamy, toasty aromas, as well as litchi and lemon. The palate is gentle and evolved, in a very appealing way. Flavors of toast, cream, and lemon mingle, with an agreeably darker note. A wine for now, rather than to keep. | 90

JR | Second bottle needed. Deep copper color. Not an immediate nose but good race and grip on the palate. Molten green somehow. Clean and fresh. Not that deep-flavored but with lots of easy appeal. And with some pungency underneath. Real grip. Drink 2015-21. | 92



Domaine Bott-Geyl Gewurztraminer Sonnenglanz Grand Cru 2010 | 91
(13% ABV; 58g/l RS)

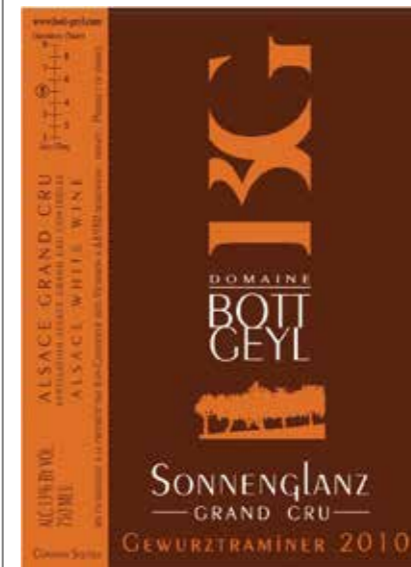
AJ | Deep mid-yellow-gold. Rich and burnished, sweet, but gently savory, too. Some bacon fat here, as if it had 5 percent PG. The benefits of age: plump, ample, comfortable, but aromatically not a show-stopper. On the palate, it is rich,

BRIGHT MID-GOLD. SWEET, LUSCIOUS, AND FRESH, YET VERY GENEROUS, TOO: THERE'S ALMOST A FIGGY NOTE TO THE SPICED MELON AND SOFT TANGERINE. GOSH—ONCE IN THE MOUTH, YOU SEE ITS FREIGHT AND POWER: MAGNIFICENT DENSITY AND COMPLEXITY, AND A WINE WITH A LONG FUTURE AHEAD. COMMANDING STUFF

broad-shouldered, generous, and long: a low-yielding, lusciously honeyed Gewurz from a fine site, with ample varietal style. It's carrying its years perfectly: That's what's lifted off the aromatic richness, but the benefit is the harmony and resonance and fullness and breadth on the palate. A very good effort. | 89

CM | Lovely, golden color. Rich, opulent aromas, maturing well, with toasty, honeyed intensity. The palate is dominated by honeyed ripeness, but has the exotic litchi side, as well. And the acidity is marvelous, lightening and tightening the whole wine. It may be seven years old and already delicious, but it has a great future ahead of it, as the lean, toasty length shows. | 95

JR | Dark apricot color. Very sweet and rich. Not the most appetizing. Some gingerbread notes. Very broad and rich. Lilies to the fore! Drink 2014-19. | 89



Albert Boxler Gewurztraminer Brand Grand Cru 2015 | 91
(13.8% ABV; 35g/l RS)

AJ | Bright mid-gold. Sweet, luscious, and fresh, yet very generous, too: There's almost a figgy note to the spiced melon and soft tangerine. Gosh—once in the mouth, you see its freight and power: magnificent density and complexity here, and certainly a wine with a long future ahead. Commanding stuff. Lushly and ripely fruity, as I've indicated, but also dense, creamy, and complex in a very unobvious, subtle, and intriguing manner. The legacy of a fine vineyard or botrytis? Perhaps both, but I incline more to the former. Masterful and complete, anyway—a reference bottle for this tasting. Splendid "mineral," stone finish. Young still. | 97

CM | A closed, rather tongue-tied youngster, with not much to say yet. The elements seem okay, with decent acidity to balance the sweetness and high alcohol. The finish is still dumb, with a little barley sugar and litchi at last. Ungainly at the moment, and it is hard to say if it will become more graceful. | 84

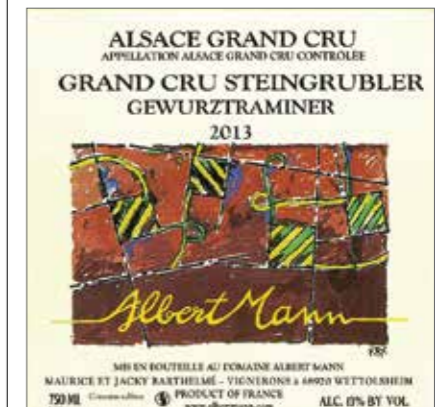
JR | Deep gold. Fragrant and very obviously Gewurz on the nose. Then bitter and pungent on the palate—very Gewurz! Very intriguing and rewarding. Positively flamboyant! Drink 2017-25. | 92

Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Steingrubler Grand Cru 2013 | 91
(13% ABV; 35g/l RS)

AJ | Bright mid-gold. This is quite an earthy Gewurz that almost has some vegetal tones. Lemon cream behind; complex, if not a prominent charmer. Despite the 35g/l, this comes across as quite light, deft, and elegant, with an acid balance but not with huge depth, succulence, or drive. Well made and full of pleasure, though it wouldn't be a bottle I'd squirrel away. | 87

CM | Relatively quiet, but with more to say than some of the other 2015s. Creamy, honey and barley-sugar aromas. Sweetness is quite high but well balanced by acidity. This shows promise, with the structural elements in place, and already some exotic, perfumed flavor. It just needs a couple of years to sort itself out. | 91

JR | Mid-straw. Relatively straightforward but with very good varietal integrity. High-toned and decidedly bitter on the end. Lots of sweetness—but well-placed sweetness. Long. Drink 2016-22. | 92



Blanck Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru Vieilles Vignes 2012 | 90
(13% ABV; 39.9g/l RS)

AJ | Pale to mid-gold. Lots of spice lift here, though the sweetness is balanced by a meat-and-bean undertow, a quiet vegetal pulse. Generous, soft, full, earthy-spicy; relatively delicate in terms of the expression of its sweetness, but very complex in terms of the overall spectrum of flavors. Not the most "typical" wine on the table, but very good and very moreish. | 91

CM | Aromatic, advanced, with litchi and honey notes. The palate is soft and easy-drinking, with well-developed litchi and barley-sugar flavors. Acidity is good, and the balance works well, even though sugar is high. | 88

JR | Heady and tropical flowery. Round and opulent. With a smudgy undertow of Gewurz's seductive charm. Finishes with smokiness. Long. Immediate appeal for everyone, I would imagine. But lighter than some. Drink 2015-20. | **92**



Kuentz-Bas Gewurztraminer Pfersigberg Trois Châteaux Grand Cru 2012 | **90**
(14% ABV; 26.4g/l RS)

AJ | Clear mid-gold. Pineapple and creamy mango scents. Quite a tropical-fruit style here; a dusty note; a touch fudgy. Lots to like, but less pristine and fine than some of its peers. Juicy, round, soft, full and gratifying—more mango fruit and some orange citrus, too, lent dignity by its spice. Generously contoured and unmistakable, but lacks a little inner nerve and sinew. | **88**
CM | Open, floral, exotic, and evolved, with litchi and barley-sugar aromas. Very appealing. This tastes ready to enjoy, with attractive, litchi

fruit flavor, lovely fresh acidity, and an open, inviting character. Lovely now; maybe not to keep. | **90**
JR | Deep coppery straw. Subtle, savory, appetizing Gewurz notes on the nose. Racy, energetic wine that soars above its RS level. Really very accomplished and superior. The overwhelming impression is of Gewurz flavor not sweetness. This wine shows how it's done—with light bitterness on the end. Drink 2015-22. | **92**

Domaine Muré Clos St Landelin Gewurztraminer Grand Cru 2013 | **90**
(13.5% ABV; 32g/l RS)

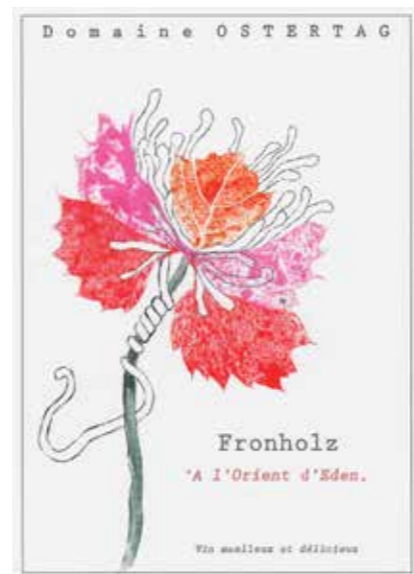
AJ | Back a vintage and into full light gold now; handsome. Deep, rich, complex: instantly you know that you are in front of a serious and possibly profound Gewurz. Deep fruits with some freshness, as well as lots of honeyed spice; botrytized complexities. Age has swiped the florals somewhat, but the mushroomy richness of age is ample recompense. On the palate, it is classical, pure, and rich, its sugars well qualified by the complexities both of age and of concentration. Floral spice and mushroomy, earthy richness come together admirably here. Impressive wine. Deep, round, mature; perfectly ready for me. | **92**
CM | Lovely golden color to this. Creamy, toasty, litchi aromas. The palate is rich and seductive, with opulent, Turkish-delight rose-petal fragrance and enough acidity to balance the

sweetness. At a delightful point in its evolution. I'd drink this now. | **90**
JR | Deep copper. Very sweet start and some floral Gewurz character—heady lilies?—and a little bit of reverberation on the finish. A tad simple. But good intensity. Savory. Long. Drink 2016-20. | **89**



Ostertag Fronholz Gewurztraminer A l'Orient d'Eden 2016 | **90**
(12.5% ABV; 48g/l RS)

AJ | Light mid-gold in color. A rich, graceful bough of sweet scent: honeyed, with fine fruits (dessert apple, peach, pineapple), creamy soft and packed with charm. It's young as yet, but bodes well. Excellent Gewurz on the palate: lush, dense, rich, and resonant, packed with layered fruit sweetness and spiced warmth. A young classic that could be aged with confidence. | **92**
CM | Quite a golden color for a young wine. Has aromatics that hint at barley sugar and litchi. It's weighty, young, and a bit ungainly at present, but it does have high acidity to balance the sugar and a latent intensity that suggests a more interesting future. | **90**
JR | Deep bronzy straw color. Not that much concentration. Just sweet, juicy wine. Nothing wrong with this wine with its bitter finish, but it's just not compelling. Drink 2016-19. | **88**



Cave de Ribeauvillé Gewurztraminer Collection Vendanges Manuelles 2016 | **90**
(13.5% ABV; 12.5g/l)

AJ | Silver-green in color, and a fresh and almost grassy scent, with just a little musky edge; tea leaf, too. Lightly attractive. Fresh, graceful, creamy, and poised—an excellent choice for those who are slightly shy of the style: It is accurate and quietly charming, without being in any way baroque. | **91**
CM | Rather closed and dumb, with alcohol showing on the nose. It's very young and will probably open out. Acidity is fresh and very well in balance with other components. There's a little sweetness, and flavors and aromas develop in the mouth as the wine warms up. The finish is on the dark side of the Gewurz spectrum: a hint of toast, barley sugar, and a touch of litchi. | **88**
JR | Very pale greenish straw. Very light, high-acid nose. Very youthful, with some fermentation aromas still hanging around but refined and quite delicate with low phenolics. Racy and just a suggestion of sweetness. Builds to a peacock's-tail finish. Should develop into something quite special. Drink 2018-24. | **90**

Domaine Schoffit Gewurztraminer Rangen Clos Saint-Theobald Grand Cru 2015 | **90**
(13.5% ABV; 59g/l RS)

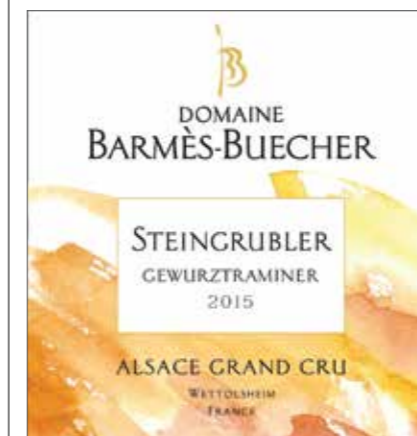
AJ | Mid-white gold. Very beautiful Gewurztraminer scent of cream, ginger, and jasmine, with a hint of musk rose. How can you resist anything that smells like this? Classy yet sensorially attractive, too. Very sugar-saturated, and within those sugars a great wealth of perfume—more so, in truth, than fruit wealth. So, the result is a very sweet, very perfumed wine of impressive complexity and absolute varietal fidelity: outstanding. The very greatest, though, have just a little bit more: either some fruit ballast, or a sense of earth and stone (also a ballast). This is fine wine, but the sugars for the time being have such an upper hand that I am not sure where to find the ballast. Perhaps it will come with time. | **92**
CM | Yellow with a glint of gold. Young and vigorous, with tight lemon and litchi aromatics. Very young, very restrained, but already showing the Gewurz signature flavors of litchi and barley sugar. Everything is big about this

MID-WHITE GOLD. VERY BEAUTIFUL GEWURZ SCENT OF CREAM, GINGER, AND JASMINE. HOW CAN YOU RESIST ANYTHING THAT SMELLS LIKE THIS?

wine: the acidity, the alcohol, the sugar level, the intensity of flavor. It all needs to settle down in a cool cellar for a few years. But when it comes together, it will be excellent. | **93**
JR | Mid-straw. Sweet, sugary nose. Thick and syrupy with some angular acidity and chew on the end. Just a bit sickly. Youthful. Drink 2017-22. | **85**

Domaine Barmès-Buecher Gewurztraminer Steingrubler Grand Cru 2015 | **89**
(13.3% ABV; 28.8g/l)

AJ | Mid-gold; bright. Cream, ginger, tangerine, gathered barley, and then a little quiet gardenia richness behind—intriguing, if not wholly enchanting, as some of its peers are. Very rich on the palate, concentrated, too, tangy and long, and exotic in style, suggesting Japanese mushrooms and salted cream and strange hothouse blooms... I'm enjoying it enormously and I'd love to drink a bottle, but it is definitely a wine for looking at in attentive isolation since the sweetness (being less supported by fruit than for some of its peers) is striking. I think Gewurz is so extraordinary that one ought to let it just be however it wants to be. A fascinating outlier. | **91**
CM | Tight, quite lean, and at the same time exotic. Needs time. This is coiled and waiting, but with good elements and intensity. Acidity balances the other components well, and there's an underlying litchi and barley-sugar flavor, but this has not yet reached its moment. | **90**
JR | Deep gold. Rather simple nose. Lots of sweetness on the palate. Light fruit intensity. Just a medium-sweet white really, rather than a fine expression of Gewurz. Drink 2017-20. | **87**



Dirler-Cadé Gewurztraminer Kitterlé Grand Cru 2016 | **89**
(14% ABV; 80g/l RS)

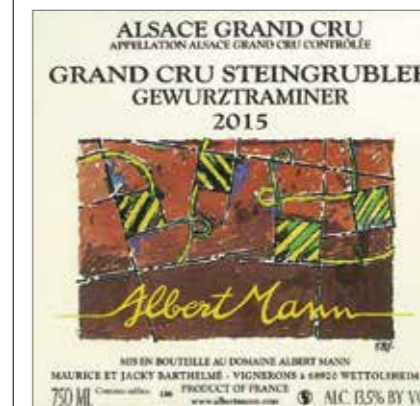
AJ | Bright pale gold. Very young still, and almost undigested: lots of sweet pear and quince, but without any varietal cues for the time being. Hugely pretty, nonetheless. On the palate: a great wall of youthful crystallized sugar with fruit perfumes drifting through it, but nonetheless with nothing that really insists on challenging or being Gewurz. Judgment reserved, really, for such a young sweet wine. | **89**

COULD ALMOST BE A CHENIN BLANC. THIS IS (FOR ME) TRUE OF THE PALATE, TOO: IT'S GENEROUS, WELL ROUNDED, AND SWEET

CM | Yellow with a suggestion of gold. Honeyed sweetness dominates aromas at present, with a hint of lemon zest. This is very young, with an apple youth that will be smoothed away by time in bottle. At the moment, it's all a bit too much—high acidity, high alcohol, and high sugar. It's almost more like rather exotic spiced apple juice than wine. But the length is just beginning to show the way it might go. You have to wait for this. Probably not among the very best, but worth waiting for five years to see where it goes. | **90**
JR | Deep straw. Easy, sweet. Gingery but without real focus. Lots of volume but less focus. Drink 2017-22. | **89**

Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Steingrubler Grand Cru 2015 | **89**
(13.5% ABV; 37g/l RS)

AJ | Pale silver-straw in color. Lively, vivid, fresh, with orchard fruits (apple and pear) sent into a sweet curve but without any notable spice or floral notes. Could almost be a Chenin Blanc. This is (for me) true of the palate, too: It's generous, well rounded, and sweet, given life and dignity by its orchard fruits, but with many fewer Gewurztraminer keys than its peers. Still a very good wine and a wonderful drink. Perhaps a question of site? | **90**
CM | Rather lean and reductive, with some lemony aroma. The palate is also tucked up and waiting, with lemony acidity, ripe honeyed fruit, and quite a lot of sugar. This needs time to get to a more drinkable stage. | **88**
JR | Bright deep straw. Light, rather simple nose. Sweet and round, with some Gewurz-in-a-cloud. Hint of red pepper. But not enough acidity, alas—despite the good grip on the end. Quite fresh. Drink 2017-20. | **89**



CHARLES METCALFE'S VERDICT

In the long-gone days when I was first learning about wine, there was a rule that said the best match for smoked salmon was Alsace Gewurztraminer. Having tasted almost 50 Alsace Gewurztraminers in this tasting, I can imagine few worse matches. Is this because most Alsace producers have decided that their preferred style of Gewurztraminer has more residual sugar than used to be the case? The average sugar level of these wines was over 30g/l (not what you want with an oily smoked fish!). The best wines in the tasting, however, were very sweet, made in a full-bloodedly late-picked style, opulent and exotic, whereas many of the medium-sweet to sweet wines seemed to lack the intensity to age well and

were neither one thing nor another—not sweet enough for dessert wines, but much too sweet to serve with most savory dishes. Maybe the best food companions are strong, mold-ripened cheeses. Best drinking at present seems to come from the 2012 and 2013 vintages, with a few lovely older wines from 2008 and 2010. 2015 has produced some magnificent wines, the best not nearly ready to drink. Leave them in the cellar till 2020 at the earliest. And the 2016s are also much too young, though perhaps not with the aging ability of the 2015s. For the record, by the way, I don't think Alsace Gewurztraminer was ever much good as a match for smoked salmon. Much better to go for the traditional smelly cheese option.

TOP WINES

- Domaine Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer Clos Windsbuhl 2010 **97**
- Domaine Weinbach Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru 2008 **96**
- Domaine Bott-Geyl Gewurztraminer Sonnenglanz Grand Cru 2010 **95**
- Domaine Schoffit Gewurztraminer Rangen Clos Saint-Theobald Grand Cru 2013 **95**

- Dopff Au Moulin Gewurztraminer Sporen de Riquewihr Grand Cru 2015 **94**
- Domaine Weinbach Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru 2013 **94**
- Domaine Schoffit Gewurztraminer Rangen Clos Saint-Theobald Grand Cru 2015 **93**
- Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Kaefferkopf Grand Cru 2015 **92**

Cave de Ribeauvillé Gewurztraminer 2016 | 89
(13% ABV; 22.5g/l RS)

AJ | Steel green-gold. Super aromas: creamy, seductive, and insinuating, spice-dusted, nougat-rich, delicately honeyed, yet freshly fruited, too. Spot on and subtle withal. On the palate, this is very graceful—indeed, almost willowy—which you can't often say of Gewurztraminer. The floral-spice notes are picked out with great restraint and subtlety, and the palate is tender, graceful, light, and moreish. There's a little hazelnut richness on the finish. A Gewurz that you'd be happy to drink a second or a third glass of, yet it would also satisfy the most finicky of Gewurzophiles. | 91

CM | Attractive, rose-petal aroma. Youthfully charming. The palate is fresh and lively, with good acidity and pleasing flavors. It's not a wine of great weight, and I wouldn't expect great things of this in the future. A "gather ye rosebuds" type of wine. | 88

JR | Pale straw. Light and very youthful on the nose. Nicely balanced in a sweetish rosewater

JANCIS ROBINSON MW'S VERDICT

I can't remember the last time I tasted a range of Gewurzes! And I would have been happy to taste some from Alto Adige, Slovenia, and New Zealand, too. The tasting was quite difficult because of the very different ages and vintages of the wines, which meant, among other things, that the colors varied widely, many as if they were in an evolutionary state. My impression of two of the vintages is that the 2011s are rather good, whereas many of the 2010s seemed a bit past it. The medium-sweet wines are difficult to place, but bitterness is no longer a flaw!

TOP WINES

Cave de Turckheim Gewurztraminer Brand Grand Cru 2013 **93**

Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Kaefferkopf Grand Cru 2015 **93**

Meyer-Fonné Gewurztraminer Sporen Grand Cru Vieilles Vignes 2015 **93**

Blanck Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru Vieilles Vignes 2012 **92**

Albert Boxler Gewurztraminer Brand Grand Cru 2015 **92**

Dopff Au Moulin Gewurztraminer Sporen de Riquewihr Grand Cru 2015 **92**

Kuentz-Bas Gewurztraminer Pfersigberg Grand Cru Trois Châteaux Grand Cru 2012 **92**

Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Steingrubler Grand Cru 2013 **92**

Domaine Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer Hengst Grand Cru 2013 **92**

Domaine Zind Humbrecht Gewurztraminer Clos Windsbuhl 2010 **92**

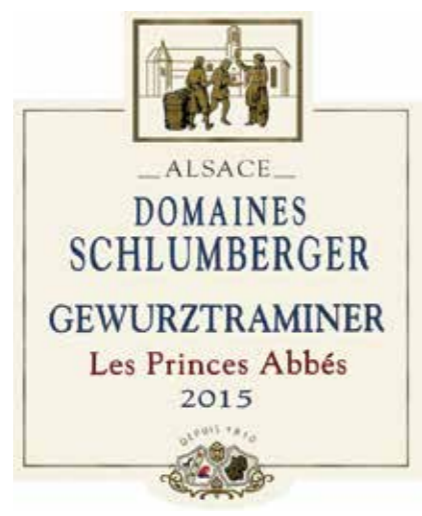
way. Charming and fleet of foot. Already approachable, with some grip on the end. Not the most dramatic but very competent. Quite persistent. Drink 2017-22. | 89

Domaines Schlumberger Gewurztraminer Les Princes Abbés 2015 | 89
(13% ABV; 25.75g/l RS)

AJ | Pale mid-gold. Exuberant lifted spice and soft honey behind, over becomingly peachy fruits: a super scent. Honeydew melon adds to the fun. Juicy, full, and exuberant, with that honeydew flavor well to the fore; glycerous and rich; and then plenty of spice hidden in the 26g/l sugars. A generous Gewurz of ample personality and flesh, but well balanced by its spice and its alcohol. | 90

CM | Dark, restrained, litchi aromas. This is young and quite closed, but it does have good elements and should develop. Acidity is good, and balances other structural elements well. It has a creamy texture and good sweetness level; it just needs time. | 88

JR | Deep straw. Rather sweet and simple on the nose, with the merest hint of struck match. Something a little, and not unpleasantly, vegetal about this. Sweet start and then quite tingly and energetic on the end, so that the whole is not unbalanced. But this is the sort of medium-sweet wine that can be difficult to place in a drinking context. Clean finish. Drink 2017-21. | 89



Pierre Sparr Gewurztraminer Mambourg Grand Cru 2015 | 89
(12.5% ABV; 34.53g/l RS)

AJ | Pale to full silver-gold. It's both spicy and floral, yet there is a lovely fleshy fattiness here that draws you ineluctably in. An attractive aromatic profile, though no notable fruit and not much complexity yet. Almost a roastiness here. In the mouth, it's vivid, rich, full, and generous, with lots of almost primary fruit dressed gratifyingly in spicy honey. Very generous and hugely enjoyable; the spices carry and lift what might almost otherwise be simple if exuberant fruits. | 91

THIS IS VERY GRACEFUL—ALMOST WILLOWY—WHICH YOU CAN'T OFTEN SAY OF GEWURZTRAMINER. THE FLORAL-SPICE NOTES ARE PICKED OUT WITH GREAT RESTRAINT AND SUBTLETY, AND THE PALATE IS TENDER, GRACEFUL, LIGHT, AND MOREISH

CM | Quite closed at present, with a little litchi escaping and a hint of lemon. Gentle litchi and barley-sugar flavors, with sweetness just about balanced by the acidity. It's young and may develop further but is in a rather ungainly moment now. | 86

JR | Mid-straw. A little sugary on the nose. Some Gewurz pungency on the palate. Medium intensity and clean and fresh enough. But a difficult wine to fit into drinking plans, with its medium-sweet dimension. Impressive length, however. Drink 2017-21. | 89



Trimbach Cuvée des Seigneurs de Ribeaupierre 2012 | 89
(14.5% ABV; 25g/l RS)

AJ | Full pale gold. Excitingly warm, sensual, gingery scents over lovely orange and tangerine fruit; a little botrytis complexity, too. There's jasmine richness as well: very complete and gratifying aromas. Lush, sweet, vivid, generous, and rather tangy on the palate, made in a much less reductive style than its peers at this "drier" end of the tasting. What you gain on the nose

you perhaps lose on the palate, since it can't quite match the aromatic charm of the wine. On the plus side, it's quite a gutsy effort that would go well with fatty food—and no one will fail to spot the variety. | 89

CM | Lovely, mature Gewurz aromas, with an attractive golden note to the color. Mainly litchi, with a suggestion of witch hazel. The palate is mature, with richness and character. There's very good balancing acidity, and exotic length. Probably at peak point now. | 90

JR | Deep pinky copper. Smudgy impact on the nose—too alcoholic? Really quite a sweet start, with some burnished metal and bitterness on the end. Quite dramatic! Food definitely needed with this. Hot finish, though. Makes quite an impact. Drink 2014-18. | 89

Domaine Weinbach Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru 2013 | 89
(13.5% ABV; 48g/l)

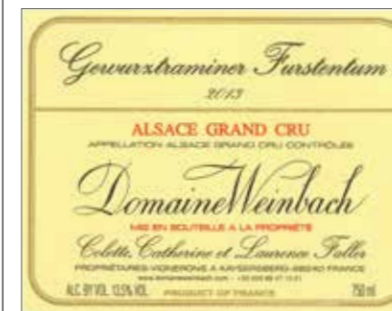
AJ | Pale, mid-silver-gold. A big buzzy muddle of bee-loud scent: vibrant, autumnal, must-like and generously sweet. Attractive if unpoised and rather simple. This sets the tone for the palate, too. You'd have to enjoy drinking it, and within the sugars there are perfumed depths (thanks to the variety), but it is neither a great vin de terroir nor a great late-harvest incarnation of Gewurz. | 85

CM | Pale, yellow-gold color. Rich, creamy, opulent, and evolved aromas. Very appealing, with lemon, honey, toast, cream, and spice. It's sweet but balanced by good acidity. This is lovely, aromatic, and creamy, with this lovely acidity and delightful length. And although delicious now, will probably continue to evolve in bottle. | 94

JR | Deep golden straw. Pungent, interesting nose. Very full-bodied in litchi mode. Lots of fun. Absolutely ready to drink. Great balance and pungent length. Nothing to reproach except

PALE, YELLOW-GOLD COLOR. RICH, CREAMY, OPULENT, AND EVOLVED AROMAS. VERY APPEALING, WITH LEMON, HONEY, TOAST, CREAM, AND SPICE. IT'S SWEET BUT BALANCED BY GOOD ACIDITY. THIS IS LOVELY, AROMATIC, AND CREAMY, WITH LOVELY ACIDITY AND DELIGHTFUL LENGTH

perhaps a lack of real complexity. Long and reverberant. Drink 2016-20. | 89

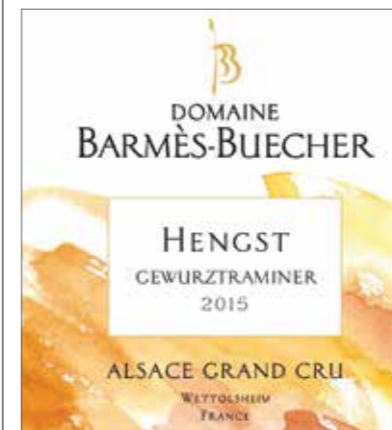


Domaine Barmès-Buecher Gewurztraminer Hengst Grand Cru 2015 | 88
(13.9% ABV; 19.6g/l RS)

AJ | Silver green-gold. An attractive, well-crafted aroma, which combines a soft, gentle spiciness with a quiet vegetal feltiness; perhaps a little rose in the background, but none of the really obvious triggers are to the fore. Singular but pleasant. On the palate, the 20g/l shows prominently: It's very salty-creamy and lush but lacks a fruit core and supporting sap or spice. I'd enjoy drinking it but have to admit it is on the torpid side, though the aromatics are very interesting and in some ways compelling. And it doesn't lack concentration, either. | 86

CM | Dark, scented rose-petal aroma. Seems good for a young wine. This is opulent, restrained, and looks to have a good future. Flavors are appropriately exotic, the balance of acidity, sweetness, and alcohol is well judged, and there's good, exotic, perfumed length. I'd leave this a couple of years. | 91

JR | Pale straw. Very cool, low-key nose. Sweetness dominates the front palate, but there is perceptible varietal character of a litchi variety. Neat and refreshing, though embryonic. Fades a little on the finish. Drink 2017-21. | 87



Blanck Gewurztraminer 2016 | 88
(13% ABV; 15.59g/l)

AJ | Steel white. Very attractively fresh, cleanly spicy scents: invigorating and enticing. Lots of

lift. On the palate, this is a little more richly spicy than that fresh nose led one to expect. There's some sweetness, and it has a mouth-coating texture with plenty of glycerol, yet the freshness of style returns at the finish and makes it a very clean, pungent, and classic example. | 90

CM | A hint of something slightly rummy on the nose. It could be a touch of rather dominant oak barrel. It's young and rather raw at present but has good acidity, balanced sweetness, and some pleasantly candied aromatics lurking. Difficult to judge now, but does have adequate length, with some barley-sugar and litchi eventually appearing. | 86

JR | Pale greenish straw. Fresh, light, and floral but without strong Gewurz character on the nose. Sweet start and quite juicy and agreeable with sugar/acid ratio satisfactory. Fairly long. Neat and unshowy. Refreshing. May develop into something even more impressive. Drink 2017-21. | 88



Albert Boxler Gewurztraminer Réserve 2015 | 88
(13.5% ABV; 30g/l RS)

AJ | Full light gold. Soft and sweet. Back lacks a little aromatic finesse and detail, though it has a jasmine/litchi charm and is wholly typical. Gathered, gingery, zesty, deep, rich, and luscious, on the palate this wine is a concentrated tour de force of aromatic succulence. Great harmony and completeness, too. Estimable and rewarding, and great classicism, too, all in all. | 92

CM | Not a great deal showing at present, except a whiff of alcohol. It's young and unformed as yet, with good acidity and a creamy note to the texture. But it's really closed, not showing much, even on the finish. And the end is a shade hot. Not my favorite here, though not bad. | 83

JR | Edgy, high-toned nose, with masses of sweetness (low acid?) and some floral notes. Very intense and showy. Like a bouquet of carnations in its showiness. Precocious. Drink 2017-20. | 88

Joseph Cattin Gewurztraminer Hatschbourg Grand Cru 2015 | 88
(13% ABV; 30.18g/l RS)

AJ | Clear mid-gold. A soft focus sweet-spiciness, which is typical and attractive, though as you sniff it's not a showstopper. The thing itself, nonetheless. Juicy, fresh, lively, with an acid balance (which few of its peers at this stage of the tasting have), and a slightly simpler style as well. Straightforward, exuberant, enjoyable, and

LOTS OF PLANTY EXCITEMENT HERE, THOUGH IT IS MUCH LESS EXOTICALLY SWEET IN SCENT THAN MOST. FULL, LIVELY (PLENTY OF ACIDITY FOR A GEWURZ HERE), AND VIVID

classical, but not necessarily ambitious. | **88**
CM | A youngster, but with some appealing aromas already apparent. Fresh, litchi and a hint of lemon. The palate is nicely balanced, with good acidity and even a touch of phenols to add an interesting twist. Good now, but will improve with some years in a cellar. | **89**
JR | Pale gold. Light and fresh. A green streak but not much intensity of fruity core. A bit simple but not an unpleasant drink—albeit without that much Gewurz character. Good freshness. May develop into something more interesting. Residual sugar exceptionally well covered by pronounced acidity. Drink 2016–19. | **88**

Josmeyer Gewurztraminer Hengst Grand Cru 2011 | **88**
 (14.5% ABV; 20g/l RS)

AJ | Full light gold. A becoming barley-sugar sweetness qualified and supported by classy ginger spice and soft peachy fruit. Down-the-line, attractive, gentle Gewurztraminer, with lots to like, well balanced by its spice and riding on a wave of qualified and supported warmth to finish. | **88**
CM | This isn't showing much on the nose at present. Perhaps it never will. There's a little alcohol grinning through. The palate is pleasant, with candied barley-sugar character, decent acidity, and some litchi length. Pleasant, if not great. | **87**
JR | Mid coppery color. In the savory spectrum of Gewurz on the nose, and then masses of sweetness on the front palate, but it all tightens up to a pretty tense, arresting wine by the finish. Throbs. Real bite. There's some tension here. Drink 2014–20. | **90**

Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru Vieilles Vignes 2014 | **88**
 (13% ABV; 37g/l RS)

AJ | Pale, bright gold. An earthy, soil-rich reading of the variety; lots of planty excitement here, though it is much less exotically sweet in scent than most. Full, lively (plenty of acidity for a Gewurz here), vivid, and almost fresh in style: a juicy fruity Gewurz rather than a spice-bomb odalisque. Agreeable, though not particularly ambitious. | **88**
CM | Lean, tight, a touch of honey on the nose,

but not much else. This is lemony and tight, with a distinct honey character, almost with concentration of propolis, or "bee glue." The palate is lean and lemony, suggesting this has quite a way to go. But it's not the right moment to drink this yet. I'd wait two or three years and hope for a less angular wine. | **89**
JR | Deep bright straw. Light, rather simple nose. Quite evolved and then green and leafy on the palate. A bit loose and smudgy on the end. Doesn't quite hang together yet. A bit glucose and simple. Drink 2018–21. | **88**



Domaine Weinbach Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru 2008 | **88**
 (13% ABV; 49.5g/l RS)

AJ | Pale and youthful in appearance for its vintage. Classically sweet, late-harvest scents rather than a vin de terroir approach. In truth, not a lot of Gewurz specificities: some gingery grain, but it's the late harvest one smells. Generous, sweet, and bright on the palate: a sugar-fest, but it lacks aromatic complexity. | **84**
CM | Pale gold color. Toasty, mature aromas, with notes of marzipan, lemon zest, and barley-sugar. There's a hint of propolis ("bee glue") to this, mingled with the toasty, lemon-zest flavors, and sprightly acidity. This seems a wine at peak maturity, but lean and toned, ready to carry on for some time yet. Just shows what high acidity and balanced sugar can do to help a wine age. The finish is marzipan and beehives, and the length is considerable. | **96**

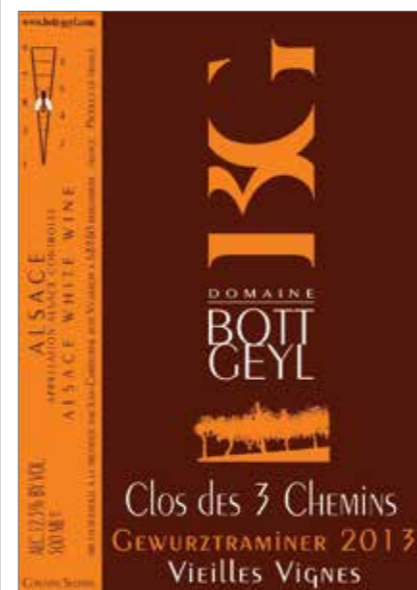
GOLDEN COLOR, RICH, CREAMY, OPULENT AROMAS, WITH TOASTY MATURITY. THERE'S GOOD ACIDITY, AS WELL, AND THIS SUPPORTS THE INHERENT RICHNESS OF THE WINE

JR | Doesn't seem to be showing its age on the basis of its deep straw color, but it's a bit fossilized rather than evolved on the nose. Lots of sweetness. Easy and round but not that fresh. Lots of beeswax. Why wasn't this sold long ago, I wonder. Quite long. Drink 2013–20. | **85**



Domaine Bott-Geyl Gewurztraminer Clos des 3 Chemins Vieilles Vignes 2013 | **87**
 (12.5% ABV; 53g/l; 50cl)

AJ | Mid-gold, bright. Sweet, warm, honeyed, and enticing: there are some gentle truffley complexities if you hunt them down. Excellent if undemonstrative aromas, but with time in the glass it may grow more articulate. Deep and lively wine, with way more acidity than is the norm for this tasting, so a "classic" dessert wine balance. The drawback is that it isn't anywhere near the exotic, mood-altering, mind-changing, horizon-shifting ideal of Gewurz in Alsace, which is necessarily baroque. | **84**
CM | Golden color. Rich, creamy, opulent aromas, with toasty maturity. There's good acidity, as well, and this supports the inherent richness of the wine. It is already very drinkable, with flavors of litchi, honey, and apple, and will probably develop further, as the creamily aromatic length suggests. | **91**
JR | Very deep copper color. Swingeing acidity on a big, bold sweet platform—not very integrated. Sour. Drink 2015–18. | **85**



Kuentz-Bas Gewurztraminer Trois Châteaux Vin d'Alsace 2014 (13% ABV; 16.9g/l RS) | **87**

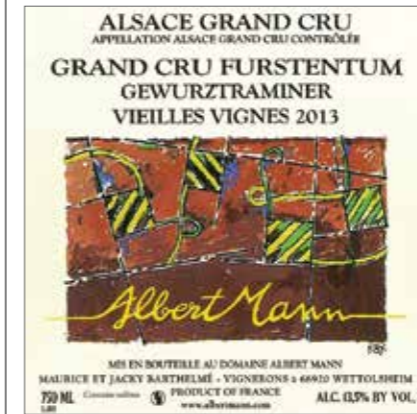
AJ | Soft, pale gold. Honeyed spices and gingery depths here, together with the late autumn, moistly sticky presence that true late-harvest wines have (though this is only 17g/l). On the palate, it seems to run on its sugar a little, and turn a little flabby in comparison with the very best. Not much marrow here, though it makes pleasant sipping. | **84**
CM | A noticeably gold note to the color here. It's opulent, with a rather exotic bouquet. It does have this slightly oxidative character, with bright acidity, good, reined-in, rose-petal and litchi flavors. The finish is soft and seductive, but still enlivened by good acidity. More evolved than I would have expected, but exotically appealing. | **90**
JR | Bright gold. Hint of wet wool on the nose. Satin smooth texture and some green streak keeps this from falling over. A hint of the glucose drink Lucozade. Not the finest, but there is interest here. Drink 2016–20. | **87**

Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru Vieilles Vignes 2013 | **87**
 (13.5% ABV; 33g/l RS)

AJ | Bright mid-gold. Bottle 1: Oxidized. Bottle 2: Light, fresh, pristine, and graceful, and much better than the slightly defective first bottle. Nonetheless, it is not a wine of huge aromatic complexity. Rich, soft, vivid, spicy, and generous, with some discreet acidity to back up the alcoholic warmth and perfumed fullness as a factor of balance. Deftly done. | **91**
CM | A slightly reductive, thiol note to this. The palate opens up more, and shows litchi, and barley-sugar flavors, good acidity, and some intensity. But there's a niggling note of something (might it be rot?) that persists to the finish. Not my favorite wine. | **81**
JR | Deep gold. First bottle dirty. Second bottle

GOLDEN, CREAMY, AND MATURE, THIS HAS RIPE, OPULENT AROMAS OF BARLEY SUGAR AND CANDY. THERE'S AN EVOLVED TOASTINESS AS WELL, AND A LUSCIOUS, OPULENT TEXTURE. THE WINE IS BUOYED UP BY LIVELY ACIDITY, SO THE SUGAR GOES ALMOST UNNOTICED

much cleaner and positively opulent. Very charming with a burned edge and great balance. Pungent, and handles its residual sugar well. Very definitely Gewurz. Rather well balanced and appetizing despite the high residual sugar. Long and savory. Quite intense. Long undertow. Drink 2016–22. | **90**



Domaine Muré Gewurztraminer Zinnkoepfle Grand Cru 2013 | **87**
 (11.5% ABV; 103g/l RS)

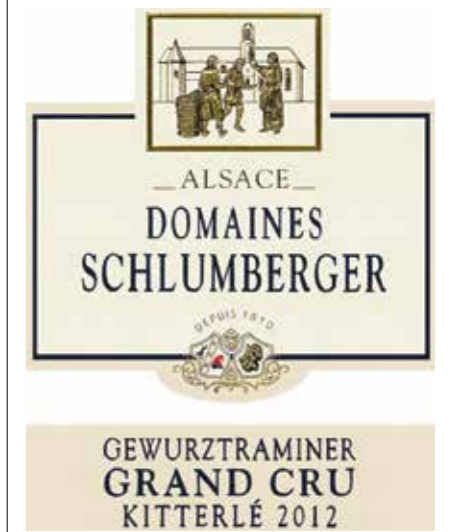
AJ | Mid-gold. Tangy, lush, and full: lots of honeycomb richness here, with just a little pear and rose, but not hugely varietal. Pretty nonetheless, and generous. Big, full, generous, but not at all dense, fine-drawn, fine-grained, or subtle. A simple adventure in sugar. | **85**
CM | Golden color. Honeyed, rich aromas, with a hint of marzipan and a touch of oxidation. This is dominated by the sweetness, which is very high. It's hard to see how this will develop. It's all about honey and sweetness at the moment. This is almost too sweet for me, because the other components are overwhelmed. There is creamy, honeyed length, though. | **87**
JR | Deep apricot color. Smoky and not much focus. Lots of round sweetness, but not freshness. Drink 2015–18. | **89**



Domaines Schlumberger Gewurztraminer Kitterlé Grand Cru 2012 | **87**
 (12.5% ABV; 45.9g/l RS)

AJ | Bright deep gold. Malty grains, but a little

bit withdrawn and restrained in aromatic terms against the best of its peers. Generous sweetness on the palate, but touches of caramel and custard rather than stone, fruit, spice, and perfume. | **86**
CM | Golden, creamy, and mature, this has ripe, opulent aromas of barley sugar and candy. There's an evolved toastiness as well, and a luscious, opulent texture. The wine is buoyed up by lively acidity, so the sugar goes almost unnoticed. The finish is toasty and creamy. A lovely wine to enjoy soon. | **91**
JR | Bright gold. Heavy, rather sweaty nose. Very sweet and round. Lacks freshness. Rather reminds me of the Austrian Gewurzes of yore. Distinctly syrupy. Not refreshing. Falls apart. Drink 2014–16. | **85**



Domaine Schoffl Gewurztraminer Rangen Clos Saint-Theobald Grand Cru 2013 | **87**
 (12.5% ABV; 48g/l RS)

AJ | Filling out into a luscious gold. Buttered popcorn: generous and exuberant but unpolished and doesn't plumb the recesses of varietal potential. Some spiced pear. Bottle 2: Even deeper in color, and with the same overall (attractive but unobtrusive) blowness of scent. On the palate it is simple stuff: moderate concentration and certainly at the end of its aging trajectory, though a fun drink. | **80**
CM | Beautiful, golden color. Opulent, exotic, and unctuous aromas, of litchis and cream. The palate is complex and delicious, and probably nearing its best. Acidity fully supports the sweetness, and suggests it could carry this further. But it's lovely now, with rich, opulent flavors, buoyed up by this tremendous acidity. Very tempting now, although could age further. | **95**
JR | Aggressively apricot color. Very big and blustery. Not fine, but this makes an impact! I asked for a second bottle to see whether it was any fresher. No! If anything, even heavier. And darker. Needs more finesse, however blustering it is. Drink 2015–18. | **86**

Léon Beyer Gewurztraminer Comtes d'Eguisheim 2010 | 86
(14% ABV; 4g/l RS)

AJ | Delicate light gold. Plump, sweet scents of dripping summer fruits; a little rose. Exuberant, classically oily palate, with plenty of rose-garden perfume. Vinous, long, and structured, with a little acidity and a perfectly dry style. Very good dry Gewurztraminer. | 90

CM | Pleasant aroma of litchi, not immensely complex, but adequate. Palate seems sweeter than the numbers suggest, but this does have some litchi perfume and good acidity. Length isn't great, but it's an adequate Gewurz. | 82
JR | Deep pinky straw. Smells too "heavy" to release much on the (decidedly indistinct) nose. Round and rather soft. On the way down. Drink 2012-17. | 86



Theo Cattin et Fils Gewurztraminer Bollenberg Cuvée Prestige 2016 | 86
(13% ABV; 18.9g/l RS)

AJ | Green steel-gold. Fresh, grapy, floral—another of those Gewurztraminers that smell a little bit like the Mosel on steroids. But it does draw you in and make you want to sip. Fresh, sweet, and attractive in a soft, grassy-floral kind of way on the palate, too, with just enough concentration to carry its sugars. | 85
CM | Youth dumbs this down at present, with few aromas showing. The palate is weighty but needs time to develop. There seem to be good elements in place, with litchi flavor eventually

YOUNG AND RATHER TIGHTLY SHUTTERED AT PRESENT. THERE'S GOOD WEIGHT AND GOOD ACIDITY TO BALANCE THE SUGAR AND AN UNDERLYING INTENSITY. BUT THIS NEEDS FIVE YEARS OR SO TO REACH A MORE DRINKABLE MOMENT

struggling through, good acidity and sweetness in balance. Length is good and presages well for the future. | 88

JR | Pale straw. Low-key nose. Very soft and juicy. I'd like more acidity or bitterness. Sweetness obtrudes. Drink 2017-19. | 85

Dirler-Cadé Gewurztraminer Kessler Grand Cru 2013 | 86
(13% ABV; 50g/l RS)

AJ | Pale to mid-gold. Very exotic, very fruity scents: green plums left in the sunshine till they dimple and ooze sugars. Some apricot, too. Quite delicious to smell, yet I wouldn't shout out, "Ah, Gewurz!" This completely describes the palate also: baked green plums, succulent and sweet. But with Gewurz on the label, you do hope for a bit more aromatic density and power. Generous sugars. | 85

CM | Yellow with a suggestion of gold. Rather dumb on nose, with some honey and a hint of lemon. The palate is more open but weighty and sweet, and the alcohol reinforces the sugar. There is acidity, but it rather fades beneath the weight of the sugar and alcohol. | 85

JR | Fresh, simple nose with floral notes (lilies?). There's a bitter note on the end. Pungent and interesting, with more apparent sweetness than most. Just not that fresh and compelling. Drink 2015-20. | 88

Dopff Au Moulin Gewurztraminer Domaine Familial 2013 | 86
(13.5% ABV; 14g/l RS)

AJ | Full gold. Sweet and grassy, almost like the Mosel amplified. Exuberant but perhaps lacks aromatic finesse and typicity. Juicy and soft, full of lush orchard fruit and grassy freshness. Not much spice or backbone, and no sign of litchi or rose, but pleasant drinking. | 84

CM | A good whiff of rose petal to the bouquet of this, with a hint of barley-sugar sweetness. There's lovely balance to the palate, with good weight of flavor, lively acidity, aromatically floral notes, and sweetness well balanced. The length is a little fragile and tends more to barley sugar than rose petals. | 87

JR | Deep straw. Richly burned toast aroma. This seems relatively evolved and to have rather low acidity, though it certainly isn't too sweet. Lacks much definition. Drink 2014-18. | 86

Hugel Gewurztraminer Grossi Laüe 2010 | 86
(14% ABV; 16.3g/l RS)

AJ | Pale steel-gold. There's a sense of aromatic richness here, almost a butteriness, combined with gentle, low-focus floral notes. Soft, sweet, quietly attractive: buttered *pain d'épices*. Not notably concentrated, yet very easy and supple to drink. | 86

CM | Dark, exotic aromas, with rose petal, toast, and Turkish delight predominant. The palate has a lovely balance of sweetness and acidity, and some development of flavor. This is lively and

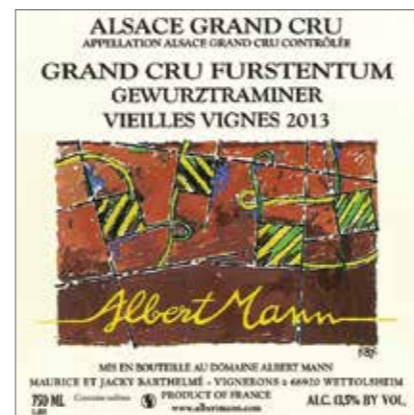
fresh and is evolving well, with buttery, barley-sugar length and good freshness. | 89
JR | Pale yellowish straw. Hardly any nose. The sugar rather obtrudes. And then so does the alcohol on the end. Rather an unbalanced wine—too old? Drink 2012-16. | 84



Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Furstentum Grand Cru Vieilles Vignes 2015 | 86
(13.5% ABV; 26g/l RS)

AJ | Steel green-silver. Slightly dry, cardboard scents. Some spiced apple fruit, but it lacks subtlety, richness, and appeal. On the palate, the character is similar—that cardboard (filter-pad?) note is unbecoming. The fruit quality isn't bad, though, and there is some winning sweet rose on the palate, too. You could certainly recognize it and enjoy it, but without finer aromatics it's not really a contender today. | 83
CM | Pretty dumb and closed on the nose. Young and rather tightly shuttered at present. There's good weight and good acidity to balance the sugar and an underlying intensity. But this needs five years or so to reach a more drinkable moment. | 89

JR | Mid-straw. Indistinct syrupy nose. Sweetness rather dominates everything, though there is some freshness on the end. Lightly bitter. Just not quite enough distinctive flavor—more sugar+acid+bitterness. Drink 2017-21. | 87



Bott Frères Gewurztraminer Réserve Personnelle 2016 | 85
(12.5% ABV; 47.29g/l RS)

AJ | Pale to mid-gold. Sweet, malty, reedy, planty; graceful and restrained aromas for the 45+ g/l

cohort. Attractive, nonetheless, if relatively superficial, without any great power, density, or saturation for this sugar level. | 85

CM | Honeyed, with glimmers of aromatics to come, but not really here yet. The palate is sweet, quite alcoholic and with good acidity. The sweetness is rather overpowering at the moment. Without sufficient aromatic complexity to balance the sugar, this presents as a sweet, honeyed, rather alcoholic Gewurz. It's difficult to see a positive future for it. | 79

JR | Bright gold. Simple green-fruit flavors. Full-on and fragrant. Not that alcoholic. Correct. And rich and long. Drink 2017-22. | 90



Cave de Turckheim Gewurztraminer Vieilles Vignes 2015 | 85
(13% ABV; 23g/l RS)

AJ | Pale steel-green. Some quiet apple fruit, a little bit of stalk. Lively, though not as seductive as most, perhaps. Apples, apricots, tangerines, in sweet style and dressed with spice and nougatine richness. Actually very good in the mouth—and better than the aromatic profile suggested. | 88

CM | Pleasant floral aromas, mainly rose. Light and refreshing, with a darker undertone of toast and highish acidity. There's almost a burned hint to this that slightly jars. It's light, with no great length, and not going very far. | 79
JR | Smoky/wet woolly nose. Sulfides in ascendant? Low acid and a little sickly. A powder puff of a wine—insubstantial and talsy. Drink 2016-18. | 87

PALE STEEL-GREEN. SOME QUIET APPLE FRUIT, A LITTLE BIT OF STALK. LIVELY, THOUGH NOT AS SEDUCTIVE AS MOST, PERHAPS. ACTUALLY VERY GOOD IN THE MOUTH

Trimbach Cuvée des Seigneurs de Ribeauvillé 2011 | 84
(14.5% ABV; 16g/l RS)

AJ | Deep steel-gold. Rather a quiet and uneventful scent, which isn't the Gewurz ideal. A little torpid ginger if you hunt about. Rather a weighty palate, too, though you realize that it's here that all the aromas were hiding: The spices emerge through the soft and luscious summer fruit. A fair to good wine that would win a higher score with a more attractive aromatic profile. | 85

CM | Not a lot of aromas showing here. The palate is similarly dumb. It's pleasant wine, with good acidity and sweetness, though slightly overt alcohol. Not much length. Doesn't add up to much. | 77

JR | Deep coppery color. Refreshing nose with strong faded rose-petal notes. A tad low in acidity, but the bitterness compensates. This seems to have been made by someone with a clear vision. Could only be Alsace, with a vibrant undertow. Drink 2013-20. | 91



Léon Beyer Gewurztraminer Comtes d'Eguisheim Pfersigberg Grand Cru 2011 | 83
(14% ABV; 4g/l RS)

AJ | Pale steel-gold. Clean, soft litchi fruits but little evident spice. A touch dusty. Dry and rather sinewy palate, though long, with a little baked-apple fruit on the palate. Touch bitter on the finish. Fair at best, though drinkable. | 83

CM | Hint of barley sugar on the nose, otherwise rather bland with a whiff of aggressive alcohol. The dryness doesn't really help this. It might have been more appealing with a few more grams of sugar! Acidity balances the alcohol adequately, but there's little real perfume, and a slightly hot finish. | 78
JR | Mid-straw. Mid intensity of rose petal aroma. Slightly oily palate entry. Very savory finish and medium body. A distinctive style with some bite and freshness. Quite long. Confidently different. Well made, but it rather fell apart in the glass. Drink 2013-20. | 87

Domaine Albert Mann Gewurztraminer Steingrubler Grand Cru 2014 | 80
(13% ABV; 28g/l RS)

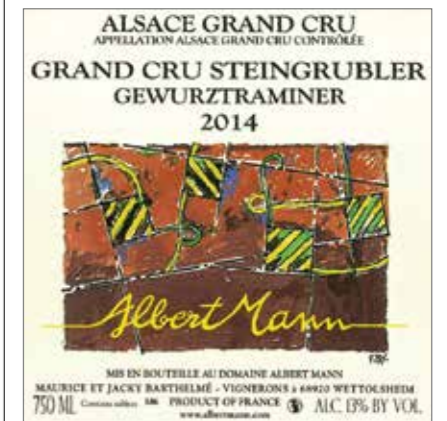
AJ | Quite a pale steel-gold. Slightly odd scents, though—some vitamin B meatiness and grubbiness, and nothing lovely or lifted or sweet

REFRESHING NOSE WITH STRONG FADED ROSE-PETAL NOTES. A TAD LOW IN ACIDITY, BUT THE BITTERNESS COMPENSATES. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN MADE BY SOMEONE WITH A CLEAR VISION. COULD ONLY BE ALSACE, WITH A VIBRANT UNDERTOW

to engage with. Not wholly successful, and it doesn't entice. Rather similar on the palate. One senses there has been some sort of struggle here, and the result is a little disappointing and coarse-grained. | 76

CM | Hard to read at the moment, with what seems to be a hint of reduction and thiols on the nose, and not a lot else showing. Acidity is good, and balances the sweetness, but there aren't many of the flavors I hope to find in Gewurz. Neither is there great length. Maybe that's a good thing. | 79

JR | Deep bright gold. Very simple and sulfidey. Unsubtle. Unappetizing. Drink 2014-16. | 85



Dirler-Cadé Gewurztraminer Spiegel Grand Cru 2015 | 77
(13.5% ABV; 48g/l RS)

AJ | Full mid-gold. Bottle 1: Very strange, raw aromas, entirely unsexy and untypical. Bottle 2: Not notably different. Still raw and rather bean-like. Atypical. All the oddity is there on the palate, too: not a success. | 74

CM | Really unappealing rot character. This is not good wine and will never be anything other than tainted by rot. | 70

JR | Pale straw. Sticky nose. Just sweet and simple. Raw finish. Clumsy. And indeed a bit sickly. Second bottle equally heavy, if not more so. Very sweet. Drink 2017-20. | 86