

## **Wiltinger Schlangengraben Riesling Spätlese feinherb Weingut Johann Peter Reinert 2005**

The best vineyards along the Saar are the most difficult in Germany to cultivate. The steep slopes of weathered slate and the extreme weather conditions give “steelier,” lighter bodied wines than those from the Mittel Mosel downriver. Reinert plants his vines wide apart so that sunlight reaches the clusters, and ripen the grapes to perfection. The resulting wines balance delicate sweetness with high acidity and stony qualities. This 2005 Spätlese offers just a hint of how interestingly the wine will develop in time.

### **Regional History**

Viticulture in Germany is mentioned by the Stoic philosopher Posidonius of Rhodes (135-51 BC), who wrote, “...the [Germans] drink a lot of undiluted wine...” It’s known that the Romans first planted many of Germany’s finest vineyard sites. With the rise of the early Christian church, the vine had been intimately intertwined with religious and secular history. Charlemagne supported winemaking directly with vine planting projects and indirectly, by his support and encouragement of monastic orders. By the late 18th century, it was the Church who was responsible for quality controls such as laws against the adulteration of wines, replacement of lesser-known varietals with the noble Riesling grape, and the custom of distinguishing certain vineyard sites as being superior. Long before the first growths in Bordeaux were established, the Mosel had already set the benchmark in terms of quality for racy, elegantly fruity Rieslings. At the end of the 1800s, Rieslings from reputable estates in the Mosel were the most sought after and expensive wines in the world.

The lighter German wines are excellent with classic regional dishes such as wiener schnitzel, spaetzle (noodles) in butter or delicate cream sauce & kudlen (dumplings). The heavier Spätlese & dry or off-dry Auslese wines are excellent with fish (including sushi & sashimi), poultry, and other white meat dishes. German wines pair particularly well with reduction sauces having an edge of caramelization and the addition of cream or crème fraiche. German wines are naturally well suited to cut through the edge of sweetness and fat from these elegant sauces. In contrast, garlic-laden, tomato-based sauces and olive-oil preparations combat the delicate aromas and texture of most German wines.



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