

Keller, Florsheim-Dalsheim

If I had to name the best producer in Germany today, it would be Klaus-Peter Keller, who has raised this estate to new heights since he took over from his father in 2002. His sublime dry rieslings make up the core of his offering, but literally everything he touches turns to gold. Not only are his Silvaner Feuervogel, Weissburgunder "S" and Pinot Noir "FR" first-class, but he is also one of the few winemakers from more southerly climates who can produce spatlezes, auslezes and TBAs that vie with their likes from the Rheingau, Nahe and Mosel. No fewer than five of his wines placed in my top ten in three different categories in 2009, a stellar vintage for this estate.

Also recommended: 2009 Silvaner Trocken Feuervogel (89), 2009 Weisser Burgunder "S" (89), 2009 Riesling Trocken von der Fels (87), 2009 Westhofener Riesling Trocken (89), 2009 Riesling Kabinett "RR" (90), 2009 Niersteiner Pettenthal Riesling Grosses Gewachs (91), 2009 Westhofener Kirchspiel Riesling Spatlese (89), 2009 Niersteiner Pettenthal Riesling Spatlese (91), 2009 Monsheimer Silberberg Rieslaner Auslese (93), 2009 Dalsheimer Hubacker Riesling Auslese (92), 2009 Westhofener Kirchspiel Riesling Auslese *** (93), 2009 Westhofener Morstein Riesling Auslese *** (93), 2009 Westhofener Morstein Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Gold Capsule (96), 2009 Westhofener Kirchspiel Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Gold Capsule (97), 2009 Westhofener Abtserde Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Gold Capsule (98), 2008 Pinot Noir "S" (89), 2008 Dalsheimer Burgel Pinot Noir Grosses Gewachs (90) and 2008 Pinot Noir "FR" (92). (Sussex Wine Merchants, Moorestown, NJ; Dee Vine Wines, San Francisco, CA)

2009 Westhofener Kirchspiel Riesling Trocken Grosses Gewachs (\$120) White peach, basil and salted almonds on the nose. Silky and refined, with very pure kiwi fruit enlivened by zesty acidity. Salty finishing minerality will assure this wine of a long life. 92

2009 Dalsheimer Hubacker Riesling Trocken Grosses Gewachs (\$85) Exuberant aromas of ripe apricot, sweet lime and herbal spices. The crisp, clean structure of this wine masks its intensity and weight today; flavors of ethereal passion fruit and spices dominate. Fine minerality extends the very long finish. This is again the most approachable of Keller's dry rieslings. 92

2009 Westhofener Morstein Riesling Trocken Grosses Gewachs (\$120) Seductive aromas of apricot, toasted pine nuts and lemon oil. The velvety texture and finely wrought nectarine flavor are given balance by an understated acidity. A persistent spiciness lingers on the long, unctuous finish. The most majestic of the dry rieslings here. 93

2009 Riesling Trocken G Max (\$275) Enticing aromas of ripe apricot, dried herbs and sweet lime. Supple and expansive, but with a crisp acid structure giving shape to the wine and providing the structural support for an extended evolution in bottle. Smoked almonds and a persistent saltiness linger on the finish. With its unctuous richness, outstanding depth and subtly spicy character, this is one of the finest dry rieslings of the vintage. 95

2009 Westhofener Abtserde Riesling Trocken Grosses Gewachs (\$120) Expansive aromas of cling peach, clove oil and passion fruit. The explosive pit fruit flavor is densely packed in an almost perfect structure that intrigues, charms and then refreshes the palate. A tantalizingly complex and extremely persistent finish offers perfect clarity and outstanding intensity. This is like drinking pure water from a mountain stream. My top dry riesling of the vintage. 96

2009 Westhofener Abtserde Riesling Spatlese (auction wine) Pale gold. Ripe peach, passion fruit and candied fruit on the nose. Rich texture of creamy papaya, yet still clean, refreshing and vibrantly spiced. In spite of the wine's high residual sugar, this spatlese remains bright and lively and finishes with true distinction. 92(+?)

2009 Westhofener Abtserde Riesling Auslese Gold Capsule (auction wine) Rich golden yellow. Apricot nectar, pineapple and a hint of smoked meat are woven intricately into the brown spice botrytis on the nose. Sweet, luscious peach flavor with a velvety texture that's kept light by an enticing acid structure. Pure, delicate, refined and very long on the finish. 93

2009 Dalsheimer Hubacker Riesling Auslese*** Deep golden yellow. Rich melon, acacia honey and smoked almonds dominate the nose, along with a hint of brown spice botrytis. Deep, rich, concentrated pineapple fruit currently overpowers the wine's subtle acidity, which will only begin to surface as it ages. Caramelized peach with a touch of citrus fruit enlivens and cleanses the palate on the very long, pure finish. Excellent potential. 94

2009 Westhofener Abtserde Riesling Trockenbeerenauslese Gold Capsule #41 Golden color. The nose offers an exotic mix of mango, papaya and lichee hovering over rich, cinnamon-tinged botrytis. Compellingly sweet and rich, with highly concentrated pineapple flavor complemented by smoky accents and leavened by the elegantly bitter expression of the botrytis. A wine of riveting depth, its creamy fruit, smoky spices and strong botrytis character linger endlessly on the finish. A nearly perfect trockenbeerenauslese and one of the finest wine s of the vintage. 98

(by Joel Payne)