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# Austria's Single Vineyard Summit 2025 – Wachau

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AUSTRIA

AUSTRIA 2024

RIESLING

GRÜNER VELTLINER

WHITE WINE



*Riesling and Grüner Veltliner from Austria's most exalted white-wine region. See also our reports on [Grüner Veltliner](#) and [Riesling](#) from Lower Austria and the [red wines](#) shown at the ÖTW tastings this September. Above, Grüner Veltliner in the Kollmütz vineyard in Wösendorf (© Pamela Schmatz).*

**Julia writes** The Wachau remains separate from the other wine regions along the Danube and for good reason. Not because it grows different varieties, although Riesling and Grüner Veltliner are more dominant in the

Wachau than in any other Austrian wine-growing region – and our reviews below are pretty much equally divided between these two – but because it has a very strong regional identity, defined and reinforced over the last 40 years by the [Vinea Wachau](#), an impressively collegiate association of around 200 producers, farming more than 90% of the region's vineyards. (The Wachau was one of Jancis's exemplars in her recent article on [Vintner cooperation](#).)

This regional identity may have similarities with parts of the Kremstal and the Kamptal but in the Wachau, the terraced vineyards delineated by magnificent dry-stone walls – around 30% of the entire vineyard area – are particularly steep and dramatic, up to almost 530 m (1,739 ft) in elevation and with a maximum gradient of 47°, earning them the status of Natural World Heritage Site in 2000.

These vineyards are mostly on hard crystalline rock such as gneiss, amphibolite, marble and quartz, with more [loess](#) on the eastern slopes, although soils closer to the river are typically lighter and sandier. The mostly poor soils on the terraces result in naturally low yields. The day–night temperature range is notably high, making it possible to produce wines of both power and freshness. Summers are hot, though moderated by proximity to the river, forest or by elevation and winters are cold, but warmer nearer the river.

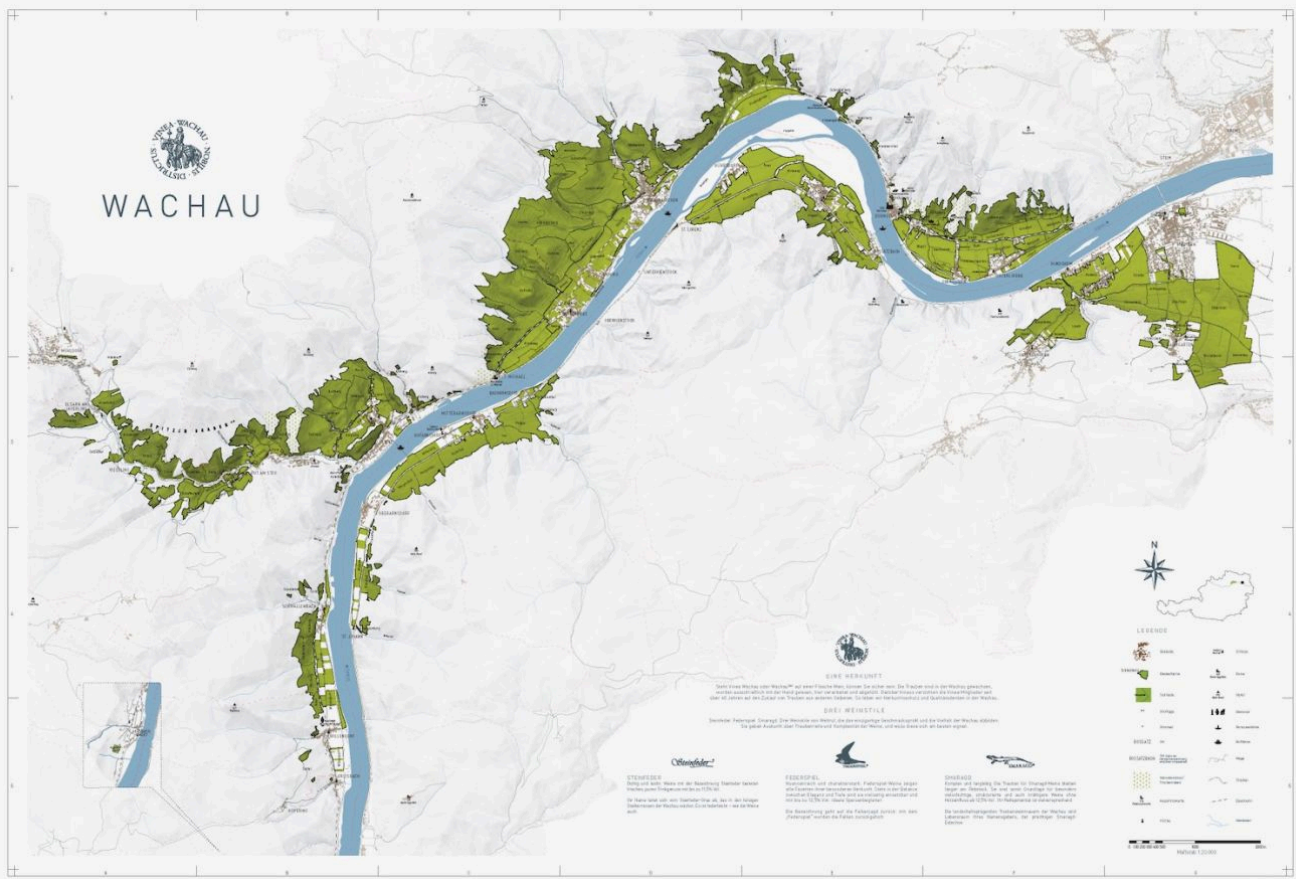


Riesling in the Kollmitz vineyard in Joching (credit: Mathias Hirtzberger)

The vineyard area is also much smaller than in Kremstal or Kamptal, with 1,285 ha/3,175 acres v 2,242 ha/5,540 acres and 3,567 ha/8,814 acres respectively, according to [Austrian Wine statistics](#).

Tara and I shared this Wachau tasting, dividing the wines geographically east to west on the basis that, generally speaking, the climate becomes cooler as you go west and further from the river: from Mautern and Loiben in the east to Spitz and Viessling in what is known as the Spitzer Graben in the west. This is mainly because of colder Atlantic air from the west and the warmer Pannonian influence from the east. The village names are included in the tasting notes if you want to locate the vineyard on a map.





Vinea Wachau map – for more detail, see the [interactive vineyard map](#) on their website.

However, it's not just the east–west transition that's influential here. There is also an important difference in winegrowing conditions depending on the [aspect](#) of the vineyards. Those south of the Danube, for example in Mautern, Rossatz or Arnsdorf, are more likely to face north than those that are north of the river, for example, in Loiben or Wösendorf, which are more likely to face south and be warmer and sunnier. In the past, it was much more challenging to ripen grapes in a north-facing site but today, such cooler sites have their advantages if ripeness with freshness is the goal, as explained by Martin Bergkirchner from Mitterarnsdorf in [last year's report](#).

One other key distinction of Wachau wines, and clearly a source of unflinching pride among the Wachau winegrowers, is their quality ladder based on power and concentration: from most powerful to lightest, [Smaragd](#), [Federspiel](#) and [Steinfeder](#). (Many producers wear a very cute label badge of a lizard: *Smaragd* is the name of a green lizard that basks on the region's sunny slopes.) All wines in these three categories must be certified under the Sustainable Austria programme. With its well-established reputation for specific vineyard sites, the region seems to have little intention of adopting the now legally recognised category Erste Lage although as a DAC-defined region since 2000, it does share the three-tier pyramid now used in most of

the country, ie *Gebietswein* (regional wine), *Ortswein* (village wine) and *Riedenwein* (single-vineyard wine). There are 155 such vineyards registered in the Wachau.

## Grüner v Riesling in 2024

Of the 103 wines on show, 52 Grüners and 51 Rieslings, the vast majority were from the 2024 vintage, which was badly hit by floods last September, during and immediately after this event last year (see the photos in [last year's report](#)). As Simon Gattinger, a young winegrower in Loiben and a volunteer fireman, told me, those who picked before the rains probably made Federspiel wines, those who waited were rewarded with Smaragd. However, it was clear from some of the wines reviewed, waiting also meant loss of precious acidity, resulting in power but a lack of balancing freshness.

Georg Högl, who has been winemaker in his family business since 2014, taking over from his father, who is in charge of the vineyards, where Georg's 91-year-old grandfather still drives a tractor, confirmed what we had been told by winegrowers in the Kamptal and the Kremstal: that Riesling was affected more intensely by the rains than Grüner because berries swollen by the rain burst and were susceptible to rot if not picked immediately – and possibly prematurely. He held off a few days after the rain to pick his Riesling, from which he made mainly Federspiel. The Grüner he picked a week later – still earlier than usual – from which he produced more Smaragd. Key to coping with the climate challenges, he told me, was 'perfect canopy management. Removing enough leaves/shoots to have open vines for wind and sunlight. But not too much, because of the danger of sunburn. The best way is to remove from north and east and everything in the middle of the vine.'





Georg Högl working on the canopy in the Bruck vineyard in the village of Viessling, western Wachau

Högl also pointed out that vineyards in the Spitzer Graben, the narrow valley of the River Spitz (*Graben* means ‘ditch’) that runs from the town of Spitz to Elsarn am Jauerling further west, are cooler than those along the Danube, because the sun reaches the vineyards later in the day in the spring and autumn – an advantage in warmer years such as 2023.

When I spoke to Franz Hirtzberger Jr of the eponymous winery in Spitz, he was quick to defend the prospects of the 2024 Smaragds with slightly lower acidity, asserting that they can still age really well. In a recent vertical tasting of their Honigvogel Smaragd, the 2003, from a hot vintage, showed extremely well, apparently. Nowadays they encourage higher yields in Grüner than in the past in order to retain higher acidity. He also believes that while the quality is more variable in 2024 than in 2023, ‘the best 2024 are better than anything in 2023’.

Walter Lahrnsteig, in Mitterarnsdorf, told me in an email that since around 2018, ‘vintages have naturally shown more ripeness and power’ so in order to keep freshness in their wines they have changed their ways of working in the vineyard, not just being more careful about harvesting dates but also having a shorter canopy, typically down from 1.6 m in height to 1.1 m in order to reduce photosynthesis and slow the production of sugar in the grapes. ‘Our

goal is a wine that starts with some pressure, tightens through the mid palate, and finishes long and with lots of minerality – keeping that drinkability rather than heaviness.’



Walter Lahrnsteig in the Traunthal vineyard in Oberarnsdorf (© Martin Skopal)

Franz Pichler of PAX in the village of Joching started out just five years ago and has just 1.5 ha (3.7 acres) of his own vines and rents another 5.5 ha (14 acres). He created the name PAX (P from Pichler and Ax from his wife/business partner's surname Axmann) 'because there are too many Pichlers'. He was one of the few who chose to show wines from the 2023 vintage, because, they believe, the wines benefit from a longer and gentler period in big oak vessels, then some time in tank, before bottling. Their customers also appreciate their more 'mature' wines, apparently.





Verena Axmann-Pichler and Franz Stefan Pichler have chosen the name PAX.

## Why all the fuss about Smaragd?

One question that provoked me again and again was why there is such a fixation about Smaragd. It reminded me of the relentless promotion of Grosse Gewächse wines in Germany as the pinnacle of quality when Kabinetts – probably, if I dare say it, my favourite style of German Riesling and certainly the one I buy most often – can offer outstanding quality at lower prices.

But perhaps price is the key, based on tradition and a legacy of the days when power and concentration were a once-in-a-decade achievement. Austrian wine lovers – probably also the gatekeepers outside of Austria – are very unlikely to pay the same price for a Federspiel, let alone a Steinfeder, as for a Smaragd, even if the work involved may be no less and the conditions needed to produce a fully ripe dry wine with lower alcohol are less common.



Emmerich Knoll of Weingut Knoll in Unterloiben, president of Vinea Wachau, is frustrated by the lack of enthusiasm among the region's top producers for Steinfeder, the lightest Wachau style. 'Although it would definitely find consumers in today's markets, it is still seen as a simpler wine, mostly from alluvial soils next to the Danube (so it has no clear origin, which seems so important today)'. He accepts that it might not be the best style for a single-vineyard wine because 'it does not show all the distinctiveness of great crus', which are best achieved at 12.5–13.5%, but he thinks Steinfeder is a perfect complement to the higher-profile single-vineyard wines since 'it shows a different face of Wachau ... and we are the only area that has per definition a light, low-alcohol wine! But it must be a serious wine, vinification not different from a cru Federspiel, not with very intense fermentation aromas or a high CO<sub>2</sub> level.'

It's hard to convince Smaragd lovers to drink to Steinfeder, and vice versa, says Knoll. 'Taste, style, price just don't fit.' In the words of Franz Hirtzberger Jr, Steinfeder is 'unser Trinkwein' (our everyday-drinking wine).

But what of Federspiel, which has to fall within the range of 11.5–12.5%? Knoll believes these wines can be a great expression of vineyard site, even as good as Smaragd. Franz Pichler and Verena Axmann at PAX agree. They would like to make single-vineyard Federspiel but their vineyards best suited to this style are small and scattered and thus making an Ortswein (village-level wine) is more logical. I would love to see more Federspiels in the annual Grafenegg tasting (there were just four). A diet of 99% Smaragd can be tiring, especially in a vintage such as 2024.

Hanne Hirtzberger of Weinhofmeisterei Mathias Hirtzberger (below) reinforced my theory about price. Making this style of wine from a top vineyard requires as much effort as making a Smaragd but wine drinkers, in Austria in particular, where the perceived relationship between concentration and quality is well entrenched, won't pay the same price for the two wines: a vicious circle.



Hanne and Mathias Hirtzberger (© Pamela Schmatz)

In a later email, Hanne and Mathias Hirtzberger explained that Federspiel is the backbone of their winery in terms of the number of bottles, and they see it as Austrians' everyday wine. Successful wines in this style, whether Riesling or Grüner, require suitable vineyards that will achieve flavour ripeness at lower alcohol levels plus the decision to make that style of wine from the outset. It's not a decision you make at harvest time.

Regarding Steinfeder, they added, 'We push ourselves ... to make some Steinfeder every year. Which can be a challenge in some (hotter) years. It is not hard to produce Steinfeder in general, but it is harder to produce Steinfeder from physiologically ripe grapes and then it is a lot about timing (and the right vineyard choice and vineyard work during the year).' Experience of the vineyards is critical. Riesling is more difficult: 'grapes at Steinfeder levels often lack the typical character for Riesling. Also the acidity levels of the Riesling are often still too dominant.' The Vinea Wachau rules – hand-harvesting and working sustainably, for example – make it hard to charge a high enough price for a Steinfeder.

Lahrnsteig believes that all three styles are equally valuable, describing Federspiel as 'the golden middle' and suggesting that Steinfeder and Federspiel should be closer in price since they are simply different styles,



and Steinfeder is particularly important for their [Heuriger](#) customers. Smaragd, on the other hand, has the greatest ageing potential.

## Julia's highlights

Highlights for me in this tasting came from both ends of the western part of the region I focused on. Excellent Grüners were made from the aptly named Schön vineyard in Viessling at the western end of the Spitzer Graben by Högl and Graben Gritsch, both managing to achieve that elusive combination, particularly in 2024, of richness and freshness.

From Joching and Wösendorf, further east and on the northern bank of the Danube, came a full-flavoured yet mouth-watering Kollmütz Grüner from Weinhofmeisterei Mathias Hirtzberger and from neighbouring Joching, PAX's seemingly effortless and sweet-fruited yet refreshing Kollmitz bottling.

Even if most producers I spoke to reported more obstacles with Riesling than with Grüner in 2024, my three highest-scoring wines in the tasting were Riesling. Franz Hirtzberger Jr proved the point he had made to me during the tasting, that it really was possible to make refreshing wines in 2024, particularly in the Spitzer Graben. His Hochrain and Singerriedel were beautifully fresh and elegant, promising a long future. Similar qualities were also to the fore in Mathias Hirtzberger's expressive wine from the Kollmitz vineyard in Joching. Two wines from Franz Pichler of PAX demonstrated not only his skill in both east (Höll in Wösendorf) and west (Biern in Viessling) but also the benefit of showing his wines a year later – all were from the 2023 vintage and demonstrated the superiority of the vintage as well as greater harmony and incipient complexity.

## Tara's highlights

**Tara adds** Like Julia, I also wish for more Federspiel wines in these tastings. And last year I admit that I was rather jealous that Julia got the cooler end of the Wachau, where the 2023 wines generally showed more finesse, and less tropical fruit and roasted fruit notes, than those from the warmer eastern end.

But this year I didn't mind the split at all. Despite the warm summer and fast development, the best wines in 2024 have restraint – in Riesling and Grüner alike. While there's no doubt the rain made harvest really complicated for

some producers – and there are some dilute wines – for others it had a silver lining. ‘I believe the rain saved us – there would have been more alcohol and less acidity [without it]’, Emmerich Knoll said to me. ‘The rain brought lower temperatures, and so more time for the fruit to hang. The rain was part of the quality.’

I’d heard the same sentiment the evening before from Christoph Donabaum, who’s at the western end of the Wachau. ‘We were really worried [about the rain]’, he told me, ‘But it was really cool. If it had been five degrees more, the vineyards would have been destroyed. But the grapes – especially Grüner Veltliner – survived.’ In the end, they didn’t finish harvesting until 3 November.

And Martin Mittelbach at Tegernseerhof described to me how their year-long tactic is to delay the harvest in the autumn, which usually now comes too early. ‘We try to work on postponing the ripening point – not just the sugars but to get to cooler temperatures so that we can have longer skin contact.’ The skin contact is especially important for Grüner Veltliner – ‘It needs a phenolic backbone’, he explains. ‘Otherwise it can be too oily, too wide; you don’t have focus without it.’ Pruning in the end of March/early April; seeding grass between the rows to set up competition for water; keeping the canopy ‘open and fresh but trying to reduce growth’ are some of their tactics. In 2024, they started picking two days before the rain – because in one of their vineyards ‘the vines were in a flooding area’ – but in the end didn’t finish harvest until 19 October. His wines are some of the most restrained, elegant wines I tasted at my end of the Wachau – alongside bottlings from Knoll, Jamek, Prager and Frischengruber.

The 103 wine reviews below are grouped by grape variety. Within those groups they are ordered by vineyard site and then alphabetically by producer, with the name of the village given at the start of the italicised background notes, but you can reorder the wines within the varietal groups as you wish.

Sort by score



## Grüner Veltliner

Prager, Achleiten Stockkultur Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024  
Wachau

18 + / 20



## WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Prager writes: 'Like the Loibenberg and Kellerberg, the upper Achleiten is composed of Gföhl gneiss. In contrast, the lower Achleiten consists of base-rich migmatite-amphibolite, a stable adjoining rock with Gföhl gneiss. Migmatites are formed by the partial melting of rocks. In the southernmost corner near the railway, paragneiss is the third parent material in the area. The profile shows a soil composed of migmatite-amphibolite. The sandy, stony soil indicates a very good supply of calcium and magnesium. The gneiss character of the soil dominates underneath the topsoil, easily visible by the large feldspars in the profile. The amphibolite character predominates in the dark bottom area. The white coatings and fillings in cracks come from carbonates that were precipitated during the course of soil formation. The carbonate itself probably comes from the glacial loess cover.'* Aged in stainless-steel tanks. Certified sustainable.

This is super-reduced, but with lots of swirling the fruit comes up, white and crisp, with a lovely, restrained sweetness. White-pepper spice. Elegant. Later in the day, it's shining, projecting its flavours with bell-tone clarity. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2026 – 2040

### Nikolaihof, Im Weingebirge Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2019 Wachau

17.5/20

## WHITE

*Mautern. Loam, loess, paragneiss. Screwcap closure. RS 1.6 g/l, TA 4.9 g/l. Certified biodynamic (Demeter).*

Since last year when I last tasted this, it's become only richer and more delicious. The gold hue and earthy, nutty lees notes show the maturity of the wine; but it feels clean and vibrant, swirling with notes of dried flowers, fresh acacia blossom, apricot jam and lovely *Waldmeister* (woodruff) spice. It's plush and inviting right now, especially with a creamy wild-mushroom fricassee, and yet it's also built to last for many more years in the cellar. Long finish. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2036

### Jäger, Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

## WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Weathered Gföhler gneiss. Aged for six months in stainless-steel tanks. Natural cork closure. RS 1.9 g/l, TA 4.7 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Juicy, spicy, dense and rich, with a slightly smoky stoniness behind. It's powerful but also warm and inviting right now, a lovely balance of fruit, acidity and concentration. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2035

### PAX, Kollmitz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Joching. Kollmitz is the name of the hill above Joching. Mostly covered by loess, terrace gravel and sea sediments, with a paragneiss core. Average gradient 27%. Vines over 30 years old. Certified sustainable.*

Highly expressive, sweet citrus aroma, even a hint of apricot. Honeyed and sweet-tasting, though I think this is the fruit profile rather than residual sugar. Lovely balance of freshness and fruit sweetness. Not trying too hard to impress by its power. There's an ease here, resulting in a relaxed and delicious wine. (JH)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2026 – 2035

### Weinhofmeisterei Mathias Hirtzberger, Kollmütz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. A big vineyard directly west of the town of Wösendorf. The soils of these terraced vineyards developed from highly weathered paragneiss. At the foot of the Kollmütz slope, the vines grow in loess soils. On the summit plateau, the vines are rooted in sandy terrace gravel from the Danube. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Rich, golden-fruited aroma. Almost savoury in its spice character. Rich, chewy and yet remarkably mouth-watering – unusual in this vintage. Full but not heavy, extremely well balanced, long and likely to age well. Succulent and chewy on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2038

### Frischengruber, Kreuzberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Vines 60+ years old on paragneiss and amphibolite. Spontaneous fermentation in 500-litre neutral oak barrels, then moved into stainless steel. Screwcap closure. RS 3.5 g/l, TA 6.1 g/l. Certified sustainable.*



Cool, lemony – lemon balm. Fresh, breezy acidity. There's a real delicacy to this, even as the fruit warms in the glass to red-blushed peach and apricot. Feels springy, crisp-edged, refreshing. The advantages of north-facing slopes in warm years, perhaps. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2034

### Jamek, Liebenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Dürnstein. Gneiss and amphibolite towards the top; stony loam-silt towards the bottom. Terraced with dry-stone walls, facing south-south-west. Vines over 30 years old. Aged in large wooden barrels. RS 2 g/l, TA 4.9 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Typical Jamek reserve on full display here: this is round and smooth, with pretty scents over very ripe, green fruit. A cool minerality keeping everything together – as it likely will for another decade. Firm, impressive. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2034

### Emmerich Knoll, Loibenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Large vineyard mainly of Gföhl gneiss with some loess patches. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Spicy, almost oily, with a smooth, tangy green-fruit-and-herb flavour. It's savoury and mouth-filling. Very Grüner Veltliner, very calm, reserved, paced. Would go well with rich but quiet dishes, like bread dumplings or schnitzel (hold the currant jam). Lasts. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2039

### Graben Gritsch, Schön Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Viessling. Steeply sloping terraced site directly adjoining the Bruck vineyard. Slate and gneiss. Vines more than 30 years old. Screwcap closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Pale gold. Honeyed and deeply inviting. Ripe in yellow fruits, sour-fresh apricot and with notable precision and freshness. Not as powerful as some in this line-up but it is full of flavour, refreshing, with a long, spicy yet elegant finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2026 – 2035

Josef & Georg Högl, Schön Alte Parzellen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Viessling. Steeply sloping terraced site directly adjoining the Bruck vineyard. Slate and gneiss. Vines more than 30 years old. Not yet bottled (delay in cork delivery) but they were able to show it at the Grafenegg tasting as it already has its official Prüfnummer. RS 1.8 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

This has a darker aroma profile than the straight Schön. More rocky-mineral than openly fruity. On the palate, it's rich and spicy with a hint of orange. Deep and long yet beautifully balanced with a surprisingly cool, fresh, citrusy finish. (JH)

Drink: 2028 – 2040

Alzinger, Steinertal Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Unterloiben. A steep terraced 4.61-ha vineyard of orthogneiss. Spontaneously fermented in stainless steel, then matured in steel and a small amount of neutral Austrian oak. Certified sustainable.*

Yellow-green in colour as well as in flavour: minty, spicy, *Waldmeister* notes lifting ripe cantaloupe fruitiness. The alcohol peeks out at the front of palate, but a wave of juicy cantaloupe flavour comes up to meet it and pull it back in. The undertow is stony, cool and firm. Elegant and characterful Grüner. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2035

Tegernseerhof, Schütt Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5 +/20

WHITE

*Loiben. South-facing at 208–225 m of elevation, on weathered gneiss. Certified sustainable.*

This is super-closed right now, smelling like wet rock and tasting like it, too (reduced). It's super-lean, just liquid rocks, with a cool, tight, clean feel, but not steely; just stony. Needs time. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2027 – 2037

**Domäne Roland Chan, Bach Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau** 16.5/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Bach is the mid slope of the Gaisberg vineyard. Some way from the river. Gneiss and loess. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.1 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Lighter and more delicate in aroma than the Atzberg wines but still peppery and rich, more savoury/spiced than fruity, though there's fruit weight at the core of the wine. Powerful, with just enough freshness for harmony and ageing potential. Could be tiring after one glass – even with this lower alcohol level – but the chewy texture adds freshness. (JH)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2026 – 2033

**Josef & Georg Högl, Brandstatt Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau** 16.5/20

WHITE

*Elsarn. In the Spitzer Graben in the far west of the Wachau. Gneiss and mica schist. Vines 5–10 years old. Screwcap closure. RS 1.9 g/l, TA 5.4 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Openly aromatic with fresh pears and a light herbal note. Lots of varietally typical white pepper here. Chewy and rich in the mouth, with both depth and length. Almost savoury in the textured aftertaste. (JH)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2028 – 2038

**Tegernseerhof, Höhereck Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau** 16.5/20

WHITE

*Dürnstein. Gföhler gneiss. Certified sustainable.*

This is tropically ripe but has freshness, like a slice of freshly cut pineapple. White pepper but not heat. Relatively reserved compared with most of these 2024s. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2024 – 2030

**Weinhauerei 378, Höll Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau** 16.5/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Gneiss, amphibolite, quartzite. Narrow vineyard west of Wösendorf. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable*



*and organic.*

Another good example of 2023, showing a dash of non-sweet honey as well as lovely bright quince notes. Plus, yellow plums and spice. Many layers. Moderate alcohol, a firm grip and decent acidity make this more drinkable than some 2024s, though I am not sure it is bone dry. (JH)

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2027 – 2032

### Piewald, Kalkofen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Steep terraces in the Spitzer Graben, acidic gneiss is united with base-rich amphibolite. The topsoil of the profile consists of loam from both rock types. A crack filled with clayey soil material can be seen in the middle. The vine roots penetrate deep into the rock through these cracks. Vines over 30 years old. Certified sustainable.*

Intensely spicy aroma – more spice than fruit. Rocky-mineral, too. Really powerful with the heat of a central-European not a northern-European wine. Moderate acidity but surprising freshness. Both power and length, with the fruit in the background, holding the core. A very light impression of non-sweet honey on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2035

### Schmelz, Kollmütz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Joching. A plateau with deep loess soils. Fermented and aged for six months in tank. RS 1.4 g/l, TA 4.6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Ripe and golden on the nose. Open and expressive. Already slightly honeyed. Sour-fresh intensity rather than fresh acidity. Firm, chewy, the texture increasing the freshness. Long, savoury finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2032

### Bergkirchner, Poigen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Arnsdorf. Above Mitterarnsdorf, south of the river. Silt and small stones, complemented by cool downdrafts from the Dunkelsteinerwald. Fermented in tank, and aged more than 12 months on the lees. Screwcap closure. RS 2 g/l, TA 4.7 g/l. Certified sustainable and organic.*

Gleaming pale gold. Intensely ripe yellow fruit, golden, and spice, too. Full and broad in the mouth, all those golden flavours, with the texture as much as the acidity giving the structure. Slightly sour on the long, powerful finish. More power than elegance. (JH)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2028 – 2038

### Lahrnsteig, Poigen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Arnsdorf. South of the river. Calcareous loess. RS 3.5 g/l, TA 6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Openly aromatic and spicy. Intense varietal character and beautifully fragrant with lemon and herbs. There's a little bit of sweetness to round out the finish, but it balances the higher-than-average acidity. Fresh and precise. Lots of fruit and lighter-bodied than many a Smaragd 2024, thus easier to drink. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2034

### Pammer, Poigen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Arnsdorf. Poigen is south of the river. Vines here are on sandy soil. Vines 10–20 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.* Smells very young – pear drops and peppery pears. Relatively light-bodied, with masses of freshness on the finish. Straightforward, balanced for the longer term. Less powerful than some but persistent. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2028 – 2037

### Josef & Georg Högl, Schön Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Viessling. Steeply sloping terraced site directly adjoining the Bruck vineyard. Slate and gneiss. Vines more than 30 years old. RS 1.4 g/l, TA 5.3 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Ripe and full of yellow fruit yet with a light stony/mineral overlay. A gentle grip and respectable acidity give this length and a strong direction to a long, clean-cut finish. Power initially, so that the finish seems lighter. Spicy aftertaste lingers. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2028 – 2038

Emmerich Knoll, Schütt Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Loiben. South-facing at 208–225 m of elevation with weathered gneiss. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

This is ripe, almost oily in texture – though not as ripe as Loibenberg – and it has a ton of acidity. The flavours are restrained: earthy/lentil-y, with hints of quince. Floral, nutty and firm yet juicy. Needs time. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2027 – 2034

Strawanzer - Donabaum, Setzberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. A big vineyard between Spitz and Gut am Steig. Various types of gneiss, marble and some loess. Vines over 30 years old. Whole-bunch pressed and fermented in tank. Natural cork closure. RS 3 g/l, TA 5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

A very, very slight smoky impression, suggesting a touch of (good) reduction and adding another layer to the bright, tangy quince fruit. Broad, chewy and relatively gentle on the palate but the fruit flavour adds refreshment here. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2026 – 2030

Schmelz, Steinertal Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Loiben. This is the last vineyard on the north side of the Danube before the border with Kremstal. Very steep slopes of stony, poor soils of crystalline rock. Vines over 30 years old. Aged for 6 months in stainless-steel tanks. RS 2.2 g/l, TA 4.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Bright yellow, this has a lovely crunch of lemon-yellow fruit. Ripe but firm, cool even in its stony feel. The fruit is ripe but not tropical; the stones are at the fore. The alcohol, however, is very high. Needs pork roast or pan-fried *Käseknodeln* (cheese dumplings). (TQT)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2025 – 2034

Hofstätter, 1000-Eimerberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE



*Spitz. West of the Danube and close to the town of Spitz. Humus-rich topsoil over paragneiss and marble. Two-thirds fermented in tanks, one-third spontaneously fermented in barrel. Aged for 4 months in large oak barrels. RS 4.2 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Peppery yellow fruit. Rich and broad in the mouth, rounded by the little bit of residual sweetness but just balanced overall. Powerful, long and just fresh enough. Broad, generous Smaragd style with a light impression of sweetness on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 14%   Drink: 2026 – 2030

### Jamek, Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Terraces of Gföhler gneiss and migmatite-amphibolite. Aged in large wooden barrels. RS 5.3 g/l, TA 5.4 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Very sweet, plump, nectary fruit, recalling passion-fruit purée (without the seedy tang). It's very youthful, and while it says Smaragd on the label, it doesn't feel that full in fact. It's cosy wine, a little smoky. Give it more time? (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%   Drink: 2027 – 2032

### Atzberg, Atzberg Steilterrassen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Iron-rich soils with gneiss and slate. Poor topsoil. Vines 10–20 years old. Aged for 12 months. RS 1.6 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Pale, gleaming gold. Smoky and ripe-fruited, green fruits and pears. Big, rich and savoury-spicy on the palate. Deep, mouth-filling, flavourful but not particularly refreshing. More harmonious than their Obere Steilterrassen 2024. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%   Drink: 2026 – 2034

### Sigl, Himmelreich Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. 5-ha parcel in the centre of Steiger. Crystalline rock. Screwcap closure. RS 4.7 g/l, TA 5.9 g/l. Certified sustainable and organic.*

Cedary and intense, this contrasts tropical ripeness and sweet green-pepper

notes. It's very full-bodied, though mostly at the front of the palate. It lasts, though much more lightly, and the acidity nearly cleans it up. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2025 – 2032

### Bruch, Hochrain Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. West of the village. Clay and loess soils, south-east-facing, plus paragneiss and steeper slopes higher up. Vines 20–30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 1.8 g/l, TA 4.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Youthful, ripe, spiced citrus and pear. The alcohol is better integrated here than in some, but it lacks freshness overall. What it lacks in freshness, it gains in perfume. Juicy but could do with a little more energy. Sour-fresh aftertaste lifts the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2026 – 2030

### Johann Donabaum, Kirchweg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Relatively close to the Danube. Loess and clay. Vines 20–30 years old. Spontaneously fermented in a large oak vat. Aged for 10 months in a 1,250-litre oak cask. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Youthfully scented with pear drops and ripe citrus. Very primary. Chewy, creamy and broad. Powerful but not heavy. Hard to judge when it is only just off the starting block. Plenty of spice on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2028 – 2032

### Holzapfel, Kollmitz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Joching. Kollmitz is the name of the hill above Joching. Mostly covered by loess, terrace gravel and sea sediments, with a paragneiss core. Average gradient is 27%. Screwcap closure. TA 1.1 g/l, RS 5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Unusual and subtle aroma of pineapple. Is this the fruit or the yeast? One of the gentler 2024 Smaragds with nice freshness on the finish. Persistent, straightforward fruit at this stage. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2026 – 2030

Simon Gattinger, Kreutles Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Unterloiben. Loess vineyard at foot of the eastern end of the Loibenberg. 20- to 30-year-old vines. Natural cork closure. RS 1.5 g/l, TA 4.3 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Medium yellow. Buttery, oily Grüner, with notes of apple blossom, orange oil, white pepper and apples. A meaty savour balances it and suggests a match with roast chicken. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2030

Josef Fischer, Kreuzberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Loess over paragneiss and amphibolite. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Thick and lentil-y. Pink peppercorn and mango, guava, finger banana. Tropical, exotic, hearty Grüner, though the acidity cleans it up. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2034

Alzinger, Loibenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Certified sustainable.*

Soft and fleshy, this feels a little sun-baked, with notes of brown sugar and brûléed fruit. It's a little low in acid, though it's nice – a comfy Grüner, ready for fish in a spicy smoked-paprika sauce. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2030

Schmelz, Loibenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Loiben. 20- to 30-year-old vines on Gföhler gneiss. Cultured-yeast fermentation. Aged for six months in stainless-steel tanks. Natural cork closure. RS 1.4 g/l, TA 4.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Perfumed and pretty, though a little OTT – very surprisingly floral for a Grüner Veltliner. Honeysuckle and guava, white raspberries and juicy pear. It pulls it all together in the finish – finishing clean if not zesty. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2025 – 2032



**Johann Donabaum, Point Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Small vineyard west of Spitz. Deep and heavy soil with humus-rich topsoil. Vines over 30 years old. Spontaneous fermentation and ageing in 1,250-hl oak casks. Natural cork closure. RS 2 g/l, TA 5.1 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Pale gold. Intensely golden – yellow-fruited and ripe pear aroma. Smells rich from the get-go. Dry but honeyed and sweet-tasting. Rounded, generous and seemingly gentle but there's hidden power and a nicely chewy finish. Could do with a little more freshness overall. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%   Drink: 2027 – 2035

**Rixinger, Singerriedel Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. A smallish vineyard (8.31 ha) west of and quite close to the Danube at 208–308 m of elevation. Steep (average gradient 50%), with dry-stone walls, Grüner on the lower and less steep parts. Shallow, meagre and sandy soils. Paragneiss, mica schist. RS 4.7 g/l, TA 5.1 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Pale gold. Seductively rich and open aroma of golden plums and something almost tropical. The aroma perhaps accentuated by the residual sweetness. Broad, fat and needing a little more freshness, but the aromatic expression is impressive. Rounded, almost honeyed, even in youth. Spicy aftertaste seems to be as much in the texture as in the flavour. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%   Drink: 2027 – 2030

**Emmerich Knoll, Trum Grüner Veltliner Federspiel 2024 Wachau**

16/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Small vineyard between Frauenweingarten and Schütt, gentle (5%) slope, gneiss at the top moving into loess at the bottom. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

The wine seems to capture both the fat richness of very ripe Grüner Veltliner on loess, and a cooler, firmer aspect more common to Grüner Veltliner on gneiss. The two balance each other out. Medium body, medium length, though for a Federspiel I wish for a little more freshness, a little less oiliness. (TQT)

Alcohol: 12.5%   Drink: 2025 – 2032

Atzberg, Atzberg Obere Steilterrassen Grüner Veltliner Smaragd

15.5/20

2024 Wachau

WHITE

*Spitz. Iron-rich soils with gneiss and slate. Poor topsoil. Vines 10–20 years old. Aged for 12 months. RS 1.8 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Mid gold, notably deep in colour. Smells golden, too – ripe yellow plums with a dash of sweet, peppery spice. Powerful, mouth-filling and deep but with a sour top note and not truly refreshing. Big rather than elegant. (JH)

Alcohol: 14%   Drink: 2026 – 2033

Sigl, Frauenweingärten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Loess. Natural cork closure. RS 5 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l. Certified sustainable and organic.*

This smells of *Waldmeister* syrup (a confection flavoured with sweet woodruff). It's pretty – that herbal note in combination with the acidity managing to bring the wine to a clean finish. Simple, gentle Grüner. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%   Drink: 2025 – 2028

Rudi Pichler, Hochrain Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Clay and loess soils, south-east-facing, in one part of the vineyard. Plus, paragneiss and steeper slopes higher up. Vines over 30 years old. Tank-fermented. Screwcap closure. RS 1.5 g/l, TA 4.6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Highly perfumed with spicy yellow fruit and pears plus a pâtisserie-like sweetness (from the fruit, I think, since the residual sugar is negligible). Firmly textured, low in acidity, broad in the mouth. Gentle but a bit fat overall. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%   Drink: 2026 – 2029

Braun, Seiberberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Crystalline rock. Aged 11 months in 700-litre oak barrels. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Oak lays heavy on the wine's white fruit and leaves a vanilla oiliness. There's acidity but it's hard to tell now where this will go. Give it a couple more years in bottle before opening in the hopes that it will wrap that oak in better.

(TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2028 – 2030

### Roman Gritsch, Steinporz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. West of the river and quite close to the town of Spitz. The easternmost occurrence of Spitzer granodiorite gneiss, which develops from a granite-like rock. In addition, there is dark, base-rich amphibolite. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 4 g/l, TA 5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Big, sweet-smelling aroma of yellow fruit and overripe pears. Big and broad, more richness than freshness. Tiring except in small sips. (JH)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2027 – 2030

### Erich Bayer, Vorderseiber Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. South- and south-east-facing terraced vineyard at 231–384 m of elevation. 20 cm of humus over paragneiss. Vines over 30 years old. Aged for 10 months in stainless-steel tanks. RS 2 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Bright yellow. This wine's sweetness hits the throat, propelled by the heat. It's concentrated, with dried peach and persimmon notes, wanting for acidity. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2025 – 2028

### Andreas Gattinger, Weitenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Humus over clay and Gföhler gneiss. Vines over 30 years old. Screwcap closure. Certified sustainable.*

Incense-like spice and oak. Thick, heavy, but also just €14 – this may simply be outclassed in this line-up. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2030



**Christoph Donabaum, Zornberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024**

15.5/20

**Wachau**

WHITE

*Spitz. Paragneiss, amphibolite and gneiss. Away from the Danube in Gut am Steg. Screwcap closure. Certified sustainable.*

Youthful, primary aromas of pear drops and something more floral. Simple, relatively soft. A surprisingly gentle Smaragd. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2030

**Holzapfel, Achleiten Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

15/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Gföhl gneiss, migmatite-amphibolite. RS 1.3 g/l, TA 5.2 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Fallen apples and golden plums, not entirely clean; touch smoky. Short finish. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2025 – 2027

**Rudi Pichler, Kollmütz Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

15/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. A big vineyard directly west of the town of Wösendorf. The soils of these terraced vineyards developed from highly weathered paragneiss. At the foot of the Kollmütz slope, the vines grow in loess soils. On the summit plateau, the vines are rooted in sandy terrace gravel from the Danube. Vines over 30 years old. Fermented in stainless-steel tanks. Screwcap closure. RS 1.6 g/l, TA 4.6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Unusual aroma that I cannot quite place. I think there may be a touch of smoky reduction (in a good way). Plenty of fruit in the middle but a little bit sour overall and lacks energy/freshness. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2030

**Eder, Süssenberg Grüner Veltliner Federspiel 2024 Wachau**

15/20

WHITE

*Mautern. Small south-facing terraced sector of the Loibenberg on loess and paragneiss. Fermented and aged on the fine lees for 10 months in stainless-steel tanks. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.2 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Youthful scents of banana – green and yellow – and tropical fruit mark this wine, contrasted by a heavy earthiness. Medium acidity, short-to-medium finish. (TQT)

Alcohol: 12.5% Drink: 2025 – 2027

### Jäger, Vorderseiber Grüner Veltliner Federspiel 2024 Wachau

15/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. 5- to 10-year-old vines in 2 m of loess over Gföhler gneiss, south-west exposure. Fermented and aged for 3 months in stainless-steel tanks. Filtered. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.2 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Pale shade of lemon. Very light on the palate as well, but what it does deliver is sweet, peppery and direct, like a lightly peppery yellow-apple sauce. Strangely, a little heat. (TQT)

Alcohol: 12.5% Drink: 2025 – 2027

### Hutter, Alte Point Grüner Veltliner Smaragd 2023 Wachau

14.5/20

WHITE

*Mautern. Loess. Fermentation in stainless-steel tanks. RS 1.7 g/l, TA 5.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Really ripe, bitter phenolics, lots of skin character as well as alcohol. Lacks freshness. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14.5% Drink: 2025 – 2028

## Riesling

### Emmerich Knoll, Kellerberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

18/20

WHITE

*Dürnstein. Terraced slope of Gföhler gneiss facing south-south-east. Certified sustainable.*

Lemony and cool from the first whiff. Notes of cold yellow plum and apple blossom skate across a cool, stony base. The wine has energy, life, even as it's restrained. Has real grip, real coolness. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2040

### Jamek, Klaus Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

18/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Gföhler gneiss and migmatite-amphibolite. Aged in large oak casks. Natural cork closure. RS 4 g/l, TA 5.7 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Sweet, apple. Cool, classy, restrained. Crystalline fruit, even as it's round and smooth, almost oily. There's no hint of alcohol here, even though it's listed as 14%; everything is seamlessly wrapped together. Very, very, very elegant and will age beautifully. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%   Drink: 2025 – 2040

### Franz Hirtzberger, Hochrain Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Clay and loess soils, south-east-facing. Natural cork closure. RS 1.6 g/l, TA 6.3 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Pure lime fruit – uncomplicated first impression. Just a hint of a more stony/mineral side to it. Elegant restraint, moderate alcohol and terrific freshness. Long and masses of tension. A long future. (JH)

Alcohol: 13%   Drink: 2029 – 2040

### Tegernseerhof, Kellerberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17.5/20

WHITE

*Dürnstein. Gföhl gneiss interspersed with pockets of wind-deposited loess. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

One of Tegernseerhof's riper wines, this is peachy, with the stoniness running underneath. It's ripe, round, oily, but the flavours feel unformed, backwards. Not severe but very staid, standoffish. Comes around after lunch – flavours recall apple strudel in their ripeness and delicacy, almost that shattery crispness. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13%   Drink: 2025 – 2035

### Weinhofmeisterei Mathias Hirtzberger, Kollmitz Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17.5/20

WHITE

*Joching. Kollmitz is the name of the hill above Joching. Mostly covered by loess, terrace gravel and sea sediments, with a paragneiss core. Average gradient 27%. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Intensely aromatic with stony citrus. Piercing freshness and remarkably open. Excellent harmony between site and variety. Deep, full-flavoured and



balanced by the acidity. A complete if very young wine. Extremely long finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2037

### Emmerich Knoll, Loibenberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17.5/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Gföhler gneiss. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Succulent pear and crunchy peach flavour, ripe yet restrained, a wave of minerality coming up to put a lid on the fruit. This starts out robust, until the landslide of mineral tones descends on the golden peach and juicy pear fruit. It remains succulent, even more so once that salty minerality kicks in. It's attractive already but will have no problem ageing for the next 10 years. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2035

### Franz Hirtzberger, Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. A smallish vineyard (8.31 ha) quite close to the Danube at 208–308 m. Steep (average gradient 50%) with dry-stone walls, Riesling on the steeper parts. Shallow, meagre and sandy soils. Paragneiss, mica schist. RS 2.3 g/l, TA 6.6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Golden fruits and deep citrus flavours. Full, rich and beautifully fresh. Long and likely to have a long future. (JH)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2028 – 2038

### Emmerich Knoll, Schütt Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17 ++/20

WHITE

*Dürnstein. Alluvial fan of pure, eroded Gföhler gneiss. Vines over 30 years old. Hand-picked whole bunches are crushed, macerated and then pressed. Fermented in large old casks of 10–40 hl, mostly with selected yeast at 24–27 °C, first rack after about 2 to 3 weeks. The wines stay on the fine lees for 6–8 months, then filtered and bottled. Certified sustainable.*

This is super-reduced, flinty and clenched shut. The main event right now is the texture, round and smooth as mineral oil. It's all size and promise right now, needing time to realise its potential. Tasting it again at the end of the day from a bottle that had been opened many hours, it was much juicier and

more open. If you open it now, decant, but better to cellar for another couple years or ten. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2028 – 2038

### Tegernseerhof, Steinertal Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17 ++/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Stony, windy, south-east-facing terraced slope with lime silicate marble. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

The high lime content in the soil, winemaker Martin Mittelbach says, gives the wines a very particular mineral signature. I didn't know that when I tasted it, but the first thing I wrote was 'Mineral, mineral, mineral'. Despite its lean, austere character, it feels dense, almost chewy, as if there are hidden depths of flavour time will reveal. Some tangy, sweet-sour green-plum fruit adds the edges. This is just at the very beginning of revealing itself. Love the savour and restraint. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2026 – 2035

### PAX, Biern Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Viessling. Terraced vineyards at 261–415 m. Barren and steep like its neighbour Kalkofen. Vines over 30 years old.*

Perfumed and lightly honeyed citrus. Complex and a touch smoky. Deep-fruited, mouth-watering and layered. Ageing well and still has a long way to go. Tight and energetic, especially compared with many of the 2024s. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2028 – 2035

### Weinhofmeisterei Mathias Hirtzberger, Gaisberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Terraced at 220–409 m but not as steep as some vineyards (average gradient 29%). Close to the Danube. Quartz gravel is embedded in a red loamy matrix rich in iron oxide. Meagre soil with a thick humus layer. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Perfumed citrus, even a touch floral. And creamy! Then a shaft of power and drive on the palate. Spice and depth rather than perfume on the palate. It will

be interesting to see which direction this young wine takes in the bottle as it has so many layers now. Nicely chewy texture on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2028 – 2036

### PAX, Höll Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Terraced at 236–390 m, south- and south-east-facing. Sandy gneiss. Vines over 30 years old. Aged for six months in 1,200-litre oak casks. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.4 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Herby citrus aroma. An attractive ‘untamed’ impression, with ripe green fruits adding richness. On the palate, pure, precise and super-fresh. Elegant in its freshness and linear purity. Tight and long. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2026 – 2036

### Simon Gattinger, Loibenberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Gföhler gneiss, vines over 30 years of age. Simon Gattinger – a young, tall blond who founded this winery in 2017 – tells me he’s at the very top of the Loibenberg. Fermentation in stainless steel. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

The wine has the chill of the forest and the stony soil it grows on. It’s fragrant with white flowers more than fruit, feels crisp and tastes of mineral more than fruit. And yet it’s charming, mouth-watering, like fruit washed in cold salt water – green plum, yellow grape (without being grapey). Very fine, terrific restraint. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2034

### Franz Hirtzberger, Setzberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Just west of Spitz. Facing west and south-east. Paragneiss soils. A big vineyard of two halves. Screwcap closure. RS 1.5 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Deep, golden and yet fresh and light on its feet. Bright, taut and a little bit salty on the long finish. Nicely chewy texture adds length. Needs time. (JH)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2028 – 2038



Alzinger, Steinertal Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Loiben. A steep terraced 4.61-ha vineyard of orthogneiss. Screwcap closure. Certified sustainable.*

Succulent, steadfast, quietly vibrant, with crisp green-plum fruit and a feeling of coolness that's like the vapour coming off the land on a warming morning. This is very pretty, with delicate violet notes and great balance. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2025 – 2035

Franz Hirtzberger, Steinporz Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

17/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Just north of Spitz. South-east-facing at 235–416 m. The most eastern occurrence of the Spitz granodiorite gneiss, which developed from a granitic rock. Dark amphibolite is also found. Screwcap closure. RS 1.8 g/l, TA 6.4 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Deep and dark-fruited, with a strong impression of dark and brooding rocks. Firm and dry. Not particularly powerful but long. (JH)

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2027 – 2034

Christoph Donabaum, 1000-Eimerberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. The vineyard rises directly above the Danube. Humus-rich soil over paragneiss and marble, derived from limestone parent material. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Pure, golden lemon fruit. Creamy and aromatic. Full in the mouth but relatively gentle, with balancing freshness on the citrusy finish. A vibrant, mouth-watering Smaragd. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2033

Strawanzer - Donabaum, 1000-Eimerberg Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. The vineyard rises directly above the Danube. Humus-rich soil over paragneiss and marble, derived from limestone parent material. Vines 10–20*

*years old. Natural cork closure. RS 8 g/l, TA 6.7 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Inviting, wild perfume, marked as much by an impression of rocky scrubland as by fruit – herbal and alive. Yet there's a bright citrus note, too. Sweeter than I expected on the palate (the residual sugar is 8 g/l) – ripe lemons and apricot. A conundrum of a wine. Perhaps there's some botrytis? Notable freshness giving a sweet-sour aftertaste. Definitely needs longer to mesh. (JH)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2028 – 2035

### Josef & Georg Högl, Bruck Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Viessling. Terraced vineyard at 292–488 m of elevation. Sandy but stony soils from weathered gneiss and amphibolite. RS 3.9 g/l, TA 5.2 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Sweet citrus with a touch of white mushroom, spice and golden fruits, but also smells cool and fresh. Firm and cool on the palate, the numbers (total acidity and residual sugar) are misleading because this is refreshing. There's just a very slight sweet-sour aftertaste. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2027 – 2033

### Domäne Roland Chan, Klaus Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Gföhler gneiss. Vines over 30 years old. RS 4.7 g/l, TA 6.9 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Darker tones than the Achleiten. Ripe in a richer, fuller way, like nectarines ripened to softness. Undertow of tannins pulling back on the sweetness, and nice acidity to keep that alcohol in check. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2025 – 2035

### Piewald, Offenberg Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. South-facing, with an average gradient of 43%. Thin, sandy soils and narrow terraces. Marble parent rock. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Sweet lemon and apricot. On the palate, creamy, generous and packed with fruit. A big, fresh vibrant wine with a long finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2035

### Johann Donabaum, Setzberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Just west of Spitz. Facing west and south-east. A big vineyard of two halves. 10-year-old vines. Aged for 10 months in 450-litre steel and ceramic tanks. Natural cork closure. RS 2 g/l, TA 6.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Rich in pure apricot fruit – open and expressive, even a touch honeyed. Rich, powerful, spicy and full-bodied for a wine of 13% alcohol. Terrific freshness to balance. And persistent. Uncomplicated now but there is a stony/mineral side that I think will emerge more strikingly with time. (JH)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2028 – 2038

### Franz Mayer, Setzberg Rheinriesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. A big vineyard (around 41 ha) just west of Spitz. Sandy, stony. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

This is my first Riesling after a run of Grüner Veltliners and the aroma is surprisingly muted, but the freshness packs a punch. Tight, dense and as savoury as it is citrus-fruited. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2035

### Hofstätter, Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

WHITE

*Spitz. A smallish vineyard (8.31 ha) quite close to the Danube at 208–308 m of elevation. Steep (average gradient 50%), with dry-stone walls. Riesling on the steeper parts. Shallow, meagre and sandy soils. Paragneiss, mica schist. One-third spontaneously fermented in oak casks. Aged for 4 months in large oak casks. Screwcap closure. RS 3.5 g/l, TA 6.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Not very expressive just now. Suggestion of yellow fruits and a rocky/mineral savoury side. Deep, chewy and extremely fresh. Very young but a complete wine that needs time. The SO<sub>2</sub> is a bit intrusive at the moment. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2028 – 2038

### Lagler, Steinporz Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

## WHITE

*Spitz. Just north of Spitz. South-east-facing at 235–416 m of elevation. The most eastern occurrence of the Spitz granodiorite gneiss, which developed from a granitic rock. Dark amphibolite is also found. Vines over 30 years old. Spontaneous fermentation in stainless-steel tanks. Aged in 2,000-litre oak casks on the fine lees for six months.*

Invitingly spicy-rich aroma of golden fruit. Broad and rich, with some sweetness on the finish. The alcohol and the residual sugar bring a roundness but seem to take away from the precision of Riesling here. Plenty of flavour, not so much elegance. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2034

Lahrnsteig, Traunthal Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

## WHITE

*Oberarnsdorf. East of the Danube and south of Spitz. West-facing and close to the river. Calcareous soils. Vines over 30 years old. Screwcap closure. RS 5.5 g/l, TA 5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Even late in the day (ie at the end of a long day of tasting), this is seductive. Creamy and complex, ripe and cool. Really creamy on the palate, the residual sweetness giving roundness and ease. Sweet-sour now and likely to be much better in five years. (JH)

Alcohol: 14% Drink: 2027 – 2037

Holzapfel, Vorderseiber Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16.5/20

## WHITE

*Weißkirchen. Paragneiss. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 5.3 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Cool, stony scent. Green fruit and lots of herbs – angelica, baby's breath. Very fine, light touch. This comes from a very large (43 ha), heterogeneous vineyard but this particular wine comes from a patch of paragneiss, hornblende-gneiss and feldspars – the stoniness clear in the wine's coolness and restraint. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2030

Roman Gritsch, 1000-Eimerberg Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16/20

## WHITE



*Spitz. The vineyard rises directly above the Danube. Humus-rich soil over paragneiss and marble, derived from limestone parent material. Vines over 30 years old. RS 4.5 g/l, TA 5.9 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Lime-dominated fruit profile, more marked by variety than site, even now. Plus a rich oily/mineral aroma. Off dry, sweet-sour, embryonic, more contrast than harmony at the moment. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2028 – 2033

### Domäne Roland Chan, Achleiten Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. Gföhler gneiss and migmatitic amphibolite. Vines over 30 years old. RS 6.8 g/l, TA 5.7 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

This smells very sweet, with ripe, floral peach scents. It's fleshy and intense, but the acidity wraps around it, keeps it in balance. Pretty wine, in a very pink mode. But noticeably sweet. Keep it chilled and pair with spicy food. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2030

### Piewald, Biern Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Terraced vineyards at 261–415 m. Barren and steep like its neighbour Kalkofen. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Rich, ripe and golden. Powerful and spicy, with a touch of mushroom (botrytis?). On the palate, just a little bit harsh, though it is full of flavour and balanced for a fresh finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2032

### Graben Gritsch, Bruck Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Terraced vineyard at 292–488 m. Sandy but stony soils from weathered gneiss and amphibolite. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 1 g/l, TA 7.5 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Rich fruit aroma of apricot and yellow plums but still a stony, mineral side to it. A big, broad wine – broad more than deep, the high acidity just in balance. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2030

Frischengruber, Goldberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Deep humus and loess over gravel and paragneiss. Fermented in stainless steel. Natural cork closure. RS 6 g/l, TA 7.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.* Searing acidity against lots of yellow-fruit sweetness. It smells richer than it feels, as the acidity takes over, bringing this to a lemon and quinine finish, which is refreshing but confusing. Give it another year to assemble itself. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2026 – 2030

Rudi Pichler, Kirchweg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Vineyard bordering Hochrain. Sandy and stony soil. Vines over 30 years old. Fermented in stainless-steel tanks. Natural cork closure. RS 2.8 g/l, TA 6.3 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Golden and lightly honeyed. Spicy, with a suggestion of botrytis in apricot fruit notes. Juicy, rounded and crisp. Full-flavoured but slightly sour on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2030

Frischengruber, Kreuzberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Screwcap closure. RS 4 g/l, TA 7.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Very sweet in scent and first taste, with very tangy acidity meeting the tip of the tongue. It's jaunty, forward, a lot of flavour all at once – yellow flowers, crisp yellow plum – and then gone. Enjoy it now for that pow of flavour. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2027

Alzinger, Loibenberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Loiben. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Fruit salad-y: crisp pear and ripe melon, green grape and even a hint of strawberry. It's light, fresh and slightly sweet in feel, lingering on that fruitiness. On the lighter side of Smaragd. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2025 – 2030

### Christoph Donabaum, Offenberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. South-facing, with an average gradient of 43%. Thin, sandy soils and narrow terraces. Marble parent rock. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Not especially aromatic, though there is lots going on: ripe citrus and peppery spice. On the palate, deep, chewy yet somehow lacks charm. Full-flavoured though slightly sour on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2034

### Paul Stierschneider - Urbanushof, Rothenberg Riesling Smaragd 2024

16/20

#### Wachau

WHITE

*Loiben. South-facing slope above the Kreutles vineyard on crystalline rock and some loess. 10- to 20-year-old vines. Natural cork closure. RS 5.3 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Cool, green, limey – this screams Austrian Riesling in that ripe, round, green Riesling way. It's boisterous, sunny, saturated with flavour, everything emphasised by the sweetness (I can feel the residual sugar on the back of my throat). Charming, simple; bring on the pizza with *capicola* and pineapple! (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2025 – 2027

### Thomas Gritsch, Setzberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Just west of Spitz. Facing west and south-east. A big vineyard of two halves. Vines over 30 years old. Screwcap closure. RS 2.9 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Very ripe fruit aroma – orange and apricot – though also a hint of stony minerality. Actually, quite subtle on the nose. Even a touch floral as it opens in the glass. Medium-bodied, very fresh. Perhaps just slightly sweet-sour on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2030

### Eder, Silberbichl Riesling Smaragd 2023 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Mautern. Loess soils with mica-containing rocks. Vines over 30 years old. Stainless-steel tanks only. Screwcap closure. RS 4 g/l, TA 6 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

That extra year of age is obvious in the burnished, baked peach flavours and warm, sunny ripeness. The alcohol is a little high, searing the gentle fruit a bit, but it's overall charming. (TQT)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2025 – 2030

### Jäger, Steinriegel Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. A mix of lime, silicate and marble unique to this vineyard. Whole-cluster pressed, then fermented and aged in steel tanks for six months. Bottled in April. Screwcap closure. RS 4 g/l, TA 6.2 g/l. Certified sustainable. Immediately charming, a mouthful of sun-warmed yellow fruit lasting with fruity, syrupy sweetness. The acidity stands apart a bit in the middle – comes out of nowhere but then recedes to let the fruit last through the finish. Easy, charming wine, though not sure it lives up to its Smaragd label. (TQT)*

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2025 – 2030

### Nikolaihof, Vom Stein Riesling Smaragd 2021 Wachau

16/20

WHITE

*Mautern. Deep-soiled, stony section of the Silberbichl vineyard. Vines over 30 years old. Vinified in large old wood. Screwcap closure. RS 3.3 g/l, TA 6.5 g/l. Certified sustainable and biodynamic (Demeter).*

Deep yellow in hue. This feels mature, with earthy savour sweetened by notes of cognac and brown sugar. The old-school opulence is countered by a frisson of natty volatile acidity and acacia-flower fragrance, elements that bring freshness and liveliness to the wine. Good basic intro to Nikolaihof style. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2025 – 2031

### Braun, Achleiten Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE



*Weissenkirchen. Certified sustainable.*

Beery – that strange Achleiten stink. It's earth-bound, meaty/stony, though not nearly as ripe as others. Is it a little dilute? Slight floral notes on the finish; begins to find some delicacy, but there's not a lot of detail here. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2025 – 2030

### Weinhauerei 378, Bach Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Bach is the mid slope of the Gaisberg vineyard. Terraced with an average gradient of 42%. Paragneiss. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable and organic.*

Unusual stone-dust overlay on the bright citrus. Intensely sweet-fruited, relatively simple flavour but with good depth of fruit. Slightly harsh on the finish. (JH)

Alcohol: 13%    Drink: 2027 – 2030

### Sigl, Kirnberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Primary-rock soils. RS 4.4 g/l, TA 7.2 g/l. Certified sustainable and organic.*

Green-yellow. Sweet, with searing acidity to cut through the slightly syrupy sweetness. Recalls lemon-verbena syrup. It's pretty but lacks a little stuffing. Medium finish. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13.5%    Drink: 2025 – 2027

### Schwaiger, Kollmütz Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15.5/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. The soils of these terraced vineyards developed from highly weathered paragneiss. At the foot of the Kollmütz slope, the vines grow in loess soils. On the summit plateau, the vines are rooted in sandy terrace gravel from the Danube. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Slightly strange aroma. Dusty, a bit like cardboard and there is a touch of mushroom. On the palate, rich, spicy and golden but a bit harsh overall. Deep, chewy but not much fun. (JH)

Alcohol: 14%    Drink: 2027 – 2029

**Josef Fischer, Kreuzberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

15.5/20

WHITE

*Rossatz. Sandy loam over paragneiss and amphibolite. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

Super-ripe, even overripe fruit – that fermenting scent. Fischer's style seems to be for riper wines; this one, from the southern side of the Danube, no exception. It's peachy and nutty, a bit of skin tannin adding savour and grip. The acidity stands apart, cutting the wine a bit short. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13%   Drink: 2025 – 2027

**Andreas Gattinger, Steinriegl Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

15.5/20

WHITE

*Weissenkirchen. 20- to 30-year-old vines on paragneiss. Natural cork closure. Certified sustainable.*

This is very ripe, almost sweet, with a nutty edge and a streak of appley acidity running down the middle. A bit thick and dense. (TQT)

Alcohol: 13%   Drink: 2025 – 2030

**Roman Gritsch, Setzberg Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

15/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Just west of Spitz. Facing west and south-east. A big vineyard of two halves. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 3 g/l, TA 5.9 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Smells slightly strange – mushrooms or not totally clean. On the palate, a little bit flat though there is more fruit showing here than on the nose. Seems to lack Riesling purity. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5%   Drink: 2026 – 2028

**Rixinger, Singerriedel Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau**

15/20

WHITE

*Spitz. A smallish vineyard (8.31 ha) quite close to the Danube at 208–308 m. Steep (average gradient 50%) with dry-stone walls, Riesling on the steeper parts. Shallow, meagre and sandy soils. Paragneiss, mica schist. Natural cork closure. RS 1.5 g/l, TA 5.2 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Rich in honeyed apricot aromas and flavours. Powerful, dry and lightly tannic on the palate. A little bit hard on the finish, which is a shame. (JH)

Alcohol: 13% Drink: 2027 – 2031

### Thomas Gritsch, Vogelleithen Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

15/20

WHITE

*Spitz. Between Spitz and Viessling. Average gradient of 45%, at 251–364 m of elevation – the eastern extension of the Biern vineyard. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 1.8 g/l, TA 5.3 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Notably herbal aroma. Dusty and almost green in fruit profile. Tight, lean, dry. Hard work in youth but maybe it will come round? Not sure. Just too lean for comfort now. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2026 – 2029

### Rudi Pichler, Hochrain Riesling Smaragd 2024 Wachau

14.5/20

WHITE

*Wösendorf. Clay and loess soils, south-east-facing, in one part of the vineyard. Plus paragneiss and steeper slopes higher up. Tank-fermented. Vines over 30 years old. Natural cork closure. RS 1.4 g/l, TA 5.8 g/l. Certified sustainable.*

Marked aroma of white mushrooms. More citrus on the palate, but a rather sour finish. Doesn't smell or taste totally clean. (JH)

Alcohol: 13.5% Drink: 2027 – 2028

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