



Schloss Schönborn Estate Wines

Tuesday, May 13, 2008

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

[Toronto Board of Trade](#) (4th Floor), 1st Cdn Place,
(Entrance off Adelaide St. between Bay & York)

Members' Fee: \$48

Guests/Non-Members Fee: \$58

Toronto Vintners is very pleased to be offering a rare tasting of the wines of Schloss Schönborn. Every one of the following wines was sourced directly from estate's massive Schatzhammer (treasure chamber) of older vintages.

Schloss Schönborn is one of Germany's largest and oldest estates. The roots of the von Schönborn family can be traced back to the times of the crusades and the first mention with respect to viticulture was in 1349. The estate is still family owned today. The estate was steadily enlarged, especially in the 17th Century, including the purchase of the famous Marcobrunn vineyard. Historic invoices document the purchase of hand-blown bottles in 1750, revealing that the Schönborns were amongst the first estates anywhere in the world to actually bottle their wines. During the Victorian age Queen Victoria propelled German Riesling to their height of popularity. Believe it or not the Rheingau's best wines sold for as much as three times the prices as Chateau Lafite! Based in Hattenheim, Schloss Schönborn is a founding member of the VDP, an association of the best producers in Germany and owns prime vineyards from across the entire Rheingau from Hochheim to Rudesheim and everywhere in between. There are over 50 hectares under vine planted to 91% Riesling 6% Spatburgunder (Pinot Noir) and 3% Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) with an annual production of 300,000 bottles.

The wines selected consist of three Spatlese and five Auslese. Spatlese translates to 'Late Harvest' while Auslese roughly 'Select Harvest'. While sweet in youth the wines will have lost some of the plump sweetness but none of the refreshing acidity German Riesling is known for. The specific wines were picked to illustrate the great terroir of the Marcobrunn vineyard as well as the greatness of the 1989 vintage. Schloss Schönborn's records indicate Marcobrunn has been sold and labeled as a Grosses Gewächs ('Grand Cru') since the 1700s. We will be pouring the 1988, 1991, and 1993 Marcobrunn Spatlese's along with the opportunity to compare Spatlese and Auslese in the 1993 vintage. We are also pleased to offer a horizontal of four excellent 1989 Ausleses from four different vineyards allowing the distinctive vineyards to be compared. We'd like to thank Schloss Schönborn for ageing these wines for us, and their Ontario agent Harry Drung of H.H.D. Imports for offering these wines to us. Please join us for another evening of outstanding wines presented by the Toronto Vintners Club.

Our reception wine will be supplied by Craig MacDonald, winemaker of Creekside & Weir Estate Winery. Craig, who has been our guest speaker before, also plans to be in attendance. You'll have a chance to mingle with Craig and ask him questions.

HOW TO REGISTER

Register for tickets online at www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent5/. You have the choice of paying by credit card or mailing in a cheque after you complete the online registration form. Ticket sales with a credit card are guaranteed as soon as payment is processed; reservations by cheque are not final until your payment is actually received. Cheques must be received by May 9th. After May 4th, the registration system will only accept credit card sales to ensure we receive payment in time. Please note that all ticket sales are final. [Be careful not to register twice if paying by credit card. Processing may take several seconds or a minute or two so be patient.]

You will be sent an email confirmation once you have completed your registration. If you do not receive your confirmation, please contact tortovintners@onlineregistrations.ca

THE WINES

Vintage and vineyard notes courtesy of *The Wines of Germany* by Stephen Brook and *Vintage Wine* by Michael Broadbent.

1. Erbacher Marcobrunn Spatlese 1988

1988 – **** From the spring, through the summer and until the end of September, well-nigh perfect growing and ripening conditions. However pre-harvest rain and fog dampened expectations. On the whole an extremely good yet perhaps not fully appreciated vintage.

2. Erbacher Marcobrunn Spatlese 1991

1991 - ** to *** A mild winter and good start to the spring, rudely interrupted by a severe frost on April 20 and another a week later. The third hammer blow of frost was on June 4. Despite this the flowering was successful. Summer was long, hot and sunny. The much needed rain did not arrive until the latter part of September, dampening the harvest prospects. Pick and choose carefully.

3. Erbacher Marcobrunn Spatlese 1993

1993 - **** to ***** Overall a very good vintage with some outstanding wines produced despite variable weather. The growing season started well, a warm spring leading to an unusually advanced flowering. The summer was very mixed: drought, cool, rainy conditions varying from region to region. There was seriously heavy rain in September and early October when picking started, albeit cautiously. As always in this situation, the better, well-drained sites and well-managed exercising strict selection were able to make wines which varied from good to great. Elimination of less than healthy grapes is time-consuming and expensive; the producer has less to sell. The higher quality wines can be a revelation.

4. Erbacher Marcobrunn Auslese 1993

5.2 ha. Schloss Schönborn is the principal owner (2.7 ha). Rich in marl, this site consistently yields Rieslings that are rich, spicy and full-flavoured; their richness and body mean that they can, however lack some elegance.

5. Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen Auslese 1989

10 ha. A Grosses Gewächs (Grand Cru) site.

6. Hattenheimer Pfaffenberg Auslese 1989

7 ha. Alleinbesitz (Monopole) of Schloss Schönborn. The soil is loess-loam with sand, giving precocious wines that can be perfumed and fruity.

7. Hochheimer Kirchenstück Auslese 1989

15 ha. A Grosses Gewächs (Grand Cru) site. Light loam soil, this is Hochheim's most feminine and elegant vineyard. Gunter Kunstler compares Stielweg to Latour and Kirchenstück to Chateau Lafite.

8. Erbacher Marcobrunn Auslese 1989

1989 Vintage: *** to **** On the whole a very good vintage and a large crop thanks to almost ideal growing conditions. Mild winter, warm spring, which encouraged early bud break, perfect flowering in June and a hot, sunny and relatively dry summer. Unsurprisingly, in these conditions all grape varieties ripened well and the harvest began towards the beginning of September. Very ripe grapes and botrytis made it no the easiest of years for the lighter styles of wine, lack of acidity being a problem. The higher quality wines are lovely now, and the best Auslesen have life in hand.

“Quality German wines have two advantages for the consumer. First, price. Because German wines are considered a niche market, demand is limited and there is little speculative or investment element, and so even the quality wines tend to be good value. Second, of all the major classic wines of Europe these are, in my opinion the easiest to enjoy. You do not have to be an expert to appreciate the smell and taste of a really good German wine despite the initially complicated looking label. Those people – and there are quite a few – who purport not to like sweet wines or who at first glance find the German wine labels incomprehensible are missing out on one of the joys of wine.”

--Michael Broadbent, *Vintage Wine*