



PLUMPJACK

WINES

WINE CLUB

November 2005

Long before the Toyota Prius was conceived, scientists were experimenting with hybrids - grape hybrids not cars. Our wines this month are the result of two German scientists trying to improve on what Mother Nature had provided. By crossing two types of grape vines, their intent was to create a vine producing fruit that would surpass either varietal separately. In both instances, one grape varietal was chosen for its flavor while the other was selected for its growing characteristics, such as its ability to ripen, resilience to frost and the amount of

fruit it would yield. I did not, however, choose Scheurebe and Zweigelt for scientific study or etymology, but rather for organoleptic exploration. With the holiday season approaching, many of us will sit down to traditional feasts. With that in mind, I chose these two wines for their food compatibility and versatility. They are both soft, fruit-forward wines with delicious, but at the same time, interesting flavors. They are wines that are immediately enjoyable and should make for fun conversation as friends and family try to figure out not only what they are drinking, but even more challenging, how to pronounce the names!

***2004 Weingut Dr. Deinhard
Scheurebe Kabinett
Deidesheim, Pfalz
Germany***



***2004 Weingut Glatzer
Zweigelt Riedencuvée
Carnuntum, Austria***

Pfalz, until recently known as Rheinpfalz, is Germany's second largest wine region in the southern part of the country. The words Phalz and Palatinate both derive from the Latin "palatium", meaning palace. The Roman emperors constructed their imperial residences on a hill in the region 2000 years ago, and the name still sticks. It is here that the *Deutsche Weinstrasse*, the German wine route, was first established in 1935, to link some 40 villages on a north-south axis, and to strengthen regional identity. Pfalz lies between the densely forested Haardt Mountains (an extension of the Vosges Mountains) and the Rhine plain, extending from south of Worms all the way to the French border, just north of Alsace. This region, which produces more wine than any of the other 13 German wine regions, is the warmest in Germany. Its 56,000 acres of vineyards, which follow the eastern edge of the high-lying woods of the Pfalz Forest, don't need the shelter of river valleys, and certain Mediterranean fruits, such as figs and lemons, can be grown there. Mittelhaardt is the northern area of this region with its renowned wine-growing towns such as Forst, Deidesheim, Wachenheim, Ungstein, Kallstadt, and Bad Dürkheim. Deidesheim, generally recognized as the best village of the whole area, is where Weingut Dr. Deinhard is located. This estate is now in the hands of the Koch Family, yet is called Dr. Deinhard after its founder, who moved from Koblenz to Deidesheim in the middle of the 19th century. The estate, which produces about 17,000 cases annually, has 75 acres planted, of which 80% is Riesling, and the other 20% includes Scheurebe, Weissburgunder, Gewurtztraminer, and Pinot Noir. The winemaker for Weingut Dr. Deinhard is Heinz Bauer. When Terry Theise, the importer of this wine, asked Bauer if his cellar work was different from the other quality estates of the region, Bauer's reply was, "Quality results from what one does in the vineyard. There are no wonder winemakers. Intensity, flexibility, knowledge and intuition are the things which bring



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quality.” The grape Scheurebe is a 20th century German vine crossing created by Dr. Georg Scheu. It is a Silvaner-Riesling cross, but is much more than a riper, more productive replica of Riesling. The 2004 Scheurebe from Dr. Deinhard comes from Ruppertsberger Linsenbusch, where the best parcels could be considered legitimate 1er Cru. It is an exuberant wine with racy flavors of black currants and rich grapefruit. The palate shows the mineral intricacy of Riesling with a delicious overtone of lavender. The slight sweetness is counterbalanced with ample acidity, and the little touch of “spritzy” makes the wine lively in the mouth. There is an intriguing combination of fruit flavors and spice (fortunately the alcohol is only 10%) that makes it difficult for me not to gulp this wine at an alarming pace! This is a great wine to have with spicy Thai or Vietnamese food or to have at the end of a meal with fruit and cheese.

The 2004 Weingut Dr. Deinhard Scheurebe is \$19.99/bottle, \$215.90/case.



Austrian wine may not be as famous as wine from France, Italy, or California, but it has gained tremendously in profile and popularity recently. Since the mid-eighties Austrian wine laws have tightened up, and wineries have changed their focus from quantity to quality and are now producing world-class wines. Another reason Austrian wines are getting so much attention is because of their very individual character, owed not only to regional grape varieties not often found elsewhere, but also because of their unique terroir. Austria is divided into 9 political provinces, and since June of 1999, each of these provinces belongs to one of Austria's four wine regions: Bergland, Weinland, Steiermark and Wien. Weinland consists of the provinces Burgenland and Lower Austria. The appellations within Lower Austria (Niederösterreich) are Wachau, Kremstal, Kamptal, Traisental, Donauland, Weinviertel, Carnuntum and Thermenregion. The Carnuntum region is a hop, skip and a jump east of Vienna. If you can figure exactly how to get out of the city of Vienna, you're about a 20 minute ride to Göttlesbrunn, where you'll find one of the most famed wineries, that of Walter Glatzer. The recent success of the Carnuntum region is closely linked to Walter Glatzer's wine making. His consistent and uncompromising drive for quality and his numerous awards have inspired many young wine growers of the region. Owning approximately 50 acres of vineyards, Walter cultivates mainly red grape varieties that benefit from perfect conditions in the warm Pannonian climate and the excellent soils consisting of clay and gravel. Terry Theise writes, “Walter is a miracle. He is an amazingly nice guy, making sensational wines and offering them at way down-to-earth prices. He aims to grow the best possible grapes. He'll green-harvest when necessary, not only to increase dry extract but also to guarantee physiological ripeness. Glatzer does all his harvesting by hand, though he could, if wished, work much of his land by machine.” Zweigelt is Austria's most popular dark-berried grape variety. It is a hybrid created by Dr. Zweigelt in 1923, crossing Blaufränkisch and St-Laurent. At its best, it combines some of the bite of the first with the body of the second. The 2004 Glatzer Zweigelt Riedencuvée is a knockout example of what Zweigelt should be. It has a nice ruby color with aromas of cherry, strawberry, rose pedals and pepper. In the mouth, the wine is medium-bodied with tastes of cherry and raspberry, and a peppery mid palette. The soft tannins and pleasing acidity make it an easy wine to drink with a variety of dishes. It is perfect with (can you guess?) turkey, ham, duck, chicken, and salmon.

The 2004 Glatzer Zweigelt Riedencuvée is \$17.99/bottle, \$194.30/case