

View from the Cellar

John Gilman

Ratings of the 2017 Vintage

Weingut Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch (Bernkastel)

Sofia Thanisch and her team have made an absolutely superb set of 2017ers. The family estate was hit hard by frost and also caught a bit of the August hail in 2017, so that the yields here are nearly fifty percent less than was the case in 2016 (thirty-two fuders in '17 versus fully sixty in '16), but everyone is very happy with the quality of the wines in this most recent vintage. The picking started on September 25th in 2017 and proceeded quickly, with the harvesting team very careful about selection in this vintage and the last bunches collected on October 12th. Sofia Thanisch has a broad range of dry to sweeter styled wines available in the 2017 vintage (though none in the same quantities as was the case in 2016), with a pair of truly beautiful Grosses Gewächs bottlings from the Graben and Doctor vineyards, a classic range of Kabinetten (including one of the best young Doctor Kabinetten I have ever tasted) and both Spätlesen and Auslesen from the Badstube and Doctor vineyards. In addition to the lineup I tasted during my visit at the end of May, there are also some Goldkapsel and Beerenauslese cuvées still down in the cellars that had not yet been bottled. The remainder of the 2017ers had been bottled two weeks prior to my visit (with the exception of the Estate Riesling Kabinett, which was still in cask), but the recently-bottled wines were still nicely open and really showing beautifully. Sofia Thanisch and her team here have been on quite a hot streak in the last ten to fifteen years and the wines at the estate have never been better than they are today. 2017 is a vintage that presented great possibilities to those who were draconian with their selections and only worked with perfect grapes, which was clearly the case here! Perhaps there is no better example of just how good the 2017 vintage could be across a wide array of styles than is the Doctor vineyard here at Weingut Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch, as Sofia Thanisch has a brilliant 2017 Grosses Gewächs awaiting release from the Doctor, as well as stunning Kabinett, Spätlese and Auslese as well! All of these will be absolute classics and amongst the finest examples of their level and style from this great vineyard to be crafted here in many, many vintages! And there are still Goldkapsel Auslese and Beerenauslese from the vineyard still unfinished down in the cellars and awaiting discovery next year, the Doctor vineyard has clearly decided to play Santa Claus in 2017! A great, great range of wines from Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch in this vintage.

2017 Estate Riesling QbA Trocken- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #11

For the last five or six years, this has been one of my absolute favorite bottlings of Estate Riesling Trocken, as the wine delivers excellent complexity and palate presence for its very reasonable price tag. The 2017 is another fine example in the making, offering up a superb bouquet of apple, wild yeasts, slate, a touch of petrol and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and beautifully balanced, with a fine core, bright, ripe acids and excellent length and grip on the focused finish. Entry level dry Riesling on the Mosel does not get better than this. 2018-2035. **90.**

2017 Graben Grosses Gewächs- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #10

The first vintage of Graben Grosses Gewächs from Sofia Thanisch was the 2014 and this *terroir* has turned out to be a beautiful source for great dry Rieslings. The 2017 is absolutely superb, with the inherent elegance of the best 2017ers very much in evidence here. The bouquet offers up a superb blend of apple, pear, wild yeasts, spring flowers, a touch of orange peel and a complex base of salty soil tones. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, complex and seamless in its balance, with a rock solid core, great delineation and grip, vibrant acids and a long, nascently complex and very classy finish. 2021-2060. **94.**

2017 Doctor Grosses Gewächs- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #9

When I think about it, I am not sure if there is a better vineyard in the middle Mosel for producing dry wines, as the broader shoulders of the Berncasteler Doctor really work perfectly with a drier style. The 2017 Doctor Grosses Gewächs from Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch may well be the greatest young vintage of this wine I have ever tasted in the GG style, as the wine has the depth and palate impression of this great *terroir*, coupled to uncanny refinement and elegance this year. The stellar bouquet wafts from the glass in a youthful blend of grapefruit, lemon, wild yeasts, salty soil tones, citrus peel, dried flowers and plenty of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and properly reserved in profile, with a rock solid core, great focus and bounce, ripe, zesty acids and a very, very long, complex and perfectly balanced finish. This is unequivocally a legend in the making! 2024-2065+. **96+.**

2017 Estate Riesling Kabinett- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch

I did not write down the AP # for the Estate Riesling Kabinett in 2017, but the wine is really quite lovely. The nose offers up a fine constellation of green apple, pear, bee pollen, slate and a fine topnote of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full and juicy on the attack, with lovely focus and balance, bright acids and a long, complex and bouncy finish. This is really a fine example and a great value in 2017! 2018-2040. **90.**

2017 Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett Feinherb- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch AP #8

The 2017 Badstube Kabinett Feinherb is a lovely wine, coming in at 10.5 percent alcohol and carrying twenty-five grams per liter of residual sugar. It was bottled under a screwcap this year. The wine offers up a fine bouquet of lemon, apple, slate, a touch of petrol, apple blossoms and a gentle topnote of wild yeasts. On the palate the wine is medium-full, pure and complex, with beautiful balance, zesty, ripe acids and impressive length and grip on the focused finish. Fine juice. 2018-2040. **91+.**

2017 Estate Riesling QbA- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #12 (screwcap)

The 2017 Estate Riesling QbA is also really good this year (as is the case with everything I tasted from Weingut Dr. Thanisch this year!), with a bit more body than the Kabinette Feinherb, but the same sense of balance and grace. The nose delivers a classic blend of apple, a touch of mirabelle, salty minerality, dried flowers and a bit of upper register smokiness. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and quite solid at the core, with impressive delineation and grip, bouncy acids and a long, poised and zesty finish. Good juice. 2018-2035. **90.**

2017 Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Kabinett- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch AP #13

The 2017 Kabinett from the Badstube vineyard is excellent. The nose wafts from the glass in a complex blend of apple, a touch of white cherry, wild yeasts, slate, a touch of sea salts and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, medium-full, complex and filigreed, with bright acids, excellent focus and balance, fine lift and grip on the finish and impressive length and salty mineral drive on the complex finish. Really lovely Kabinett. 2018-2040+. **93.**

2017 Bernkasteler Doctor Riesling Kabinett- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #2

There is only a single bottling of Kabinett from the Doctor vineyard this year from Sofia Thanisch, rather than the customary one for regular release and one for the auction in Trier. It is a great, great wine in 2017 and will repay cellaring with sheer brilliance when it is fully mature. The outstanding nose offers up scents of apple, pear, salty soil tones, spring flowers, a hint of the yellow plum to come with bottle age and an esthery topnote of bee pollen. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, pure and nascently complex, with a great core and even better cut, impeccable balance, ripe acids and a very, very long, focused and absolutely stellar finish. A great wine in the making. 2022-2060. **95.**

2017 Bernkasteler Badstube Riesling Spätlese- Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #6

The 2017 Badstube Spätlese from Dr. Thanisch is a lovely wine in the making, but it is more reserved in personality than the Kabinett and could do with at least a couple of years in the cellar to start to stir. The bouquet delivers a fine blend of apple, pear, bee pollen, salty soil tones and apple blossoms in the upper register. On the palate the wine is fullish, pure and very precise, with a good juicy core, bright acids and excellent focus and grip on the long and dancing finish. Classic Bernkasteler Spätlese in the making! 2020-2055+. **92+.**



Sofia Thanisch and her husband Hans outside of the tasting room at Weingut Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch.

2017 Berncasteler Doctor Riesling Auslese - Wwe. Dr. Thanisch Erben Thanisch AP #8

The 2017 Doctor Auslese AP #8 is the only Auslese bottling from this great vineyard this year, and it is again, a legend in the making. This is still properly young and reserved, but the depth, precision and structural elegance of this wine this year promises nothing but greatness in the fullness of time! The bouquet is pure and nascently complex, offering up scents of pear, mirabelle, salty soil tones, lime zest, lilacs, bee pollen and a wide array of spring flowers. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, long and utterly seamless, with ripe, zesty acids, great focus and grip and a very, very long, poised and complex finish. Like many of the very best 2017 Auslesen, the Doctor closes with a lovely push of salty minerality that dovetails magically with the gorgeous fruit tones. A great, great Auslese. 2027-2100. **96.**