

Dr. Loosen

GERMANY | MOSEL

Ernst Loosen has unlocked the secret to great dry wines in Germany's Mosel Valley.



ERNST LOOSEN



FOUNDED:
Early 1800s
OWNER:
Ernst Loosen
WINEMAKER:
Bernhard Schug
VITICULTURIST:
Roland Orthmann
ACRES OWNED:
150
ANNUAL PRODUCTION:
35,000 cases
ESTATE GROWN:
100% (except for Dr. L wines)
IMPORTER:
Loosen Bros.
USA, Salem, OR

ERNST LOOSEN MAKES SOME OF THE finest Grosses Gewächs (GG, or “great growth”) wines in the Mosel. The key, he’s found through experiments started in 2008, is spontaneous fermentations in traditional 1,000-liter wooden casks followed by long aging on the lees—one year minimum—with no stirring. It’s a method he discovered in the notebooks of his great-grandfather, and one he has perfected in the 2017 vintage. That year’s devastating spring frost and hail, torrential summer heat, drought and heavy August rains reduced Loosen’s yields by 40 percent, but thanks to the work of Roland Orthmann, his viticulturist for 20 years, and Loosen’s collection of own-rooted vines—averaging 70 years old—what fruit made it into the GGs was concentrated and pristine. Without the scrim of residual sweetness, the wines feel vibrant and precise, *and* maintain their essential Mosel transparency and finesse. —T.Q.T.

2017 Mosel Erdener Treppchen GG Riesling (\$54, 95 points) Ernst Loosen’s 150 acres of vines include parcels in the Middle Mosel’s top vineyards, such as Treppchen, a slope so steep that, long ago, a staircase was built into the red-slate hillside (thus the name, the “little staircase of Erden”). Loosen reserves the oldest parcel, an especially steep section of own-rooted vines, for his GG; in 2017, the vines seem to have sucked up the very stone they grow in: It tastes like a liquid extract of minerals, tangy and savory, fleshing out into peach and lime, the acidity expanding ever outward. This is just an infant now; cellar it for ten years or more.

2017 Mosel Graacher Domprobst GG Riesling (\$54, 94 points) Whether you pick up this GG, the Erdener Treppchen GG listed above, or the GGs from Wehlener Sonnenuhr (93 points) is a matter of personal preference more than quality. All are fascinating testaments to the power of terroir. The Graacher Domprobst, from a warm, protected site in the center of Himmelreich, is stylish and immediately attractive, as rich and buoyant as lemon meringue, in contrast to the more austere Wehlener Sonnenuhr GG, a wine of penetrating acidity and mineral flavors giving its pineapple fruit a cut-glass precision and clarity.

2018 Mosel Dr. L Dry Riesling (\$12, 87 points) Loosen buys in grapes for his Dr. L bottlings, and you’d be hard pressed to find a better \$12 riesling. This one is floral and earthy, with a full-bodied texture that makes it satisfying on its own or with a week-night rotisserie chicken.