

# Riesling



## **5 Things You Need To Know**

### **1. Basics:**

***Riesling has been planted in American vineyards since the 1800s, but the wine has had its ups and downs with consumers - going in and out of fashion, with resulting fluctuations in acreage.***

***One of the first grape varieties grown in Washington, the state's Rieslings tend to be very floral in the nose, with vivid apricot, peach and apple flavors. This varies greatly from many of the dry Riesling produced in Europe-***

*specifically Germany where the tendency is a much dryer white wine. That is, until we talk about the Late Harvest versions. Most Washington Rieslings are made in a dry to off-dry style to accompany food. With nearly 4500 acres of Riesling planted in Washington State, it is the second largest white grape crop after Chardonnay. Occasionally, the "noble rot"- literally mold on the skin of the grapes- works its magic on Riesling, concentrating the sugars and flavors to produce a late-harvest wine of incomparable intensity. When the conditions are right, Washington vintners also produce incredible ice wines from Riesling. Some of the worlds most sought after wines are these type of Late Harvest or Ice Wines which have a tremendous flavor, often a tremendous price and are truly a joy to experience.*

*Riesling needs very little time in the production process or bottle before it's ready for market so you will often see a recent vintage on the shelf less than a year after harvest.*

*Domestically, Washington State is the largest producer of Riesling with nearly twice the acreage of California. Oregon, too, produces a Riesling as well as several other states in the U.S. Worldwide the Rieslings from Germany are held with the highest esteem for they are the noblest and oldest of the Riesling vines. Producers there offer the wine lover a vast array of Riesling from Blue Nun to the finest Trocken Beren Auslese that demand the most premium of prices.*

*Washington state stores currently offer 17 Riesling in the 750 ml size ranging in price from \$5 - \$20.*

## **2. What's it taste like?**




*Rieslings styles range in varying styles and tastes from dry and off-dry, to fruity, sweet and botrytised ( that's the Late Harvest ones), the general*

*profile of Washington dry Riesling emerges as steely with good fruit aromatics and a palate-cleansing finish. A typical Riesling flavor varies, depending on region, with ripe yellow peach, apricot, nectarine and tropical fruit from warmer regions and more citrusy and white fruit (quince, pear and white peach) from cooler climates such as Washington states Columbia valley and Puget sound region as well as some Northern California areas).*

### **3. What's it go with?**



*Riesling is the great all around wine. It can be enjoyed simply alone as an aperitif; or with chicken, fish or other light dishes. It reaches its pinnacle when accompanying fresh cracked crab (at least in this writer's opinion). It's quite versatile and often enjoyed nicely chilled, with a good friend and a sunset. The sweeter versions (Ice and Late Harvest) are concentrated dessert wines and are served in small quantities (one or two ounces) paired with cheeses or fruit tarts or similar style dessert.*

-  *As the sales person, recommend three possible choices for your customer. Show them a low priced, a medium priced and one of your more premium offerings. You will often find the customer will buy the top shelf item that you have taken the time to show them.*

### **4. Riesling in LCB Stores-by the numbers**

***Fun fact: the number one selling 750 ml wine in Washington State is .... Chateau Ste Michelle Riesling. Outselling by nearly 100 cases monthly the nearest competitor Cooks Brut. As a category and its 17 offerings, the Riesling category sells an average of over 1500 cases statewide monthly. By comparison the Washington Chardonnay category with 26 offerings sells a little more than 1700 cases monthly.***

- 📌 ***In state stores, Riesling is typically set on the shelf by region then by price with the more expensive brands and labels near the top of the shelf. Imports and larger bottles of which there are few are set by brand.***

## **5. Category Leaders**

***In Washington state stores the best sellers in the Riesling category are (by size):***

### **Washington**

- 🍷 ***Chateau Ste Michelle***
- 🍷 ***Columbia Cellarmaster ( a slightly sweeter version of Riesling)***
- 🍷 ***Snoqualmie Winemakers Reserve ( yet again, a slightly sweet wine)***
- 🍷 ***Washington Hills Late Harvest Riesling***
- 🍷 ***Columbia Crest Two Vines***

***There are many other Rieslings labels from different parts of the world available in state stores as Wine Specialty or HUB items, grocery and wine stores. Get to know some of them take a look at the labels, do some investigating, the payoff in your ability to better serve your customer will be tremendous...***