



Charles Smith Wines: The Modernist Project 2007 "Kung Fu Girl" Riesling, WA, \$12 retail

Wine Topics

Riesling Rocks—in Washington

By Wini Moranville

On April 6th, 3,500 wine-lovers sipped their way through the Grand Tasting of Taste Washington, a wine and food extravaganza held every year in Seattle (an offshoot is coming up in June in Spokane).

The Seattle event showcased 210 wineries pouring up to three wines each. Do the math and that's a lot of wine to get through. Over the years, I've found the best way to approach these mega-tastings is to focus on one or two varietals.

I chose Riesling, as the day before the tasting, I sat in on a fantastic seminar called "Riesling Rocks the Rim." Not only do I love Riesling but I adore Wild Ginger—and one of the panelists was Ole Thompson, the wine-buyer for this ultra-stylish Southeast Asian-focused Seattle restaurant.

By the way, Thompson and his panelists were all guys—meaty guys that looked like they'd be just as happy with a beer and a burger and fistful of fries as with a glass of Riesling and chopstick-tweezed food. One fellow even wore a shirt with the words "Real Men Drink Riesling" boldly emblazoned across it. That should make anyone rethink the girly-girl misperception about Riesling.

So, what's so great about Riesling? "Fragrance, finesse, dynamic flavors, and balance" said one panel member. Washington Rieslings further distinguish themselves with rich fruit and great structure—similar to much-loved qualities found in Old World Rieslings.

Another panelist, the noted wine expert and author Evan Goldstein, pointed out that Riesling's bright acidity meshes beautifully with food—especially the pan-Asian food we've come to love.

Of the many Washington State Rieslings I tasted, both at the seminar and the grand tasting, here are my favorites. Unfortunately, some of these may not be available nationwide. You can contact the wineries directly to see if they'll ship to your state. Of course, another way to get to know wines from small producers is to join the **Better Homes and Gardens Wine Club**.

- **Kung Fu Girl Riesling** from Charles Smith Wines (Washington State; \$12): I knew I'd love this wine—it was made with Wild Ginger (one of my favorite restaurants) in mind. Lightly floral, with pleasing mineral notes.
- **Snoqualmie 2006 Naked Riesling** (Columbia Valley; \$10): The "naked" refers to the organically grown grapes. This is honeyed, citrusy and good—a great summer quaff.
- **Two Mountain Winery 2007 Riesling** (Rattlesnake Hills; \$13): Solid and refreshing, not overly brisk, but in no way cloying, either.
- **Gamache Vineyards 2007 Estate Riesling** (\$18): Wow. Gorgeous—a voluptuous fruit salad, with peaches, apricot, and sweet pink grapefruit notes.
- **DS Winery 2007 Riesling** (Horse Heaven Hills; \$20). Refreshingly apple-y, with a pleasantly low alcohol content (under 10%), which suits summer sipping.