Antonio Galloni
VINOUS

BY ANNE KREBIEHL MW | AUGUST 20, 2026

The Thörle brothers have once again beaten all the odds to create a downright luminous collection of 2025 Rieslings, while their 2024 Pinot Noirs are simply breathtaking. They have really knocked it out of the park. “Harvest in 2025 was a tough battle because everything ripened together,” said Christoph Thörle. “We started on September 1 and were done on September 23, with the big rain forecast for September 20-21. Weather during flowering was changeable with slight wind and some rain, giving us loose bunches. This was followed by a cooler period, and a summer that was not hot apart from around ten days in June and August. Everything was set for ripening, especially with the low fruit set.” Thörle noted that they were largely finished before the rain, with a few parcels they had left unpicked for sweet wine. They were lucky and some botrytis dried out, so they could pick very concentrated wines up to Beerenauslese. Yields, however, were very low. In the Hölle, they got just 12 hl/ha of Riesling, and even their young Riesling and Chardonnay vines only gave them 45 hl/ha. The estate Pinot Noir delivers Grand Cru concentration at 18 hl/ha.

RIESLING DRY

2025 Thörle Saulheimer Hölle Riesling – 98 points
Drinking window: 2030 - 2065

The 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle had a mere 12 hl/ha of yield this year on this steep, active-lime site. Gentle, lemony cream is all the nose gives away. The palate, however, is a symphony of coolest limestone and lemon, absolutely compact and svelte, totally linear and super bright. This is bundled luminosity, pristine lemon, total concentration but also total elegance and linearity. This shines. (Bone-dry)

2025 Thörle Saulheimer Probstey Riesling – 96 points
Drinking window: 2028 - 2055

The 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Probstey is a site of sandy loam over limestone, the warmest site of the estate, rising to 175 meters and facing south. This was completely fermented in Stück (1200l. Once again, the nose is slow to show itself, offering subtle lemon and creamy peach. It is on the palate that the creamy peachiness comes into full, generous flow. This is rounded but so fresh, so brilliantly lemony and so supple, so smooth. This strikes an effortless balance and rings with freshness and generosity. The zesty texture makes the mouth water on the long finish. (Bone-dry)

2025 Thörle Saulheimer Schlossberg Riesling – 95 points
Drinking window: 2028 - 2050

The 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Schlossberg is from richer clay soils with calcareous marl and good water availability, and it was fermented in Stück and Halbstück. The nose is shy, offering lemony brightness. The palate is concentrated, has grip and fill and a lovely pithy note that reminds one of golden lemon and juicy yellow stone fruit. The finish homes in on that pith, that lemon peel and that purity. (Bone-dry)

2025 Thörle Saulheim Riesling Kalkstein – 93 points
Drinking window: 2026 - 2041

The 2025 Riesling Kalkstein Saulheim was four-fifths fermented in used Stück, the rest in stainless steel and stayed on gross lees for nine months. Tenderness on the nose reveals a very slight smokiness and supple, smooth, ripe lemon and even a touch of lemon balm before opening up into white and yellow peach. The palate is beautifully concentrated, with the cooling effect of limestone but such fill, such juiciness, such flow and such energetic ease. The finish is long and lemony. (Bone-dry)

2025 Thörle Austernkalk Riesling – 91 points
Drinking window: 2026 - 2036

The 2025 Riesling Austernkalk is picked from a younger parcel within the Schlossberg, its name referencing the numerous fossils in the Tertiary limestone. It was matured two-thirds in Stück, one-third in stainless steel, then spent eight months on gross lees. A tender, juicy note of fresh yellow apple verges on stone fruit. On the palate, it unpacks its customary lemon purity, pervading a super-juicy, almost fleshy pale peachiness. This is generous and beautifully bright, and finishes with a note of salt. (Bone-dry)

PINOT NOIR & CO.

2024 Saulheimer Schlossberg Spätburgunder– 97 points
Drinking window: 2028 - 2055

The 2024 Spätburgunder Saulheimer Schlossberg is the first wine from these three barrels, one of which was new, to be bottled separately under its own site name. The vines, a mix of clone 828 and a massal selection rooted in heavier soil, are now 12 years old. Yields were painfully low. Tart cherry, mulberry and cranberry give an exquisitely aromatic nose. The palate is dense, with a dusting of cocoa powder lending a darker aspect to the red fruit and bringing it into utter freshness. It is this acidity that pulls every nuance into focus. Untold earthy depth serves as a backdrop, which for now is muted. It needs bottle age. (Bone-dry)

2024 Saulheimer Hölle Spätburgunder– 97 points
Drinking window: 2029 - 2060

The 2024 Spätburgunder Saulheimer Hölle is from the oldest Pinot vines on the estate. The wine spent 18 months in oak. Tart, ripe and delicious Morello cherry is exquisite on the nose. The palate is crystalline and statuesque from the off, with such grace and poise, such luminous freshness. Seemingly nano-particled tannins make you shiver with their caressing silkiness. Dense but weightless, this is sinuous and effortlessly beautiful. Liquid elegance, pervaded by aromatic red fruit. Wow. (Bone-dry)

2024 Thörle Saulheimer Probstey Spätburgunder – 95 points
Drinking window: 2028 - 2050

The 2024 Spätburgunder Saulheimer Probstey matured for 18 months in 40% new oak. Smokiness comes first and surrounds ripe, dark cherry, presaging a bold wine. The palate, however, disobliges and presents delicious red fruit instead, beautifully dense, with cocoa powder setting a darker accent. At its core is a well of juicy, mouthwatering, enlivening and energetic freshness. A lovely frisson of herbal savor adds yet another accent while firm tannins are like a silky, tight but elastic web. This is wonderfully robust, muscular, still boisterous even, but glorious. (Bone-dry)

2024 Thörle Saulheimer Spätburgunder Kalkstein – 94 points
Drinking window: 2028 - 2046

The 2024 Spätburgunder Saulheim is from the Hölle and Schlossberg sites and matured for 18 months in small barrels, with a quarter of the wood new. Delicious Morello cherry seems extended by lovely woodsmoke but lifts with its aromatic intensity. Crimson silk holds the Morello cherry on the palate;

smoothness and freshness align, presenting exquisite aromatic purity. This has depth, structure, purity, incredible substance and total elegance. The tannins seem to release more and more flavor as they dissolve slowly on the palate, giving a slow-release effect to aromatic cherry on that endless finish. (Bone-dry)

2024 Thörle Spätburgunder – 92 points
Drinking window: 2026 - 2038

The 2024 Spätburgunder is made from tiny yields and small berries, explaining the relatively dark color. The wine spent 18 months in oak. Morello cherry is pure and direct on the nose, beguiling with its aromatic tartness, while slight smokiness follows. Exquisite red-fruitedness defines the dense but light-footed palate. Detailed and superfine tannins are silky and fused, and bright acidity underlines the Morello aromatics, tangy, delicious and alluring. It is astonishing that a wine can be so light-footed and yet so dense. Christoph Thoerle says these low yields were key to ripening the fruit in such a cool year as 2024. (Bone-dry)

2025 Thörle Kalk & Kreide Saulheim Chardonnay & Pinot blanc– (93-95) points
Drinking window: 2028 - 2046

The 2025 Kalk & Kreide is blended from 60% Chardonnay and 40% Weissburgunder, grown on limestone sites, fermented and aged in tonneaux and Stück, with a quarter of new wood. This is the final blend. Woodsmoke and toasted hazelnut come with a lemon breeze. The palate is textured with yeast and lemon pith. Its fill of limestone saltiness aligns with exquisite lemon zest and just lasts and lasts, with gorgeous smokiness surrounding the lemon and salt tang. (Bone-dry)

RIESLING SWEET

Thörle 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle Kabinett – 93 points
Drinking window: 2026 - 2041

The 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle Kabinett trembles with flintiness and lemony peach. Juiciness skips, jumps, twirls and dances with lemony and peachy abandon, with delicious acidity as its eternal dynamo. Wonderful, delicious and totally lip-smacking. The 2025's 8.9 g/l of acid stands against 38 g/l of residual sugar. (Sweet)

Thörle 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle Auslese – 93 points
Drinking window: 2026 - 2041

The 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle Auslese is made from superripe fruit and healthy, fresh botrytis, harvested in late September. The pale wine speaks more of fresh fruit than botrytis on the nose, with lovely peach and orange peel. The palate is sweet, and here the concentration of botrytized fruit becomes apparent, with candied peach and smooth peach compote, while lovely orange jelly joins in. Everything is juicy and tapers toward ripe lemon zest with all its wonderful pithiness and mouthfeel. Residual sugar is 121.3 g/l. (Sweet)

Thörle 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle Beerenauslese – 96 points
Drinking window: 2026 - 2041

The 2025 Riesling Saulheimer Hölle Beerenauslese is from grapes that were botrytized after the rain and dried out. It is only due to the wine's character that this was not designated as a TBA. A touch of honey pairs with passion fruit jelly on the nose. Even more passion fruit arrives on the super-concentrated, luscious palate, where candied citrus peel vies for attention and is cut by all that thrilling, fruity sharpness that makes everything precise. The acidity is a killer. This is high-octane stuff and will last forever. Residual sugar is 224.5g/l. (Luscious)

“After the frost horrors of 2024, several winemakers noted how “pleasant” or “relaxed” the 2025 growing period was. There was no frost damage at all, winter had left good moisture reserves, and while there were some dry periods, rain always came in time. The warm summer did not have any crazy heat spikes, but 2025 was another year of above-average temperatures. In fact, the German Weather Service counted 1,980 sunshine hours in the federal state of Rheinland-Pfalz, making 2025 one of the top five sunniest years since 1951. The vines thus had everything they needed and ripeness raced ahead, prompting many to start picking in late August and early September.

Several estates reported that, unusually, everything ripened at once. Most spoke of an exhausting, quick harvest with long days. Some raced against fast-advancing ripeness, and some were able to pick wonderfully pure sweet Riesling Prädikate from shriveled grapes without botrytis, but all knew significant rainfall was forecast for the weekend of September 20-21. Many who had ripe fruit saw that as a natural deadline, hurrying to get everything in before the rain. Growers strategized to pick parcels from each site so that they would have “some of everything” in the cellar, eventually being able to blend with later-picked parcels. Some managed to pick everything before the rain by resorting to machine harvest for estate-level wines, increasing harvest crews or equipping their pickers with headlamps to harvest through the night. Others deliberately waited longer to start picking, knowing the rain would come and it would be necessary to sort and discard a lot of fruit. (When rain hits ripe fruit that already has soft skins, berries split and become an ideal breeding ground for all sorts of rot.) Most estates were finished by early October, if not earlier. Seventy-six-year-old Helmut Dönnhoff, of Weingut Dönnhoff in the cool Nahe, said that for the first time in his life, the entire harvest was picked within the month of September.

Many winemakers commented on the low yields of 2025, which exacerbated ripening and catapulted sugar levels. Different factors contributed to the low yields. In southern Rheinhessen, wind and rain at flowering led to millerandage and poor fruit set, with spots of hail affecting some. Several growers remarked that there was just less juice in the grapes, or that berries were small even if there was good fruit set. This explains the high extract and healthy, stable acid levels of 2025. The Rieslings thus brim with fruit, often prompting an involuntary exclamation of “Lecker,” the German word for “tasty.” This is not a term the Germans love, especially in a wine context, because it is associated with easy pleasures of unsophisticated food and drink, but all the peachy, inviting, juicy openness and relative opulence of the wines made it hard to suppress this expression. Of course, such ripeness also spells higher alcohol, and many wines clock in at a full degree more than last year. But 2025 goes well beyond fruit since acids remained stable, giving contour and spine to all this generosity. The 2025s are easy to like, approachable and pliant. Many estates crafted luminous marvels of Riesling, chiseled monuments that simply have everything. I encountered only a few examples with a touch of heat or not quite enough tension. The usual suspects did everything right.

Two thousand twenty-five was also a year for sweet wines with and without botrytis. The fruit, already concentrated by low yields and ample ripeness, often began shriveling on the vine, resulting in Spätlesen and many Auslesen. In many cases, ripeness was already too high for the light-footed Kabinett style. Some producers picked botrytised fruit, while for others the botrytis had dried out by harvest. With or without botrytis, 2025 Auslesen are abundant. One winemaker joked that he had made enough Auslese to last him for the rest of his life. Few made TBAs, as that final concentration wasn’t often possible with more rain coming. Sweet-wine lovers, however, are spoilt for choice in 2025.

For some reason, many consumers are still skeptical about German Pinot Noir. I wish they could taste some of the silky, beautiful wines I came across for this report. **The 2024 Pinot Noirs should finally drive it home that Germany can and does excel with Spätburgunder. Standout names are Thörle, Keller, Knewitz, Adamswein, Wagner-Stempel and Battenfeld-Spanier.** I tasted the wines for this report during estate visits in early July 2026.”

From 2025 Rheinhessen-Nahe and Mittelrhein: Opulence, Clarity and Sweet Marvels (Aug 2026) by Anne Krebiehl MW