

imbibe

LIQUID CULTURE

Plus

50 HOLIDAY
GIFT IDEAS

DESTINATION
SYDNEY

NORTHWEST
RIESLINGS

RED (WINE)
VELVET CAKE

Holiday Drinks

FESTIVE RECIPES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

taste test Ideal for the holiday table, Northwest Rieslings rise to the occasion.

Riesling D'être

Riesling has ridden a rollercoaster of popularity. Demand for cheap, sweet wines in the '70s and '80s led to a flood of poorly made, overly sweet Rieslings until the varietal fell from favor in the '90s. But Riesling remains an impressive and incredibly versatile wine. With roots in Germany, it's long been revered for its bright fruit flavors and a tendency to reflect its terroir, such as the slate soils of Mosel, and it's one of the most food-friendly wines, making it perfect for the holidays. It's also a varietal that Pacific Northwest producers have found particularly well-suited to their cooler climes, and a number of Rieslings—from pleasingly sweet to bone dry—have helped reclaim the grape's good name. **By Penelope Bass**

Ponzi Vineyards Riesling, 2015
\$22, ponziwines.com

Willamette Valley vineyard Ponzi began making dry Rieslings in the 1970s. The 2015 Ponzi Riesling is bone-dry and delightfully crisp, with notes of melon, almond and an almost saké-like character.



Charles Smith Kung Fu Girl Riesling, 2016
\$13, klwines.com

From Washington winemaker Charles Smith, the Kung Fu Girl Riesling is a knockout, particularly for the price. Gorgeous floral aromas accompany an initial sweetness that is pared by tart green apple and a zippy acidity that dances across the palate.



Argyle Nuthouse Riesling, 2015
\$30, argylewinery.com

Named for the former hazelnut processing plant that now houses Oregon winery Argyle, the Nuthouse Riesling comes from devigorated rootstocks in their Eola-Amity Hills vineyard. It starts with a creamy sweetness, then finishes dry with notes of crisp, tart fruit.



Pacific Rim Riesling, Solstice Vineyard, 2015
\$24, pacificrimwine.com

Grown from the popularity of Bonny Doon's Pacific Rim Dry Riesling, Pacific Rim became its own winery in 2006 dedicated to the varietal. From their Solstice Vineyards in the Yakima Valley—an area rich in minerals from the Missoula Floods—this bottling presents lots of slate in both aroma and flavor, nicely complemented by bright citrus notes.



Long Shadows Poet's Leap Riesling, 2016
\$20, longshadows.com

From the Long Shadows Vintners collective in Walla Walla, Washington, Poet's Leap is inspired by the classic Rieslings of Germany. With a creamy sweetness up front and a pleasantly dry finish with a hint of minerality, this one can easily stand up to turkey or other holiday fare.



J. Christopher Medici Vineyards Riesling, 2015
\$25, jchristopherwines.com

Passionate about Old World wines, long-time winemaker Jay Somers partnered with German winemaker Ernst Loosen in 2010 to open the new home of J. Christopher Winery on Chehalem Mountain in Newberg, Oregon. Their Medici Vineyards Riesling is crisp and dry, with lots of lemon, pear and stone.



Chateau Ste. Michelle Dry Riesling, 2016
\$9, ste-michelle.com

Sourced from their cooler-climate vines in the Columbia Valley, this dry Riesling from Washington's oldest winery (and largest producer of the varietal) is ideal for holiday meals, with a snappy acidity balanced by a barely-there honeyed sweetness and aromas of lemon and citrus blossom—plus a price that can't be beat.

