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## Domaine Meyer-Fonne

By Ian D'Agata

Felix Meyer of Meyer-Fonné owns 10 hectares and works another 3.5 from rentals, with several prime grand cru sites at his disposal: Wineck-Schlossberg, Kaefferkopf, Furstentum, Sporen and Schoenenbourg. The estate also owns vines in numerous high-quality *lieux-dit*, such as Pfoeller (where the Sommerberg turns in the direction of the Florimont), Dorfburg and Hinterburg. Meyer did very well in both 2010 and 2011, but I think the quality leap between his entry-level wines and the grand crus is very evident, more so than at most other estates. His great 2010s are not to be missed, and the grand crus really offer a lesson on differences in *terroir*.

### **2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Blanc Vieilles Vignes**

87

(\$19) (roughly 60% auxerrois and 40% pinot blanc): Bright straw-green. Brisk aromas of citrus peel and white flowers. Classically dry, juicy and penetrating, but pliant rather than hard, offering moderately ripe, slightly herbal flavors of apple and pear. Uncomplicated but delicious food-friendly white wine with moderate length. These vines were planted between 1960 and 1970, according to Felix Meyer.

### **2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Reserve**

87

(\$23) Bright green-tinged straw color. Lemon, orange peel and wet stone on the nose. Leanish and slightly off-dry, with modest flesh but decent palate presence to the simple citrus and mineral flavors. Could use a bit more length, but this is a solid entry-level riesling.

### **2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Vignoble de Katzenthal**

89

Bright straw-yellow with green highlights. The nose hints at spicy *mirabelle*, chamomile and thyme. Rich, ripe and fresh, with very pure flavors of yellow apple, plum and herbs. Quite dry and firm on the bright back end. Lots going on here, if in an understated way.

### **2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Muscat Vignoble de Katzenthal**

88

(a 50/50 blend of muscat d'Alsace and muscat ottonel): Bright straw-yellow. Musky aromas of white flowers and lime, complicated by an obvious mineral element. Supple on the palate, offering moderately intense flavors of grapefruit, tangerine and rose petal. Finishes fresh, floral, and persistent--and drier than the 5 g/l residual sugar might indicate. These vines in the Hinterbourg are principally on deep granite soils, which explains this wine's mineral bent.

### **2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Reserve**

88

(\$26) Vivid straw. Tangerine and yellow plum on the nose. Rich and round on the palate, with flavors of yellow plum, yellow apple and ripe white peach. Soft acidity leaves this wine tasting quite sweet (it's technically 12 g/l residual sugar). Finishes with a hint of smoke and modest complexity.

### **2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Reserve**

89

(40 g/l residual sugar): Golden yellow. Burnt almond, aromatic herbs, roasted peach and mango on the perfumed nose. Then sweet, suave and very rich in the mouth, offering dense flavors of spicy candied pineapple and banana cream pie. Peppery honey and sweet brown spice nuances on the long, satisfying finish. Outstanding entry-level gewurz, as only Alsace

can muster. Though this certainly tastes moderately sweet (but much less so than the rather high 40 g/l residual sugar suggests), I love this wine's overall balance and penetrating, spicy aromas and flavors.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Wineck-Schlossberg**

**91**

Bright straw green. Cinnamon and nutmeg spice notes complement yellow stone fruits on the nose. Airy, moderately sweet and round, with caramel apple and lime flavors firmed and extended on the back end by real mineral verve and almost biting acidity. The very crisp riesling, made from vines averaging about 30 years of age, displays the airy mineral quality typical of granite soils but also an obvious spicy component typical of clay deposits--both characteristic of the Wineck-Schlossberg.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Schoenenbourg**

**92**

Good full yellow. Fusel and vanilla nuances complicate ripe yellow fruits on the nose. Soft and clean, with deep, rich flavors of orange and pineapple. Rather soft in acidity but finishes long and peppery. A step up in volume from the Wineck-Schlossberg, but those who like their rieslings minerally and light might prefer that wine. Meyer is one of the first to harvest on the Schoenenbourg, in an effort to make a dry wine. I love this wine's definition and graceful delivery of flavor.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Pfoeller**

**89(+?)**

Very bright yellow. Expressive, sweetly spicy aromas of tropical fruits and honey. Then large-scaled and off-dry in the mouth, with dominant flavors of mango, papaya, grapefruit and peppery honey. This is from the section of the Sommerberg where the grand cru turns (located next to Boxler's Dudenstein, on mainly *muschelkalk calcaire*, like the Geisberg and Rosacker), an area that always delivers austere wines with plenty of acidity.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Kaefferkopf**

**90(+?)**

Dark straw-yellow. Perfumed mineral and floral aromas. Ripe, honeyed citrus and quince flavors are enlivened by juicy acidity and carry well on the finish. This lovely riesling offers good definition and depth of flavor. From yellow-green marly-sandstone soils.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Dorfburg**

**91(+?)**

Good full yellow. Enticing, delicate aromas and flavors of pear and spicy caramel apple, with hints of banana and pineapple emerging. Enters the mouth soft and supple, but rising acidity nicely frames the mineral and pear flavors on the long, lemony finish. Rather atypical pinot gris from Alsace: bright and almost lean, it will remind you of riesling. Made from roughly 20-year-old vines, planted on the western side of the slope on oolitic *calcaire* of Jurassic origin, which is geologically younger than *muschelkalk*, the oldest of Alsace's different *calcaires* soils. The former gives less powerful minerality and more delicacy, while the *muschelkalk* gives structured wines that age well. The western exposure allows for a more gradual ripening of the pinot gris, which enables Meyer to make a dry wine.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Hinterburg de Katzenthal**

**91(+?)**

Bright, medium-deep straw-yellow. Honeyed dates and tropical fruits on the explosive nose and palate. Very rich and fat on entry, then opulent in the middle palate and tactile and long on the back end, leaving behind mango and grapefruit notes. This wine from granite soils almost always has residual sugar, as the grapes here ripen extremely well. In fact, this is where Felix Meyer makes most of his VTs and SGNs. Very impressive pinot gris.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Dorfburg Vieilles Vignes**

**92**

(made with 25% botrytized grapes): Bright, dark yellow. Aromas of ripe tropical fruits, spices and caramel apple. Rich and sweet but lively too, with plenty of harmonious acidity providing lift to the honeyed raisin, candied orange rind and custard cream flavors. This rather fat, showy gewurz is really everything a fan of this variety might ask for. Made from a single parcel of vines planted in 1959 on marno-calcareous soils. None was made in 2010 due to the difficult flowering conditions: since there was so little gewurztraminer available, Meyer declassified all of the Dorfburg juice into his Gewurztraminer Reserve.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Wineck-Schlossberg**

**93(+?)**

Very bright golden-yellow. Orange flower and lavender notes lift tangerine and peach on the fresh nose. Very sweet and rich in the mouth, conveying an impression of modest acidity, but its saline, mineral personality helps it remain fresh and clean. Finishes very long, with a repeating note of crushed stone. A rare bottling of gewurztraminer on granite, but historically this part of the Wineck-Schlossberg, on the border with Kaefferkopf, has deeper soils that have a little sandstone and that have been planted partly to this variety. Made with 20% botrytized grapes.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Sporen Vieilles Vignes**

**94(+?)**

Bright golden-yellow. Knockout aromas of tangerine, lemon rind and spicy lemon jelly, all lifted by white flowers. Pure, deep flavors of citrus fruits and sweet brown spices are nicely lifted by refreshing acidity. No botrytized grapes here. This superb wine should age very well. These 40-year-old vines actually grow in the Obere-Sporen, which means Sporen du Haut (or "high" Sporen), where there aren't many owners. According to Meyer, the rich subsoil and small surface stones make for intense, profound, long-lived wines.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Furstentum Vieilles Vignes 92(+?)**

Bright, deep golden yellow. Enticing scents of tropical fruit, smoked beef and sweet brown spices. Rich and smoky in the mouth, with concentrated acidity giving lift to the tropical fruit, caramel apple, toffee and cinnamon flavors. This is a perfect example of the combination of power and finesse that is possible in truly great gewurztraminer. About 30% nobly rotten grapes add complexity here. These vines were planted in 1961.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gentil D'Alsace 87**

(\$18) Pale straw. Lovely lemon sorbet nose is really riesling-dominated (while in 2011 it's the muscat that stands out), with complicating jasmine and tequila notes. Then lively and fresh on the palate, with zippy acidity carrying the citrus and floral flavors through a persistent finish. A very successful entry-level wine, and much livelier than the 2011, which is bigger but ultimately less charming.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Wineck-Schlossberg 92(+?)**

(\$42) Bright straw-green. The aromas of yellow apple and quince jam show an almost auxerrois-like buttery quality, along with the characteristic spiciness of the site. Bright and fresh on the palate, with a lovely tactile mouthfeel to the flavors of quince, lime and honeyed herbs. The long finish features high but harmonious acidity. This includes grapes from one parcel of 14-year-old vines that was not used in 2011 because the vines suffered in the sweltering heat of that summer.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Schoenenbourg 91(+?)**

(\$48) Bright pale yellow. Pure, subdued aromas of lemon, stone fruits and caraway seed. Enters very tight and fresh, with floral flavors, then shows sweeter peach, citrus fruits and mineral in the middle. Ultimately more complex than the Wineck-Schlossberg, offering a nice combination of power and finesse. Finishes completely dry, clean and long. I wouldn't touch a bottle for another five years; Meyer suggests waiting even longer.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Kaefferkopf 91(+?)**

Bright lemon-yellow color. Floral honey, ripe citrus fruits and apricot on the generous nose. Then broad and powerful in the mouth yet racy too, with a slightly honeyed texture cut by firm acidity. Tactile, nicely balanced wine with a subtle sweetness. Finishes gripping and long.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Riesling Pfoeller 90(+?)**

Pale straw green. Rich nose offers ripe guava, winter melon and lichee notes complicated by lemony botrytis. Big, rich and slightly sweet, with lovely acidity lifting the peach and apricot flavors. Finishes very long and smooth, with lively acids and lingering sweetness. Doesn't match the complexity of some of the other 2010s here, but this bigger, fatter wine will appeal more to those who prefer their rieslings with a little more meat and creamy charm. Meyer served this to me after the grand crus because it has more residual sugar; about 15% of the grape were hit by noble rot.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Kaefferkopf 91(+?)**

Bright, pale yellow. Penetrating passion fruit, pear liqueur, marzipan and creme brulee on the nose, plus an intense note of strawberry; this has real power and aromatic complexity. Then quite sweet but tight in the mouth, with enough acidity to keep the ripe flavors of lemon and cooked apple bright and focused. This is the first-ever Kaefferkopf pinot gris for this estate as Meyer feels the 14-year-old vines only now justify being labeled as grand cru. This young wine needs another three years to develop more complexity and volume, but it already offers the nose of an outstanding pinot gris.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Hinterburg de Katzenthal 88**

Bright yellow. Pineapple, mandarin orange and custard cream on the nose. Big and fat, but does not seem to have quite the acidity to lift its sweet apple and pear flavors. Showing limited nuance today. Finishes moderately long but ultimately a bit boring. Maybe time will help it gain more definition, but I wouldn't bet on it.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Wineck-Schlossberg 91(+?)**

Bright gold-tinged yellow. Pungent notes of iris, lavender and minerals complicate richer glazed pineapple and passion fruit aromas. Nicely light and lively on the palate too, offering flavors of roasted banana, lemon, vanilla and peppery spices. This gewurztraminer is anything but massive and boasts superb balance. A rather civilized, less flamboyant gewurz, with a mineral

tightness given to it by the granite, which helps to balance the innate richness of the variety. Great stuff, if in a different gewurztraminer style than usual. In my experience, the only other Alsace *terroir* that can so radically modify the expression of the variety is Eichberg. Meyer told me his family had originally planned to replant this site with riesling but in the end kept these old gewurztraminer vines and today are very happy to have done so. A side note: apparently this is the only area where historically there was gewurztraminer on the Wineck-Schlossberg, so the old-timers obviously knew what they were doing.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Kaefferkopf**

**87(+)?**

Bright yellow. Rather simple aromas of tropical fruit, canned peach and smoked meat. Fat and full in the mouth, with flavors of candied lemon, lichee and sweet brown spice. This big, masculine wine borders on the exotic, but currently comes across as chunky and a little boring. Finishes moderately long and needs some time in bottle to develop more nuance.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Sporen Vieilles Vignes**

**92**

Bright yellow-gold. Archetypical Sporen nose of smoky tropical fruits and grilled bacon fat, with pungent floral notes of iris and poinsettia emerging with air. Enters the mouth big and spicy, then turns livelier and more focused in the middle, with harmonious acidity lifting the spicy flavors of lemon jelly, grilled apricot and rose water. Another rich wine that finishes with a twinge of bitterness and needs time in bottle. But quite complex despite the lack of noble rot. From vines planted in 1970 and 1962.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Furstentum Vieilles Vignes**

**92**

Good full yellow. Lemon cream, lichee, minerals and rose petal on the perfumed, expressive nose. Suave and dense, with harmonious acidity framing the sweet honeyed flavors of ripe citrus fruit and apricot nectar. Finishes long and pure, with a note of citrus skin and very good cut. The Furstentum is a lovely site for gewurztraminer, as the best wines made from this grand cru combine power and grace as few other sites do. Rarely are they very showy (save when young and in hot years) but they usually have noteworthy finesse.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Hinterburg de Katzenthal Vendanges Tardives**

**93(+)?**

Medium-deep yellow. Strawberry truffle, white chocolate, resin and smoke on the captivating nose. Surprisingly delicate in the mouth, with juicy, fresh flavors of poached pear and ripe apple complicated by a delicious grapey quality. Glyceric and rich on the long finish but lively and suave too, thanks to its excellent sugar/acid balance. For Felix Meyer, it's a question of botrytis: without it, he won't make a VT, and he harvests quickly in one pass without *tries* but wants at least 30% botrytis in order to concentrate freshness. This very well-balanced pinot gris is made from vines in the steep heart of the vineyard with full east exposure, so the sun hits the grapes early in the morning and by 5:00 the entire area is submerged in shadow.

**2010 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Wineck-Schlossberg Vieilles Vignes Vendanges Tardives**

**92**

Bright gold-tinged yellow. Smoky botrytis complicates lemon, tangerine, peach and guava on the rich nose and palate. Dense and bright in the mouth, with a lovely tactile impression leavened by a slight bitter twinge on the long back end. Noble rot affected roughly 50% of the berries, and so this is almost an SGN. Once again, the magic of old vines contributes to high quality: this wine comes from two parcels that were planted in '58 and '61.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Kaefferkopf Vendages Tardives**

**89**

Bright yellow. Fresh, pure aromas of flowers, lichee and spicy caramel banana. Not yet complex and less massive than usual, with a velvety mouthfeel and rather refined notes of spices and citrus fruits. Finishes with decent volume and breadth, and a late hint of smoked meat. Harvested on October 25, which is very late for a 2011 wine.

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Gewurztraminer Wineck-Schlossberg Vieilles Vignes Vendanges Tardives**

**91**

Good full straw-yellow. Aromas of canned peach, smoked meat and spices. Soft, moderately rich and sweet, with spicy, smoky peach and apricot flavors persisting nicely. This is bigger and fatter than the corresponding 2010, probably an effect of the heat, according to Meyer, who told me that the berries "almost roasted on the vines."

**2011 Domaine Meyer Fonne Pinot Gris Hinterburg de Katzenthal Selection de Grains Nobles**

**94**

(just one *trie*; 100% botrytized grapes): Medium yellow-gold. Knockout pungent aromas of lime, quince preserves, truffle, acacia honey and sweet spices. Rich strawberry, vanilla bean and spicy caramelized apple flavors lead to a very long and highly perfumed, spicy finish. I love this wine's wonderfully thick yet tangy mouthfeel, as the very pure botrytis character gives it superb verve in spite of its extraordinarily rich texture. This pinot gris expresses almost gewurztraminer-like spicy richness.

(a single *trie* in the vineyard on October 29, 90% of the grapes were affected by noble rot). Medium saturated golden-yellow. Brooding nose hints at ripe tropical fruits and flowers. Then rich and seriously chewy in the mouth, with flavors of tropical fruits, cardamom and cinnamon. Impeccably balanced and extremely long, finishing with lingering notes of sweet banana and white chocolate. This nectar was only made previously in 2007.