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## Get friendlier with Grüner Veltliner

A little gem from Austria, this variety can be versatile with food and make different styles to suit different needs

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A new year always brings the urge to try something different and surely Austria's gruner veltliner is sufficiently unknown to the Irish consumer to qualify as something of a drinking adventure. According to Gary Byrne of importers Quintessential Wines, Laurenz V Friendly Grüner Veltliner is the best selling grüner in Ireland despite running to just 10 pallets.



But the category is growing, with grüner makers and merchants targeting sauvignon blanc and pinot grigio drinkers with the lure of something just as refreshing, but often more interesting and agreeable.

That friendly grüner is produced in Austria's Kamptal region by Laurenz Moser, grandson of the inventor of the famous Lenz Moser vine trellis training system. European marketing of the wine is spearheaded by a company called TXB, which was founded by seven executives who worked for Mondavi's European promotional team in the days before the break up that brought Mondavi to an end.

One of the team just happened to be another Lenz Moser grandson, also called Lenz, who sees his mission as twofold: to succeed at his new venture and, although he also represents wineries outside Austria, to raise the profile of grüner veltliner in Europe. In pursuit of those targets, he staged a Dublin tasting recently, in association with two Irish importers, Quintessential and Classic Wines.

Quintessential are handling the Moser grüners and, apart from **Friendly** (€9.95 trade), also offer **Charming Grüner Veltliner 2006** (€14.95), which has lively and intense green fruit, a touch of asparagus, and very decent length. Not from the Moser portfolio but well worth trying is another Quintessential offering, **Loiserberg Grüner Veltliner 2007** (€13). This comes from a premium area and has noticeable richness to its ripe apple and subtle apricot flavours.

The TXB wine imported by Classic Drinks is, in fact, the appealing **Huesgen (by the glass) Reising 2007** (€9) from Germany's Rheinhessen, which is aimed specifically at the bar trade. Classic also do a grüner, however, in **Peter Schweiger 2007** (€10) which has a tasty, racy green apple style.

Going perfectly with fish, salads, pork, white pasta dishes and all those foods which contrast with the heavyweights of the Christmas season, grüner is the perfect January wine.

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