The label pictured here is from the winner in The White Wine Category of the 28th Annual Hilton Head Island Food and Wine Festival. The wine was chosen in a blind tasting by the judges from all the entries in this category. This was indeed an awesome task, as there were several hundred white wine entries and only sixteen hours of judging available to choose the "Best of Show" in this category. What the judges found in this case was a wine produced from 100% Riesling, bright gold in color, a fruity nasal quality, and flavors of lemon and peach.

As you can see from the label, the wine is from the Mosel and grown and produced at the S.A.Prum Winery. The winery is in Wehlen on the Mosel, just east of Bernkastel-Kues. This is one of Germany's most beautiful valleys. Just getting to the valley is half the fun, thanks to the beautiful scenery composed of charming villages and manicured vineyards located on spectacular hillsides.

The Prum Family's rich and ancient history in the mid Mosel dates back to 1156. The family has produced wine commercially for over 200 years. (Can anyone imagine being able to trace their residence back 1057 years. The family would have had to survive wars, the dark ages, famine, Hitler, and who knows what else. Truly an amazing feat and all done for the Riesling Grape.) Today, the estate comprises 40 acres of vineyards, 15 acres of which are located within the famed Wehlener Sonnenuhr (Sundial of Wehlen) domain. Named for the historic sundial painted on an outcrop of slate located by a Prum ancestor back in 1842, the incredibly steep Wehlner Sonnenuhr vineyard is a globally renowned source of what is arguably Germany's finest Riesling. Here vines average 80 years and older and benefit from plentiful sunshine. The soil is made up of layers of finely decomposed, mineral-rich blue slate. Underneath, deep-lying aquifers provide the vines with adequate water during dry periods. Because of the northerly location of Mosel, the Riesling Wines are often light, low in alcohol, crisp and high in acidity. By the way, should you find yourself in the area, make arrangements to take in a tour of the Prum

winery. You will be hosted by Raimund Prum. Mr. Prum is the owner, winemaker, and grandson of Sebastian Alois Prum. Sebastian was the founder of the winery in 1911. Under the leadership of Raimund, the winery has earned its reputation as one of the most successful wineries in Germany's celebrated Mosel wine region.

Something was nagging me in the back of my mind as I was writing and researching this article. How could such a small winery of only 40 acres achieve world-wide recognition and world-wide distribution? The answer to the first part of the question is easy. Never yield to a lesser quality standard. The answer to the second part is a little more difficult. Prum had the product, the passionate personnel, and the modern production facility. All it needed was distribution. Enter Palm Bay International. Whether Prum was looking to add world-wide distribution to their bag of tricks, I don't really know. In any case, they were discovered by Palm Bay. Founded in 1977, Palm Bay had established itself on solid ground in the wine distribution business. The company recognized Prum as a quality producer of Riesling wines that also represented wine value to the consumer.

Palm Bay International has, over the past three decades, assembled one of the most valuable and comprehensive portfolios of wines and distilled spirits in the US. Today the list is well over 100 brands. Three decades ago it was two. The two were Cavit (Pinot Grigio) and Principato (Red, Rose, and White). You have seen Cavit adds on TV and you have probably seen Principato in The Olive Garden Restaurants. These two brands alone represent 1,000, 000 + cases per year. Palm Bay International now imports wine and spirits from eleven countries. Some of the more familiar brands are Cinzano, Dry Sack Sherry, Lancers, Trimbach, and Santa Rita. You can see that S.A. Prum is in good company.

WINESPEAK
Touring wineries in Germany is sensational either by river cruise or by car or bus. Viking offers some terrific wine river cruise opportunities. My own personnel preference is by private car. I usually make reservations way ahead of time and follow-up with confirmations. E-mail is the best way. Reservations made ahead of time pay enormous dividends towards the visit. The winery personnel are ready for your visit and I have always found that they are generous with the time allowed. Try one. You will not be disappointed.

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