

FOOD & WINE

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BEST WINE IMPORTER- DISTRIBUTOR TERRY THEISE

WHY THESE STANDS OUT
He combed one of the least fashionable wine-regions in one of the least fashionable wine producing countries and discovered iconic bottles.



No one man introduced Americans to more great wines they didn't know they wanted than Terry Theise of Terry Theise Estate Selections, an importer based in Silver Spring, Maryland. The voluble 52-year-old made his name 20 years ago by combing one of the least fashionable wine regions (the Rheinpfalz) in one of the least fashionable wine-producing countries (Germany) and discovering bottles like the now-iconic Müller-Catoir and extraordinary producers like Dönnhoff and Willi Schaefer. Theise, who started his business doing literally everything himself, was driven by what he calls "pure passion." AS he says, "There was an amazing story that wasn't being told, and I knew I couldn't wimp out." In 1994 Theise became one of the first Americans to import Austrian wines to the United States, and in 1997 he added small Champagne producers like Vilmart and Gimonnet to his portfolio. "It all fit philosophically," he says. "I cherish them all as European white wines that display a similar grace, freshness and clarity and come to us from geographically complex soils after hundred of years of trial and error."

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