

WINE DINNER ■ PRAPAI KRAISORNKOVIT

The happy marriage

One of the happiest marriages is one between food and wine. There is nothing more relaxing and fun than enjoying delicious food, paired with good wine and great company.

Showcasing this culinary marriage at its finest was fin (fabulous is needed), a distributor of boutique wines led by Jan Ganser and Benjawan Vitootsat, who hosted a recent wine dinner at the St Regis Bangkok.

Held at the hotel's stylish Viu restaurant and overseen by two handsome Germans — Markus Schneider, a shooting star winemaker, and Bastian Mantei, the hotel's young and creative executive chef — who worked together to present the "German Epicurean Wine Dinner" that featured a seven-course gourmet menu accompanied by eight fine wines from Markus Schneider Winery.

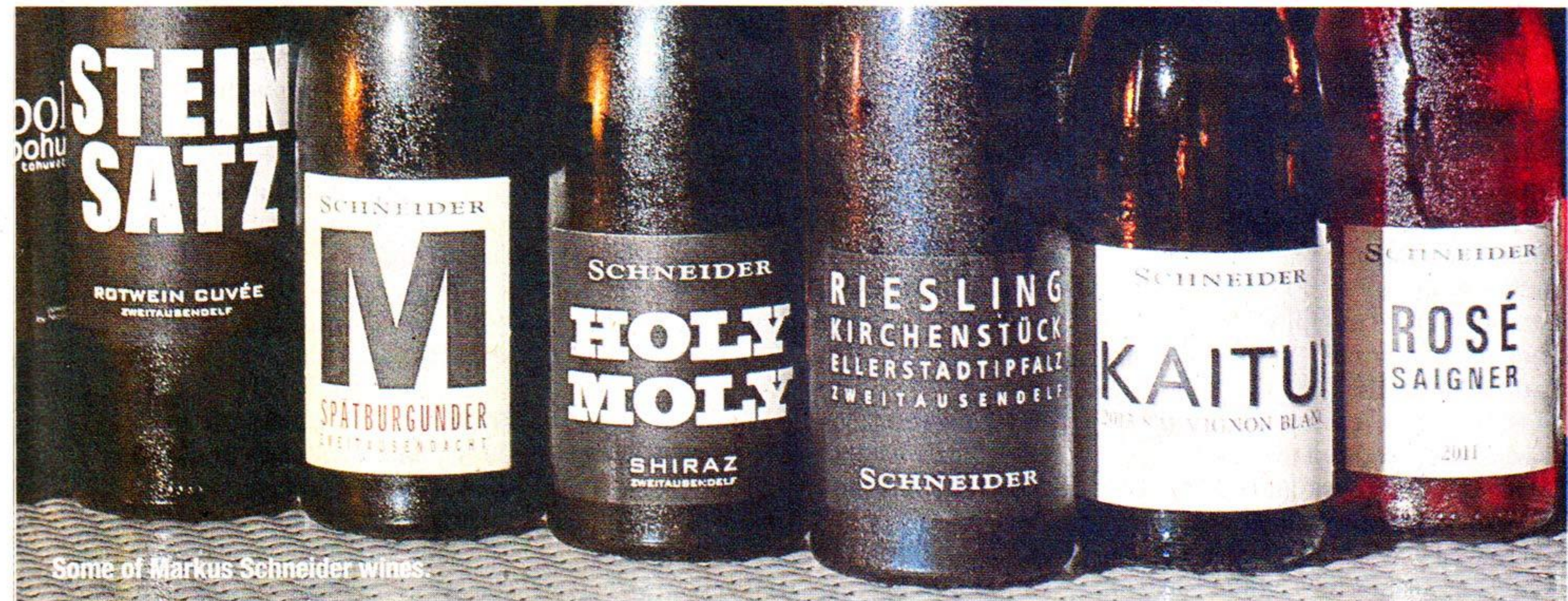
Markus Schneider's roots originated in Pfalz, a key wine region in western Germany. After he took over the winery from his father, it took Schneider only a few years to develop his first wine. Well-known as "the individualist" when it comes to winemaking, Schneider is passionate about what he does. His preference is to produce wines that he likes to drink himself. In doing so, it is important for him create a unique style and refine his individualism.

"It's not investment that makes good wine, it's passion: putting all the elements together and finding your way," said Markus. "I try to make individual wines that reflect the soil that anchors the grapes — to make the soil talk to you through the wine."

His recipe for success lies in coupling this individuality with quality. Ample evidence of the latter is provided by reduced quantities, manual harvesting, careful

and gentle pressing, and long maturation periods with no external influences on red wines filled in wooden casks. Schneider's white wines remain in contact with the fine yeast until shortly before bottling in order to achieve a complex aroma spectrum. His reds clearly belong in the top league of Germany's wines. He produces several very good Cuvees, mixing classic Bordelaise such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot with regional varieties.

He also marketed his wines with non-traditional, modern labels and wine names, without any reference to the vineyards where the grapes come from — names such as M Spaetburgunder, Holy Moly, Tohuwabohu, Kaitui and Black Print. In 2003, Markus was voted "Newcomer of the Year" and in 2006 "Discovery of the Year" by Gault Millau guidebook. Today,



his wines are poured at the best tables in Germany such as Hotel Adlon and Sansibar restaurant on the German island of Sylt.

Arriving from the acclaimed Park Hyatt in Zurich, Bastian Mantei joined St Regis Bangkok as its new executive chef in 2012. His passion for food and cuisine started at an early age. He steadily gained experience from working for several Michelin-star restaurants all across Europe and in some of Asia's most luxurious hotels. He is known for his innovative flair and attention to detail when it comes to pairing food and wines.

The evening started with an aperitif, creative canapes served with the aromatic 2012 Markus Schneider Riesling from Pfalz. This refreshing white wine showcased the

fruitiness of German riesling — sweet spice on the nose, followed by a fruity flavour on the palate, with a fresh mouthful and a delightful finish.

The seven-course gourmet dinner finely executed by chef Mantei started with tuna two-way — seared and tartar with passion fruit, black olive, pine nuts and micro green. The dish was well-paired with the 2011 Riesling Kirchenstueck, a more serious Riesling with volume, finesse and subtlety.

The second dish was the delicious Angus beef steak tartare served with the 2011 Rose Saigner. Today, rose wine has become very trendy among young drinkers. And this particular rose is fresh, fruity with a delightful spritz. Hints of strawberry and raspberry created a refreshing touch

of acidity — making this delicious rose a perfect partner for the meat.

Three creative dishes followed — foie gras terrine two-way with vanilla tomato and aged balsamic and brioche, paired with the 2011 Weissburgunder Bubeneck; pumpkin cappuccino with grain croutons, truffle cream and toasted almonds, served with 2008 M Spaetburgunder Pinot Noir; and seabass with candied watermelon, celeriac and pesto beans, complimented by the 2013 Kaitui Sauvignon Blanc Weltpremiere. All three wines were fine representatives of modern German wines — aromatic, juicy and elegant and fitted perfectly with each dish.

The main course was Wagyu rib-eye with maple glazed carrots, lettuce potato mousseline BBQ sauce and mustard air. To accompany this rich, meaty creation, the winemaker selected two majestic reds with unique names — 2011 Tohuwabohu (a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc), and 2011 Holy Moly Shiraz. Both were remarkable with deep dark aromas of ripe fruit and dried plums, clean and austere at first, then filling out with a rich concentration.

The evening ended beautifully with a delicious dessert, Valrhona chocolate treat, which was perfectly accompanied by the 2011 Steinsatz, a cuvee, fruit-driven red wine with a red and black cherry fruit aroma. It was surprisingly smooth with the dark chocolate dessert.

Wagyu rib-eye, maple glazed carrots, lettuce potato mousseline BBQ sauce and mustard air.



From left are Faiek El-Saadani, director of Food & Beverage at St Regis Bangkok, Jan Ganser, winemaker Markus Schneider and executive chef Bastian Mantei.

fin-fabulous is needed is the exclusive distributor of Markus Schneider wines in Thailand. Call 02-635-0154.