

XTRAVAGANCE

CELEBRATING THE PERFECT MATCH

A recent wine dinner proves again that German wines pair perfectly with Thai cuisine

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SPECIAL TO THE NATION

The German Embassy in Bangkok has held several functions over the past 12 months to celebrate the 150 years of Thai-German diplomatic relationships and the most recent of these was a wine dinner hosted by the ambassador himself to present organic wines from the Wittmann vineyards.

Germany, of course, is famous for its white wines, especially Riesling. However, it also produces several other white varietals with which Thais are not familiar, not least because of the difficulties in pronouncing their names. Among these are Silvaner, Scheurebe and Späetburgunder, the latter being Germany's Pinot Noir and a wine that is gaining in interest among connoisseurs around the globe.

The dinner offered an opportunity for German envoy Dr Rolf Schulze to prove once again just how well German wines complement Thai cuisine by inviting Gunter and Elisabeth Wittmann from Rheinhessen, Germany to pair their organic wines with Benjawan Wisootsat of Fin's Thai inspired dishes at his residence.

Wittmann has been producing wine in the Rheinhessen region since 1663. The couple has been practising organic viticulture for more than 20 years and biodynamic farming since 2003. The winery is a member of the Association of German Prädikat Wine Estates or VDP, which guarantees quality.

Dr Schulze and his wife Petronella welcomed guests with a 2008 Riesling Sekt Brut, a popular sparkling wine whose crisp taste was a good match for the canapés.

The ambassador gave a short welcome speech and introduced the Wittmanns, who paired the hors d'oeuvre German pork meat jelly *suelze* salad in Thai style with their 2011 Gutriesling QbA Trocken. The *suelze*, which is not unlike northern Thai *naem* (fermented pork meat) went well with the dry Riesling with its compatible acidity and fruity note.

The second course was grilled tiger prawn and fried boneless chicken wing with green apple salad and som tam dressing served with 2010 Gruener Silvaner Trocken, an indigenous German white varietal. The Gruener Silvaner had fresh green herb and green apple, which matched well with the apple salad and also made the grilled tiger prawn taste sweeter. If any white is made to go with som tam dressing, it's certainly German.

The third course was Thai "Huehner - Bouillon", chicken *consomme* with pineapple and kaffir lime leaf served with 2011 Gutswein Scheurebe QbA Trocken, another alternative to Sauvignon Blanc. The Scheurebe has the fine fragrance of meadow blossoms, fresh grass and



FRONT ROW, from left, Damira Uberoi, Suvimol Mahagitsiri, Petronella Schulze, Ganzeboom, Rolf Schulze, Elisabeth Wittman, Benjawan Wisootsat, Chirathep Senivongse Na Ayudhya, Paradai Theerathada, Mark Sonntag. Second row from left: Parani Chitrakorn, Gunter Wittman, Axel Foellmer, Prayudh Mahagitsiri. Back row from left, Dr Vachara Phanchet, Kuku Uberoi, Surong Bulakul, Rangsan Jangienkit.



Gunter and Elisabeth Wittmann were welcomed by German ambassador Dr Rolf Schulze.



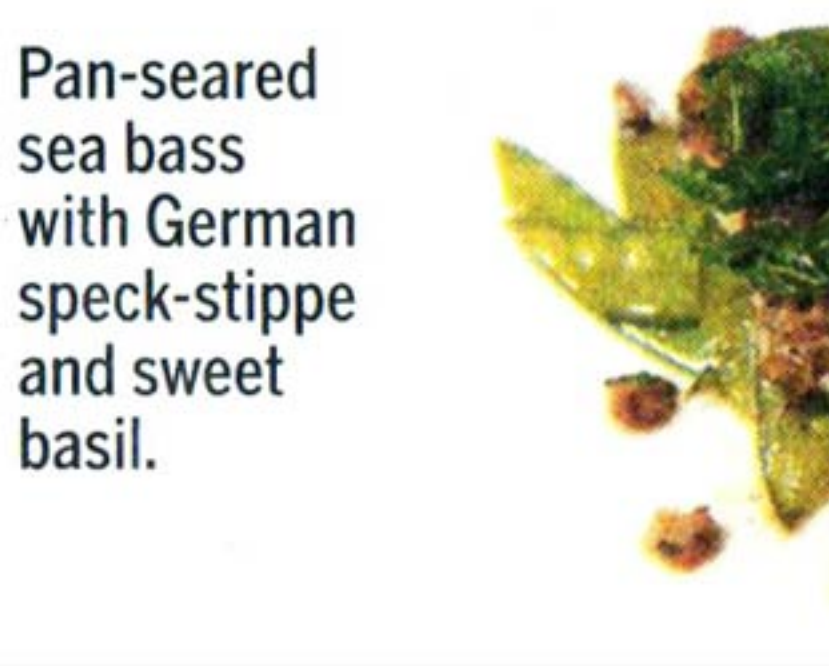
Prayudh Mahagitsiri, Rolf Schulze, Petronella Schulze, Ganzeboom and Suvimol Mahagitsiri.



Grilled tiger prawns and fried boneless chicken wings with green apple salad and som tam dressing.



German pork meat jelly *suelze* salad in Thai style.



Pan-seared sea bass with German speck-stippe and sweet basil.



Rolf Schulze and Elisabeth Wittmann.

herbs as well as fruity notes of apple, currant and grapefruit. It was a difficult pairing of liquid and liquid with so many aromas though.

The main course was pan-seared seabass with German "speck-stippe" and sweet basil served with 2011 Westhofener Aulerde Riesling GG (Grosses Gewächs) from the "Cru" estate. It delivered lush and juicy, positively bright grapefruit and yellow

plum with chalky mineral note. This pairing was absolutely perfect

In between courses, Nescafé's Prayudh Mahagitsiri shared some jokes with guests.

The second main course was roasted "Martin's-Goose" with red cabbage, boiled potatoes and Massaman sauce served with 2010 Späetburgunder Pinot Noir. This Späetburgunder showed a rich body, a fine tannin structure and flavours of dark berry fruit. The goose with massaman sauce somehow had a sharper taste than the Späetburgunder, which was lean.

Then came the 2007 Westhofener Morstein Riesling Auslese, a proud sweet wine, paired with Thai exotic fruit in syrup and flower water. The wine showed passion fruit and citrus pate de fruit aromas and flavours with honey and spice note. There's plenty of structure and it needs a little time to integrate.

Kuku Uberoi stood up at the dinner to thank the ambassador and his wife on behalf of all the guests for their continuing warm hospitality and the envoy's work in celebrating this important milestone in Thai-German diplomatic relations.