



Vintage report 2010

The Final Weeks Counted!

A Golden October, Patience, and Selective Harvest in our Hillside Sites Made the Difference.

Springtime in 2010 was a long time in coming after a long, cold winter with an unusually high number of days with snow - since 1937, there have been only five winters with more snow. As such, it took considerable time for the soil to warm up and Riesling bud burst was first recorded on 26 April, or five days later than the ten-year's average. Considering long-term climate change, this was still three days earlier than 30 years ago.

Since the weather in May was too cool and wet, vegetation progressed very slowly. Yet, temperatures rose in early June and Riesling began to flower on the 16th. The weather was variable during second half of the month. Blossoming was prolonged; there was considerable blossom drop; and fruit set was uneven. At this stage, it was already clear that this would be a small crop. As in 2004, veraison, or ripening, began on 21 August. Although wet weather in September - never a desirable - was not a problem for the vines in the hillside sites, thanks to their barren, weathered soils and good drainage, we could see the writing on the wall, already heralded by colleagues in more southerly regions with earlier ripening varieties.

Yet, we were spared. "Salvation" came on 3 October, just in time, when the beautifully sunny, dry weather of a "Golden October" set in. The faces of Rheingau growers increasingly lightened, and as we began harvesting at Weingut Robert Weil, we were more than surprised about what our crop yielded. The grapes had exceptionally concentrated aromas, due to longer time on the vine and lower yields.

In the meantime, the young wines are quite compact and have a long finish, as well as tremendous fruit and a fine, ripe acidity - perceptible, but well-integrated. All in all, we were able to bring in a crop that yielded tremendous dry wines and, in certain sites, lusciously sweet wines. But we are especially pleased with our Estate Riesling wines (Gutswein). These wines not only have power and length, but also considerable finesse and an interesting play of aromas, fruit, and acidity.

Patience and faith were rewarded. Stringent, selective harvesting yielded grapes of every quality category up to Trockenbeerenauslese - for the 22nd consecutive year. The aroma profiles of vintage 2010 wines are very similar to those of 1990 or 2001, whereby this year's crop was considerably riper when harvested.