



Vintage report 2003

The calendar year 2003 will be remembered as a year of weather superlatives. Since 1860, when meteorological data was first recorded on a regular basis in the Rheingau, there have never been more hours of sunshine - 350 hours more than average. It was the overall warmest summer ever, with the highest daytime and night time temperatures ever recorded: 40.2°C/104.4°F and 27.6°C/81.7°F, respectively. Water levels, even in the largest rivers, reached an all-time low.

Naturally, this weather also had an impact on the viticultural year. Every stage of the entire vegetation period in 2003 can be prefaced with “early” or “ahead of schedule”: early bud break, very early blossoming (16 days earlier than the 30-year average) and overall development and ripening well ahead of the long-term average.

All of this data, of course, has led to great expectations for the 2003 vintage – all of which are justified. Thanks to their balanced soil structure – a mix of stony phyllite with loess-loam – our vineyards were able to store sufficient water reserves to ensure that the grapes had enough water during the dry summer. The exceptional amount of sunshine enabled the grapes to develop and ripen to perfection – we were able to harvest golden-yellow, completely healthy, high-quality grapes of Spätlese ripeness at a time when we would normally expect grapes of QbA ripeness. The harvest began on 22 September – the earliest since the founding of the estate in 1875.

In our *Grand Cru* site “Kiedrich Gräfenberg” the crop yielded wines in the premium category *Erstes Gewächs* as well as lusciously sweet dessert wines with Oechsle levels up to 316 degrees. These were also record-breaking must weights for Weingut Robert Weil.

Once again, for the 15th year in a row, we were able to harvest every quality categories possible, from QbA to Trockenbeerenauslese and Eiswein.

Yields in 2003 averaged 53 hl/ha – slightly less than the long-term average of 55 hl/ha.

As we continue to monitor the development of the new vintage in the cellar, we can say with increasing confidence, that in the footsteps of the wonderful 2001 and 2002 vintages, we have yet another phenomenal vintage at hand. The wines are marked by a sensational wealth of aromas, a long finish, and a fine, lively acidity.

Nature has bestowed us with a trio of perfect vintages at the start of the new century – each with its own personality – but all with the extraordinary depth and substance that make for very exciting tastings.