



Vintage report 2002

In retrospect, 2002 will be remembered for its very stormy weather – not only in Germany. Fortunately, the Rheingau was spared from severe storms, downpours and flooding. The year will also go down in history as the second warmest since 1860, when meteorological data was first recorded on a regular basis.

After an early and quick blossoming, well-balanced temperatures and precipitation during July and August in the Rheingau provided ideal growing conditions for the Riesling vines. Summer-like weather continued into September, with warm days and cool nights, which led to an optimal ripening of the crop.

Alas, there was no repeat of the "golden October" we experienced in 2001. It doubtlessly would have enabled the 2002 vintage to have qualified as a vintage of the century. Yet, thanks to the quality preservation measures we practice in our vineyards, as well as selective harvesting, the variable weather conditions from mid-October on did not adversely affect our overall quality.

As such – even without the benefit of favorable weather in October – 2002 is a phenomenal vintage. During the regular harvest period, the exceptionally ripe and healthy crop yielded first-rate Kabinett and Spätlese qualities: superb dry wines, including a "First Growth" from the Gräfenberg site. In due course, the grapes began to shrivel and we were able to harvest berries with must weights of up to 200° Oechsle, thus ensuring a supply of lusciously sweet wines, too.

During a brief, frosty intermezzo in the second week of December we harvested Eiswein – and thus, for the 14th year in a row, Weingut Robert Weil has been able to harvest every quality category possible, from QbA to Trockenbeerenauslese and Eiswein.

In all, the high degrees of ripeness and extract, as well as the very lively, ripe acidity of the 2002 crop, yielded wines with a wealth of fruit and concentrated flavor.

The 1976 vintage is the most recent predecessor with average must weights as high as those of 2002. The must weights of grapes for our dry "Gutswein" (house wine) at the start of the harvest and during the main harvest, for example, ranged from 85°-98° Oechsle.

Yields in 2002 averaged 55 hl/ha – slightly higher than usual.