



## Vintage report 2009

The winter of 2008/2009 was the coldest since well over a decade. Particularly in the early weeks of January, thermometer readings seldom reached above freezing and temperatures dropped to as low as -15°C/5°F. The weather remained cold even well into March, and included a late snowfall on the 25th of the month – all of which boded for a late bud burst.

Yet April exceeded all expectations. Almost without exception the weather was as warm and sunny as one would expect in early summer, and it was the second warmest April on record since 1884, when weather findings were first documented at the research institute in Geisenheim/Rheingau. This led to explosive growth. By the end of the month, vegetation was some two weeks ahead of schedule and generally proceeded thereafter under relatively balanced weather conditions. Unfortunately, a cold spell during blossoming resulted in damage due to coulure and poor fruit set, leaving very loose clusters and a slight reduction in yield, which, however, also set the stage for clusters that would be able to remain on the vine for a long time.

The 12th of August marked the start of the ripening phase of development, i.e. about two weeks ahead of schedule. Ideal weather conditions enabled must weights to steadily rise. By early October, must weights of at least 90° Oechsle were measured in all sites – coupled with an extraordinarily healthy crop of optimal physiological ripeness. One could truly say that the grapes looked very tempting and tasted just as good. The grape harvest for our Estate Rieslings began on 5 October. Because blossoming was relatively early, grapes had been on the vine for at least 115 days by then. We have great expectations for these wines, thanks to the exceptionally high quality of the crop. The next phase of the harvest was devoted to bringing in golden yellow, fully ripened and healthy crop with must weights of ca. 100° Oechsle – destined for the production of our finest dry wines from the Erste Lage (Premier Cru) *Klosterberg*, *Turmberg* and Grosse Lage (Grand Cru) *Gräfenberg* sites.

The weather in October was somewhat variable, yet the crop remained healthy, thanks to reduced cluster density and cool temperatures. As such, we were also able to harvest grapes well suited for the production of grandiose wines with naturally ripe sweetness in the Prädikat category Spätlese. In the later stages of the harvest, a very fine “noble rot” (*Botrytis*) set in that enabled us to harvest grapes suitable for all other Prädikat levels, from Auslese to Trockenbeerenauslese. By harvesting selectively, we could pick grapes with must weights of up to 241° Oechsle. As such, we remain in the remarkable position of being able to produce wines of every quality category, up to and including Trockenbeerenauslese, for the 21st year in a row.

Vintage 2009: our steep sites, *Kiedricher Kosterberg*, *Kiedrich Turmberg* and *Kiedrich Gräfenberg*, and their extraordinarily physiological ripe grapes yielded truly great crops that promise wines of great extract (substance) and perceptible mineral tones that reflect their appellations of origin. We can thank Mother Nature for this.