



## The 2016 Vintage

**Thanks to tireless work in the vineyards,  
a wet and worrisome start gave way  
to a fairy tale summer and bountiful autumn!**

The winter of 2016 kicked off with the same all-too-familiar mildness of recent years, and ended up the second warmest ever measured in the Rheingau in over 130 years of record-keeping.

The winegrowing community was much more concerned about a different factor, however: unusually high volumes of precipitation that fell well into the summer months. The rain was initially viewed as a welcome chance to replenish the soil following extremely dry conditions in 2015. As the deluge progressed on an almost-daily basis from mid-May through the end of June, the winegrowers began to wonder if their boon had turned to bane. And yet the bigger picture remained rosy. Budbreak arrived in the last week of April and flowering began in mid June, both well within the 30-year mean. We were also spared the classic springtime hazards of hail and late frost this year, although we did observe fungal growth, especially *Peronospora*, which loves such wet conditions. The choice and timing of which countermeasures to deploy became an existential one.

And then, almost unexpectedly, the skies brightened and a magnificent July, August and September dawned. For those vines and grapes that had come through the tribulations of the first half-year unscathed, a fairy tale summer and golden autumn awaited. The sun returned from wherever it had been on holiday and graced the vineyards with plenty of rays. The initial ripening phase was unremarkable during the final days of August, but thanks to the stunning September that followed - the Rheingau's warmest in human memory - the berries enjoyed nearly perfect ripening conditions. A bit of rain in early October did nothing to darken the outlook for a fantastic vintage.

We were fortunate to bring in tremendously healthy fruit of stunning physiological maturity. The Gutsweine were already measuring well over 80 °Oe when we launched harvest in early October. Just as important was a harder-to-measure factor: the grapes tasted fantastic. It's important to always remember that a wine can never taste better than the berries used to make it.

The extended hangtime provided the Ortsweine, the steep Erste Lagen and the Grosse Lagen vineyards with more opportunity to ripen in full and develop a complete and complex range of aromatics. In addition to our prized dry Rieslings, 2016 graced us with delicate naturally and nobly sweet Prädikat wines, thus making 2016 the 28th consecutive year at Weingut Robert Weil to see a successful harvest of Auslese, Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese.

Overall harvest yields lined up with the well-established average, with the exception of our nobly sweet Prädikat wines. That fruit hung happily and healthily on the vines well into November, promising mouthwatering wines but highly limited quantities.