



## Vintage report 2004

While 2002 and 2003 were marked by extreme weather situations, 2004 can be viewed as a meteorologically and phenologically “normal” year. Even if the summer didn’t seem particularly memorable, meteorological records show otherwise – 2004 was warmer than the 30-year average.

Blossoming was a bit earlier than usual. Cool weather during blossoming led to some coulure and in turn, loose clusters – a development that turned out to be beneficial in that it helped the grapes to remain healthy for a long time.

Vegetation time during the months of July and August was optimal and ripening began early. Precipitation was well measured out and sufficient, and enabled the soil to regain a good water balance after the dry weather of 2003.

Ideal Indian summer weather set in at the end of August and continued well into October. As such, must weights increased dramatically and quickly.

We began harvesting completely ripe, healthy grapes on 11 October in our vineyards. Not only had the grapes developed a wonderful fruitiness and long-lasting flavour, but also a surprisingly high level of ripeness (reflected in their high must weights), so that even our QbA wines are of a calibre equivalent to that of a high-quality Kabinett or Spätlese.

The harvest continued nearly until Christmas, culminating with Eiswein on 21 December. Thus, for sixteen consecutive years we have been able to harvest a crop that yielded every quality level possible, including Eiswein and Trockenbeerenauslese.

Thus far, the wines of the new vintage are extremely expressive and have a long finish. At the same time, they are rich in nuances and well-structured. Besides the ripeness of the crop and the lasting character of the wines, the acid of 2004 tastes very ripe (high tartaric acid) and harmonic and lend the wines a very fine and delicate structure.

Given this profile, the 2004 vintage can be viewed as an excellent, typical, “classic” Riesling year – with wines of an absolute Riesling-typical tasting profile. At this stage, and although it is not always easy (or even desirable) to make comparisons, we would say that the high quality of the 2004 Rieslings is reminiscent of that of the remarkable vintage 1990.

The average yield was exactly the same than the long-term average of 55 hl/ha.

