

Vintage Report 2001

Two months of the year 2001 – September and October – sorely tried vintners' emotions and decisively influenced the quality of vintage 2001.

First came September and with it, the seemingly endless rains that evoked memories of the problematic harvest of 2000 and threatened to jeopardize the positive developments of the spring and summer of 2001. Blossoming was timely even though temperatures were slightly cool. In June, July and August the weather was overall well balanced with regard to the amount of rainfall and average temperatures. As a result, ripening began early – for Riesling, in mid-August. It is certainly interesting to note that during the past decade, the development of the grapes has proceeded and the onset of ripening has occurred considerably earlier than in the four decades before.

Although many hopes were shattered during rain-soaked September, the weather changed course in October it was literally a "golden October" that had an extremely positive influence on must weights and enabled grapes to reach a very high degree of ripeness.

Indeed, the very high quality of vintage 2001 is due primarily to the positive developments during the month of October. The Rheingau sites at higher elevations with stony soils, such as those of Rauenthal, Hallgarten and Kiedrich, as well as Rüdesheim and Lorch, benefited in particular. The vineyards with heavier, water-retaining soils near the Rhine were afflicted with rot during the damp, warm weather at the end of September.

At Weingut Robert Weil we were able to harvest a very high proportion of Prädikat wines in 2001. As of late October, we achieved absolute top must weights in the individual Prädikat categories. We produced splendid dry wines from extremely healthy grapes with must weights of +/- 95° Oechsle as well as a full range of lusciously sweet wines, including Trockenbeerenauslese with must weights exceeding 200° Oechsle. On 14 December we harvested Eiswein with 180° Oechsle – and thus, for 13 years running, have succeeded in producing wines of every Prädikat level.

The young wines of vintage 2001 are extremely compact and rich in extract, and have a long finish. They show an elegant, very ripe acidity and a fine, fruity aroma. These wines will doubtlessly rank among the best of the past decade at Weingut Robert Weil.

Yields in 2001 averaged 48 hl/ha – considerably lower than the long-term average. The lower yields are not only the result of selective picking during the harvest, but also – and not least – due to quality-oriented vineyard measures practiced throughout the year.

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.

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.

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.

Vintage Report 2005

The generally accepted, popular evaluation of a year's weather still seems to be tied to the extreme conditions of the benchmark year 2003. For this reason, the summer weather during vintage 2005 is generally rated as just average – despite concrete data that impressively show that this was really not the case. The growing season was marked by a number of sun hours that well exceeded the average quota. By the end of July 2005 in the Rheingau, for example, 150 sun hours had been recorded – more than the long-term average (1971–2000). Rainfall was evenly distributed throughout the year, above all during the growing season – providing ideal conditions for grape growth.

Budburst in mid-April, as well as blossoming a few weeks later, took place a week earlier than usual. This extremely positive development continued throughout June and July, thanks to ideal weather. As such, the official "ripening" of the grapes began in mid-August, or some two weeks earlier than normal.

The vintage was then crowned by an unusually sunny September, followed by a truly "golden" October.

These conditions led to an unusually early ripeness of the grapes, so that Weingut Robert Weil could begin harvesting at the start of October.

The vineyards yielded completely healthy and golden yellow grapes with a wonderful, ripe fruitiness as well as intensive aromas and perfect must weights at the start of the harvest.

These were ideal prerequisites for the extraordinarily high quality of our Estate-Rieslings, our *Erstes Gewächs* (first growth) and the Gräfenberg Spätlese with record must weights. Some three weeks after the start of the harvest (ideal timing), a very fine Botrytis (noble rot) set in, so that this year we were able to continue the tradition – for the 17th year in a row and unique in the world! – of harvesting every quality level of wine up to Trockenbeerenauslese with 245 degrees Oechsle.

The exceptional ripeness levels of the grapes combined with the 10% lower-than-average yield, lends vintage 2005 the strength and long finish of the wines of 2003. On the other hand, the wines also show the finesse and elegance, as well as the mineral tones and perfect acidity levels, of the wines of 2004 – in all, vintage 2005 represents a perfect combination of the best of two earlier vintages.

If one wants to classify or compare 2005 with other vintages, it seems likely that this year's wines will be comparable with those of the great vintages 1971, 1953 and even 1921.

Vintage Report 2006

Global warming, change of climate, and the possibility of concomitant extreme weather circumstances are increasingly topics of discussion, not least among wine-growers, who must consider the influence of these phenomena on viticulture. In 2006, record weather conditions were recorded once again. In assessing the temperature increases during the last twenty years, one can generally say that the Rheingau has benefited from this phenomenon. In the future, despite higher temperatures, it will still be possible to produce wines with an ideal Riesling profile – finesse, mineral character, and fine acidity – particularly in the stony soils in the higher sites in the foothills of the Taunus Hills.

Budburst occurred on schedule, followed by a slightly early blossoming. Despite a light deficit in rainfall, the grapes went through the next stages of development very quickly, not least due to the weather in the month of July, during which temperatures were the highest recorded since 1885, when Geisenheim began keeping track of meteorological data. In August, the weather had its ups and downs – as in 2005 – but conditions in general enabled the grapes to ripen to perfection. In the distant past, it was quite more a challenge for growers to wait for their grapes to reach the stage of complete ripeness. Thanks to above-average temperatures during the past two decades, however, grapes have ripened earlier and earlier. Today's growers face the challenges of harvesting their crop earlier and at higher temperatures. As such, there is a shorter time frame in which to achieve the optimal quality of a selective harvest. This was the case in 2006. The challenge in 2006 was to start the selective harvest for grapes with a perfect ripeness in good time and to use the chance for a longer hang time through November. Therefore we harvested our Estate-wines by mid-October. The grapes were not only physiologically very ripe, but also very healthy, thanks to selective harvesting. We also left bunches on the vine for additional ripening well into November. During this stage of the harvest, we and our 80 pickers had sufficient time to bring in grapes of every Prädikat level, including Trockenbeerenauslese with 223°Oe, from our Grand Cru site – Kiedricher Gräfenberg – for the 18th consecutive year.

It is already clear today that general there will be a broad spectrum of qualities of vintage 2006 wines. Dealing with the general weather extremes during vegetation and the rainfall in the first half of October, in particular, left us facing an exceptional strategic challenge in harvest management. At Weingut Robert Weil, we harvested for seven weeks nonstop, often from 14 to 18 hours per day. So we could be more than satisfied with the quality of the 2006 vintage. With regard to quantity, the volume of our crop was just a little less than the long-term average, and thus, also satisfactory.

That we were able to fully take advantage of the opportunities of this vintage is also thanks to our vineyards. Their location in the Taunus foothills enables Riesling grapes to benefit from warmer temperatures. Circulation in our sites helps ensure that our small, loose clusters remain healthy – an all-important prerequisite for high-quality wines. It's too soon to baptize the new vintage, but qualitatively it will nicely complement its recent forerunners: 2003 "Baroque Vintage"; 2004 "Classic Vintage of the Highest Standing"; and 2005 "Synthesis of 2003 and 2004." For today, suffice it to say that we were equally challenged and blessed by Mother Nature in 2006.

Vintage Report 2007

The phenomena of climate change and resultant global warming also affected the year 2007. Once again, weather observations yielded record-breaking data: after a winter that was clearly too mild, spring weather in April and May was extremely warm. Furthermore, even though the summer often did not feel very "summery," temperatures registered during the growing season were the highest since recordkeeping began (1884), even breaking the record set in 2003.

Naturally, these climatic conditions had a considerable affect on the vines. A very warm April led to an extremely early bud burst. Warm temperatures continued in May, so that vines blossomed during the second half of the month – the earliest blossoming since time immemorial. The warmth lasted through early June and by mid-June, vegetation was more than three weeks ahead of schedule. Rather average weather during the rest of summer reduced this head start. Nevertheless, the grapes began to ripen in the Rheingau on 3 August – precisely as early as in the "record year" 2003. The difference was that the development of the grapes (after early blossoming) continued more slowly and consistently, thanks to a better distribution of sunshine and rainfall than in 2003.

Because of this perfect weather pattern, vines had optimal supplies of water and nutrients, and despite the relatively early harvest (due to early blossoming), Riesling grapes could remain on the vines for a long time – an important factor for this grape variety.

Even the grapes harvested the earliest had exceptionally high extract values (even higher than in 2005 and 2006) and showed a perfect physiological ripeness and well-developed aromas. As such, the early harvest yielded fine Kabinett and light Spätlese qualities that will be bottled as Qualitätswein (Gutsriesling).

In all, ideal weather conditions enabled us to leisurely extend the harvest over seven weeks and selectively harvest the best grapes for other Prädikat wines. For the 19th consecutive year we were able to harvest every Prädikat, including Trockenbeerenauslese with up to 256 degrees Oechsle, in our Grand Cru sites *Kiedricher Gräfenberg* and *Kiedricher Turmberg*.

In addition to the exceptionally high quality of the 2007 vintage, the wonderful climatic conditions during the year provided us with a higher yield. After five short years, this brings us back to our long-term average.

It still seems that the Rheingau will be one of the regions to benefit from increasingly warmer weather. In the future, despite higher temperatures, it will still be possible to produce wines with an ideal Riesling profile – finesse, mineral character, and fine acidity – particularly in the stony soils in the higher sites in the foothills of the Taunus Hills. In addition to these natural advantages of terroir, with God's blessing we were able to harvest our grapes over a long period of time, after a picture-perfect growing season in 2007.

Vintage Report 2008

At first glance, 2008 seemed like such a wonderfully "normal" year. Nevertheless, and despite many a cloudy day in summer, the weather during the growing season was once again noticeably warmer than the long-term average. The somewhat above-average amount of rain during summer was good for both soil and grape.

The vines were in full blossom two weeks earlier than the 30-year average, and yet the main harvest didn't begin until the second week of October. This meant that grapes remained on the vine for a long time, at least 120 days. Because sugar development proceeded slowly, the 2008 crop was able to reach an outstanding level of physiological ripeness.

This could be tasted during the harvest. Both grapes and grape musts were remarkable for their concentrated aromas, good body and high level of complexity. Even the grapes for our Gutsweine ("house wines") reached high-end Kabinett must weights. This bodes well for the wines' future development.

Most important of all, though, particularly in our stony parcels in the upper reaches of slopes, grapes once again remained healthy for a long time. As a result, we were able to harvest grapes suitable for producing great dry Rieslings – up to and including "Erstes Gewächs" – from our steep Kiedrich sites *Klosterberg*, *Turmberg* and *Gräfenberg*.

Despite all best efforts to achieve the highest quality possible, damp weather during the harvest naturally reduced the quantities of grapes we could harvest that would be suitable for our finest dry, as well as lusciously sweet, wines.

Nevertheless, Weingut Robert Weil once again was able to harvest grapes that qualified for all Prädikat levels, up to and including Trockenbeerenauslese. And this, for the 20th consecutive year – an unparalleled feat worldwide that underscores the special terroirs of our sites at higher elevations.

Harvests in recent years have increasingly required a focus on quality strategies in vineyard management – we have responded accordingly and our efforts have paid off. It could be summed up, perhaps, as follows: don't begin harvesting too late, yet be the last to finish harvesting, and get the timing of the main harvest right. It's essential to plan enough time for a painstakingly selective harvest of the crop to meet the challenge of reaching high quality. Quality: if it doesn't happen in the vineyard, it can't and won't happen in the cellar, for winemaking can only accompany what Mother Nature brings forth.

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.

Vintage Report 2010

The Final Weeks Counted!

A Golden October, Patience, and Selective Harvest in our Hillside Sites Made the Difference.

Springtime in 2010 was a long time in coming after a long, cold winter with an unusually high number of days with snow – since 1937, there have been only five winters with more snow. As such, it took considerable time for the soil to warm up and Riesling bud burst was first recorded on 26 April, or five days later than the ten-year's average. Considering long-term climate change, this was still three days earlier than 30 years ago.

Since the weather in May was too cool and wet, vegetation progressed very slowly. Yet, temperatures rose in early June and Riesling began to flower on the 16th. The weather was variable during second half of the month. Blossoming was prolonged; there was considerable blossom drop; and fruit set was uneven. At this stage, it was already clear that this would be a small crop. As in 2004, veraison, or ripening, began on 21 August. Although wet weather in September – never a desirable – was not a problem for the vines in the hillside sites, thanks to their barren, weathered soils and good drainage, we could see the writing on the wall, already heralded by colleagues in more southerly regions with earlier ripening varietals.

Yet, we were spared. "Salvation" came on 3 October, just in time, when the beautifully sunny, dry weather of a "Golden October" set in. The faces of Rheingau growers increasingly lightened, and as we began harvesting at Weingut Robert Weil, we were more than surprised about what our crop yielded. The grapes had exceptionally concentrated aromas, due to longer time on the vine and lower yields.

In the meantime, the young wines are quite compact and have a long finish, as well as tremendous fruit and a fine, ripe acidity – perceptible, but well-integrated. All in all, we were able to bring in a crop that yielded tremendous dry wines and, in certain sites, lusciously sweet wines. But we are especially pleased with our Estate Riesling wines (Gutswein). These wines not only have power and length, but also considerable finesse and an interesting play of aromas, fruit, and acidity.

Patience and faith were rewarded. Stringent, selective harvesting yielded grapes of every quality category up to Trockenbeerenauslese – for the 22nd consecutive year. The aroma profiles of vintage 2010 wines are very similar to those of 1990 or 2001, whereby this year's crop was considerably riper when harvested.

Vintage Report 2011

**A curious year of weather extremes, great anxiety,
and fantastic harvest results**

The weather in 2011 brought wine-growers many a surprise. Only after overcoming great challenges were they rewarded with exceptional results.

Following an exceptionally early bud burst in mid-April, a cold snap one night in the first part of May sufficed to cause not inconsiderable frost damage in low-lying sites.

A summer-like spring

In general, the weather in March, April, and May was more like that of early summer, with temperatures some 3°C (5.4°F) higher than the long-term average – a value that has been topped only once during the past century. Due to the warmth, blossoming in the Rheingau had already begun by late May, and growth was more than three weeks ahead of schedule at that time.

A damp summer

If spring was marked by too little precipitation, summer rains more than made up for the deficit. As a result, however, temperatures did not drop; they remained higher than the long-term average. Extremely early blossoming and favorable weather during summer led to a phenomenon at the beginning of August: the start of veraison – the earliest since time immemorial. The weather during this phase of ripening was not ideal: it remained damp and warm from mid-August until well into September. Growers could envision pending disaster (onset of rot) even though both grapes and vineyards were still in perfect shape.

A picture-perfect Indian summer

In mid-September – just in time – the weather improved. It remained dry until the end of October, and conditions were ideal for harvesting. Justifiably, one can say that the ripeness of this year's crop was exceptional. Although fantastic analytical values confirm this, the actual taste of the grapes in the vineyard was even more telling. From the very first day of picking, ripeness was perceptible to the taste. Once again, our crop in the Turmberg and Gräfenberg sites enabled us to produce wines of every quality level, up to and including Trockenbeerenauslese. We also achieved record Oechsle readings in 2011: 265° degrees in Turmberg and 301° in Gräfenberg.

The young wines are extraordinarily compact, with brilliant aromas, thanks to the perfectly ripe condition of the grapes at harvest. We're especially pleased, though, that the wines of 2011 are not only powerful and compact, but also reveal their play and elegance through a subtle fruitiness. Despite high levels of ripeness, we were able to preserve the aromas and mineral notes typical of our cool-climate, hillside sites. Uncompromising selection during the harvest blessed us with a tremendous vintage that will surely join the ranks of its predecessors from the "comet years" 1811 and 1911. In any case, people will be talking about vintage 2011 for generations to come.

Vintage Report 2012

A surprise – patience and hard work were more than rewarded

The weather in 2012 brought with it many a surprise. January, for example, was rather spring-like before it turned frosty cold in February. Our vines withstood the frost unscathed.

Late bud burst. Due to variable weather in March and April, bud burst was relatively late – not until the end of April.

Early blossoming. Thanks to warm weather in May, Mother Nature picked up speed. Blossoming was a week earlier than usual and completed by mid-June.

Coulure and reduced yields. Despite favorable timing, the weather during blossoming in the first half of June was too cool and wet. In the Rheingau, this resulted in considerable blossom drop and deficient fruit set, and with it, naturally reduced yields.

Healthy, loose clusters. Coulure was a blessing in disguise, leaving us with loose clusters that were able to remain very healthy well into November. Even the damp weather in early summer didn't adversely affect the grapes in our vineyards. Nevertheless, the long-term experience of our vineyard team, intensive foliage management, and plant protection measures were indispensable.

Very good ripening phase. The first signs of ripening could be seen in mid-August, about a week earlier than usual. Conditions for further development during the decisive ripening phase in late summer were excellent. Warm days fostered a rapid increase in Oechsle degrees, while cool nights helped stabilize acidity. In addition, berry skins were quite thick and extremely robust, which enabled clusters to remain healthy for an unusually long time.

Top harvest conditions. At the beginning of October, grapes were in nearly perfect shape – ripe, full-flavored, and absolutely healthy. Oechsle readings were about 85 degrees. Things could hardly have been better. Nevertheless, we were in no rush. We wanted to harvest perfect, physiologically ripe Riesling grapes. In our finest sites, we were rewarded with wonderful, golden yellow berries with 94°–98° Oechsle.

Despite all euphoria and a qualitatively outstanding crop, we realized that something was missing. Selective harvesting continued well into November, yet precisely because the crop was exceptionally healthy, there were very few botrytized grapes. Yet here, too, we gave our all. Our efforts paid off: although the quantity was minimal, the quality of the grapes sufficiently ripe for lusciously sweet wines was quite high.

Unparalleled in the world – Trockenbeerenauslese, year for year, since 1989. We are happy that in 2012, we were once again able to harvest grapes of every quality category, including Trockenbeerenauslese and Eiswein.

Finesse, elegance, and subtle complexity. Vintage 2012 did not bring forth superlatives. The young wines show great delicacy. They are rather subtle in terms of fruit, substance, and complexity. Alcohol levels are somewhat lower than in the wines of the past three years, yet the new vintage wines are no less powerful and firm. With their delicate aromas and mineral finish, they reflect our vision of wines produced from grapes grown in the stony soils of our cool-climate, hillside sites. They are wines with great aging potential.

Vintage Report 2013

**A Year Marked by a Long Winter and Cool Spring,
but Sunny and Hot Summer and Late Summer ...
... Capricious Weather During the Harvest**

Due to cool, wet spring weather, bud burst was substantially delayed, but even. Nevertheless, thanks to intensive work in the vineyards we were literally able to lay the groundwork for a promising vintage in 2013. The weather was also responsible for late blossoming – a week later than the longtime average – and led to considerable coulure and a concomitant "natural" reduction in yield. This also resulted in loose clusters later in the season, which helped ensure a healthy crop and thus improved prospects for them to remain longer on the vine.

Thanks to sufficient moisture reserves in the soil, hot weather in July and August fostered grape development and veraison began on 24 August, neither too early nor too late.

Good weather in September enabled must weights to quickly rise to 80 degrees Oechsle.

On 14 October, the harvest began in full force with the entire team of pickers. In the meantime, extremely variable weather had set in and it remained throughout the rest of the harvest, with lots of rainy spells. Yet, a highly selective harvest by hand enabled us to bring in an absolutely healthy and physiologically ripe crop. Even the grapes for our Gutsweine reached ca. 85 degrees Oechsle.

On 23 October, we started picking grapes for our dry wines from classified sites. They, too, were completely healthy and had reached ca. 95 degrees Oechsle.

Very soon thereafter, we began harvesting grapes for Spätlese with residual sweetness before they reached an overripe state. They were all picked with starting must weights of about 100 degrees Oechsle and between 10 and 11 grams of acidity. The main harvest was completed on 3 November, not least because of the wet weather, marking the end of a successful, but very stressful, three weeks.

Although the weather remained poor throughout November and into December, we were still able to do a number of selective pickings to bring in small quantities of Auslese, Beerenauslese, and Trockenbeerenauslese with must weights of up to 201 degrees Oechsle and optimal acidity levels.

If samples of the musts were promising, initial tastings of the finished wines were even better.

Our team can be proud of a remarkable accomplishment: for 25 years in a row – every year since 1989 – we have harvested grapes for Trockenbeerenauslese ... a worldwide record.

While not a year of superlatives, the wines of vintage 2013 have a number of positive attributes. They are enormously concentrated, expressive, and rich in complex fruit aromas and have great finesse. At second glance, this vintage might possibly join the ranks of "great vintages." In any case, they will be very pleasant to drink early on, yet still have aging potential.

Vintage Report 2014

**A year of constant highs and lows:
in temperature, precipitation and the winemakers' disposition –
but the key factor for the quality of the grapes
was preventing the vines from getting "wet feet"**

Following a mild winter, the vegetation phase began with an unprecedented April 7 bud break, the earliest in living memory. But while the first four months of the year were consistently too warm, May proved a bit too cool, which slowed development between bud break and flowering. In the end, however, the vines were still almost two weeks ahead of the historical average, culminating in an optimal and steady fruit set that put the winemakers in a fine mood. That euphoria faded, however, in the face of strong, sustained precipitation throughout July and August. When all was said and done, rain volumes measured two to three times higher than normal. The rain was obviously beyond our control, but optimal preparation of our vineyards to handle the challenging conditions was not. Our decision to abstain from the use of fertilizer was particularly helpful for us at Weingut Robert Weil this year.

The sparse, stony soils of our hillside vineyards are already inclined to produce grapes with small berries. Beyond this, our terrain is notable for its outstanding drainage. And with the complete ground cover on our vineyards further drawing away some of the excess water, our vines never got wet feet.

Our organic philosophy and practices in the vineyards paid strong dividends through the natural health and strengthening of the vines and thicker skins on the berries. These were real factors in guaranteeing the health of the grapes during the contrary weather conditions of early and mid-autumn, and set the stage for the long hang times needed for physiological maturity.

Our grapes in the Kiedrich vineyards looked superb and tasted even better.
Even so, the 2014 vintage still had more challenges in store!

Our window for harvesting healthy, physiologically ripe berries was so short that even with 80 harvest assistants we all had our hands full.

Yet the results speak for themselves: excellent quality throughout the entire range, from the dry estate (Gutswein) and village (Ortswein) wines to the classified sites of the *Klosterberg* and *Turmberg* (Erste Lagen), and all the way to our crown jewel, the *Gräfenberg* (Grosse Lage). This held true for both dry and dessert Prädikat wines, albeit in minute amounts for the naturally and noble sweet ones.

The 2014 vintage is Weingut Robert Weil's 26th straight to produce a Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese.

While harvest volumes were in line with the historical averages, the noble sweet Prädikat wines were, as noted above, gathered in minute quantities.

Vintage Report 2015

The 2015 vintage is the product of yet another year of weather extremes.

Despite an intense dry spell throughout the summer, the Rheingau and her vineyards remained brilliantly green. The Kiedrich hillsides in particular benefited from runoff water from the surrounding forest, one of the characteristics that makes them truly special.

A notably great vintage, with the potential to be the vintage of the century – only time will tell for sure!

Like the vintage before it, 2015 began with a mild winter. Nonetheless, there were a few notably frosty days with recorded temperatures of –5 and –10° C (14–23° F).

Mother Nature first emerged in her spring finery around mid-April with a few summery days, leading to budbreak on April 22, only marginally earlier than the norm.

Typical May and June weather helped maintain that ahead-of-schedule pace right up through flowering, which was observed in our vineyards 8 days ahead of the historical average. The long dry spell that followed had a strong impact on growth, although on the whole the Rheingau remained green throughout the hot and extremely dry summer.

The Kiedrich hillside slopes once again showed just how remarkable they are. In wet years, the sparse, stony soils of our hillside vineyards drain away excess moisture so that our vines never get their feet wet. In dry years, the water runoff the surrounding forest keeps the vines sufficiently hydrated.

Ripening began in earnest around mid-August, approx. 5 days ahead of the long-standing average. August, September and October were picture-perfect for ripening, with uninterrupted dry, sunny weather dotted with brief (and necessary) showers.

In early October, the first of our Riesling vineyards were ready for harvest. The grapes tasted magnificent and were the picture of health, leading to plenty of relieved smiles all around. Our Gutsriesling alone easily topped 80° Oe, while the Ortsriesling weighed in at admirable 90° Oe and the Erste and Grosse Lage wines measured average must weights of 90 and above. And all of this with sensational, ripe acidity and stunning extract values – we couldn't wish for anything better!

The crowning glory are the Spätlese and noble sweet selections which top out at over 200° Oe.

The 2015 vintage is thus the 27th consecutive year at Weingut Robert Weil to see a successful harvest of botrytis-laced fruit for Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese wines.

While the overall yield totaled only slightly below the historical average, the tremendous health of the berries well into late October strongly limited the amount of fruit appropriate for noble sweet wines.

Vintage Report 2016

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.

Vintage Report 2017

Nature giveth and nature taketh
The extreme challenges of this vintage
brought out the best in our Kiedrich vineyards

It was bitter cold in the early days of 2017, but we used it our advantage. On one of the chilliest nights, with the thermometer showing an icy -10°C, we brought in an excellent quality 2016 ice wine.

But how quickly things change. February, March and the initial days of April were warm enough to bring about bud break in mid-April – a full 2 weeks earlier than the long-standing average.

This early schedule, however, significantly increased the risk of one of any winemaker's great fears: spring frost. And sure enough, late April saw a hard cold snap sweep through the Rheingau, hitting many of the region's vineyards. The hillside vineyards in Kiedrich are fortunately ideal at guiding away the cold air, leaving our vines mercifully undamaged.

In mid-May the pendulum swung back, delivering summer-like temperatures that induced the onset of flowering by early June.

A relatively uniform fruitset continued without coulure, and the Kiedrich vineyards blossomed in all their glory.

During the night of 31 July, severe thunderstorms with heavy hail and winds swept throughout the Rheingau, hitting the middle Rheingau particularly hard.

Once again, the Kiedrich vineyards escaped without any significant damage.

By 10 August, our ripening Riesling grapes were approximately two weeks earlier than the historical average.

Thanks to intensive vineyard management throughout August and September, the grapes remained healthy and by late September had reached a perfect physiological ripeness.

The grapes were quickly harvested to must readings of 80 °Oe and a fine, ripe acidity ... Perfect estate and village level wines. Hang times into mid-October delivered grapes measuring 90° Oe degrees, optimal readings for the top dry wines in our best vineyards.

Spätlese and Auslese selection began immediately thereafter, while the selection process for our grand Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese fruit followed to great anticipation in late October. The 2017 vintage thus represents the 29th – and counting – straight vintage where all three levels of naturally sweet wines (Auslese, BA, TBA) were harvested at Weingut Robert Weil.

And so one of the most intense, challenging and capricious growing seasons we've ever experienced has nonetheless come to a satisfying end.

While our yields were small – 15% beneath the long-standing average – they are still manageable, especially as compared to the shortfalls of our neighbors and colleagues.

Vintage Report 2018

**Another "Summer of the Century" is in the books ...
and this one began in April!
Warmest growth cycle on record!
And despite all that, our Kiedrich hillside vineyards
never needed extra sun protection!**

Weather conditions during the vegetative phase from April to October set new benchmarks: taken together, those months were more than one-half degree Celsius warmer than the previous record year (1947); viewed through the prism of a seven-month span, that's a huge jump.

This past growing season was almost a full degree Celsius warmer than the warmest year in recent history (2003). Compared with average temperatures since the beginning of recorded weather statistics, that figure totals an unbelievable 2.8 degree Celsius difference.

These Mediterranean temperatures were part of an extended period of warmth that, as of right now, is unprecedented.

April began with early summer conditions, May temperatures corresponded to those of an average June, and the consistently high temperatures of summer reached well into October, refusing to give way to autumn.

The growth in the vineyards reflected this. While bud break was just seven days ahead of the long-established average, the vines had already developed a 17-day lead by the time they blossomed. Veraison began 21 days ahead of a "normal" year and harvest kicked off 24 days earlier than expected.

This action in the vineyard was however only possible because we'd had reasonably high levels of precipitation during the winter, leaving sufficient water reserves in the soil to handle the extremely dry vegetation cycle.

That same dry weather also thwarted disease and pests from afflicting the vines during the growth cycle, and the fruit remained extraordinarily healthy right up until the end of harvest in early November.

To ensure that the wines from this hot vintage retained their noted cool climate character, we made the decision to start the harvest in mid-September...following the motto "Our harvest will start first and end last... with a sharp focus on which grapes are ripe and ready for which intended wines."

In the end we brought in grapes for grand, fine and elegant "Guts"-Rieslings; fruit of tremendous density and expressiveness for the dry "Lagen" wines; and a small quantity of premium nobly sweet wines. For the 30th straight year, our berries covered the entire spectrum of quality levels, including a Trockenbeerenauslese measuring 274° Oe. We were thrilled not just with the residual sugar levels across the entire range, but also with the fine, elegant acidity and perfect physiological ripeness of the grapes that will express itself beautifully in these wines.

Harvest yields were also very strong and will allow us to balance out the small volumes of a year ago.

Vintage Report 2019

An Autumn of Envy

Hope and uncertainty for winegrowers

Our Kiedrich hillside vineyards once again shine

2018 will be remembered for the warmest growth period on record, but 2019 had its own very hot and especially parched tale to tell.

Above-average temperatures and warm, dry soils at the beginning of the year led to a very early budbreak — arriving before April was even halfway done.

An unusually cold May then put the brakes on this 2-week head start and flowering ultimately ended in mid-June, roughly in line with the long-term average.

Despite the drought, the vines developed well over the course of the hot summer and veraison for our Riesling fruit began in mid-August, almost a week ahead of statistical expectations.

Development picked up momentum rapidly thanks to the truly stunning weather of late August and September and the general good water retention in our Kiedrich sites. Despite the drought, our vineyards remained in beautiful shape right up through harvest.

A wonderful ripening period rewarded us with optimally healthy and intensely delicious grapes, and a harvest in phenomenal weather starting in the second half of September.

Any winemaker would have rejoiced at our cull of Gutswein (estate) and Ortswein (village) Rieslings. Yet the 2019 vintage will go down in history as an Autumn of Envy, as harvest yields varied greatly from location to location, with some estates only able to bring in half of their anticipated volumes.

Our yields here at Weingut Robert Weil fortunately stood only a few percentage points below the annual average, but in uniformly phenomenal quality: *Gutswein and Ortswein are fantastic ... The dry single vineyard Lagenwein are stunning ... The naturally sweet Kabinett and Spätlese wines are incredibly beautiful ... And although extremely small in quantity, the noble sweet specialties are a dream ... Must weights for the Trockenbeerenauslese running up to 209° Oe, with outstanding acidity and pressed from the very finest berries.*

Looking back, 2019 was certainly a demanding vintage. Yet it was also one that rewarded our constant labors in the vineyard with stunning, healthy and high-quality fruit – the foundation for long-lived wines guaranteed to grace cellars for many years to come.

As always, we owe our success to the incredible quality of the Kiedrich hillside sites and the remarkable hard work of our highly motivated Weil Team!

Vintage Report 2020

Outstanding Quality ...
thanks to precipitation in winter,
the late summer and early autumn

While the 2020 growing season wasn't as obviously hot as some recent years, it nevertheless goes into the record books as the warmest overall period since records have been kept.

The long-term savior for the vines was the plentiful rains during the winter of 2019/20. January started much too mild, with only a very few true frost days. But February soon brought a number of heavily rainy days, which are so crucial for building up water reserves. By mid-March the pendulum swung back to bone dry, with very warm and sunny conditions at times.

Unseasonably warm temperatures and plentiful rain encouraged very early bud break around 10 April ... the second-earliest date on record, and a full two weeks earlier than the long-standing historical average.

In response, flowering shifted far forward to late May, but was slowed by a cold snap starting on Whit Sunday – and as a result didn't finish until 10 June, albeit still two weeks ahead of historical expectations.

June and July ran roughly in accordance with the historical averages, leading to an August and September of enduring high temperatures and plentiful sunshine.

The ability of our vines to develop at all throughout the extremely dry summer can be directly attributed to the water reserves banked during the rainy winter months.

Ripening began around 10 August, also 14 days ahead of the long-standing historical average. The high quality of the fruit, which showed perfect health and physiological ripeness, came thanks to the very warm, sunny and dry September weather ... including the cool nights necessary for optimal aroma formation. We couldn't have asked for more!

The main harvest started very early as well, on 21 September. Given the outstanding quality of the grapes, things moved along quickly, allowing the harvest to conclude as the first half of October came to an end.

The second part of October was spent harvesting the Spätlese and nobly sweet prädikat wines, a process that actually extended into November.

The grapes were so healthy that noble rot only arrived very late, pushing back our chance to harvest the raisin-like berries for our Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese wines.

As such, there will be only a very small quantity of these coveted nobly sweet treasures, albeit in fantastic quality, high concentration up around 200° Oe, with a very fine, elegant acidity. We're proud to have achieved a Trockenbeerenauslese once again this year – the 32nd in a row.

Harvest volumes finished right around the historical average.

Vintage Report 2021

A classic cool climate vintage
that will reward patience for many, many years to come

It's no secret that the 2021 vintage presented significant challenges to winemakers – in Germany and abroad.

Reports poured in from all corners of late frosts in spring, heavy rains in spring and summer, and then catastrophic flooding, hail and windstorms throughout.

On top of those dire problems, many regions faced the grim threat of both downy and powdery mildew in summer, leading to early onset rot that often left only a brief window in autumn to harvest fully ripe grapes.

And in the Rheingau?

While we were spared the extreme weather conditions mentioned above, excessive rain remained a concern throughout spring and summer. This necessitated an unusually intensive set of vineyard management measures.

At Weingut Robert Weil, we supplemented our normal practices to secure good air circulation in the vineyards with additional canopy thinning, cluster thinning and green harvest.

Thanks to the outstanding drainage properties of the phyllite soils on the Kiedricher Berg, our vines avoided 'wet feet.'

Our own hard manual labor on the Kiedricher Berg was further aided by the famous winds of the Taunus, which run downhill into the Rhine valley and perpetually help keep the vineyards dry. And finally the good September weather also helped deliver outstanding physiological ripeness in the grapes.

Our harvest of the fruit for base wines for the sparkling Sekt began in the final days of September, with the main harvest withheld until early October.

It was a year of very good nutritional supply and growth for the grapes and average harvest volumes that didn't overtax the vines; we were pleased with the strong extract levels and concentration of the resulting wines.

Our tireless work in the vineyards and the extreme adaptability of the Kiedricher Berg itself (outstanding water drainage in wet years, strong water replenishment from the forest above in dry ones) ultimately delivered not just physiological ripeness, but also excellent health in the fruit at harvest. By late September/early October, we found that the grapes had reached their perfect taste profile, a crucial factor in the quality of the wine that will eventually be produced from them.

Starting in mid-October, we began bringing in fantastic crops of golden grapes from our Erste and Grosse Lagen: ideally ripe and healthy. Expectations are through the roof!

Late October and November brought the coveted chance to pick a selection of shriveled grapes in the vineyard. While quantities are minute, we are once again blessed to have brought in all levels of quality, including a Trockenbeerenauslese, for the 33rd year in a row.

Vintage Report 2022

**Record temperatures and Mediterranean levels of sunshine,
with almost no summer rain and challenging harvest conditions**

This year's winegrowing journey was shaped by a summer of high temperatures and little rain. 2022 started with a very warm winter and rains that helped replenish water reserves in the soil. Yet, at that point, we were little aware just how crucial those early rains would prove in securing the later survival of several of our vineyards.

A cold snap in April slowed things down again, leading to bud break on April 20, right in line with the historical average. And nature soon showed her pleasure with the high temperatures, plentiful sunshine, and abundant water in the soil, accelerating growth through flowering in the early days of June, about a week ahead of historical expectation.

As drought set in, the vineyards slowed things down again, despite the record temperatures and Mediterranean levels of sunshine. As such, the pace of development in the vineyards remained moderate throughout the summer. And when the ripeness threshold was passed on a reference parcel on August 6, harvest began on September 20 – nine and ten days ahead of the historical average, respectively.

This natural brake on assimilation is likely to grow in importance for the quality of our grapes and the wine we make from them. As global warming dictates a growing scarcity of water; we must continue to focus our work on preparing the vines to be thirsty, but never quite drying out. Our Kiedrich hillsides help us maintain certain enviable advantages as they can draw on water reserves from the forestland above during increasingly dry and hot years.

By mid-September, the grapes looked fantastic and tasted even better. And then the rains came – although to our great relief, the Kiedrich hillsides once again showed the amazing drainage quality of the phyllite soils. The water drained naturally, and thanks to the meticulous work by our team throughout the year, which set the foundation for loose clusters and strong air circulation in the vineyards, we kept the fruit completely healthy and on the vine until physiological ripeness was achieved.

Both the grape quality and the sensory analysis of the must and young wines point towards an outstanding vintage, from the estate-level Gutsriesling to the village-level Ortsriesling and the single-site Erste and Grosse Lagen wines.

It took courage, patience, and hard manual labor, but we also brought in fruit for exceptional naturally sweet Spätlese and Auslese wines, and in late October even a small quantity of the coveted raisin-like berries needed for a Trockenbeerenauslese. As such, we proudly produced wines in all quality categories for the 34th year in a row.

Vintage Report 2023

It was a year of weather extremes, highlighted by severe heat and dryness in June and July and high rainfall in August. Sunshine and warm weather helped with ripening in September, although a changeable October presented its own challenges during harvest.

Classic – or even average – weather patterns are increasingly rare nowadays on the 50th degree of latitude in the northern hemisphere. We are instead experiencing more frequent bouts of extreme weather, in particular precipitation, against a backdrop of rising average temperatures. January and February 2023, for example, both ran very mild and very dry again. While March was relatively mild and April relatively cool, spring was dominated largely by changeable weather and frequent rainfalls through mid-May.

We nevertheless observed bud break on April 20, right around the 30-year average. If the first part of May was too cold, the second half of May proved much warmer. June and July were marked by heat and dryness. Fortunately for us, the forest above our Kiedrich vineyards serves as a crucial water reservoir, ensuring the vines have the moisture they need thanks to natural diffusion. While bud break came right on schedule, flowering actually arrived a week earlier than anticipated and ran smoothly.

August was framed by extreme amounts of precipitation, with the outstanding water drainage of the Kiedricher Berg's phyllite soils serving the vines well.

Seen as a whole, we were able to keep the vineyards marvelously healthy, not least thanks to the ecological viticulture practiced at Weingut Robert Weil. Ripening began around August 10, a good week before the well-established standard.

Our greatest success came in preserving grape health despite extended hang times, which is a defining element for grand cool climate wines.

The Kiedricher Berg played again a major role in this; we winegrowers can only harness, never surpass, the quality potential that is naturally present.

We in the Rheingau also had the tremendous good fortune to be spared the heavy rains and hail that affected some other winegrowing regions.

Given all of the challenges associated with 2023, we cannot help but be tremendously grateful for the ceaseless dedication and expertise of our team, which ultimately delivered perfectly ripe and healthy grapes.

The grape quality, taste, and aromas of the musts and young wines point towards an excellent vintage – running from the estate-level Gutsriesling to the village-level Ortsriesling and Erste and Grosse Lagen wines.

Thanks to a dose of courage, patience, and hard manual labor, we also brought in magnificent residually sweet Spätlese and Auslese wines – including, in late October, the highly coveted, raisin-like grapes for a Trockenbeerenauslese. While only a tiny volume, that TBA represents the 35th year in a row that we have brought in the entire spectrum of quality levels.

Vintage Report 2024

A good year for nature, in which, thanks to high rainfall, water reservoirs and groundwater levels were able to recover after a few very dry years. The characteristics of the different terroirs were also clearly demonstrated, and we as winegrowers were very challenged, but in the end the "Kiedricher Berg" gifted us with outstanding grape quality

Rainy and once again very warm weather dominated throughout 2024. Only in the second and third week of January was there "real" winter weather with extended periods of frost, freezing rain and snow. February followed as by far the mildest since the beginning of weather records in 1885.

Spring got off to a very mild, unsettled and rainy start. Due to the higher temperatures in March and the first half of April (compared to the long-term average) vegetation started early and bud break was recorded ten days earlier than normal, around April 10th.

On the nights of April 22nd and 23rd, the temperatures in the Rheingau fell to a critical level of just below 0°C (32°F), but fortunately we did not experience any late frosts in our vineyards.

May followed with very wet conditions, but better weather in June meant that flowering started on June 6th, which corresponds to the long-term average.

July and August were again very unsettled, sometimes with thunderstorms and heavy rain but fortunately without hail, which was not the case in many other wine-growing regions.

The vines finally developed almost in line with the long-term average, with veraison beginning in mid-August.

Despite these difficult conditions, the "Kiedricher Berg" once again proved to be a terrific partner. The barren phyllite soils with their excellent water drainage to keep the vines from getting "wet feet," as well as the drying Taunus winds blowing into the Rhine valley, combined with organic viticulture and the resulting firm berry skins, guaranteed us healthy vineyards with the possibility of long hanging times of the grapes for appropriate aroma development. All this despite a consistent and not insignificant amount of rainfall.

We were then able to start harvesting at the end of September, with perfectly healthy, golden yellow grapes that showed complex, intense fruit and were extremely tasty. An excellent foundation for making outstanding wines, or as we like to say, great grapes make great wines.

We are already certain that our estate and village Rieslings have reached a level of quality that is on a par with the exceptional 2023 vintage.

This was followed in mid-October by the harvest of even more mature grapes (still absolutely healthy, though) in our Erste Lage vineyards Kiedricher Klosterberg and Kiedricher Turmberg as well as the Grosse Lage vineyard, Kiedricher Gräfenberg. The healthy grapes we harvested were certainly a prerequisite for the outstanding qualities that are now maturing in the barrel, but this year we find we have been extremely limited in the selection of late-harvested and noble sweet wines. These qualities could only be selected in tiny quantities and with great effort. We are also excited to report that once again we were rewarded by nature with the harvest of all quality levels, including a Trockenbeerenauslese, which we have now done for 36 straight years.