

Max Ferd. Richter 2015 Vintage Report

2015 – A wonderful harvest

At the recent Summit Meeting for Global Climate Control in Paris the 195 participating countries ambitiously resolved to reduce global warming and to limit the total increase to less than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit). 2015 has been the warmest year since record keeping began in 1881.

In 2014 the harvest in Germany suffered from unusually warm and rainy weather and the entry of the "drosophila suzukii", an insect that infects the vines and causes the grapes to rot. This insect is tied to the increase in temperature of the region. 2015 showed a much different picture. There was little rain with a warm dry summer. The harvest itself was stress free – an enjoyable experience that happens about once in a decade. Every morning was a sunny cool delight, with one exception: it snowed in the Mosel Valley on the 14th of October; the earliest date ever. Although this was related to climate change it did not propose a problem. Harvest began on the 28th of September and was concluded by the end of October. We had ample time for hand picking. With three passes through our vineyards we were able to produce all categories, from Qba to TBA.

Similar to recent years the 2014-2015 winter experience was mild with almost no temperatures below freezing. Home heating was inexpensive but certain nasty parasites survived as well. A warm May created early June flowering and despite a few cold days it was completed before the end of the month. The setting of the fruit was undisturbed so we were able to anticipate an above average quantity. There was very limited rain so we were forced to water the young vines planted in 2014 and 2015. Older, deep-rooted vines had no problem with the drought.

Before joining our winemaking team at Richter Constantin had an internship with my good friend August Kessler in the Rheingau. His experience with Pinot Noir from the famous Assmannhausen vineyard created great interest in red winemaking. For the first time in our long history Constantin planted a vineyard of Pinot Noir. We will have to be patient for 5 years before that new chapter in Richter history will be able to be opened.

The summer of 2015 will remain one of the best in my memory. Lots of sunshine and warmth with just enough gentle rain showers to allow the vines to flourish. Fortunately we didn't suffer from hailstorms as was the case in 2011 and 2013. No pest problems affected our grapes or canopies. In August we executed a severe green harvest along with leaf-pulling to open the canopies. This helped greatly to support healthy development of the fruit – a necessary precondition for the intensely selective hand picking that is the formula for success in our steep vineyards. Preliminary tastings revealed comparisons to the great vintages of 2002 and 2012.

In order to meet the growing demand for our wines, particularly the „Zeppelin Riesling“, we acquired new vineyards and made significant investments in the cellars. Although worldwide competition has increased Mosel Riesling has a unique taste profile. The wines are spicy, refreshing, minerally driven and low in alcohol. The 2015 vintage will be a shining example of these qualities.

Best wishes for a great holiday season and a happy, successful New Year!



(Dr. Dirk Richter)



(Constantin Richter)

Mülheim/Mosel, 11th December 2015