

2016 Max Ferd. Richter Vintage Report

The Golden October Harvest

The winegrower's saying "Leap years has it all!" was true again in 2016. Much turbulence and extreme weather conditions happened: frost, hailstorms, heavy downpours, extreme heat, as well as enough sunshine to sun burn the grapes and canopies! Luckily enough, all these weather surprises came in a sequence that lead to healthy and mature grapes in a golden October month that will be remembered for a long time. Subsequently grape picking with dry and sunny weather was an enjoyable experience; the canopies created an image of the Mosel Valley covered with a golden yellow garment.

2016 started with far too mild a winter, only shortly interrupted by some cold days in the midst of January. The grapes left for a possible icewine harvest did not freeze and were rotten anyway by the huge amount of rain in the end of 2015. This is the 3rd consecutive vintage, where we were unable to pick an Eiswein.

Spring was very wet with some late frost in May and a hailstorm prior to flowering; however this did not cause major damage to our vineyards. Vineyard growth and flowering was disturbed by almost daily rainfall causing tremendous mildew infection. We had to spray more often than usual. This was difficult but unavoidable in order to eliminate extensive fungus damage. Finding a dry moment to successfully spray the protective agents on the leaves, canopies and grapes was more or less accidental. In some parcels we were lucky, in others not. Colleagues who adapted organic farming, prohibiting the use of chemical agents, suffered tragically from the mildew problem, sometimes losing their entire crop. Winegrowers speak of 2016 as a "Jealous Harvest".

From mid-July, through all of August and September weather underwent a complete change: a picture perfect summer, with sunshine and heat, dried up some of the fungal infection. The grapes and bunches started to develop and ripen under perfect conditions. During the second half of August we experienced a heat wave leading to some sunburn in very hot vineyard sites. However, those berries mummified and had to be sorted out during grape picking. Coolish nights interchanged with sunny and warm days in September provided the perfect rhythm to develop clean and expressive aromatics.

Grape picking started on the 4th and ended on the 31st of October, quick compared to previous vintages. The overall quantity in our Estate was 15% less than last year. Due to the overall lack of botrytis there is just a limited amount of Auslese grapes. We were able to select some small quantity of Beerenauslese in the Graacher Himmelreich. We now await freezing temperatures for a possible Eiswein harvest in the Mülheimer Helenenkloster. Vintage 2016 will be recognized for outstanding Qba, Kabinett and Spätlese wines.

As the demand for our wines has steadily increased we were able to add new vineyards in the Mülheimer Sonnenlay to produce more "Zeppelin-wine", as well as in our top vineyard "Brauneberger Juffer". The 2015 vintage was highly regarded by both the German and international press. We hope that 2016 will be highly regarded as well!



(Dr. Dirk Richter)

(Constantin Richter)

Mülheim/Mosel, 30th November 2016