

Vintage report of the Max Ferd. Richter Estate
2020 – A Vintage As Never Before

2020 – A vintage to remember, a year to forget. The coronavirus pandemic entirely overshadowed this vintage year. It was a difficult challenge to organize our daily work in the vineyards, cellars, administration and marketing. To make matters worse, in October 2019 the US administration imposed a 25% custom tariff on German wines, as an act of retaliation for subsidies given to the European Airbus Industries Co. That had a profoundly negative affect on our most important export market. World-wide shutdowns to slow the spread of the virus affected both on and off-premise sales, dealing us a severe blow. Our sales in April and May plummeted. In late May the shutdown was lifted in Germany and the situation immediately improved. During summer and autumn seasons we welcomed numerous visitors to our estate on a daily basis. The lack of international travel and domestic holiday destinations induced our fellow citizens to explore the beautiful Mosel landscape and its wines. Even exports grew stronger thanks to a growing demand in Southeast Asia.

Vintners call 2020 a “jealous vintage”. Late spring frost, hail, fungus and pest problems were minor and regional. In the area around Mülheim/Mosel we were fortunate not to be affected by any of them. For the past few years it seems like there was no winter. Bud break started early In April, due to very warm and sunny weather. The first half of May brought enough rain to accelerate the growing of the vines. By the end of May the flowering started under perfect weather conditions. The persistent heat and lack of rain lasted through the very warm and often hot summer months of June and July. This caused some draught stress for younger vines, but the older deeply rooted vines found enough humidity to grow perfectly healthy grape bunches. Luckily there was very little fungus, however the grapes suffered some sunburn damage as in the last few years. In the end it was a minor problem. Early bud break and rapid healthy vegetation created a season that was about 3 weeks ahead of normal, leading to an early harvest.

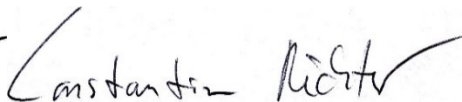
We began the 2020 grape harvest on September, 13 with the Pinot Noir and were fortunate enough to have handpicked the grapes for our Riesling Kabinett wines before the end of September. In early October the generally sunny and stable weather pattern changed and we had to rush to “steal” our grapes on the drier days of the month. Because the temperature was low the grapes remained perfectly healthy. We harvested sufficient quantities for our entry level wines as well as a few Spätlese and Auslese, topped by a small quantity of botrytis grapes for a TBA from Wehlener Sonnenuhr. The overall quantity is higher than anticipated. Due to the clean, healthy grapes we will produce aromatic Rieslings with well-balanced fruit acid. We think the 2020 wines will be compared to the 2016 vintage with a strong emphasis on the Kabinetts.

Both the national and international wine press gave us high praise for our 2019 vintage. We are committed to follow that route of quality and consistency.

We wish you all the best as we all struggle with the stress of the pandemic. Stay healthy!



(Dr. Dirk Richter)



(Constantin Richter)

Mülheim/Mosel, 24th Nov. 2020