

2021 Max Ferd. Richter Vintage Report
A harvest to remember the 1960s

1921 is generally regarded as the most spectacular German Vintage of the 20th Century. Grapes had ripened to perfection and the natural yeast was unable to ferment the sugar down to a level of dryness. For the first time ever all wines had to be bottled with residual sweetness. Consumers welcomed that unusual “new” style. They had been starving during WW1 and this new wine experience truly met their wish for something tasty.

At the start of 2021 winegrowers embraced the idea that perhaps 100 years later a similar vintage would return. However, that proved to be just a hopeful wish. Winter and spring 2021 were frosty and without expected precipitation. Lack of humidity persisted. Sunshine was intense during March and April despite below average temperatures. This caused a considerably later bud break than normal. Heavy rainfall in May allowed the water level in the soil to slowly recover. The flowering of vines started at end of June, nearly four weeks later than in past vintages. This late start to flowering was common in the 1960s and 1970s, before the climate change affected viticulture as we know it today. Thus we no longer worry about the difficulties of such vintages as, 1963, 1966, 1973 or 1975!

The rainy weather lasted through the summer, affecting the young grapes and causing considerable infection of fungus disease. Protection of the vines was of utmost importance so we knew yields would be much lower. We had to spray more often than usual to fight mildew, phomopsis (black rot) and botrytis. In the end we succeeded to grow healthy fruit but by end of August the ripening process was still quite retarded. The start of the grape harvest, which had begun in mid-September for the past five years, was pushed back 3 weeks, similar to vintages of 50 years ago.

In September and October we finally were blessed with a wonderful sunny, warm, dry autumn season that advanced the ripening of grapes and brought back optimism for a satisfying vintage. Harvest began on October 11 and commenced in early November, leaving grapes in our monopole Mülheimer Helenenkloster vineyard with the hope for a successful Eiswein harvest. Our last Eiswein vintage was 2016, five years ago. Despite the difficulties of the summer our grapes were very healthy. We can expect wines with clean aromatic fruit structure and great complexity. The benefit of the early rains, supplying ample water to the roots, allowed the development of intense minerality. The bulk of our offerings will be QBA and Kabinett wines. Spätlese and Auslese are a rare exception, though we did manage to select a TBA from the Wehlener Sonnenuhr vineyard. As of now we can compare the 2021 vintage with 2004, 1996 and 1991.

The Covid 19 pandemic accompanied us through 2021 but did not negatively affect our sales. The 2020 vintage, a classic Riesling vintage, was a great gift. Our customers were impressed by the fresh spicy character and the lively balance of minerals, residual sugar and perfectly integrated acidity!

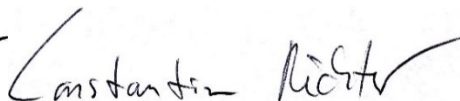
Thank you for your support. We received many accolades, both nationally and internationally. This gives us inspiration to continue to bring our wines to the highest level. We are blessed to work in an industry that brings pleasure to people throughout the world.

Wishing a merry Christmas, a happy holiday season and a healthy, prosperous and successful New Year 2022!

Yours,



(Dr. Dirk Richter)



(Constantin Richter)

Mülheim/Mosel, 6th Dec. 2021