

Max Ferd. Richter 2022 Vintage Report
The Challenge of Climate Change


The year 2022 has been declared the warmest ever since the beginning of official record keeping in Germany in 1881. The mild winter was shortly interrupted by a deep frost before the holidays in December, allowing us to pick frozen grapes for Eiswein. This was followed by a sunny springtime and a bright and dry summer season with lots of sunshine and high temperatures. The summer 2022 will be remembered as outstanding as it was in 2003 and 1976, however, the lack of rain during the vegetation season caused a severe drought. Finally, the rain came at the start of harvest, too late to influence the quality and quantity significantly.

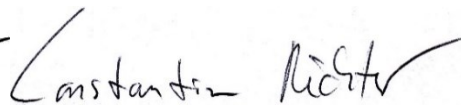
Because of the drought during the vegetation season we had to water the newly planted and younger vineyards. A strict vendange verte (green harvest) was necessary to lower the stress on these vines in order to guarantee their survival. These vineyards were harvested separately, as the drought stress has a significant effect on aromatic flavours and taste. The older vines, deeply rooted in the slate stone were able to overcome those difficulties by penetrating deeply enough to find available water.

The Riesling harvest started during the last week of September and terminated at the end of October. Heavy rainfall interrupted the grape picking from time to time. The vines absorbed the water greedily and loaded the berries, causing a slight reduction of sugar content and acid. Fortunately the grapes were fairly loose, so that the sudden increase of juice didn't cause the individual berries to press against each other, forcing the skins to burst and the fruit to rot. Our highly trained picking crew was always present during these times to preclude such a frightening development.

Despite these problems we had a 10% larger crop than in 2021, still below historic average yields. Most wines will be classified Qualitätswein (Qba) and Kabinett. There will be smaller quantities of Spätlese and Auslese wines available, as we were able to pick by severe manual selection. Quantities will not be enough to satisfy our global demand but the quality will be outstanding. The rich and enduring sunshine during the summer months will be the hallmark of the vintage, revealing wonderful fruit, clean aromatics and expressive delicacy, paired with mature, harmonious, well-structured fruit acid. 2022 wines will develop great drinking pleasure, reminiscent of the 2016 vintage.

Climate change creates a great challenge. Looking forward we are acquiring new vineyard parcels in the old Mosel oxbow valley, situated south of Mülheim, where we profit from a cooler climate than in our vineyards situated directly on the Mosel river banks. We grow and cut weeds in the vineyards helping to keep the slate stone cooler and we cut the canopies shorter than before to reduce evaporation. New vineyards are planted on grafted vines, where rootstock and Riesling clones show a better drought resistance. Thus we are confident, in the long run, that we will be able to produce the light, fragrant and spicy type of Mosel Riesling you have come to enjoy so much.


(Dr. Dirk Richter)


(Constantin Richter)

Mülheim/Mosel, 10th Nov. 2022