

The weather went crazy in 2024

Harvest report of the Max Ferd. Richter winery

The 2024 harvest is complete. 2024 was a very challenging year, and not just politically!

The start to early vegetation in March was very promising. A rainy late autumn and a mild, wet winter had provided enough soil moisture, that the sunny warm, March weather ensured early budding, and the first green shimmered in the vineyards by the end of March.

This very early development was abruptly interrupted by a late frost on the night of 21 April 2024. Shoots that were already 10 – 15 cm long were destroyed by a cold air front that lasted 12 hours. The frost was so severe, particularly on the Saar and Ruwer rivers, that there was already a fear of total failure of the new vintage at this early stage. Although the frost damage steadily decreased downstream on the Mosel, it also led to predicted losses of around 30% of the average annual yield here in the Middle Mosel. Surprisingly, there were very small-scale, localised differences in the extent of the damage. It affected both frost-prone sites and vineyard plots that had not experienced frost damage in living memory. As a result the 2024 harvest will be the smallest on the Moselle for over 20 years and will lead to supply shortages.

The further course of vegetation in 2024 up to the start of the grape harvest in mid-September was a rollercoaster of sun and rain. Sunny and warm weather alternated with heavy rainfall at times. Although there were no drought stress problems, plant protection had to be applied more frequently than usual due to the threat of fungal infestation. Blossoming began very early at the end of May. As a result of the frost, the clusters were very loose. The same problem continued at different stages of development as secondary shoots developed. Due to the weather, flowering lasted over three weeks. In our top sites of Brauneberg and Wehlen, we were able to start defoliation at the beginning of June in order to protect the growing grapes more quickly from the effects of the wet weather.

Thanks to our exceptional efforts in plant protection and intensive manual labor, we were able to see healthy grapes ripening. We started the autumn wine harvest in mid-September with the Pinot Noir harvest and ended the harvest on 21 October with the harvest of the last Riesling grapes at Elisenburg. At 45 hl/ha, the harvest volume is well below average and the quality level peaked in the estate wine and Kabinett range. There will only be a few late and Auslese wines. In all the quality is very high. The first wines fermented, showing crystal-clear fruit, rich extract and lively fruit acidity. 2024 is a vintage that will certainly bring drinking pleasure and allow comparisons with 2004, 2008 and 2021.

Another negative in 2024 is the global decline in wine consumption. Young people in particular are turning more frequently to alcoholic mixed drinks. Sales of non-alcoholic wines are increasing, however the quality level still leaves something to be desired. We on the Moselle have the privilege of producing naturally low-alcohol wines anyway. Raciness, fruit and wholesomeness are our trump cards in the tough international competition. That's why our sales remain strong, year after year.

We wish you and your families a happy festive holiday season and a healthy, peaceful New Year 2025.

Yours



(Dr. Dirk Richter)



(Constantin Richter)

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