



DR. LOOSEN

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## Germany's challenging 2013 vintage — "The fastest harvest ever!"

*Harvest notes from Ernst Loosen, owner of Dr. Loosen & Villa Wolf*

BERNKASTEL/MOSEL, GERMANY — The dust is finally starting to settle after the chaotic frenzy of the 2013 harvest. It was one of the most frantic vintages ever, thanks to unwelcome wet weather, and required the largest picking crew we've ever assembled. In order to beat the rains we had all hands on deck. Even the office staff, along with the entire bottling team, were enlisted to help out. In addition, we brought in the harvest crew from our friends at Weingut Fritz Haag, once they had finished up in Brauneberg. At times we must have had 60 or 70 people out in the vineyards, but amid all the confusion, no one could really keep track.



*Beautifully ripe Riesling grapes from the 2013 harvest.*

The 2013 growing season was unusual and challenging the whole year through. It started with a long, cold winter that delayed vine development. Warmer spring weather finally arrived in mid-April, and the vines showed their first leaves at the beginning of May. More cool, wet weather led to a late flowering at the end of June. But just as things started to get going, we were hit with a fierce hailstorm that hindered the development of the grapes. In summer we had relatively good weather conditions, which brought on explosive growth and the vines began to catch up. At the end of a very warm August, we thought we were in much better position for a normal, abundant harvest than we had been at that same point in 2012. But then we were pounded by torrential rains in late September and early October, which enabled an onslaught of botrytis.

We began the harvest in the second week of October. Right from the start we had to very strictly select the healthy grapes from those affected by the rapidly developing botrytis. Because we had to pick so quickly to get everything in before it totally succumbed to the Noble Rot, acidity levels remained rather high. Ripeness was quite good, however, so we ended up with a sort of Franken-vintage that combined the monstrously high acidity of 2010 with the freakish amount of botrytis in 2006. The yields were quite low, as in 2010, with some parcels coming in 30 to 40 percent less than normal.

In spite of all these weather challenges and the small production that resulted, we are quite happy with the quality of the wines, most especially the classic fruity style wines. Every Prädikat was produced, including a precious bit of Trockenbeerenauslese from the Erdener Prälät vineyard. Thanks to the hard work of strict harvest selection, the young wines are clean and bright with a pronounced fruity aroma and the freshening lift of bright acidity. Our new range of old-school dry wines was also produced, but these wines stay on the lees for 12 to 24 months, so it will be some time before we see how the extended maturation time helps the wines find their balance with the elevated acidities.

It was definitely a challenging harvest, but the energy we put into it produced wines with an enervating verve and vivacity. The excellent ripeness and brilliant acidity gives the wines a liveliness that will keep them fresh and vibrant for many years.

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