



VILLA WOLF

*Ernst Loosen*

April 2020

## Hot stuff! The 2019 Harvest in the Pfalz

*A dry growing season yields a small but intensely aromatic vintage*



*Beautifully ripe clusters of Riesling hanging in the Wachenheimer Goldbächel vineyard at Villa Wolf*

WACHENHEIM/WEINSTRASSE, GERMANY —

The 2019 growing season presented some challenges because of capricious weather, but the end result was a vintage that fits our winemaking approach perfectly. The wines combine jubilant fruit aromas with a dense texture, moderate alcohol and beautifully balanced acidity. It reminds us of 2008, another favorite vintage.

The year 2019 began rather warm and dry in the Pfalz region, as the drought conditions of 2018 persisted. But we were reassured by a cool spring, which restrained vine growth, leading to a normal bud break and a healthy flowering. This was a most-welcome development following the very early year we had in 2018. Summer was characterized by erratic weather, with heat waves up to 40°C (104°F) alternating with more moderate periods. The heat spikes brought on the risk of sunburn, but cool nights helped retain good acidity and the vines continued their slow growth.

Dry conditions continued into September, causing the abundant fruit set of spring to develop into loose clusters of small, hard-skinned grapes. That meant there would be a smaller yield of juice, but it also reduced the risk of mold and mildew problems in our organically farmed vineyards. (We have been farming the estate vineyards organically since 2012, but embarked on the official three-year process for EU Bio certification in 2017.)

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We began the harvest on Sept. 17, with an early picking for sparkling wine from the Wachenheimer Goldbächel vineyard. In the must we could immediately see that the vintage was blessed with harmonious acidity and intense aroma. We then moved on to our young Pinot Noir vines in Wachenheimer Belz, where the outstanding quality of the vintage was particularly evident. The small, fully ripe Pinot grapes produced a wine with deep color and a ripe tannin structure.

Long-awaited rain finally arrived at the end of September, and you could truly feel nature taking a deep, freshening breath. The rain interrupted the picking for a few days, but we had plenty to do in the cellar before diving in again. Exhausted, but enthused, we finished the harvest on Oct. 17 exactly where we started, with the final picking in the Goldbächel vineyard. Although the yield was low (40% less than last year), we are extremely pleased with the quality of the dense and harmonious 2019s we have in our cellar. We look forward to tasting them with you!

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