

THE 2018 VINTAGE

A SUPERLATIVE YEAR?

Harvest hadn't even kicked off yet and the 2018s were already being celebrated in the media as a legendary vintage. This euphoria was to some extent understandable, given the perfect summer and the wonderful, fully ripe, golden-yellow grapes.

SO DO THE WINES LIVE UP TO THE HYPE?

The new year began in Rheinhessen with a wet and relatively warm January, followed by a cold, wintery February and plentiful precipitation in March.

April then quickly switched into a more summer-like mode and sustained high temperatures brought early bud break by the middle of the month. With good access to water, the vines grew rapidly and we literally had our hands full tying up the young shoots.

Fruit set came with the summery late-May temperatures and proceeded fully by the book. A hailstorm on the last night of May did however have us all holding our breath. The damage was fortunately minimal and we worked hard to restore the vines to proper condition.



AND THEN THE HEAT ARRIVED!

A dry, stable high-pressure system brought enduring sunshine over the months that followed and set the stage in our vineyards. The replenishing rains from earlier in the year now came into play.

Our heavy clayey marl and limestone soils once again proved highly adept at retaining just enough of those much-earlier spring downpours. We were lucky to receive a few storms at just the right times to help the vines make it safely through the high temperatures in late July and August.

Based on the significantly accelerated growth cycle, the fruit achieved full ripeness at the beginning of August, much earlier than normal. By the end we were crossing our fingers that August and September would pass without major rainfall. Our hopes were rewarded with truly picture-perfect grapes!

Harvest kicked off on August 28, the earliest date in the history of our estate. The Pinot family grapes were brought in first, with a focus on ripe fruit aromas, moderate alcohol and respectable acidity levels in the final wine.

Our Riesling harvest began on September 14. Here too the grapes didn't just look good, but also tasted great, with ripe yellow fruits dominant and a hint of tropical fruits as well. We worked right up through October 4, and each day of righteous labor brought outstanding berries to the presses.

The basis for a fantastic vintage was laid in autumn 2018!

Once fermentation was complete, the wines were stored in our deep vaulted cellar, maturing on their lees. We are currently starting to taste the individual barrels and planning our blends. Without question, this vintage has huge potential. Yet as always, we also counsel patience: fine wines need time, often several years.