

NEWS LETTER



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2005 Harvest Preview

Wine-growers in Germany have started harvesting. Although the qualities are of the high standard expected, the grapes are yielding surprisingly little juice.

Generally speaking, 2005 has been a favourable year. The beginning of the year was marked by several weeks of cold weather with both rain and snow. In March the weather changed dramatically. By mid-March daytime temperatures climbed to early Summer levels of 20°C. A period of mild weather with frequent rainfall ensued. This culminated in the flooding of the Treasury at Kloster Eberbach on 26th April 2005.

On 2nd May, 2005 Potsdam registered temperatures of 32.5° C, the hottest second day in May ever recorded since the existence of accurate weather statistics in Germany! A short spell of cooler weather followed. But from the end of May until the beginning of July Germany enjoyed beautiful Summer weather with high temperatures and low precipitation. The vines developed well. However within a very short space of time, the lack of precipitation almost led to symptoms of stress in very dry areas. The level of rainfall was insufficient.

Vegetation reached maturity approximately two weeks earlier than usual. The grapes were healthy, not too big and the must weight continued to increase. This progression was hindered somewhat by a change of weather in the latter half of July. At long last it started raining.. However, whereas the level of rainfall in certain drier areas was ideal for the further development of the grapes, in other regions it was far too high. At the end of July storms incurred great damage in the Loreley valley and brought heavy rainfall to the southern parts of Baden around Freiburg.

On the whole, the majority of the wine-growers in Germany will consider 2005 as having been a dry year. Despite the rainfall during end of July and August, the levels of precipitation ever since have been well below average.

Wine-growers have been harvesting early varieties since mid-September. The qualities are high. Currently it seems likely that wines of all qualities can be produced. Unfortunately the period of warm, wet weather in the latter half of September has resulted in fungal growth. Consequently, the grapes have to be harvested with much greater care and precision, particularly in the warmer, more southern wine-growing regions such as Baden, Pfalz and South of Rheinhessen.

Many wine-growers have been taken aback by the relatively low yield attained during the first few days of harvesting. Originally it was anticipated that the yield would be slightly less than usual. However these estimates have now been revised. Having analysed the results of the last two weeks, it appears that in certain regions the yield could be as much as 20% less than the long-term average.

If this situation persists, 2005 will be the third year in a row in with yields below average and the fifth consecutive year with qualities of an above-average to high standard.

As a result, minor price adjustments may have to be made. However it's early days yet.