

## 2007 Harvest Preview

As customary for this time of year, we would like to give you a brief summary of how this wine season has been so far and an indication of what we expect the fruits of this harvest will turn out to be.

The year began with a very warm January, which in fact was the warmest recorded since 1901. This warm weather was accompanied by some very stormy days and little precipitation. Towards the end of January we had a small bout of winter weather which brought precipitation to some wine-growing regions. However, on the whole, January was a very dry month.

February was generally a warm month and every region benefited from sufficient rainfall. Although when spring officially started most areas had more snowfall than throughout the entire winter. There was virtually no ground frost; coupled with the relatively high number of hours of sunshine, these weather conditions resulted in the vines developing unusually early.

April was yet another month in which records were broken. This April had the most hours of sunshine of any April since 1901 and the temperatures were between 3 and 6 degrees Celsius above average. Naturally the vines adapted to the warm climate accordingly and started shooting around the 10th of April. To cap it all, there was very little rainfall – only about 16% of the usual levels.

The temperatures throughout the summer could not match those of April. The cooler weather was accompanied by a lot of rain. July was mainly cold and wet and many wine-growers feared that this year's vintage would be a repeat of the 2006. Fortunately only few grapes suffered damage as a result of the continually wet weather.

August was variable with both a few, very nice summer days and some very heavy rainfall. Some wine estates in the Pfalz and Rheinhessen started harvesting grapes for "Federweißer" wine (young wine) on the 8th of August. This was the earliest harvest begin we have seen for decades.

September has been marked by a sense of eager anticipation and tension as to how the imminent harvest and consequently the new vintage will be. Unfortunately cases of rotting have been reported in Baden and Franken; luckily this seems to be restricted to only a few lots.

Many producers have already started harvesting the early grape varieties such as Müller-Thurgau or the Frühburgunder as well as Spätburgunder. Generally speaking the wine-growers are happy with the sugar levels of the grapes, which already surpass those of 2006.

The last week brought rain to some regions. Franken in particular was hit by two days of hard rain on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 07. Schloss Vollrads measured 20 l/m<sup>2</sup> on Thursday. While in Franken, Rheinhessen and Pfalz the vineyards are as populated as the Oktoberfest in Munich winemakers in Rheingau and Mosel still hesitate to pick Riesling. The last weeks and days did not bring to much increase of sugar levels so that many winemakers focused on a negative (green) harvest.

The target of green harvest is to get negatively botrytis infected grapes out of the vineyards to avoid healthy grapes get infected too. Looking at the vines of several producers regularly we can report that the Riesling grapes look great and healthy. With today 1<sup>st</sup> October the main harvest at Vollrads will only start while at Bassermann-Jordan at least one Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA) is already in the fermentation tank.

Yesterday at the 1. Lage presentation at Kloster Eberbach many wine makers had a very positive prospective about this vintage. In contrast to 2006 the work can be done slowly and concentrated and will continue for several weeks. Just to remember, last year the entire harvest was done more or less within 3 weeks. The weather forecast for next week says sunny and mainly dry weather with occasional rain. Not bad at all!

As many cellars are absolutely empty and the current vintage is virtually sold-out, the quantity of grapes in the vineyards have not been reduced as much as in previous years. We expect the quantities harvested to be equal to, or even slightly higher than that of the long-term average.

At this point in time it is difficult to foresee how the prices will develop. However, the general opinion is that there will not be any price increases this year. On the whole, we are expecting a good to very good vintage, both in quantity and quality.

Sincerely yours

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