

4-2009

## 2009 Harvest Preview

At the beginning of 2009 it was much colder than many other years in the last decade. On New Year's Eve you had to be very warmly dressed to enjoy the fireworks. On Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> of January the temperature in Wiesbaden was -12.2°C. We had not experienced such low temperatures in this region for a very long time.

The temperature did not rise above 5°C until mid-February. In calendar week 9 the temperature very briefly even rose to a very pleasant 15°C. Dull, cold and wet weather prevailed until the end of March.

In April the situation improved rapidly. During the Easter weekend (the 12th of April) we had lovely weather and temperatures of 20°C. The weather continued to be friendly and dry with average temperatures of 15°C. This tendency to warmer weather prevailed throughout May and we had a foretaste of summer with temperatures often in excess of 25°C, plenty of sunshine and only the occasional shower. At this time the vegetation was already two weeks ahead of time and flowering began.

The beginning of June was marked by a downturn. Temperatures fell and the level of rainfall increased. Around the 8<sup>th</sup> of June several areas in the Rhein, Nahe and Mosel regions were hit by hailstorms. Luckily the hail did not incur any serious damage. During the second half of June the weather improved and we had several really beautiful days.

However, the short period of bad weather had a detrimental effect on the flowering of the vines and consequently this year's yield. Due to the increased rainfall during the flowering period, many of the blossoms could not be pollinated and were therefore shed by the vines. This resulted in a natural reduction in yield and is generally called "reduced fruit set".

In most parts of Germany the weather conditions during the rest of the summer progressed well with normal temperatures and sufficient rainfall for this time of year. Following a relatively wet July, we had a lot of sunshine throughout August and the conditions peaked in a short but intensive heat wave with temperatures of 35°C and above. At the end of August and the beginning of September the temperatures were back to normal. Particularly at night it was relatively cool and during the day it was warm and sunny.

As a result of this perfect autumn weather we can be very optimistic about the main picking season here in Germany. The grapes in the vineyards are very healthy and already taste delicious.

On the whole picking began in mid-August, which is relatively early. The Grauburgunder, Weißburgunder and Spätburgunder grape varieties which have nearly all been harvested are of a very promising quality. We expect yet another vintage of elegant wines with a good level of acidity, which on the whole will be milder than those of the 2008 vintage. Especially the Riesling grapes profit tremendously from the current stable weather conditions.

We expect a lower harvest volume than usual which can be attributed to the reduced fruit set and damage incurred by hail and frost (in Sachsen). Depending on the region and the grape variety the reduction in yield could be as much as 10%.

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