

"Nur den Mut nicht sinken lassen"

(Just don't let your courage sink)

This sentence from my great-grandfather has raised many a drooping head over the years. We need confidence and courage in view of the limitations in many areas of our normal life. We share the concerns of our friends and companions who are currently unable to pursue their jobs due to the restrictions, who are faced with big question marks and uncertain prospects. These are great hardships, but we don't want to forget that they have the goal of protecting our families and friends so that we can get through this time healthy and, in retrospect, maybe even become stronger together.

We as winemakers are fortunate that our profession draws us outside. That we don't live in the metropolitan areas of society, but in the countryside. That by postponing tastings, trade shows and business trips, we had a lot of time to be in the vineyard. And so the bonding to the vines was even closer than usual, the relationship even stronger, and the more we are outside, the more firmly we can decide what to do in order to finally harvest the most beautiful little grapes. Our biodynamic work in the vineyard is a process that develops and prospers from year to year. The care of the soil with our compost and the sowing of greening mixtures bring the earth to life, strengthen the coexistence of vine and terroir, and over time individual small ecosystems emerge that can express themselves more and more clearly and concisely. We see this when we observe the plants, insects, animals and birds that live there, but we can also taste it when we taste the wines from the different places. And most importantly: living soils are better able to store water and to release it again evenly, which was particularly important in the last three years, when rain was rare in summer.

The reading of a vintage

2020 was the third year in a row that it was very dry during the summer. In this regard, we got to know new facets of our vineyards. We have clearly seen where there are water veins underground that are reached from the roots of the old vines. We have also seen where the soil can store more water, that is available to the plants, or where they are more permeable, and therefore there are more problems with drought. It was particularly important to observe and respond to these differences. Many questions arose from this: How do we deal with the cover crop between the vines? - Do we keep it trimmed short so that it doesn't even think about using water? - Or does the constant mowing stimulate even greater water consumption because the plants are constantly struggling to survive and therefore want to grow until they bloom? Could all grown up greenery lie on the floor like a shady blanket and cool it, so that overall less water is used? - Does that bring calm to growth? And what about the leaves that we usually plucked from around the grapes in long and laborious manual work so that they are better ventilated and mushrooms have a harder time? - We have reconsidered all the different steps that we carry out on the vines over the course of the year, with a lot of empathy for the plants and taking into account the respective location factors. That actually applies every year, but sometimes we become particularly aware of it. Every careful hand that touches the vine transmits quality - that is our conviction. Over the years that we have now worked with this sensitivity, the growth behavior of the vines has noticeably changed, which also affects the development of ripening. Often our grapes ripen a little earlier, but have developed a different ripeness balance, with luminescent, explosive aromas and juicy freshness with relatively low sugar content. It is a harmonious ripening - without stress - that we have been able to clearly observe over the past few years and that we like very much, because our wines are full of lively intensity and at the same time delicate, elegant and prancing.

The Picking

This year we started the harvest on August 27th and 28th, with the plots for our sparkling wine - almost as early as in 2018. Sparkling wine is a great topic and we really enjoy it. The point is to achieve flavor maturity with low alcohol, so that the finished sparkling wine, to which additional sugar is usually added during the second fermentation, does not become too clumsy. In addition to Riesling, we have three small plots with Pinot Blanc, Auxerrois and Pinot Noir, which become a beautiful *Cuvée Blanc* and *Blanc de Noir*. Just like with our wines, we also feel great importance to time and calm in the elevage of sparkling wine, so that we will only be able to enjoy the results from 2020 together in a few years. The grapes were shining and so was the sun, so we can look forward to a very nice result.

A good week later we continued with the Pinot Noir from our Klosterberg and Frührenberg vineyards. The conditions were picture perfect, although it was still quite warm during the day and we picked mainly in the cooler morning hours. The little red grapes conjured up explosive aroma fireworks on the tongue, so that we knew that the time was perfect. About two thirds of the grapes were carefully destemmed by hand and the rest were left as whole clusters. After 18 days on the mash, they were then pressed and put in barriques, where they will now mature for a year. They already show an aromatic depth that reminds me a little of the powerful 2015 vintage, but they have a slightly more filigree figure. We love the delicacy and the silky elegance that is inherent in Pinot Noir and look forward to the coming months, in which we will accompany its development.

The Riesling harvest was also a gift this year. The ripeness was very balanced and the grapes were beautifully juicy, very healthy with firm skins. Especially in plots that are crossed by groundwater veins from the Taunus Mountains, where the extensive forest collects rain that flows underground to the Rhine, the grapes have been wonderful. The roots of our old vines are deep enough to reach these water veins. We used the stable weather and the good health of the grapes for a precise first step of picking, during which we selectively picked about half of the grapes. Only perfect little bunches that were very healthy and loosely remained to the vines, but the grapes from the pre-picking were also of really fantastic quality. They were selected uncompromisingly and precisely and tasted downright electrifying, perfect conditions for the Jacobus.

After the first round of picking, we were able to follow the development of the grapes precisely and determine the time of the final harvest. At sunrise on each of the days in mid-September, we were in the vineyard and brought home our best plots. There were moments with a magical atmosphere, one highlight after the other. The grapes carried the energy of the whole summer to the tongue. Whoever tried it knew immediately that it would be a wonderful vintage.

If we go into the cellar now, most of the barrels are still bubbling softly, whispering the gentle melody of the new vintage. It's the most intimate and cozy place in the world. The individual personalities of the barrels will noticeably unfold in the coming weeks and months. Accompanying them on this path is a fantastic journey together every year.