

Peter Jakob Kühn Vineyard

Oestrich / Rheingau

ANNUAL REVIEW 2019

The feeling you get when you are at the end of a grape harvest and have just picked the final grapes after four weeks of continuous work is rather difficult to put into words.

It was a harvest which first seemed quite unremarkable, tantalising and playful, but then revealed its true nature a little more each day and turned into a real challenge.

A harvest which began in picturesque, late summer weather conditions on 13th September when we brought home the first grapes for our sparkling base wine and then for the Pinot Noir red wines.

A harvest which was hit by a fair bit of rain in early October – ironically caused by the low-pressure area “Peter”.

A harvest which was highly demanding in terms of accuracy and selection intensity, which exacted our perseverance and willpower.

Many autumn reports rave about the romantic magic arising during the grape harvest. However, there was little room for autumn romance this year. For me, the kernel of truth behind the beauty and true romance of the 2019 vintage lies in the fact that the challenge was so difficult, that the effort was so tremendous. The task helped us grow together. The beauty was closed to us and had to be won with a great deal of commitment and diligence.

As a result, 2019 has become a splendid vintage. Crystalline and profound, full of tension and lively vibrations. We are already very much looking forward to tasting these wines with you soon.

Yet only portraying the romantic scenes of the harvest would not do justice to the people who helped us



win this quality and clarity, this victory. A victory that makes us proud – a game which has demanded everything from us and on which we can look back with great pleasure, as we have once again given everything.

Budding and Flowering

The vines budded in mid-April which was once again relatively early but because May was fairly cool, they continued to grow more slowly. They began to flower around the 10th of June. This was about three weeks later than the record-breaking year of 2018, but still a week earlier than the long-term average.

Similarly to 2018, we once again saw a gentle natural coulure. This is when the vine sheds individual berries, causing the structure of the bunch to become lighter and better ventilated, which is important for healthy growth and promoting ripeness.

We support this effect by pruning excess growth at very specific moments in the growth process. This puts the vine under slight stress, thereby increasing the coulure.

In mid-April, we sowed over 40 different flowers and herbs in every other row, in order to promote flora and fauna diversity in the vineyard and establish and maintain biodiverse life in our soil. At the time when the vines flowered, the revegetation had grown and was competing with the vines for the nutrients. This is another factor which promotes a lighter vine structure and which we deliberately harnessed.

An unusual observation this year was that the young bunches were very hesitant about “cleaning” themselves after flowering. What this means is that the blossom remnants were not properly washed out of the bunch by wind or rain but hung on the panicles for quite a long time. It is difficult to say what caused this and it initially appears to be harmless. However, it might in part explain the fragility of the grapes’ skin later in autumn, as dead plant parts can certainly lead to infection, regardless of the growth stage. They attract fungi and bacteria whose natural role is to decompose dead plant parts. The blossom remnants may have been the source of latent diseases which weakened the bunch from the inside.



Summer

The temperatures here in Oestrich fluctuated continuously throughout the whole of 2019. Warm and cold alternated constantly and these fluctuations continued during the summer months.

At the end of July, the temperature then rose to over 40°C – a real heat shock. The vines were not prepared for these temperatures. They are similar to us humans: If we are out in the blazing sun too early, too soon and for too long, we burn. We also require a certain acclimatisation or resistance period before becoming accustomed to the sun. After this period, we are able to tolerate it better.

The vines in our oldest vineyards which are planted in very narrow rows are better at shading each other, with the result that they suffered less from the hot temperatures. A great advantage.

Vines are also able to cool down by transpiring – they “sweat”, thereby lowering the surface temperature on their leaves and grapes. The water reserves in the soil were, however, relatively low, as it had not rained very much in the winter and spring. Thus, the vines were not able to transpire sufficiently to compensate for the high temperatures, which is why they were sunburned.

The Harvest

We began harvesting on 13th September. To begin with, we had beautiful late summer weather. Sunny days and crisp cold nights. Quite similar to 2018, aside from the fact that it was about two weeks later. In the first few days, we harvested grapes for our sparkling base wines, then our two small Pinot Noir plots.





The Pinot Noirs were beautiful. Perfectly healthy grapes with intensive and clear aromas. Vinification with around 70 percent destemmed by hand and 30 percent whole grapes. Gentle extraction by means of reassembly during the natural fermentation process. Strained after 18 days and drawn into the barrels using fall pressure.

After the Pinot Noirs, we started on the selective preliminary harvest of the Riesling grapes on 21st September and the main harvest on 25th September. All of the grapes were purely hand-picked.

The Riesling grapes displayed dazzling aromas. Very clear and light notes. The harvest became more difficult when the weather turned in early October and brought the low-pressure area "Peter". The grapes were not very resilient this year. The gruelling summer with its heat and low precipitation had left its mark. The grape skins were relatively fragile. As the time pressure grew, the selection effort increased exponentially. Every hand and every eye had to work fast and accurately. The harvest became a true challenge for every single one of us. It became a lesson in perseverance and consistency.

The vintage gave us nothing for free, but our extensive commitment allowed us to elicit fantastic musts from it. The ripeness parameter balance was around 88 ° Oechsle and 9.5 g/l acidity at astonishingly low pH values, often below 3.00.

The fermentation is proceeding very autonomously. Some barrels are already dry, most are currently in the final phase of alcoholic fermentation and have about 10 - 20 g/l residual sugar remaining. Most should be ready by Christmas.

The aromas of the young wines are delightfully playful. They are very subtly defined and have vibrant dynamics, profound aromas and fresh, light fruit.

2019, too, is turning into a vintage with its very own story to tell. And we look forward to hearing it and sharing it with you.

Very warm greetings from the
Kühn Family, Peter Bernhard Kühn