



## Our year 2021

*"Even out of stones thrown in your path, you can build something beautiful."*

The vines, covered with frozen frost, stand like sculptures in the dense morning mist. On an early morning walk through the district, wrapped in a thick jacket with scarf and cap, you walk alone in the open countryside, and yet you feel safe, have time to review the past year in your thoughts, and at the same time feel the desire to set out for the coming year growing.

Last year, nature surprised us - once again. The weather conditions were rather cool and damp and the sunshine hours were rare compared to the three previous years. As a result, the plants also came out of hibernation later. A small deceleration after the three "turbo years" before.

In the period from the end of March to the end of April, we supplied our soils with fresh compost to promote the humus content and to strengthen the living exchange between vine and soil. This is because good compost primarily contains many beneficial microbes and bacteria that live in symbiosis with the vine and are elemental to the circulation of mineral nutrients so that the vines can find healthy, balanced and, in a sense, self-determined growth. - The basis for independent, origin taste.

Budding began in early May and proceeded very cautiously. We had about four weeks to "break out". This involves walking through the vineyards and removing all those budding buds that are too close together. The goal here is to have an airy wall of foliage where the growing shoots do not interfere with each other and where compaction can cause disease.

Flowering began in mid-June at Saint Nicholas, a good three weeks later than the previous year. The weather had changed little. It remained changeable, but became somewhat warmer. The vines responded to the rising temperatures with a breathtaking speed of growth: they virtually shot up from the dormant budding stage to the top wire station. During these weeks, we were literally outside around the clock to "staple" the shoots, i.e. to straighten them and guide them upwards in an orderly fashion in the wire frame. At the same time, the constantly changing weather conditions made for high tension in plant protection.

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Despite our great efforts, we could already see in the summer that we would have to make concessions to nature this year and that the vintage would be rather small in terms of quantity.

It was not until the end of July that the situation eased somewhat. However, a real summer did not arrive at our place. The year had started cool and remained so. We felt a bit out of time, the year almost reminiscent of the 1980s, when one still had to "fight" regularly for the balanced ripeness of the grapes. After vintages in which all efforts had been aimed rather at decelerating ripeness, an unusual situation. But above all, it was also an absolutely exciting task. A vintage with a very independent profile emerged, which had to be helped to develop with a great deal of tact. And from today's perspective, as the wines lie in their barrels and are still slowly finishing their fermentation, we can already say that the work in the vineyard during the year and especially during the harvest was once again worthwhile.

We started harvesting the grapes for our base sparkling wines on September 16. This is a subject that has become very dear to us and requires a great deal of sensitivity. The main thing is to achieve a beautiful harmony of acidity, freshness and full aroma at low Oechsle degrees. The optimal harvest time is very crucial in this regard. Just as with our wines, we also attach great importance to time and a long ripening period for our sparkling wines. Especially the time after the second fermentation in the bottle gives our sparkling wines their fine, creamy and puristic taste. So we have to be a little patient until we can taste the results, but we are already waiting for this moment full of excitement and anticipation.

About a week after the start of the harvest, we brought home our Pinot Noir grapes from our Früherenberg and Klosterberg sites. The temperatures were pleasantly warm and the weather dry. The grapes were thus able to finish ripening optimally and had an intense and deep aroma. As with the Rieslings, our goal is for the red wines to be very precise and elegant, to develop their own character and show their terroir.

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The grapes, after a strictly selective hand harvest, are taken in hand and sorted one more time in the winery, then destemmed by hand. Fermentation takes place spontaneously on the open mash for two weeks. The young red wine is then gently pressed and placed in barriques, where it is now allowed to mature for over a year. We are excited to see how these young wines will develop and look forward to accompanying them on their journey.

Especially with the Riesling we had to fight for our constant high quality this year. The changeable, unsettled weather during the summer months had taken its toll and reduced the number of grapes by about a third. The remaining grapes had a very nice, loose structure, with rather thin skins. They were fine-boned, delicate beads and their aroma was downright electrifying. The cool nights of September and October were kind to the acidity, which helped shape the energetic character of the vintage. To take full advantage of the slow development of the aromatics of the grapes, a pre-harvest of the vineyards was again very important this year. We left only the immaculate grapes hanging on the vine, and selectively harvested all other grapes. In order to take this step and cope with the prevailing conditions, we increased the size of our harvest team and were grateful for every helping hand.

Throughout the harvest, we kept asking ourselves if the grape in our hands was going to be a part of the later wine. With each grape, this decision was made. If it was answered in the affirmative, the grape went into the bucket. We had to take a lot of time, and we wanted to take that time. The quantity we harvested is the smallest for many years, but the quality is a very special one. It carries the DNA of the vineyard, of the year - with all its twists and turns - , and above all the DNA of every individual who helped us bring this wonderful vintage home to us.

We look forward to the further development of the wines and to tasting them together with you and yours soon. We look forward to what lies ahead together and will continue to turn over every stone and help the upcoming vintage to blossom.

With best regards from Oestrich,

Your family Kühn

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