

## 1991 Vintage Overview

The 1991 vintage year was one of surprises and extremes. The winter, as has been for the past several years, was very dry. Vegetation got an early start which resulted in severe frost damage in the night of April 20/21 when temperatures reached minus 7<sup>c</sup> (19° F). Losses were especially severe on the Saar and Ruwer where over 50% of the Riesling crop was lost. In the best sites losses reached 70%. With the exception of Rheinhessen, the Rhine region was spared. In Franconia the frost ruined 30% of the Silvaner crop, in Württemberg the Lemberger, Trollinger and Riesling suffered big losses and in Baden frost damage was 25% across the board. The cool weather prevailed through May and June, which delayed flowering until early July. Though late, flowering was effortless and fast with no detectable losses due to coulure (verrieseln).

With the cool temperatures in April, May and June, vegetation had fallen behind. Help came in July with very hot temperatures and some long awaited rainfall during the middle and end of the month. It stayed hot and almost completely dry in August. During this heat wave Bernkastel counted 31 days with temperatures over 30° C (86° F). Rain finally came in the second week in September. Without it the vintage would have been in deep trouble. The drought conditions in 1991 were much more severe than in 1990 (total rainfall in 1990 was 415 mm vs. 250 mm in 1991) and retarded the 1991 vintage greatly. Vineyards with shallow, light soils suffered more than vineyards with good water maintenance i.e. heavier and deeper soils. With damage to and resultant lower yields to the former, the latter often bloated and resulted in monster yields. Some properties in the Rheingau reported yields in excess of 150 hl/ha. Optimum harvest conditions were in the week and up to October 27. On the Saar and Ruwer with incredibly low yield some superb Spätlese including some Ausleses were made. Quality there is judged better than 1988. The middle Mosel was primarily a QbA and Kabinett vintage with small quantities of Spätlese. Limited quantities of Ausleses even some BA's and TBA's were also produced. The night of December 10/11 brought some great Eisweins. 1991 is a better than expected vintage but not up to the previous three vintages with exception of the wines from the Ruwer and Saar. But there are pockets with wines that will surprise many. One particular characteristic of the 1991 vintage is that the musts are very slow fermenting and are very difficult to get completely dry.

## **Estates by Region**

### **Mosel-Saar-Ruwer**

#### **Dr. Loosen**

Yield was about 60 hl/ha with 42% QbA and 58% QmP wines. The QmP wines break down to 28.5% Kabinett, 23.7% Spätlese, 4.3% Auslese and 1.3% BA, TBA, and Eiswein. The BA is in the Bernkasteler Lay, the TBA in the Wehlener Sonnenuhr and a first ever Eiswein in the Prälät on December 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>. First week of the harvest was mostly QbA whereas the second week the harvest was mostly QmP wines. No 1991 wines were tasted.

#### **Mönchhof**

1991 was an average harvest for the Mönchhof. Yield was 80hl/ha with 50% QbA, 40% Kabinett and 10% Spätlese. Must weights ranged from 60 - 86 Öchsle with must acids at very good levels from 9.5 gm/lit. to 11 gm/lit. The acids were ripe, i.e. lots of tartaric. The Kabinett wines showed bright fruit, good balance with peach and tropical fruit flavors.

#### **J.J. Prüm**

1991 was not up to the previous three harvests at J.J. Prüm. Yield was below 60 hl/ha with must weights up to 82 Öchsle. It was primarily a QbA and Kabinett vintage. Acid levels were uniformly good, to 12 gm/liter before the rain and 10 gm/liter after the rain with very high proportion of tartaric. No 1991s tasted.

#### **Dr. F. Weins-Prüm**

Very good wines in 1991. Yield was 70 hl/ha in the middle Mosel properties and only about 30 hl/ha in Waldrach. Must weights ranged from 72 to 89 Öchsle with a predicate average of close to 80 Öchsle. Must acids again were high, close to 11 gm/lit. with 75% tartaric. The wines from barrel were sappy with clean balanced apples and peaches fruit.

#### **Wwe. Dr. H. Thanisch**

An average harvest with a yield of nearly 70 hl/ha. About half QbA and half QmP wines. The latter mostly Kabinett, with small quantities of Spätlese in the Doctor and possibly an Auslese in the same site. The 1991's showed bright fruit, purity of flavors and a vibrancy that suggested good acid structure.

#### **Fritz Haag**

An average harvest in terms of must weight. Here as with most of the wines tasted we feel all that sunshine in July and August will eventually show in these wines. Yield was just shy of 60 hl/ha. 60% of the harvest was QbA from 63 to 75 Öchsle then chaptalized to 88 Öchsle. 30% Kabinett (75 to 79 Öchsle) and 10% Spätlese. Through careful selection 150 lit. of LGKA was harvested at 118 Öchsle. Sugarfree extracts are very high. The wines showed great purity and reminded of honeysuckle and apples with great balance. Mandelgraben QbA is 50% Kerner, &127;\_&127;40% Müller-Thurgau and 10% Riesling.

### **Reinhold Haart**

About 70 hl/ha were harvested with 60% QbA, 25% Kabinett, 12% Spätlese and 3% Auslese. QbA's from 65 to 73 Öchsle were chaptalized to between 85 and 88 Öchsle for Estate Riesling and Piesporter Goldtröpfchen QbA. Must acids from 11.5 gm/lit. to 12.5 gm/lit. Finished wines range from 9.0 gm/lit. to 9.7 gm/lit. with good amounts of tartaric and good extract. The wines showed bright and pure fruit. There is a stunning GKA from the Goldtröpfchen harvested at 115 Öchsle.

### **Milz - Laurentiushof**

Average harvest with yield at 68hl/ha. It breaks down to 60% QbA wines, 35% Kabinett and 5% Spätlese. Must acids ranged from 11 gm/liter to 13 gm/liter and 9 gm/liter to 10 gm/liter total acid in the finished wines. Again very high proportion of tartaric acid. The wines here showed bright fruit, apples, white peaches and spice.

### **Karthäuserhof**

Yield of 35 hl/ha was even lower than 1990. 30% of the harvest was QbA, 50% Kabinett, 18% Spätlese and 2% Auslese. Very high proportion of tartaric acid, with total acids ranging from 9 gm/lit. to 10 gm/lit. in the finished wine. Christoph compares the quality with his 1988's. The 1991 wines tasted are very typical Ruwer wines, very compact, sappy with apples and white peaches fruit and aggressive acids.

### **Piedmont**

Only 30 hl/ha were harvested which resulted in 6 Fuder QbA, 3 Fuder Kabinett and 1 Fuder Spätlese with must weights from 74 to 86 Öchsle. Finished acids are over 9 gm/liter with almost 90% tartaric. Must weights ranged from 74 to 86 Öchsle. Both the Kabinett and Spätlese are wonderful Saar Rieslings with apple and pear fruit and very sappy. These are better than either the '88 or '89 Kabinett and Spätleses.

### **von Hövel**

Yield was 40 hl/ha with a harvest breakdown of 25% QbA, 35% Kabinett, and 40% Spätlese. All the Spätleses are declassified Ausleses. There may be a small quantity of Auslese offered. Eberhard thinks that the '91 Balduin will be better than the 1990 and he prefers the '91 Spätlese to the '88. Finished acids are about 9.5 gm/lit. The wines have fine, bright fruit. They're alive, clean and show great balance.

### **Egon Müller-Scharzhof / Le Gallais**

Only 20 hl/ha were harvested with 1/3 Kabinett, 1/3 Spätlese and 1/3 Auslese. Acid structure very good, in the must over 10 gm/lit. with high tartaric content. Eiswein was produced December 10 to 11. Both Egon Sr. and Egon Jr. rate the vintage ahead of the 1988 harvest. No 1991s were tasted.

### **Dr. Fischer**

In Ockfen the yield was 50 hl/ha, in Wawern only 30 hl/ha. The harvest breaks down to 20% QbA, 40% Kabinett, 30% Spätlese and 10% Auslese. Must weights ranged in Ockfen to 90 Öchsle and in Wawern to 100 Öchsle. The wines have good, ripe acids and the Ockfener Kabinett and Spätlese showed best from the 91's tasted. Most of the Ausleses were difficult to taste, they all had significant amounts of botrytis. Here, the vintage looks better than 1988. Eiswein was produced on December 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Zilliken**

Yield was 37 hl/ha with an average must weight of 77 Öchsle. Harvest breaks down to 10% QbA, 60% Kabinett and 30% Spätlese with small quantities of Auslese. Here again the wines have very good acid structure, great fruit intensity and sappy. The Spätleses are especially fine. Hanno Zilliken compares the quality of the 1991 wines to the wines from the 1988 vintage. On December 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> a TBA quality Eiswein was harvested.

### **Schloss Saarstein**

Harvest started 10/14 and was completed 10/26/91. Must weights from 72 Öchsle to 76 Öchsle were chaptalized to 88 Öchsle for the Estate Riesling. There were 15 Fuders of QbA, 13 Fuders of Kabinett, 1 Fuder of Spätlese (which will be finished dry), 1 Fuder of Auslese and about 300 liters of a fabulous Auslese Goldcap at 115 Öchsle that was even finer, when compared, than the great 1990 GKA. On December 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> Eiswein was harvested.

### **Bert Simon**

Only 25 hl/ha was harvested with 10% QbA, 70% Kabinett and 20% Spätlese. The acids are ripe (lots of tartaric) and are almost 10 gm/lit. in the finished wines. Very bright, pure fruit in the new wines tasted. We're very anxious about the Bert Simon '91s. It is the very first vintage with Thomas Haag (Wilhelm "Fritz" Haag's son) as cellar master.

## **Rheingau**

### **Franz Künstler**

The harvest yielded 75 hl/ha. Pinot Noir was 100% Kabinett and was chaptalized to be offered as QbA only. Breakdown for whites (100% Riesling) is 38% QbA, 25% Kabinett, 34.5% Spätlese and 2.5% Auslese. Acid structure is very good with the near finished wines still 9 gm/liter to 10 gm/liter total acidity with 65% tartaric. Extracts are 2.5 gm/liter higher than in 1990. Gunter Künstler at this time compares the 1991's to the 1975's and rates them ahead of the 1989s. Of the 1991 wines tasted at the lower quality levels there is lively bright white peaches fruit, the Spätleses are quite rich with the Ausleses showing significant botrytis with apricot fruit.

### **von Simmern**

Yield was 10% below the allowable maximum. The harvest breaks down to 52% QbA (65 - 77 Öchsle), 39% Kabinett (78 - 86 Öchsle), 8% Spätlese (88 - 91 Öchsle) and 1% higher predicate (100 - 125 Öchsle). Auslesen were produced in the Hattenheimer Mannberg, Hattenheimer Nussbrunnen and Erbacher Marcobrunn; the latter also produced the only BA of the vintage. Sugarfree extract values were average with total acidity in the finished wines (8 gm/liter to 11 gm/liter) on the high side. No 1991s were tasted.

### **August Eser**

High yield of 90 hl/ha with 43% QbA and 57% QmP wines; the latter breaks down to 40% Kabinett and 11% Spätlese. The acids are ripe and range in the finished wines from 9.5 gm/liter to 10 gm/liter. The young wines have ripe, bright fruit and are very racy and spicy.

### **Georg Breuer**

Harvest yielded close to 70 hl/ha with 36% QbA, 33% Kabinett, 23% Spätlese, 7% Auslese and 1% BA. Must weights arranged from 67 - 84 Öchsle for QbA, 78 - 84 Öchsle for Kabinett, 86 - 93 Öchsle for Spätlese, 96 - 106 Öchsle for Auslese, to 134 Öchsle for the Beerenauslese which was harvested in Ruedesheim in the Berg Rottland. Bernard Breuer rates the vintage better than either 1988 or 1989 but not quite as concentrated as 1990. Acid levels, as everywhere in this vintage, are very good in excess of 9 gm/liter with a good proportion of tartaric. No 1991s were tasted.

## **Pfalz**

### **Pfeffingen**

The 1991 harvest at Pfeffingen yielded 83 hl/ha with 31% QbA, 35% Kabinett, 24% Spätlese and the remaining 10% Auslese, BA, TBA and Eiswein (harvested December 10 - 11). Must weights ranged from 72 Öchsle to 182 Öchsle, the latter a great Scheurebe TBA. The initial tasting of 1991s promises a very successful vintage. The wines were pure, lively, sappy and very true to varietal character. Finished acids with Riesling were 9.5 gm/liter to over 10 gm/liter. In the Scheurebe Spätleses acids were 8.2 gm/liter. The '91 Scheurebe Auslese reminds of the great 1981.

## **Franken**

### **Wirsching**

Yields for Müller-Thurgau, Silvaner and Scheurebe were between 70 - 80 hl/ha. For Riesling it was only 50 hl/ha. Spätleses were produced both from the Silvaner and Riesling including an Auslese from Rulaender. Acid levels with all the varieties were better than average. Of the 1991 wines tasted, there were several elegant, compact Silvaners and several racy, appley Rieslings and a powerful Traminer Spätlese with wonderful leechy and grapefruit flavors.

## **Nahe**

### **CRUSIUS**

Because of some losses due to the April frost the yield there was only 50 hl/ha. Must weights ranged from 66 to 89 Öchsle. Acids were high with good proportions of tartaric. 65% of the harvest was QbA, 20% Kabinett and 15% Spätlese in the Traiser Rotenfels, Traiser Bastei, and Norheimer Kirschheck. Hans and Peter compare the 1991 vintage to both the 1981 and 1985 vintages. To demonstrate how the 1981s have developed we tasted a '81 Schlosshoeckelheimer Kabinett. It showed very clear, precise fruit; apples, gooseberries and honey on the palate, great balance and long. Of the '91s the Rotenfels Spätlese was especially fine.

### **SCHLOSSGUT DIEL**

Low yield of 51 hl/ha with must weights from 66 to 86 Öchsle. 60% of harvest QbA and 40% was QmP, mostly Kabinett with some Spätleses in the Pittermännchen. The must acids ranged from 11 gm/liter to 14 gm/liter and the finished wines from 9.5 gm/liter to 10.5 gm/liter again with good proportion of tartaric (65%). On December 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> over 400 liters of Eiswein at 135 Öchsle with 13 gm/liter acidity was harvested. There are apples and spice and a nuance of mint especially in the Pittermännchen wines. The Goldloch Rieslings were fuller and more elegant. The barrique collection also shows very good potential.

## **Rheinhessen**

### **GUNDERLOCH**

Average yield for the harvest was 40 hl/ha with 15% QbA, 49% Kabinett, 16% Spätlese, 20% Auslese for the Riesling, with other varietals averaging 28% QbA, 49% Kabinett, 15% Spätlese and 8% Auslese. Acid levels were very good with the near finished Riesling wines all over 9 gm/liter. A superb Pinot Gris Auslese was harvested from 51 year old vines in the Niersteiner Paterberg with 105 Öchsle and 10 gm/liter acidity. The '91 Rothenberg Kabinett is again outstanding, very vibrant, with apples, peaches and pear fruit, sappy and long. This is the 4th very good vintage in a row at Gunderloch.

## **Baden**

### **SALWEY**

Harvest yielded 60 hl/ha with the various varietals mostly in the QbA and Kabinett domain with the exception of the Pinot Gris, which also produced a Spätlese. Must weights ranged from 70 to 98 Öchsle. Must acids ranged for all varietals from 7 gm/liter to 11 gm/liter with a high proportion of tartaric. Sugarfree extract values are high. The wines tasted were very bright clean, compact and sappy. The Müller-Thurgau, Vin Gris and Pinot Gris were especially impressive.

**Dr. HEGER**

Very low yield of only 38 hl/ha with Mueller-Thurgau all at 80 Öchsle i.e. Kabinett, Riesling at 84 Öchsle and over 9 gm/liter acidity was all Kabinett. Silvaner was all Kabinett and Spätlese with must weights to 92 Öchsle. Pinot Blanc was all Spätlese at 94 Öchsle and Pinot Gris the same with must weights to 105 Öchsle. Pinot Noir reached 101 Öchsle with lower must weights chaptalized to 100 Öchsle. Small lots were made from the Scheurebe with 500 liters at 115 Öchsle, 250 liter of Gewürztraminer at 130 Öchsle and 900 liter Muskateller Spätlese from very old vines at 103 Öchsle. Must acids ranged from 7.5 gm/liter to 11 gm/liter acidity with high proportion of tartaric. Sugarfree extracts were high. The '91s tasted from the barrel showed very fresh, bright fruit.

**Württemberg****GRAF ADELMANN**

Yield was a low 45 hl/ha with most of the wines harvested between 70 and 80 Öchsle. Riesling and Clevener surpassed 90 Öchsle. The harvest was slightly less than half QbA and the rest QmP, all Kabinett. The acids were high as was the Proportion of tartaric. Graf Michael thinks the '91 vintage as slightly better than average. The wines tasted were very nervy and elegant. The Riesling Kabinett was flowery, peppery with apples fruit, crisp finish. The Traminer Kabinett was lively, sappy with grapefruit, leechys, clean. Also impressive was the Muskateller and the Trollinger was compact and hearty.