

## 2000 Vintage Overview

The string of good to great vintages that started in 1988 is still intact. Our estates, after a most difficult harvest involving great risk and an inordinate amount of investment in both labor and capital, made very good wines again. 20 years ago a vintage like 2000 would have been a dismal failure. Sadly, it takes a difficult harvest to separate the men from the boys. The wines from this vintage are a testament to the advances and talents thriving on the planet today. Along with years of winemaking experience, it was imperative to have skilled vineyard management, rigorous and uncompromising selection and the guts to leave a majority of fruit on the ground instead of in the glass. Most agree that a little luck didn't hurt either.

In July, heavy rains clobbered every region except eastern Franconia. Due to the advanced state of vegetation sour rot infested the vineyards. The wetness and humidity caused fruit to swell and crack the skins resulting in damaged fruit with the invasion of fungi, bacteria and yeast. Hardest hit was the Pfalz's Middle Haart especially the towns of Deidesheim, Forst, Ruppertsberg and Wachenheim. We were told stories of people, who from their cars, could smell the vinegar / rot in the vineyards.

While some thought 1998 and 1999 didn't have sufficient acid, 2000 has great acid structure buffered by very high extracts. This is not the hard edged acid of 1996, but rather ripe and well integrated with the fruit that had consummate physiological ripeness. "Prepare yourself for an electric ladyland of trippy acids and mind-bending minerality all spinning around an expanding core of ripeness."

Our first stop was at Franz Künstler in the Rheingau where our man Gunter produced a vintage of very small quantity but very good quality. At Meyer-Näkel in the Ahr valley the 2000's could not be tasted. Werner Näkel compares the vintage to '96 and '98.

The Middle Mosel had a surprisingly good vintage. The quantity is small; a lot of fruit was discarded. What remained is often very excellent wine. At the Mönchhof, it may be the best vintage since Robert Eymael has taken over the estate. We also loved the wines at Fritz Haag, Schloss Lieser both "Prüms" - Dr. F. Weins-Prüm and Joh. Jos. Prüm, Wegeler and Reinhold Haart. The Ruwer and Saar Valley fruit was less ripe, but the basic Riesling and Kabinett wines are still delicious. This holds for Karthüserhof, von Hövel, Zilliken. Bert Simon actually produced 500 cases of Serriger Herrenberg Spätlese .

On the way to the Pfalz, we stopped at Emrich-Schönleber and were impressed with the basic Estate Riesling and Kabinett and the single vineyard wines especially from the Monzinger Halenberg. Werner Schönleber compares his 2000's to his '95s. In the Pfalz, Doris Eymael produced a stunning collection of Riesling and Scheurebe wines - one of the best collections for the vintage. Von Buhl, located in the heart of the area where sour-rot caused the greatest damage, harvested a miserly 26 hl/ha of 40% Kabinett and 55% Spätlese .

In the Kaiserstuhl region of Baden we're making a portfolio change. Our work will concentrate more on Dr. Heger / Weinhaus Heger and Heger's sister estate Otto Fischer. Salwey will no longer be part of our offering. In Baden sour-rot also did great damage. Dr. Heger harvested a meager 38 hl/ha and Fischer a mere 48 hl/ha. A small quantity of very good quality including a Riesling TBA picked at 213 Öchsle.

Wirsching, in Franconia, produced some of the finest wines of the vintage. There were no rains in July and the fruit was ripe, clean and healthy. One of the finest vintages, along with '83 and '90, we've ever tasted at Wirsching. Fürst's Burgstadter vineyards experienced problems with sour-rot whereas his vineyards in the village of Volkach were perfect much like that of Wirsching. There was a very small, but very good harvest in Burgstadt, and great Silvaners in Volkach.

In the Rheingau Wegeler and Weil produced very good wines but sour-rot was again the culprit in reducing yields. In fact at Weil the wines from the Gräfenberg vineyard are in such short supply that we still don't know how much, if any, will be available for the US Market. The hand of Oliver Haag is already being felt at Wegeler. Here the 2000s may be even better than the 1999s.

Last but not least, Fritz and Agnes Hasselbach at Gunderloch presented a stunning collection of 2000 wines in Rheinhessen. Doris Eymael at Pfeffingen and Fritz Hasselbach at Gunderloch both will have a long line of fans returning for repeat performances. Doris should be a role model for all women (and men) - and Fritz, well heck, he drives a Harley. Our notes from both estates show an overwhelming agreement in a nomination for the "outstanding achievement in the face of adversity" category.

But let us remember all the other fine performers who did so much to make this yet another great year for liquid entertainment. Expect to drink some first class wines from the treacherous 2000 vintage. We selected wines as carefully as our growers selected grapes.

Table 1 - Phenological Data Germany:				
<b>Vintage (Riesling)</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>Long Term Average</b>
<b>Bud Break</b>	4/24	4/20	4/30	5/2
<b>Flowering</b>	6/9	6/14	6/14	6/25
<b>Start of Ripening</b>	8/23	8/22	8/29	9/7
<b>Start of Harvest</b>	10/15	10/11	10/19	10/21

Table 2- Phenological Data - Pfalz:

<b>Vintage (Riesling)</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>Long Term Average</b>
<b>Bud Break</b>	4/22	4/20	4/25	4/26
<b>Flowering</b>	6/6	6/9	6/9	6/19
<b>Start of Ripening</b>	8/14	8/19	8/16	8/23
<b>Start of Harvest</b>	10/5	10/5	10/22	10/16

Table 3 - Weather Data - Mosel:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Temp C</b>	<b>Sunshine Hours</b>	<b>Rain in MM</b>	<b>Temp C</b>	<b>Sunshine Hours</b>	<b>Rain in MM</b>
<b>April</b>	11.8 / 10.9	174 / 153	42 / 60	9.3	149	51
<b>May</b>	16.1 / 16.2	179 / 192	96 / 16	13.8	199	61
<b>June</b>	19.0 / 17.2	258 / 195	49 / 75	16.8	202	68
<b>July</b>	16.6 / 20.9	137 / 247	219 / 69	18.5	211	72
<b>August</b>	19.3 / 19.0	258 / 192	45 / 47	17.7	183	76
<b>September</b>	15.8 / 18.5	107 / 173	166 / 50	14.7	135	55
<b>October</b>	11.6 / 10.7	80 / 115	63 / 59	10.0	87	57
<b>Average</b>	15.7 / 16.2	1193 / 1267	97 / 60	14.4	1166	61.4

Table 4 - Weather Data - Pfalz:

<b>Month</b>	<b>Temperature in degree C</b>	<b>Sunshine Hours</b>	<b>Rain in MM</b>	<b>Temp in degree C</b>	<b>Sunshine Hours</b>	<b>Rain in MM</b>
<b>April</b>	11.5 / 10.8	204 / 187	39 / 35	10.1	173	48
<b>May</b>	16.2 / 15.9	223 / 204	80 / 58	14.3	208	50
<b>June</b>	19.2 / 17.2	291 / 228	50 / 55	17.5	213	71
<b>July</b>	17.0 / 20.8	164 / 265	119 / 68	19.2	234	59
<b>August</b>	19.6 / 19.0	250 / 236	38 / 38	18.2	221	59
<b>September</b>	15.3 / 18.3	146 / 201	74 / 41	15.2	168	51
<b>October</b>	11.4 / 10.7	80 / 150	58 / 23	10.0	109	46
<b>Average</b>	15.7 / 16.1	1278 / 1471	65 / 45	14.9	1326	54.9

## **Estates by Region**

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

#### **Mönchhof**

Yield was barely 60 hl/ha with must weights ranging from 70 to 125 Öchsle. Ripe acids from 8.5 gm/l to 10 gm/l in the finished wine. A very selective, labor-intensive harvest with a super Estate Riesling, and very good collection of Kabinett and Spätlese wines. There is a great purity in all the Mönchhof wines, a terrific spice and minerality with apple / pear fruit in the Estate Riesling and "Astor" Kabinett (Ürziger Würzgarten). The Würzgarten Spätlese adds banana and pineapple to the fruit basket, all infused with the wonderfully intense Würzgarten spice. A Great collection, which includes superb Ausleses as well. The vintage reminds Robert of 1985.

#### **Wegeler**

Only 56 hl/ha, which required many extra hours of careful selection. Must weights ranged from 68 to 170 Öchsle (Bernkasteler Doctor TBA) and acid values from 7.8 gm/l to 9.8 gm/l in the finished wines. Harvest started 10/7 and was completed by 11/13/00. A common trait in many of these Wegeler Mosel wines is their excellent concentration. These wines are packed with dense jam like fruit. For the first time since 1996 there was a Doctor Kabinett produced. There was also Doctor Spätlese, and a huge Doctor Auslese, (115 Öchsle). We'll continue with Estate Spätlese from 1999. A wonderful collection of Doctor wines, but they will be very limited in terms of supply.

#### **Joh. Jos. Prüm**

2000's tasted were unfinished, so the aromatics were difficult to accurately define. Wines tasted included a zippy Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Spätlese, a Graacher Himmelreich Spätlese which seemed at this point more finely mineral toned. The Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese was tight aromatically, but we could still sense a better fruit density versus in the wine versus the first two Spätlese s. The residual sugar, acid, and extract balance is first-rate in this Auslese. We tasted one other Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese (2000 GKA ??), which was more slate driven than the first Sonnenuhr Auslese with denser / darker fruit.

#### **Dr. F. Weins-Prüm**

With must weights from 70 to 124 Öchsle the harvest yielded 68 hl/ha. Acids ranged from 9 gm/l to 10.5gm/l in the must and 8.3 gm/l to 9.0 gm/l in the finished wine. With the extra rainfall the wines show lots of minerality and slate on the palate, suggesting high extracts. The Estate Riesling both halb-trocken and fruity have clean, bright flavors with peach and pear fruit. There is Kabinett and Spätlese from the Wehlener Sonnenuhr and Graacher Domprobst. There is a Wehlener Sonnenuhr Auslese (only 330 liters) along with Erdener Prälat Spätlese and Auslese.

### **Schloss Lieser**

Only 50 hl/ha with must weights from 71 to 155 Öchsle and acid levels in the finished wine from 8 gm/l to 9.5 gm/l. The Estate Riesling and Estate Kabinett are very impressive. There is Niederberg Helden but no Estate Spätlese. There are four small lots of mostly 100% botrytis affected Auslese and Beerenauslese from the Niederberg Helden. The latter are very rare, concentrated, mineral driven and stony Rieslings with tropical fruit expression along with hints of cassis.

### **Fritz Haag**

The great Brauneberger Juffer Sonnenuhr produced qualities from QbA to TBA after a very labor-intensive harvest. With a yield of 60 hl/ha must weights ranged from 70 to 170 Öchsle with acids in the finished wines from 8 gm/l to 10.5 gm/l. Very floral, stony, bright, juicy Rieslings. Starting with the Juffer Sonnenuhr Spätlese tropical fruit with cassis was quite pronounced with a very fine, filigree structure. The TBA is very fine with honeyed apricots, dates, rich, dense, stony and refined - great wine.

### **Reinhold Haart**

Super! Classic smoky, peach fruit permeating all the wines, along with red fruit, a silky, filigree palate and a juicy minerality (earthy) finish. Yield was 58 hl/ha and must weights ranged from 70 to 140 Öchsle with acids from 8 to 9 gm/l in the finished wine. Extracts were high. The riper pickings - Spätlese and higher, showed peaches to tropical flavors with notes of cassis, passion fruit, mango, and nutty minerals.

### **Milz - Laurentiushof**

Did not taste extensively, but a few Spätlese showed good promise; bright flavors of pears, tropical fruit with good mineral component suggesting wines with high sugar free extract. Good quality vintage with a yield of 60 hl/ha and must weights from 72 to 147 Öchsle, the latter an Eiswein picked shortly before Christmas. The core of the vintage is good Kabinett and Spätlese, with some very good Auslese.

### **Karthäuserhof**

A very difficult vintage that started quite well. Flowering was complete by June 15 (normal is end of June), but July brought three times the normal rainfall, in August there was very warm and sunny weather resulting in very early veraison. September was cool and wet, there was hail, and the advantages gained in August were lost. Harvest began October 10 and was completed November 13. (In these five weeks there were only six dry days). Yield was 50 hl/ha with wines from QbA to Spätlese and an Eiswein at 150 Öchsle picked December 23. Very bright, minerally, vibrant classic Ruwer wines. Pure, clean, citrus, red fruits, raspberry, cassis and loaded with minerals. These wines grow only in the Ruwer.

### **von Hövel**

Very sparse harvest at 48 hl/ha. The vintage brought mostly QbA and Kabinett wines with must weights ranging from 65 to 108 Öchsle and acids from 8 to 11 gm/l. There are, to top off the vintage, two superb Ausleses. One Gold Capsule that was picked with

almost 100% botrytis offers flavors of honey, apricots, dates and an oily, dense palate. Eberhard compares the vintage to 1998, but with better physiological ripeness. The "Balduin von Hövel" Estate Riesling is super.

### **Dr. Fischer**

Yield of 66 hl/ha with must weights from 60 to 78 Öchsle and acids from 9 to 11 gm/l. Here we tasted a Dr. Fischer Estate Riesling, and an Ockfener Bockstein Kabinett. There were two Eisweins picked shortly before Christmas picked at 130 and 170 Öchsle. Mrs. Fischer compares the vintage to 1996. Initial tastings of the 2000's was disappointing.

### **Zilliken**

Very early flowering, then as everywhere, extreme rains in July. At the beginning of the harvest, individual berries varied greatly from green berries to overripe fruit with lots of botrytis. All of this made for a very difficult, labor-intensive harvest. Harvest yield was 60 hl/ha and brought mostly QbA and Kabinett with some Spätlese that will be declassified to Kabinett. Must weights ranged from 65 to 82 Öchsle and must acids from 8.5 to 10.5 gm/l giving up about 1 gm/l during fermentation. An Eiswein at 122 Öchsle was picked on December 22. Hanno compares the vintage to his 1998's.

### **Bert Simon**

Yield was 70 hl/ha and must weights ranged from 68 to 88 Öchsle with QbA, Kabinett and over 500 cases of Spätlese in the Serriger Herrenberg (quiet unusual on the Saar in 2000). Must acids from 9.5 to 11.5 gm/l and the wines tasted quite ripe with red fruit, cassis and passion fruit especially in the Spätlese. There was no Auslese or Eiswein. Bert Simon compares the vintage to 1977 or 1992.

## **Rheingau**

### **Robert Weil**

The vintage here compares to 1993 in character, however, without the quantities of Kiedricher Spätlese and Auslese. The wines are very fruity, minerally and concentrated. The estate wines tasted were quite impressive. Yield was 58 hl/ha and must weights ranged from 75 to 208 Öchsle (the latter, small amount of TBA collected at great expense and very labor intensive selection). Must acids ranged from 8.5 gm/l to 18 gm/l and the fruit was physiologically ripe. In addition to the wonderful estate wines, we tasted a Gräfenberg Goldcap (156 Öchsle) rich, concentrated, honey, apricot, mushroom, earthy, also cassis, passion fruit, dark minerals, juicy. The Gräfenberg BA, all of the above but even more concentrated.

### **Franz Künstler**

Gunter compares his 2000 wines to his 1998s. However, the effort expended to achieve this quality was much greater in 2000. Yield was 62 hl/ha and must weights ranged from 75 to 155 Öchsle - the latter 300L of Eiswein picked in the Hölle vineyard. There was also a great Auslese from the Reichstal vineyard with 11.5 gm/l acid in the finished wine and 100% botrytis. The Auslese tastes of apricots, peaches, yellow fruits and hazelnuts. Both the Estate Riesling and Reichstal Kabinett are very bright Rieslings with a strawberry red fruit character. We'll continued with the 1999 Kirchenstück Spätlese while it lasts.

### **Wegeler (Rheingau)**

The Estate Riesling and Estate Kabinett are even better than the wonderful '99s - peaches, pineapple, silky filigree wines. Makes one wonder if Haag is making wines in the Rheingau. Very good vintage here with yields of 58 hl/ha and must weights from 76 to 155 Öchsle and acids from 7.8 to 9.8 gm/l in the must and about 1 gm/l less in the finished wine. Highlights for the vintage included a very good Berg Rottland Spätlese with a stony, filigreed, creamy texture and ripe peach, pineapple fruit with touches of cassis. A superb Geisenheimer Rothenberg Auslese, more concentrated and tropical with (again) a silky palate feel. From the same vineyard a BA picked at 155 Öchsle - not tasted.

## **Pfalz**

### **Pfeffingen**

Similar to 1999 but higher acids and extracts. Yield was 67 hl/ha with must weights from 83 to 205 Öchsle (Scheurebe TBA) and acids from 8.5 to 18.5 gm/l - the ladder also Scheurebe TBA. The early pickings, such as the Estate Rieslings and Pfeffo show white pepper minerality with peach and apricot fruit. The Ungsteiner Herrenberg "First Growth" is rich, dense, chewy with 10 gm/l acid in the finished wine. Very good Gewürztraminer Spätlese and a spectacular Rieslaner GKA picked at 150 Öchsle. But the stars of this vintage are several phenomenal Scheurebes from Spätlese through TBA (good quantities of TBA). One of the best collections of Scheurebe we've ever tasted. Bravo Doris!

### **von Buhl**

An overly humid, foggy and rainy July brought on the sour rot. These conditions were quite extreme in the Forst and Deidesheim. Great amounts of money and many hours were invested in August to cut out rotten grapes. Frank John, von Buhl's cellarmaster, has never encountered a harvest like this and should there be another one, he says he will change professions! With the removal of rotten fruit the yield was a miserly 26

hl/ha, 40% Kabinett and 55% Spätlese and a little QbA and Auslese. The wines harvested are absolutely clean, elegant, filigreed with high extracts balancing higher than normal acids. There was a significant purchase of grapes from contract farmers especially for the Estate Riesling and the von Buhl "Armand" Kabinett. Two great dry Spätlese s, von Buhl Estate and the Forster Pechstein "First Growth" will be the only Spätlese s offered from the 2000 vintage. We've reserved over 200 cases 99 Foster Jesuitengarten Spätlese to tied us over. There will be no 2000 Ausleses.

## **Franken**

### **Wirsching**

Great vintage, surpassing possibly even the great 1990's. Weather for the eastern-most regions of Germany was almost ideal. The heavy July rains were non-existent in Iphofen. Yield for the normal wines was 65 hl/ha, and for the top wines 35 hl/ha or less. Average must weights were 97 Öchsle. The Müller-Thurgau, Silvaner, Scheurebe and Riesling fruit was physiologically very ripe. A great collection of Spätlese s, quality we remember from 1983 and 1990. There were also two great Ausleses, a tropical fruit basket Scheurebe from the Kronsberg, and a Silvaner from the Julius Echter Berg loaded with mineral, spice, apricot, honey and burnt nuts.

### **Fürst**

The earliest flowering since Paul took over the estate in 1975. The Burgstadter Centgrafenberg had lots of rain in July, resulting in a very labor-intensive harvest, whereas the Volkacher Karthäuser vineyard had great weather and produced a great Silvaner Spätlese . The Silvaner Spätlese has wonderfully ripe pear fruit, lots of depth and very high extract levels. Yield was a meager 48 hl/ha and must weights ranged from 82 to 102 Öchsle. Only dry wines were produced. The reds turned out quite well. The Frühburgunder was harvested in mid-September; the Pinot Noir has great color and fine fruit with good depth. Lots of bacon, pepper, black cherry, cassis, and silky on the palate.

## **Nahe**

### **Emrich-Schönleber**

Yield was 56 hl/ha with must weights from 78 to 185 Öchsle along with acids from 9.5 to 10.8 gm/l with 65% tartaric. Two Eisweins picked shortly before Christmas, one with 185 Öchsle. Werner compares the vintage favorably to the 1995 vintage. Very clean, bright wines, lots of red and ripe yellow fruit, peaches, lots of minerals with good depth. A Halenberg Auslese with 80% botrytis has honeyed apricots, passion fruit, great vibrant



palate - long stony finish. The Pinot Gris Spätlese is a wine we tried in several restaurants. We were impressed every time and we plan to offer this wine starting with the 2000 vintage. There is never a disappointing wine at Schönleber.

## **Rheinhessen**

### **Gunderloch**

The best collections we will offer from the 2000 vintage are probably the wines of Wirsching, Pfeffingen and Gunderloch, but Gunderloch is without a doubt the big dog in 2000. For us this collection is an out of the ballpark home run, and if you liked the Gunderloch wines in the past, just wait until you taste the 2000s. Tasting this collection will silence even the most jaded Riesling aficionados by the time the Nackenheimer Rothenberg Auslese is served, and by the time the Rothenberg TBA is tasted you'll be left completely speechless. It's hard to imagine a better collection in 2000 than what we tasted at Gunderloch, simply magnificent. Yield at 70 hl/ha with must weights ranging from 82 to 204 Öchsle and acids from 9 to 16.5 gm/l with very high amounts of tartaric. Gunderloch produced Estate Riesling to TBA, plus 600 liters of Eiswein picked on 2/23/01 in the Niersteiner Oelberg at 168 Öchsle. There is a lot of great Riesling here. [Click here for more info on the 2000 Gunderloch vintage.](#)

## **Baden**

### **Dr. Heger / Weinhaus Heger**

At Dr. Heger the harvest yielded a meager 38 hl/ha and a Weinhaus Heger 62 hl/ha. As in many places 2000 was the most difficult, expensive, and labor-intensive harvest ever. Must weights at Dr. Heger ranged from 83 to 213 Öchsle (the latter a Riesling TBA with 19 gm/l acidity). At Weinhaus Heger there were must weights from 76 to 110 Öchsle (the latter a Pinot Noir Auslese with great potential). We also tasted superb Silvaners, great Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris Spätlese from both Ihringer Winklerberg and Achkarrer Schlossberg. Joachim also made two dry Rieslings and two fruity Riesling Spätlese s. We feel the Dr. Heger and Weinhaus Heger Pinot Noirs are the best ever. They have a complex, ripe, fruit structure that we haven't tasted at the estate before. The acids are above average, very ripe, and sugar free extracts are quite high. Joachim compares the vintage to 1983 / 1985. A very good selection for a very difficult harvest.

### **Otto Fischer**

The sister estate of Dr. Heger / Weinhaus Heger (owned by Heger) is run by Walter Bibo, Joachim Heger's assistant cellar master. This was our first serious evaluation of the wines. The estate produces half red and half white. The primary vineyard is the Nimburg-Bottinger Steingrube. Wines of interest will be Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Riesling and Pinot Noir. The 2000 harvest brought a mere 48 hl/ha. Because of serious problems with sour rot, it was as in so many places, a very labor-intensive harvest. Only ripe, healthy grapes were processed. Must weights from 75 to 98 Öchsle, with normal acid levels and about one third tartaric. The white wines showed ripe pears, melons, gooseberries, fresh bright with heavy loam & clay clearly reflected on the palate. The Pinot Noirs showed classic cherry fruit, along with raspberries, strawberries and hints of bacon, possibly a little more rustic than the Dr. Heger Pinot Noir. Fischer owns 16 of the 60 hectares of the Steingrube vineyard.

## **Württemberg**

### **Graf Adelmann**

Did not stop at Graf Adelmann, but his vintage report indicates a near great vintage in Kleinbottwar. The Harvest yield was 58 hl/ha with must weights from 72 to 175 Öchsle (the latter a Süßmund Riesling TBA with 12 gm/l of acidity). Acids ranged from 6.5 to 12 gm/l and were very ripe over 80% tartaric. Graf Michael compares the vintage with 1995.

## **Ahr**

### **Meyer-Näkel**

We did not taste the 2000 vintage since most of the reds had not finished "malo". Average harvest of 67 hl/ha with must weights from 72 to 165 Öchsle (the latter a Riesling Eiswein picked just before Christmas). The wines are comparable to the 1994, 1996 and 1998 vintage - very good but not great vintages for red wine. We tasted through the '99 vintage once again, and we especially liked the basic Meyer-Näkel Pinot Noir (also a good value).