

The 2007 Vintage

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Scharzhof

The summer of 2007 was remarkable only for abundant rainfall. By the end of September we had already received what amounts to the average of a whole year. May, June and July were warm, creating ideal conditions for mildew. On top, there was hail, both in the Scharzhofberg where it came early and did relatively small damage and in Wiltinger braune Kupp where it hit the developing grapes after flowering and where the damage was considerable. Here not only the quantity was reduced but the vines were under shock for some time and even after recovering could never quite catch up the delay in ripening.

Such a combination of adverse influences should be enough to destroy all hopes for a great vintage but in 2007 two extraordinary months changed everything: April was about 5°C warmer than average and not a single drop of rain fell during the whole month. Since the winter had been very mild, bud break came very early and by the end of April, the vegetation had an advance of almost one month compared to normal years. Over the course of the summer, some of this advance was lost but still harvest was early and we started picking on the first of October.

At that time we were prepared for a copious harvest of Qualitätswein and Kabinett with a little bit of Spätlese from the best vineyards. After all the rain we were surprised by the excellent health of the grapes. Then came the second dry month of this year: From October 1st to 29th, there was no rain. At the beginning we were still expecting a quick harvest because we did not trust the weather and after the wet summer were afraid of more rain and the ensuing rot. It became soon apparent however, that the weather was stable, allowing us to slow down for more careful selections. By the end of the first week of picking, some noble rot began to develop. It was not wide spread as in 2006 but apparent in small batches throughout the better vineyards.

The fine weather let the grapes ripen further and the effect of the noble rot added concentration and when we came to harvest the finer vineyard sites we were convinced that the grapes were of Spätlese ripeness. By that time we had also intensified our efforts at selective picking and for 10 days we picked Trockenbeerenauslese – small quantities only, but of very fine quality. We harvested the last grapes on October 29th and on that day it began to rain. In only 3 days enough rain fell to make up for the dry 28 days.

Overall the harvest was smaller than we had initially thought. The average yield across all our vineyards and quality levels is of only 35 hl/ha. While for us this is more than 2005 and 2006 combined it is considerably less than the average yield in Germany where 2007 has produced a big crop. We believe however, that in this vintage with its rather marginal but very long growing season the lack in quantity is more than compensated by quality: 2007 is a great vintage with wines of classical proportions. The cool August has preserved acidity and October has provided the sugar. It is certainly not another 2005 but, other than that we have to look at the greatest classical years like 1971 or 1997 for comparison.