

## The 2015 vintage at Weingut Egon Müller-Scharzhof

Again there was no real winter 2014 - 2015.

While rainfall in November and December was still about normal, all the first 8 months of 2015 were drier than average and by the end of August the deficit in precipitation had reached approximately 180 mm. Mostly the weather was fine and after April 10th, there was no more frost. The flowering began in late May and was finished in the Wiltinger braune Kupp vineyard by June 15th. Just about then, there was a spell of cooler and rainy weather that delayed the flowering in most other vineyards for about a week.

July and August were hot and dry, almost to the extent of 2003. Because of the drought the pressure of fungus diseases was low and we only sprayed our vineyards 3 times during the entire season. Because of the late infection with Black Rot in 2014 we reverted to chemical sprays. It is entirely possible though, that the result would have been no different with no spraying at all. There were no diseases. Foliage and grapes were in perfect health.

The summer lasted through the first decade of September but then the weather turned. On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 20 mm of rain fell but after the long drought they were the proverbial drop in the – empty – bucket. From September 13<sup>th</sup> until the 23<sup>rd</sup> it rained constantly, 40 mm on the 16<sup>th</sup> alone. The ripeness of the grapes was already advanced but they were still at that stage quite sensitive to the sudden drop in temperature. Especially in Riesling such conditions can induce a lack of Magnesium which in turn leads to a welting of the stems. The affected grapes drop off the vine.

After September 26th, the weather improved: no more rain, blue skies and Easterly winds let the sugar-levels rise rapidly. More grapes fell to the ground, especially in vineyards with wire trellising and Botrytis started to spread.

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, we started the harvest, hoping to pick Beeren- and Trockenbeerenauslese. We quickly realized that it would not be all that easy, however. While the must weights were very high it was never completely dry and whenever the botrytised grapes began to shrivel, there was a bit of rain. The weather forecast was never for stable conditions either and nothing was to be gained from waiting so we put great effort into the sorting of the botrytised grapes but at the same time we always pushed to finish and we brought the last grapes home on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

2015 is certainly a great vintage. After the summer one would look for parallels with 2003 and they are there: The volume of the harvest is the same, almost to the litre. The overall aspect of the grapes was similar. Green, turning to golden with very little Botrytis and the must weights are on the same level. One difference is easily explained with the weather during the harvest: While it wasn't at all difficult to harvest great Auslese and while we did succeed in making a Trockenbeerenauslese, at that level the record breaking Oechsle of 2003 were never within reach.

However, after such a summer nobody would have expected the high levels of acidity of the 2015s. Acidity levels that are often twice as high as those of the 2003s and 2 or 3 g higher than those of the 2007s or 2009s. Once again we seem to have a vintage without precedent – this is one that we can expect to enjoy.