

## *The 2018 vintage at Weingut Egon Müller-Scharzhof*

The 2017/18 winter was rather mild and wet. December and January were particularly rainy. February and March were dry and slightly colder than average, but in April the weather improved and both April and May were the warmest month on record.

The wines budded a bit late but then grew quickly. The second half of May was quite wet and Downy Mildew was threatening the vines. We had to start spraying on May 17<sup>th</sup>. While the first treatment was organic, in view of the weather and given the experience from 2016, we switched to systemic products. During the night of May 30<sup>th</sup> we had 80 mm of rain, causing local erosion. The first part of June remained warm and humid and we had to spray repeatedly in short intervals. Even so there were Mildew infections in Wiltinger Braunfels and in some of the plots sprayed manually. Generally however, we could control the situation. Flowering started early and was finished by June 5<sup>th</sup>. There was a bit of *millerandage* but the crop-level was quite satisfactory.

In July the weather became hot and dry. The vines thrived and canopy management, weed control and crop protection were straightforward. We applied the last spray on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

On July 17<sup>th</sup> already softening berries could be found in particularly hot places and only a week later *veraison* had set in everywhere. In August it became very hot with temperatures of up to 37°C. The sugar levels climbed rapidly and we were considering a mid-September harvest. September however, was rather average and the sugar formation slowed a bit. By that time drought conditions prevailed but because of the heavy rainfall in spring, vineyards didn't suffer

We started our harvest on September 24<sup>th</sup> right after the passage of the first autumn storm. The grapes were ripe and exceptionally healthy and we were surprised by the quantity: After only 3 days of picking in Oberemmeler Rosenberg and Wiltinger Braunfels we already had the equivalent of our 2017 crop in our cellar. Towards the end of September night-time temperatures dropped as low as 0°C causing a loss of about 1 g/l of acidity. As we would not have liked to see another drop in acidity levels, we harvested without delay even though the weather was generally fine. It was dry, mostly sunny and temperatures reached up to 28°C. The proportion of Noble Rot grew, albeit very slowly and it remained very small until the end. The quality of the bortytised berries however was sensational and under the prevailing warm and dry conditions the healthy berries also began to shrivel and the sugar levels rose constantly while the yields began to decline.

We finished our harvest on October 20<sup>th</sup>. 2018 is for us the biggest crop in a very long time with an average yield of 51 hl/ha. We are excited by the quality of the grapes and we believe that for every Prädikat we have exactly the grapes we want. Must weights are high but not at the level of, for instance 2005 or 2010. The acidity is moderate but the pH-levels are very low. Overall, 2018 is not a Botrytis vintage but as was the case in 2011 relatively small proportions of noble rot have great concentration effect and the 2018 Auslese and Trockenbeerenauslese should be at a similar level of quality.