



December 2023

The Breakneck 2023 Harvest at Dr. Loosen

Extreme weather and an intensive harvest lead to exquisite wines.



Harvesting in the Weblener Sonnenuhr vineyard.

BERNKASTEL/MOSEL, GERMANY

Vintage 2023 will be remembered as a year defined by extreme weather changes. It began with a warmer-than-usual winter, marked by uneven rainfall and leading to a parched early spring. Then came a continuous deluge of rain and unseasonably warm temperatures in summer, making it a truly challenging year. Our winemaker, Berni Schug, describes this year's harvest as "Intensive and swift."

Early bud break, a dry and hot June, and water stress in younger vineyards were among the notable challenges that we faced. During the extended spring drought we anxiously awaited rain to enhance the growth of our vines. In order to help our youngest vines establish themselves, we had to hand-water them in the driest time of the year.

When the summer rains finally arrived, nature revived, transforming the vineyards into lush, green landscapes, and ensuring a generous water supply for the coming months. Nevertheless, it wasn't long before we yearned for the sun to break through the rain clouds, given the challenges of managing vine diseases in the face of rising temperatures and persistent moisture. Meeting these challenges demanded the unwavering attention and care of our very experienced team. Thankfully, our region remained largely untouched by frost and hail.



The Dr. Loosen estate and vineyards, along the Mosel River in Bernkastel.

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Erni Loosen taking a taste.



Selective hand picking.

Our harvest journey began early in September with a part of our small Pinot Noir vineyard where we carefully selected grapes for our Rosé Sekt. Early September also marked the onset of rapid ripening, which required an unprecedented level of precision in our grape selection process during harvest. Riesling, known for its resilience, delicacy and expressive potential, revealed its true character. The outcome? Nothing short of extraordinary.

Quality and quantity were deeply influenced by factors such as the exposure, soil composition, cultivation methods, and yield levels in individual vineyard sites. High summer rainfall, notably in soils with exceptional water retention, posed the serious threat of grape rot.

Yet, the highlight of our 2023 harvest was undoubtedly the later part of September, which brought us favorable weather conditions, enabling us to craft an exquisite array of wine styles. From dry and off-dry to Kabinett, Spätlese, and nobly sweet Auslese, Riesling showcased its remarkable versatility. Due to the early arrival of noble rot (*Botrytis cinerea*) and a following phase of dry, warm weather, we saw a steady development of “good” botrytis and were able to produce an ample quantity of the super-sticky dessert wines, Beerenauslese (BA) and Trockenbeerenauslese (TBA).

The projected yield this year appeared to be slightly higher than the average of the past 10 years. However, the higher crop level hanging on the vines was offset by our very strict harvest selection, resulting in a somewhat reduced overall yield of fruit. But we are happy with this result because of the very high quality of the juice that actually ended up in our cellar.

In mid-October, the final grapes were picked at Dr. Loosen. We eagerly anticipate the post-maturation release of our highly aromatic and profound Mosel Rieslings, which are characterized by their spicy mineral notes and remarkable potential for aging. In the end, the 2023 harvest at Dr. Loosen Winery yielded a promising balance of quality and quantity, setting the stage for exceptional wines to come.

— *Ernst Loosen*

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