



April 2023

As climate challenges continue, an excellent harvest in 2022

Another wild weather ride in Germany's Pfalz region.

WACHENHEIM/WEINSTRASSE, GERMANY

The Pfalz region experienced another very challenging viticultural thrill ride in 2022 because of extreme weather throughout the growing season. A cool spring was followed by a long, hot and dry summer, and then rain came at exactly the wrong time once harvest was underway. Thankfully, we have a resilient and resourceful team at Villa Wolf. They endured everything nature threw at them and brought in a fine crop of excellent wines.

At the beginning of the year, everything seemed to be going well. But just as bud break was getting under way, in early April, we were hit with heavy snowfall that caused some significant damage in the Pfälzerwald forest, which is atop the Mittelhaardt mountains just above our vineyards. The sudden cold also caused the vines go dormant for a couple of weeks, delaying vegetative development. A month later, in mid-May, we were hit with a spring frost that luckily did no damage to our vines, but further delayed their growth.

The flowering finally began on June 10, which is a bit later than the long-term average, but always a welcome occasion no matter when it happens. The later flowering resulted in a fair amount of *millerandage*, or uneven fruit development. But we were happy with this because it meant a naturally lower yield for better concentration, and looser, open clusters that are less susceptible to mildew and other vine diseases.

Summer in the Pfalz was extraordinarily long and sunny, with over 2,400 sunshine hours, a full 700 hours more than in an average year. That gave the vegetation plenty of solar energy to catch up after the cold spring. Unfortunately, however, it also meant that there was no rain at all for nearly three months. Our younger vines, and our vineyards on very sandy soils, had to be watered occasionally by hand, which is an enormous amount of work. But the work paid off and the team began the harvest, with the Pinot Noir, on Sept. 6.

The rain that we desperately needed in summer finally showed up in the middle of harvest, which slowed the picking as the crew dodged rainstorms. But the harvest wrapped up exactly one month after it began, with the final picking of Riesling, in the Grosse Lage Ruppertsberger Hoheburg vineyard. Tasting from barrel, our first impressions in the cellar have been very promising. The wines are fine, fruity and complex, with beautifully balanced acidity. As always, our diligent efforts in the vineyards have enabled us to make the most of another challenging year.

— Ernst Loosen



Villa Wolf vineyard manager, Claudia Fadda, harvesting Riesling the Forster Pechstein vineyard.

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