



DR. LOOSEN

2024 Harvest Report: A Rough Ride to Surprisingly Tasty Wines

Challenging weather throughout the growing season led to a demanding harvest and a reduced crop.

BERNKASTEL/MOSEL, GERMANY

Vintage 2024 was a difficult ordeal in the Mosel valley. An extremely challenging series of weather events created one obstacle after another as we guided our vines toward harvest. A generally cooler and erratic growing season yielded restrained must weights and a substantial reduction in our crop. In the end, however, we harvested surprisingly healthy grapes that have produced lively, fruity wines with delightful freshness.

The wine year 2024 started with a rainy winter. This was helpful, however, as it gave relief to the soils that were still suffering from the droughts in 2022 and 2023. The month of February was the warmest ever recorded in the Mosel, which led to an early bud break at the end of March.

Then a radical swing in the weather brought two nights of frost in mid-April, which caused damage in about a third of our vineyards. In freezing temperatures the young buds are at extreme risk and many are destroyed. Since these buds would normally become the main shoots, with higher fertility, we typically experience a crop loss of about 30–50 percent in the affected vineyards. Usually there are some dormant side-buds that will then turn into shoots, but they are less fertile and are slower to develop. Compared to vineyards that were not affected, frost-damaged vineyards had less yield and were also delayed about three to four weeks in their development.

In addition to the frost damage, we then got a hail event two weeks later, which hit the vineyards of Graach and Bernkastel. In all, just as the growing season was getting started, we were already facing a significant loss in yield.



Hauling picking bins into the vineyard on a misty morning in the Mosel valley.



The dramatic vineyards of Ürzig and Erden on one of the much-needed sunny days at the beginning of the 2024 harvest.

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Harvesting in the slate slopes above the village of Graach.



Harvesting Dr. Loosen's parcel in the precipitous Bremmer Calmont, the steepest vineyard in the world.

The month of May was characterized by ever-changing weather that led to rapid vine growth. Due to the constant humidity, the risk of diseases grew, so a diligent monitoring and defense strategy was necessary to keep the vines healthy. During the time of flowering, we had cold and rainy weather, which reduces the number of flowers being fertilized, resulting in a further reduction in yields. In addition to that, we had an extended flowering phase that took place over two weeks. When the flowering phase takes this long, some flowers get fertilized earlier and some later, so you end up with *millerandage*, where you have uneven flowering and berries of different development stages in the same cluster.

It was a rainy summer and temperatures were low, which slowed the development of the grapes. The risk of disease was looming over us the whole summer, as we waited anxiously for the fruit to fully ripen. Fortunately, the weather improved as the grapes went into their final phase of ripening.

We started the harvest on September 9th, with the selection of grapes for Sekt. In mid-September, we slowly began harvesting Riesling. The weather was dry and the grapes were remarkably healthy considering the wet summer. However, the rain returned in mid-October, adversely affecting the health of the grapes. It became even more necessary to do the demanding and laborious selection work to separate the healthy fruit from the botrytis-affected grapes.

As might be expected, due to the frost, hail and flowering problems, we ended up with 30 percent less yield compared to 2023. The wine quality is surprisingly good, however, with stable acidity and fresh fruit flavors because of the healthy grapes we harvested. As there were lower levels of botrytis this year, the production of Auslese and the noble sweet wines was small. Our impression is that the Mosel's 2024 vintage will be remembered as a Kabinett year that will show its finesse and playfulness in the glass for many years to come.

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