



## **Harvest 2003 – vintage backview**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of November – two weeks earlier than in the previous years – harvest could be completed. How can this vintage 2003 – after many comments and discussions in the media and within the wine lovers community – be seen?

The vegetation period: After an extremely cold and dry winter (till  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), that left us with some frost damage in the vineyards, the weather changed heavily round the 7<sup>th</sup> of April which started the bud break and the shooting in the mid of April. The combination of warm weather and some rainfall in May let the vineyards explode in their development and brought us to a very early flowering at the end of May to beginning of June. Due to the hot summer conditions and to avoid sunburn we took only leaves out on the north looking sides. In the summer month we regularly had some rain, but only for short periods, just enough to avoid dry stress at the plants.

All that let us to the earliest begin of harvest at September 1<sup>st</sup>. We started with selecting out grapes for the sparkling wine. Extraordinary was that at the beginning of September the nights turned cool ( $+5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). In the fourth September week we started with harvesting the red burgundy varieties (Pinot Noir, St. Laurent, Zweigelt). After October 2<sup>nd</sup> we stopped harvesting for two weeks. We had to wait for the complete physiological ripeness of the grapes.

Ripeness is not sugar level – that turned out to be one of the key factors of the vintage. Sugar levels did not change much between end of September and end of October. But if went through the vineyards and tasted the grapes, you could taste the difference from week to week.

Then in the third week of October we could start with the cooler sights for the light GV's, then we picked the Rieslings from Gaisberg and Heiligenstein and then the single vineyards from Steinsetz, Renner, Grub and Lamm. Practically the whole harvest was whole cluster pressed – soft and with low pressure. Fermentation of the single vineyard wines was done in the casks on wheels, made off local oak wood. Even for the Riesling I decided not to macerate the grapes, because I wanted not to lose finesse and elegance, which would be the result off too long maceration time.

This year we made a Riesling 'Tradition' for the first time. I think it is a fascinating year to dive into the inner layers of this variety.

In the meantime people start to compare this vintage with the legendary '47. A vintage known for his long time living and youthful appearance. I had the chance to taste a bottle from the vinothek and it was unbelievable to taste this elegant and young wine. I think, the parameter for a great vintage are set. A final judgment can be made in a couple of years. Then it will show what is bread in the bone.