

Sag niemals nie!
VINTAGE REPORT 2015



WEINTRADITION SEIT 1789

KELLER

FLÖRSHEIM-DALSHEIM

Weintradition Keller seit 1789



Dear wine friends,

If there is any truth in wine, then it has been well guarded by my father Klaus for nearly 50 years. The narrow cellar stairs, their penultimate step creaking alarmingly – beware of the cobwebs – takes you to a small, dark room with constantly high humidity and low temperatures.

A great treasure is stored here, neatly stacked on shelves: bottles from the dream vintage 1971. It was his first great vintage after he had had to take over responsibility for the cellar, along with my great-grandfather Friedrich, in 1966 (at the age of 17!). For us children there was always something magical about the 1971. Without it, we might not even be here.

It was because of a 1971 Rieslaner that my father and mother met and got to know each other at the tasting of the official certifying body. Four weeks later they were married! This was how my mother told me the story many years later. If my father is convinced of something, he pursues this goal tenaciously throughout his life.

Autumn 2015 cheers up!



It was with a 1971 Silvaner from Dalsheimer Hubacker that our estate made its first mark in the big, wide world of wine. This wine was selected as the best of the vintage, from more than 4,000 wines, and won the top award in the state.

Back then, my brother and I were not yet born, my wife Julia's birth was even further off. Nevertheless, we encountered this vintage on a regular basis. On special birthdays in the family, at our confirmations and weddings – and finally at the birth of our children. My father – well aware of the quality – saved many bottles of his favourite vintage and has since then carefully guarded his favourite vintage as the apple of his eye.

It still tastes damn good. Unfortunately, by now the stash has shrunk considerably, but we still get goose bumps whenever we open a bottle with our families and remember the old stories.

For a long time we thought that this vintage, because of its singularly high quality, would not be topped by another.

Just two years ago while we were harvesting the Hubacker grapes in 2013, my father said to me: "Despite many great vintages in my lifetime, I thought I would NEVER again experience a vintage grape quality of the 1971 harvest." Today, with the 2015 wines in barrel and images of last autumn in mind, I feel as if Mother Nature had overheard us and laughed up her sleeve.

Around mid October, my father said for the first time about this vintage, "This could be like 1971". The nights were freezing cold and the flavours exploded in the grapes. As the following days and weeks remained sunny and dry, he was convinced, "Like 1971 – with just a dash more acidity."

Here they store the treasures of 1971.





*In the 2015 vintage
we had a good laugh!*

*"Wie 1971 - nur mit
einem Tick mehr Säure."*
"Like 1971 - with just a dash more acidity" Klaus Keller



Dear Dad,

The best present for your 50th vintage here at the estate was given to you by Mother Nature! And "Never say never!"

But how could a vintage considered too hot and dry in July and August, promising low acidity and record must weights, become so great?

For us winemakers, the 2015 vintage started very early in the vineyard. Flowering was already 12 days earlier than the average. However, this head start was gradually melted away by the dry, hot weather. Just as we are not keen to climb a steep hill in record heat (without a water bottle), the vine drastically reduces its photosynthetic activity in extreme weather: the stomata beneath the leaves close, the vine lives in energy-saving mode. Nature's brilliant self-defence strategy!

After the dry summer, rain was urgently needed in September. You could see from the grapes and the foliage that the rainfall from August to October - measured at Dalsheimer Hubacker - had provided a meagre rather than a balanced diet.

2015: 133 mm
2014: 164 mm
2013: 186 mm
2012: 142 mm
2011: 129 mm
2010: 217 mm

At this stage, the vines must have felt like hikers in the desert in search of an oasis. They suffered and we suffered with them.

Thank goodness the rainfall accumulated in September, and by around the 20th we had reached the normal average rainfall for this month. At the same time, it was also much cooler towards the end of the month. Because of these cool temperatures, the grapes remained healthy - only occasionally were there hairline cracks in the grape skins. Later these little split berries would provide the basis for one of the best botrytis vintages ever.

Without anxiety, no great wines are made, and you, dear wine friends, can probably imagine that at this sensitive stage of the autumn, we were not sure in which direction things would go, whether or not there was too much rain for the vines. In retrospect, we know that it was exactly the right amount. It enabled our vines to get their breath back and recharge their batteries - the grapes could develop excellent, complex aromas and ripen slowly over a long period of time. Of course, the great temptation in 2015 was again to harvest grapes early, or too early. For the Pinots, this can sometimes lead to good results. However, with Riesling, which benefits like no other variety from slower ripening and cool nights, this is unfortunately rarely the case.



*Ice cold
at harvest.*

Wine with a difference

When in October the temperatures dropped so low that one morning the vineyards looked as if they were covered by a white powder, the Riesling grapes reached a peak in intensity and complexity. Between the 15th and 25th of October, we harvested the main crop from the best vineyard plots, whether for the basic Riesling, the Von der Fels, or the Grosse Gewächse. In 2015, you can taste the unique flavours of nature!

The grapes from the Burgundy varieties were picture perfect (the blend of Pinot Blanc and Chardonnay is a dream come true!). The 2015 Silvaners (even the basic wine we love to down in big gulps) have made us very happy. Simply splendid youngsters!

Those who love dry Scheurebe will rejoice in 2015! Those who love Rieslaner will understand from the 2015s why a famous critic once described them as “the Viagra of Riesling”. The 2015 Rieslaners are distinguished by being full of sensuality, exotic and irresistibly charismatic.

It's this very rare combination of bright acidity, high levels of extract and excellent inner density that makes the quality of the wines from this vintage so unique. The dry summer produced small, thick-skinned berries. The water in September allowed the vines to breathe and recharge their batteries for the final ripening phase in October. The cool October nights and sunny days drove the water out of the berries. The flavours became concentrated and positively exploded in each berry. Ripe grapes directly from the vines have never tasted so good!

Despite that, we might, with a little wink, still have had one more wish: that the daughter of my brother and his wife Sveta be born in this magical year!

My dear brother, unfortunately you missed the target by three days! As a birth year for your bundle of joy, this vintage would have been unbeatable – but perhaps 2016 will also be a particularly good one.

*Patrick from Switzerland.
After harvesting at
Sauzet and Cathiard
in Burgundy he is now in
Rheinbessen.
Here we are freezing
together at harvest!*





Again in 2015 my sincere thanks go to the entire Keller Team: to our fellow workers, our friends, the many helpers, the family and of course, dear wine lovers, to you who enjoy our wines with heart, mind and passion!

You all are the soul of our company and, without you, even the best provision of Nature would not lead to such wines.

Thank you very much!

*Ein grandiose Vorlage
der Natur!*
Harvest 2015: Nature's wonderful provision!

