



AUTUMN LEAVES 2025



RACE

This year's title of the harvest report had actually already been chosen by mid-August. We were all sitting in the winery's courtyard after a day of work, enjoying ourselves and 'playfully' reflecting on the past wine season. **Until then, no frost, no hailstorms, no drought or floods had hit Siefersheim.** Fungal pressure remained contained throughout the entire vegetation phase. The weather had blessed us with plenty of sunshine, warmth, and sufficient rainfall, which left vineyards in pristine conditions. Based, of course, on a lot of work and craftsmanship – but 'stress-free' in a way.

When was the last time we had experienced something similar? The unanimous answer was: 2020. In September, however, we experienced an unforeseeable plot twist. The headline 'picture-perfect vintage', which we had originally planned, was discarded. Why and how – we will get to that now...



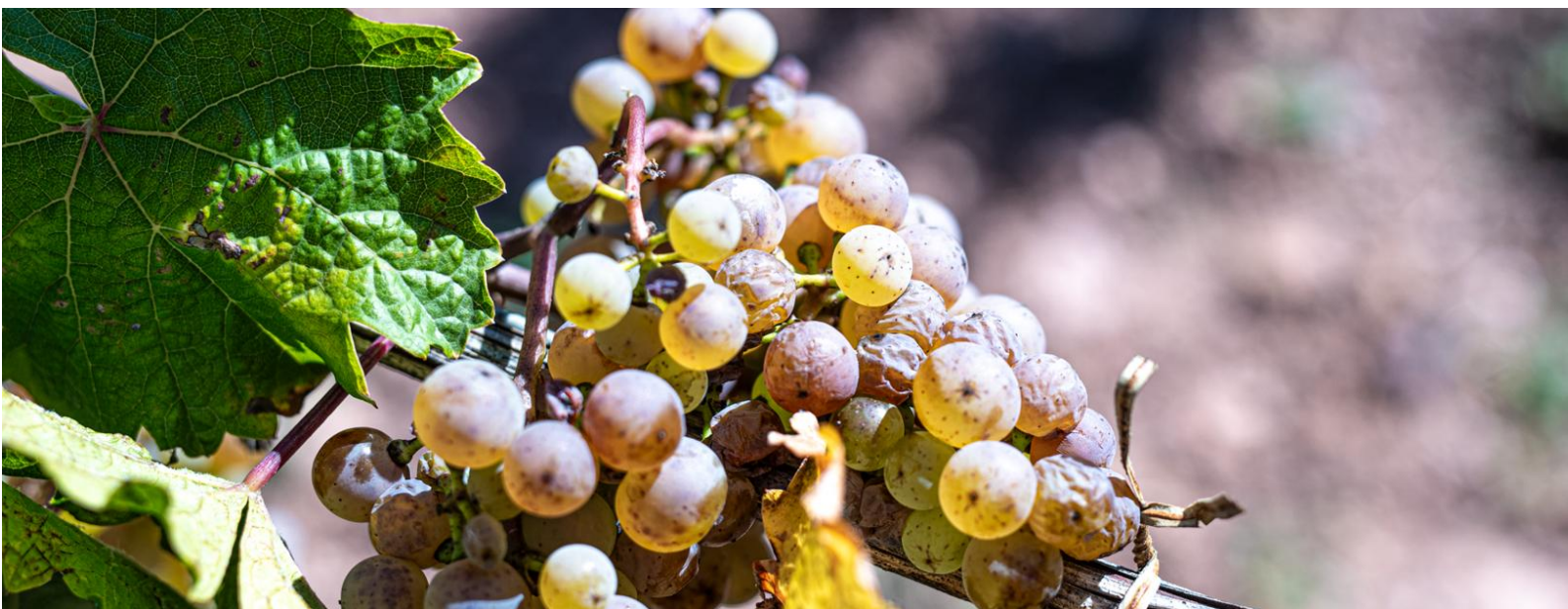
'You snooze, you loose' We have mentioned this quote several times in our harvest reports. It has probably never been as aptly suited as in 2025. The state between 'healthy and perfectly ripe' and 'overripe, botrytis rot' (photographed above) often lasted only two to three days.

As so often in recent years, the beginning of 2025 was extremely mild. Instead of classic winter weather with weeks of snow and frost, we had a rainy but sunny first quarter. Nature awoke very early in March, and our chestnut trees were already dressed in green by the beginning of April. It wasn't as record-breakingly early and warm as in the previous year, but only slightly delayed. The vineyards began to bud in mid-April, heralding an extremely sunny, beautiful spring.

This pattern continued seamlessly during May and June. An almost idyllic early summer accompanied our work in the vineyard. It was never too hot or too dry, but always warm, sunny and pleasant. The vines blossomed in the first and second week of June. Nice flowering and normal bud formation. Everything went well and there was no cause for concern. As an early, important indicator of timing, it was already clear at this point that an early start to the harvest was likely. September – and probably at the beginning of the month rather than at the end of it.

Our 'homework' for the following weeks was set accordingly. Extensive pruning and leaf removal in July and the final, mandatory yield reduction at the end. The cellar had to be ready for harvest by the end of August at the latest. It was only in retrospect that we realised how important this early preparation would be.

The harvest began on 1 September. A Monday, actually. Sparkling base wines in summery conditions. 20° Celsius, lots of sunshine alternating with a few clouds. Cool wind from the north-east. The first 10 days of September were much the same, strongly reminiscent of a very similar phase in 2015.



Perhaps this close-up of a Riesling grape is key to understanding the early days of September. The many hours of sunshine combined with dry winds from the East led (like the 2015 vintage) to the partial 'drying' of healthy berries. This caused the must weights to rise significantly – and kept the acidity levels consistently high.

The most striking thing about this first week's harvest was its' **must weights, which were surprisingly and unexpectedly high across all grape varieties and sites** – especially given the early harvest date. For example, a small amount of Scheurebe was harvested in the first week to produce grape juice. The refractometer showed 78° Oechsle – almost too ripe for juice. We measured almost 20° Oechsle less across the same vineyard during the same time last year. In viticulture, these are not just casual differences – they are worlds apart.

These initial results also set the tone for the second week of harvesting. Flawless, healthy, and fully ripe grapes with astonishingly high must weights, combined with high acidity, and low pH values. Most of the Burgundy varieties, Silvaner, and even Sauvignon Blanc arrived in the cellar with must weights between 86 to 100° Oechsle and an average of 9 to 11g acidity. They tasted consistently sweet, fresh and yet 'crisp'. The seeds separated cleanly from the flesh, which felt firm but tender and crumbly. Why should we wait any longer?

There was no more delay, because the weather changed. Fundamentally. The sunny, dry conditions at the beginning of the month gave way to very changeable, rainy, and capricious harvesting weather during the second and third week. It was not a dramatic change, but it also was not a situation where we could have said, 'Let's wait and see, it might stabilise again!'

Not whatsoever. Nothing stabilised. Quite the contrary. 'Proverbial floods' followed from 21 to 25 September. Over several days, more than 80 litres of rain fell in total. Given the still moderate temperatures and high must weights, this is exactly the combination that always leads to rampant rot and exceedingly difficult conditions. Grapes, or any fruit in general, with such high sugar ripeness generally do not 'survive' such conditions in a healthy state.



Another close-up of a Riesling grape in the third week of September. The warm, changeable weather had left its mark. High sugar ripeness paired with thin grape skins, numerous cracks, and sweet cell sap leaking out – the conditions of many vineyards was 'on a knife edge'.

What did we do? Simple. We harvested.

All men on deck, we worked to get all the important grapes for dry wines into the cellar before the 'final downpour' of 50 litres on 24 September. The first heavy rain shower at the beginning of the second week of harvesting was a wake-up call and an alarm signal. And from then on, we just kept going. Without panic, without agitation – but with all our strength, concentration, and energy. Without a break, in one go, until the evening of 23 September.

An incredible achievement. In just under 16 days, we accomplished what usually takes a good four weeks. But our harvest team, which has been with us for more than 20 years now, can do it, knows how to do it, and can handle the pressure. **No losses in terms of material or people, no compromises in quality – and without having to 'sacrifice' any vineyards.** Looking back, we can only applaud this incredible feat of energy. A huge thank you and hats off!

Here, we can also point out quite objectively and realistically that such a 'turbo mode' would not have been possible without the help of a mechanical harvester. We would have been overwhelmed by the many new developments and would simply have been too late for many plots. **We like to continuously emphasise the absolute importance of selective hand harvesting. From a quality perspective, it remains the gold standard.** However, for a harvest like 2025, we can admit that a considerable portion of the grapes for dry wines would have been lost without mechanical help. Period.

So, what is the end-result? What will the 2025 vintage look like? What did we bring into the cellar during those decisive 16 days in mid-September?

Well, from a qualitative perspective, the first thing that stands out is the homogeneous and extremely high standard. Must weights ranging from the mid-80s to over 100° Oechsle were consistently recorded across all grape varieties. That alone is rare. Correspondingly, the acidity levels are astonishingly high. Even Silvaner, which was harvested on 22 September, still registered 96° Oe and 8.5 g acidity. On average between 9 and 11 g per litre with low pH values. From a purely analytical point of view, this is reminiscent of the 2015 vintage, even though the course of events was completely different. But the similarities are surprising.

The first sensory impression of the musts was also consistently positive. It tasted juicy, fruity, and full-bodied – yet fresh at the same time. This was essentially the goal of our efforts under these conditions: to bring all the grapes for dry wines into the cellar as clean, clear, and precise as possible and with a high degree of ripeness.

In terms of quantity, the vintage is small. Here, too, a remarkable homogeneous distribution. All grape varieties have consistently lower yields compared to previous years. Overall, we are only slightly above the yield of the 'frost-shaken 2024 vintage'. But considering the fantastic quality and the wine market in general, the low harvest volume is manageable.



A photograph that perhaps most clearly illustrates the difference in yield between 2025 and 2024. On the left is a picture of last year's Merlot. The right side shows Merlot from 2025. The berries were much smaller and looser. This was also a result of the dry growing conditions for the vines in the summer of 2025.

To put it bluntly, we could conclude by saying: 'We were lucky!' Fortune was on our side this year. Of course, a successful vintage is always based on the hard work and passion that goes into all the previous works in the vineyards. We have had a great, outstanding team for many years now, and **the desire to raise the bar in terms of quality every year – to push the envelope a little more – is alive and palpable.** Every year. But sometimes you also need a bit of a 'divine touch'.

Due to the early and fast harvest, we will have a little more time than usual for the vinification and maturation of the wines. Provided we don't have any major 'mishaps' in the cellar now, we are very excited about this vintage. It has potential to be truly spectacular. It's not often that we harvest physiologically fully ripe grapes with very high must weights and high acidity levels at the same time. To use an analogy, it currently seems like a mixture of the 2019 and 2015 vintages. Very, very promising. Internally, we call this: 'DISCO-SHIT'!

Daniel Wagner & Oliver Müller

Siefersheim, 15. Oktober 2025