

October 6th, 1999

This is the first page of what in the future in irregular sequence I am going to write down to document for those of you who are eventually very closely interested in what happens at a wine estate in the Rheingau on an ongoing basis.

You will have to apologize for the grammatical and orthographic mistakes I will certainly make (this was never my strong point at school) and there will be times when time will not be sufficient in the evening to write things down (or I might have been eating and drinking with wine-friends some bottles and it might not be a good idea than to note things down. Concentration might be at such a level, that you will have problems to read it – even myself on the next day).

It might also be a good idea to cheque once in a while the diary in the other language, as I might only have the energy to do one language once in a while. Ok, me and you, the reader, will see how things develop.

Today I have checked the vineyards of Weingut von Othegraven, an estate I consult intensively over the last two year on the Saar. I wanted to take a status of the maturation status and discuss the forthcoming harvest with Herr Kraml, the estates young and motivated new cellarmaster.

Grapes look good, great ripening potential and we might start with the harvest within the next 10 days.

In our Rüdesheim estate, we could start with some earlier ripening varieties (of which we have only a very small number) towards the end of this week.

October 9th, 1999

We have actually started the harvest with some small lots of early ripening grapes two days ago and today we have started to harvest one of our Pinot Noir fields. Severe selection has taken place, in order to avoid any botrytis. The results are ok and if weather permits we will continue with Pinot Noir tomorrow. We will not stop harvested during the weekend if we have good conditions. The quantity seems to be up over last year (but do not forget this was one of our shortest year ever).

October 12th, 1999

Just a very short note. It is late. After midnight. Today we had splendid wether conditions for our harvest. Sunshine and blue sky.

We hope to pick tomorrow our Pinot Gris and on thursday this week the Pinot Noir and expect very good results.

We also have the announcement that the ZDF, the german TV chain will visit us during the picking and do a reportage. We are preparing for all our workers a typical traditonal lunch, hot sausage and rolls.

October 13th, 1999

The good weather continues. This is the most important news today. We have harvested part of our Grauer Burgunder (Pinot Gris) plantings. We vinify this wine in small oak and partially this is used for the blend of our Georg Breuer Brut, Methode Traditional Sparkling Wine. Currently we are selling the 1992 vintage, recently disgorged. The 1993 will come on stream next and we have disgorged recently some magnums of 1990 and 1991 vintage for the yearend. There are still a few available in limited supply.

We have harvested a token of the Berg Schlossberg vineyard in order to see how the Riesling does. We are greatly impressed with this first result. Very aromatic grapes and great maturity. Very promising for the grapes to come.

October 17th, 1999

Another great day for the harvest. Sunny and warm during the day. But the night temperatures are dropping and make the Botrytis come to a standstill. Just what we want. The healthy grapes for our dry wines. A firm colder easterly wind has started to blow and dries the botrytised berries. We have started to collect and select them. Some Auslesen and Beerenauslese are under way.

So we will harvest now on two fronts. Selection of healthy grapes for our major wines. Collection of botrytised berries for a small but hopefull great little production of last of the millennium dessert wines.

October 21st, 1999

The harvest is developing in an even more positive manner. We have started to harvest the Cru sites Berg Schlossberg, Berg Rottland and Nonnenberg and achieve very high maturity levels (90 Oechsle +) with good acidities. At the same time the cold wind is producing great botrytis. We will be able to have Berg Schlossberg TBA (at around 200 Oe) and Berg Schlossberg Auslese Goldkapsel, a result that in this location can only be obtained in the rarest of years.

October 22nd, 1999

Another good day for the harvest. Partially sunny, quite warm and good conditions to bring some more great grapes from the Nonnenberg site in Rauenthal. Both, healthy grapes for the "Cru" and botrytised grapes for what will probably be an Auslese Goldkapsel or BA were harvested. This is more good news.

Over the coming weekend we will all take some rest and attack again on Monday, with certainly another 2 weeks to go.

October 23rd, 1999

A rainy day. We obviously decide not to go harvest and I can leave for a customer in Stuttgart whom I have promised to assist to his annual presentation of wines. A very good company that is, called Bronner, with a tremendous worldwide assortment of high and highest quality. Good clientele and have noted a very much increasing interest in top German wines. In the evening I went to see my daughter, who lives in Stuttgart and we went to dinner in a small country style restaurant with simple regional food and local wine and, quite surprising we came to sit next to Steffi Graf and Andre Agassi, who very unpretentiously has a quite meal that evening. This is not a joke, but it tells you that to be a vintner creates a life full of surprises and enjoyment.

October 25th, 1999

A beautiful morning. Fog in the valley, sunny on the hillside. We are out harvesting. Let us see, how warm and dry it will get this afternoon, to may be go into some great vineyards for top grapes. We shall see. Today we are harvesting in Rudesheim Rauenthal Nonnenberg is nearly

finished with just two pieces still on the vines with very good potential. I am waiting for another dry day there.

Last night we tasted with Wilhelm Weil and HB Ullrich, the owner of Hotel Krone some wines for the Frankfurt meets New York Dinner where we will accompany the mayor of Frankfurt and our wines will accompany the Gala Dinner at Cipriani in N.Y. I used the occasion to check on some rare wines I had only left in double magnums. 1983 Rudesheim Berg Roseneck, still very firm and steely, fresh, may be lacking some meat, especially next to the 1983 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg, also in double magnums, which was stunning. What a wine. May be we will serve it at an event during this years Glorreiche Rheingau Tage.

October 31st, 1999

Last night we had the first rain for the week. So we could use all week in partially splendid weather conditions to continue the harvest. We finished the Nonnenberg vineyards with excellent results. For the healthy grapes good results with 95 Oechsle and a Beerenauslese of well over 150 Oe and many other wines in between. We also went into another "fillet" of the Berg Schlossberg called "Zollhaus" (in our own usage, just underneath the "Hauptmann" which gave is a great TBA) and came away with results in the same level for the healthy grapes.

There is no alternative for moderate yields if you want to get great quality. The Nonnenberg yield after completing the harvest there will be well under 40 hl/ha, but that is what it should be, no exception allowed, even when elsewhere the quantities harvested for 1999 seem often rather excessive.

Wether permitting we will continue on monday with the harvest and probably have another week to go.

November 4th, 1999

Except for tuesday, when it was raining, all other days of the week including today presented us with excellent wether and thus harvesting conditions. Crisp mornings, clear sky, warm and sunny afternoons. We benefitted from that as much as we could and have been able to get great grapes as well for our top wines as for some more dessert wines. Yesterday we harvested one of the last portions of Berg Schlossberg, where we had left only one grape per shoot with a ripeness

reading of well of 100 Oe°. A good addition to the various portions already harvested from that prestigious site.

Finally we have even been able to produce another barrel of ELYSIUM; for those who know, this is a dessert wine of BA level, which we ferment exactly as an Yquem. In new oak, the same barrel used by Yquem, fermented in the barrel and aged for certainly over two years before bottling. The first vintage we did was in 1989, a second one in 1991, a third in 1993 and now to conclude the century the fourth barrel in 1999. I am very happy for that to happen since the wines develop beautifully as they get riper. Only from the 1993 there are still a few bottles for sale, so we are glad another vintage is in sight.

If we are lucky, we will finish by Saturday this week and have our vintage celebrations with our staff and all the helpers that evening.

Our Dutch importer Peter Meijer is also coming for that weekend, so he can join the festivities.

November 10th, 1999

Yes, we did finish on Saturday. Almost like a miracle it started to rain half an hour after we cut the last grape. The weather this year was our greatest friend and allowed us to bring home one of the best harvests we have seen at our estate, it could develop as the best one of the 90ties.

A great range of botrytised wines was a highlight and especially as we were able to do this in our "Cru" vineyards, Berg Schlossberg and Nonnenberg. It also looks like a great Auslese in Berg Rottland and as in many years in Bischofsberg in addition to the fabulous grapes harvested in those sites for our First Growth wines.

I decided that we will not leave grapes hanging in a vineyard for the production of an Eiswein, should the necessary cold weather come. We were so spoiled this year, by a fantastic harvest and I feel one should have respect for nature and not demand more, more and more. To remain humble in that case seemed to me the better judgement. Also I am not so sure, whether packing the vines in plastic foil should really be the way to make wines. It does not look as in harmony with nature. So we are happy and our souls can rejoice of this great vintage.

We did celebrate last night with all our staff till the wee hours of this morning. It was a great party and all enjoyed the wines, the food and the music.

All wines are now in the cellar. The fermentation is now taking over with its own music, a great sound.

November 15th, 1999

It is all over now, the Glorious Rheingau Days (Die glorreichen Rheingau Tage). A week of celebrations. Monday a SektGala in our newly decorated cellars. 12 great sparkling wines, all Methode Champenoise from our friends and Sektmakers, Ohlig, Kloss & Fürster and Helmut Solter. We presented 3 vintages of Georg Breuer Brut: 1989, 1991 and 1993. Great Cuisine by Conny König the Chef of Breuer's Restaurant, on top of the cellars.

Tuesday evening a privatissimo dinner (the finest may be I ate at Kronenschlösschen from chef Patrik Kimpel) with a superb wine selection to discuss the final details of the medea cooperation we will have with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung for next years Rheingau Gourmet Festival. It will be a great event. The brochure will be released this week.

On Martini, November 11th, it is a tradition to eat goose. We did it with friends (as every year) and a selection of over 12 german Spätburgunder at the Krone in Assmannshausen. The best were the ones from Meyer Näkel and Paul Fürst. Great wines from close friends.

Friday evening we had the rare wine dinner at Rudesheimer Schloss. A great success for the 16 participants . The finest wines of this eventComplete tasting list under "evenets")

1929 Hattenheimer Wisselbrunn Schloss Reinhartshausen, 1921 Rauenthaler Eisweg, all three 1949 Steinberger Auslese, Johannisberger Goldatzel of Mumm and Rauenthaler Langenberg from Staatsweingut. 1959 Rauenthaler Herberg (now Baiken) from Langwerth von Simmern and both, Georg Breuer 1989 Rudesheim Berg Rottland Trockenbeerenauslese and 1959 Schloss Vollrads Beerenauslese. Non of the 26 wines a deception. Two slightly corked. And all with excellent food from our chef. Just for the records. next day a 1921 Kiedrich Gräfenberg was auctioned off at DM 20.000 by Christie's at Schloss Johannisberg (but we drank one).

Saturday night. The GIGANTEN Gala. Great Rheingau Riesling and Spätburgunder from large format bottles. We presented the double magnum of 1983 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg for 150 people. A wine of great freshness and still a lot of punge. I also liked very much the 1997 Erbach Hohenrain First Growth from Jakob Jung. Excellent ambiance .

And yesterday the Riesling Gala at Kloster Eberbach. The 12th time, this glamorous event took

place (just to say that I had the pleasure to conceive this 13 years ago together with my good friend Egbert Engelhardt and supervised it ever since) With one year off, this was the 12th time and a dozen should be enough and some younger colleagues should now take over.

Now body and mind need some rest after such a week. Listening at the fermenting wines in the cellar and writing these notes on Monday evening.

November 19th, 1999

Some more restful work has entered our lives at the estate. We have cleaned and ranged all the equipment from the harvest. All red wines are now lying in small oak in our new barrel cellar. We have put up a beautiful iron gate in front of that vaulted cellar and the wines have become the environment they deserved. Since it is in another building of ours, we have now been able to put the whites in a colder and the reds in a slightly warmer cellar. We are happy with that solution.

This evening I will drive to the Eifel mountains, south of Cologne, to a good customer, Landhaus Kallbach, for a winemaker dinner and on Saturday the Magazin Feinschmecker holds the traditional Riesling Gala at Hotel Krautkrämer in Münster, certainly an opportunity to meet many good colleagues and chat about the '99 harvest.

See you next week.

November 24th, 1999

The first intense snow hit me the morning after the winemaker dinner. More than 10 inches in a few hours. My car would not make it up the hill that morning. I still had not put the snow tires on. So I was glad to find a driver who took me to the 30 km distant train station to pick up a train to Cologne and Münster where I had my meetings. The Riesling Gala was the usual great gathering of good friends and colleagues, but not only from Germany but also from California. I met old time friends Paul Draper and Jim Clendenen and tasted their fabulous reds. Paul's Zinfandel (note that he did not put the grape variety any more in bold on the label, an idea I quite share and agree to) and Jim's Pinot Noir from '97. He feels one of his greatest wines.

So, obviously this became a long night in the bar. But we drank only good wine, so the head stayed in good condition and allowed me to leave early to catch a train again to the Eifel

(this is between Belgium, Cologne and Aachen – for those who might want to see some beautiful countryside and hit some early snow). fetch my car and drive back to the Rheingau.

Yesterday we went to the vineyards with our pruning crew to discuss the pruning philosophy for this season. We would like to see still more aeration potential in the canopy and the ground-works for that will have to be laid now when we prune.

We have also taken the first sweet wines from the lees . Berg Schlossberg TBA completed fermentation the first, which this year seems to be very steady and so far not creating too much headache.

Tomorrow will see me in Kanzem on the Saar to meet the German distributor for Von Othegraven Wines, Segnitz and Co. and in the evening there is an informal dinner with the secretary of the German vintners association in Mainz. So, another full schedule, before on Thursday I will take the train for Berlin. On Friday night I will have the vertical Nonnenberg tasting (1990 to 1998) at Kurpfalz Weinstuben together with good friend Stuart Pigott. It is sold out. All bottles Magnum or Doublemagnum. It should be a very interesting event

December 5th, 1999

Back from New York this morning, finding very windy and mild (for the season) weather on my return. It has been a busy schedule the last 7 days. After seeing some accounts during Friday last week, I had the announced tasting of Nonnenberg with Stuart. It was a very exciting event - also and in particular for me. I had never tasted all nine vintages side by side out of magnums. And it is interesting to find how they developed.

1990: very powerful, but one had the impression still closed (it was interesting for me to taste the wine one evening later at the Kronenschlösschen with French wine enthusiasts out of a 0.75 bottle and I found the wine in a more open fashion - so my deduction is that it will still develop in the large format bottles. I can see this vintage coming to its peak in another 10 years).

1991: also very strong in the expression of the flavors. Some good citric aromas on the nose. A fruit character that seems almost sweet in the finish of the mouth. A long way from being at its peak.

1992: more reluctant to show its character at this stage. A more quiet wine.

1993: luscious, full of "body", Rubens. Great wine.

1994: good mineral flavors. Very good length. Obviously still partially closed. Will open in some 3-4 more years. Powerful.

1995: Less opulent. Finesse, some flinty tones in the nose. Should be great with fish right now.

1996: Great surprise. Very full. The acidity is balanced now, even when the wine was young, this was not to be expected so early.

1997: Young, young, young. Wait and see

1998: Citric aromas on the nose. Length good fruit. Massive with depth. Young. Still jumping on the tongue.

A tasting with Stuart is always an experience. He has a way of expressing the character of the wine, that is colourful and precise at the same time. To find more out about it, read his books. They are (even though mostly not yet translated and therefore in German) some of the best wineliterature around on the globe and very, very entertaining at the same time.

We also spoke about other things, after we sat down with some food and particularly both of us were concerned with the matter of the so called "new oenological" techniques. A legal debate that takes place in the European Union whether to accept and allow the farmers in Europe methods such as "concentration, osmosis, addition of wood chips, etc"

I am strongly against using any of these. Since this will change the original formula for a wine. Yes, it can make wines in more difficult years and from difficult harvesting conditions, possibly more full bodied and showing more primary flavors. But they also become more uniform and what will get lost is the originality, the spirit of location, which in particular is what Riesling can do, due to its subtlety and finesse. This is not for me (and not for Stuart Pigott) and despite the fact that sales of concentration machines are booming (my cellar master Herr Schmoranz was at the Milano Sime exhibition last week for vinification equipment, etc and he told me that there were a hardly overseeable number of machines exhibited on this show and... ordered). I might want to put a word in my next pricelist, that we will not use these practices now and in the future. I like to adhere to the methods of the past and the craftsmanship that is attached to it.

Sunday morning. An early flight to New York. I accompanied the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt, Frau Petra Road, with Wilhelm Weil and HB Ullrich and our wines, to be served at a special Gala Dinner in New York on the following evening at the Cipriani location on 42nd street. Over 400 business people would attend and now lesser known person as Mr. Hilmar Kopper the Chief of the Board of Directors of Deutsche Bank gave the opening speech. After all, the Rheingau is the garden of Frankfurt and I find the idea to demonstrate that Frankfurt is not only money and the stock exchange but also great wine a good message to be combined. A fabulous programme of the famous Tigerpalast cabaret of Frankfurt accompanied the event.

Next day for noon I had invited some good journalist friends from New York (Mary Muliigan - I think one of only two M.W. in the USA and her husband Ed Mc.Carthy - author of "Champagne for Dummies" where the only non champagne is GEORG BREUER BRUT)) together with restaurant customers of our N.Y. distributor Ed Lauber to a lunch at Jean Georges (Vongerichten) the No. 1 chef at present in New York. We had one 1997 First Growth each of 3 domaines: Von Othegraven's Kanzem Altenberg, Bürklin Wolff's Rupertsberg Gaisböhl and Georg Breuer Rauenthal Nonnenberg. Plus the 1998 second wines from the respective estates: Truly a memorable lunch. I will try to find the menu and shows with my next entry. Attended also were the top sommeliers of possibly some of the leading restaurants in New York right now From the Danube (a new restaurant under Boulez leadership), Café Boulut and Pacific Union Café.:

On wednesday I went to see with HB Ullrich and his partner Barbara von Stechow (a Frankfurt Gallery owner), both dear friends of me, in the countryside at New Salem Tom Christopher, the painter, who will be doing the Berg Schlossberg 1999 vintage label (you will have to be patient, since it will only come out in march of 2001). We had a great day in that beautiful countryside. Forests, lakes, good company and a charming family, the Cristophers. There was a long article on him just a few days ago in the Wall Street Journal.

On the way back to the hotel, we dropped in this new Danube restaurant (30 Hudson Street, N.Y. 10013 Tel. 212-7913771 in der Gegend von SoHo). Excellent food. Good extensive wine list - may be the largest section of austrian wines outside of Austria ? - all well chosen by Alexander Adlgasser the knowledgeable formidable sommelier of the house. The decoration of the restaurant is stunning. Go and see for yourself.

Yesterday was time for shopping and lunch at La Tabla another "hot" New York restaurant. An excellent Sauvignon Blanc from Mantanzas Creek to accompany the indian/new yorkish food. And than overnight back home via Lufthansa. That brings me to dec. 5th.

December 7th, 1999

Our US-Importer, Steve Metzler came to pay his annual after harvest visit. I owe him and his wife very much since they had the guts to introduce our "Cru" wines to the US, dry Rieslings, at a time when everybody said, you can only sell sweet german Rieslings outside of Germany. He placed meanwhile our top dry "cru" from Berg Schlossberg, Nonnenberg and Berg Rottland in many leading hotels , resttaurants and wine shops and not only in the US but also in his wifes homeland of Spain and through our combined connections in Australia, Italy, England, Holland, Sweden, Norway and the latest addition Korea. Demand outstripped within 5 years supply So it was very useful to enter the famous Kanzem Altenberg from Von Othegraven /Saar under the same concept..And it is already doing very well.

He is on his way today to the palatinate to visit Bürklin-Wolf. Let us wait and see what might happen with a possible addition to his portfolio.

December 9th, 1999

Not too much is happening this week, other than beeing very busy preparing the christmas orders of our customers. This coming saturday we will be tasting the 1999 dessert wines for the first time and in the afternoon I will be travelling for 4 days to the Douro and to Madeira. My friend Bernd Philippi will join me. So I will say good bye till next week.

December 22th, 1999

It has been a while since I last reported. But this was a very busy time. We were lucky to find good wether in Portugal when we looked at some vineyards that were offered and almost spring time wether in Madeira. With friends after my return we had a splendid dinner at a Restaurant in Mainz-Kastel (a part of the city of Wiesbaden) called "Der halbe Mond". Excellent Wine list , great price quality relation and very good food. Only 4 tables.The owner does the service and his wife is in the kitchen. So if you are in that area, it is worth visiting. The street is called "In der Witz".

The next two days we met with our german colleagues, whith whom we have a joint company for the distribution of our wines in Germany. Indeed this is good company. We met at the

Kesselstatt Estate on the Ruwer and just to let the reader know, who our other friends in that group are. Here is a list: Bürklin Wolf, Heyl zu Herrnsheim, Castell, Prinz Salm, Meyer Näkel, Heger's new domaine Fischer from Baden, Graf Neipperg.

A dinner last friday at the Mainz Hyatt to prepare a wine evening on Jan. 29. 2000 where together with Bürklin Wolf, Heyl zu Herrnsheim and Hans Lang, the "First Growth" will be the leading theme. This event will be preceded by a charity quction, where we all donate some wines. So may be you want to come to. It starts at 5 pm. If I get it early enough, I will put the auction list in the new page of this home page in the days to come. Yesterday we had our annual excursion with all staff from our estate and our Hotel. We had good fun, good food and company. And it lasted till the wee hours of this morning. In Between we pack the last boxes for our customers. I will be tasting all the 99 wines from the barrel in the cellar tomorrow to get a first overview and than comes Christmas. A few days of rest with family and friends.