

January 9th, 2000

It has been quite a while since I put down my last notes. There was Christmas and the new year. We had friends for Christmas day and I prepared 2 geese (since we were many people and good eaters) and we drank quite a vast array of wines since we parted late in the evening. For the whites I choose 2 white Burgundies, a Puligny Montrachet of 1988 and a Chablis Grand Cru 1989 from Bouchard Père & Fils. They had dried out a little and showed some edges of oxydation but were still ok with the food. We taste tested our own 98 First Growth, Berg Schlossberg and Nonnenberg and they start to come around, even though far too young! But it shows already that the acidity are very well integrated in that vintage. The range of reds ranged from 1993 Brunello die Montalcino and the same vintage Altero from my friend at Poggio Antico, Paola Gloder, 1994 Pesquera (obviously too young to drink), 1993 Sociando Malet (will be great), 1991 Mouchao and among others a great bottle of 1973 Mouton Rothschild. for dessert a Domaine Schlumberger Gewürtztraminer and a Burgenländer Beerenauslese. Another highlight was a 1970 Riesling Beerenauslese from Graf Eltz that my friend brought along. He has more in his cellar, he told me. This is good news.

A couple of days after Christmas I tasted with my cellermaster Hermann Schmoranz all barrels of the 1999 in the cellar and we are quite happy at this stage. Many are still quietly fermenting and the vintage shown its ripeness and power already.

Then I took off over the new year with part of my family and friends for skiing to the french alps and returned 3 days ago.

I have been catching up with work and things will get again real busy as of tomorrow. This coming week there will be Berlin, a regional wine fair, on the menu and coming saturday the departure for South Africa, where we will bottle and present the first vintage of 1998 Mont du Toit, a wine that Bernd Philippi and myself have been developing together with the owner of the farm Stephan du Toit. It will come on the market in spring in various countries in addition to being marketed domestically in S.A..

January 23rd, 2000

Back from South Africa this morning. It was hot down there. The hottest day in Capetown for century it said in the papers. And even a bit warmer in Wellington. Well over 40° C. But you get used to it and one behaves accordingly. You might have read in the papers also about the

many fires that have erupted during that time, especially because when we arrived there were big storms blowing and made it impossible to put the fires out. In some cases the fire destroyed some portions of vineyards of top estates in Stellenbosch and near Constantia.

We bottled the 1998 vintage MONT DU TOIT. And we presented it also during the week to the South African Wine press at the famous Grande Roche hotel. It was a good event. Mont du Toit is a deep coloured red wine from very ripe grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah - the 99 vintage which is still lying in cask will get an addition of Malbec/Cabernet Franc on top - with good but well rounded tanins. It has tremendous fruit and a long finish. It comes quite close to what we were out there from the beginning. Make a red wine that can compete internationally.

Label and capsules are finished now. So it can be offered in the market. Interest is already excellent. In the most important South African Wine Guide, Platter, it achieved already 4 points out of 5. Not a bad start. I will try to scan the label in the next days and put it in the news section of this homepage.

We had in addition to the Grande Roche dinner, 2 excellent visits to restaurants which I recommend to everybody going to the Cape.

Harald Bresselschmidt Aubergine in downtown Capetown, not far from the Lord Nelson Hotel and Auberge Rozendaal, just a bit outside of Stellenbosch. Don't miss them. In case you go to Harald, give him my regards. He knows us well.

So back to work at home. Monday evening I will assist the annual Gala Dinner of the Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe German Section in Nürnberg at the Restaurant of our good friends Rottner (he wants learned to cook in the Rheingau at the Graue Haus)

Februaury 3rd, 2000

Busy days. The dinner on monday was excellent, so was the compagny and the great new hotel of Stefan Rottner in Nürnberg. The next evening was devoted to the presentation of a plan for the future development of Rüdesheim's waterfront, which I have been working on with two friends for the last year. We presented it in the townhall. the interest was immense and the hall was bursting with people. I feel things went well and we hope that our plan, which will take the town again back to the water, rather than seperating it by train and road from the Rhine river, will form the basis of discussion for the next years in our home town.

Last Friday I met with many colleagues on the subject of the first growth concept and our future activities. We will be presenting the 1998 vintage, just on the eve of the release of the wines, on the 25th in Berlin.

It was good to meet our friends from the summer holidays on Saturday in Wetzlar, an hour away. They prepared a beautiful dinner with great wines, Berg Schlossberg, Mouton Rothschild and for desserts Breuer Beerenauslese and Château d'Yquem. What a treat.

Today I came back from London, where Christie's organised a major auction for German top wines. I was very pleased with the success of our wines in that international market. See detailed results in the news section of the homepage. A double magnum of 1983 Berg Schlossberg nearly quadrupled in price since it was put on the market in 1985 for the first time. Last I had the opportunity to present in behalf of the auction house a rare wine dinner from our own collection to special guests. Hugh Johnson, Michael Broadbent among others joined together with great British wine collectors. For most it was a first to drink German wines going back up to 60 years. Hugh found that the 1939 Erbacher Marcobrunn we had, was the best wine he ever drank from his birth year. I think that alone was worth the event. I can also confirm that the wines presented themselves all in great form and a memorable event it was for most guests, for many a first to have such good mature German wines 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 and 60 years of age.

February 21st, 2000

Many things happened since the last notice.

I came back this morning from a week full of Riesling in Australia. Riesling Symposium, great attendance in Sydney. Then further tastings in Melbourne and Adelaide and to finish two days in Clare Valley. Great experience and great producers. Geoffrey Grosse and Stephanie Toole, both incredibly hospitable and I could see they enjoy what they produce, just as we do. More detailed news hopefully on the return of my next travels. As of this Thursday I will be for two days in Berlin and then on Saturday morning for a week of presentations, events and dinners in to Frankfurt airport. I am leaving for a New York and Washington.

So much for now.

March 6th, 2000

This is Carnival. A relatively unknown event for the people in the US where I just came from. I landed Saturday morning after a week of activities in New York and Washington safely again in Frankfurt. The main target of this trip was, to announce together with our importer Classical Wines (Stephen Metzler and Almudena de Llaguna) the fact that he now represents 3 estates from Germany, which represent the classical approach of First Growth and naturally dry fermented wines. Dr. Bürklin Wolf, Von Othegraven and Georg Breuer. We are presenting the American market with the wines that have made us successful already in Germany. A clear concept that is based on the tradition of German wines when they were in their heydays also in the US until the early 50th. After that, technique allowed to make sweet wines or anything in between also when it was not caused by the advent of botrytis and thus naturally in some years stopped the fermentation. An interestingly enough with that development German wines seem to have lost the momentum and have gradually lost more and more image and market share.

Classical Wines (as the name suggests) is looking for the traditional wines which display local character rather than uniformness, uniqueness rather than mainstream. And we are progressing bit by bit. 4 years ago they started alone with Breuer, we added on Othegraven later and now with Bürklin Wolf we are starting to be a factor in the market. We could feel this during this trip.

Arrival in New York on the 26th in the afternoon. I flew with Heidi Kegel of Othegraven (Christian vonGuradze of Bürklin Wolf came later in the evening and we still met for a Pinot Noir at the bar of our Hotel - Roosevelt, good location, close to Grand Central) and we went to the Cinema, rare event for me, that evening to avoid falling to sleep too early. Hanging - Up, a comedy about 3 sisters, their personal life and the cellphones. Sunday, meeting with Stephan and Almudena and the Spanish vintners which also flew in for some common activities. Lunch at the private quarters of the Metropolitan museum with Marcia Palancie, who was in charge of the press event, which took place Tuesday.

In the evening we all went to the Blue Note. A great Jazz Club downtown. Great quality. Top people play here. Al di Meola, Roy Haynes, Mike Stern, Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea or Naancy Wilson to name just one. Monday a joint presentation together with our local distributor Lauber at the Tribeca Grill (an Institution for good food) for the New York restaurants and trade. Very well attended. In the evening we all went with different sales people of Lauber for dinner. I hit it well with Bill Schiambi, the Vice President Sales, his wife and Heidi. Clementine was a great restaurant with superb food and as so common in New York, great decor.

Tuesday , the big day. Tasting at Oceana of the wines of the three german estates. The initial idea was to have 30 people. But we had almost 60 coming. This was press only. Everyone known in that business from New York was present. A superb seafood and fish lunch - one of the best places for that in that city - and the wines did very well. Nobody missed Chardonnay, nobody miss even the red wine. May be this was a milestone for our style of Riesling. The Riesling of Tradition, the one for the main courses on the table - not the apertif, TV and dessert Riesling.

Before we had another tasting, this time for consumers of the Wine and Food and German Wine Society of New York, I gave a staff training on our wines at the Gramercy, a famous restaurant with a good selection of Riesling to start with. After the evening tasting we went for dinner to the Union Pacific restaurant, another inventive place with a Riesling interest. Fred Price is the sommelier that has a soft spot for what we do. Also we were treated very well. Wednesday we join in the Grand European Wine tasting. This was not so focussed as the other events that we did ourselves. Sweet and dry, expensive and cheap, side by side. This is not of great help. An exercise probably not to be repeated. We finished the day with dinner at the Mark restaurant. Their sommeliers has a reputation to do Riesling events. We talked about it. May be this will come about in June.

Thursday morning we took the train to Washington from Penn Station. A nice change. From the station straight to the hotel (Morrison - Clark a historical beautifully restaured place with a great atmosphere at reasonable price (for the US) and than to the joint presentation with our spanish colleagues at Jalea a spanish tapas place. This was done in conjunction with our Washington/Baltimore distributor Franklin Selection. A very good house and Michael Franklin the owner is behind what we do. I think we also convinced their salespeople of the wines, as they saw the very positive customer reaction. As a total surprise I met Barry Bassin, whom I had known may be twenty years ago from New York and was a very famous face in the trade. He now retails in Washington and liked a lot what we do.

From here to the house of the spanish press attaché in Washington for drinks and tapas and than all together for the last common evening at the Georgetown Grill . Lots of wine, laughter and fun. It ended with the last bottles of Breuer wines at Stephan and Almudena`s room at the hotel. Thank god, they had a suite.

Friday morning the three germans visited Woodley, one of the wellknown retailers of the town. A very succesful enterprise and Ed Sands the owner seems open to some of our ideas. We left some bottles with him. Than a walk over the parks near the White House and the Capitol. A brief visit of the National Gallery, a last tapas meal with a botle of Pesquera at Jaleo and off we went

with the taxi to Dulles Airport. Lufthansa took us back home. Heavy headwinds caused some delay. But we all landed safely.

I had friends that afternoon for tasting wines and it felt good to go through the range of all 1998 Riesling again. Even after such a week, one does not get tired of good wines. Quite to the contrary.

There is little phone calls over Carnival. A good chance to catch up with things at home and in the office. There is not much time, since tomorrow I will go to Von Othegraven in Kanzem and on Friday the Rheingau Gourmet Festival begins, of which I am one of the organizers. There is great food and wines ahead of us. It starts with a Veltliner tasting from the top Austrian producers. They will all be here: Knoll, FX Pichler, Hirzberger and Bodenstein and also the one and only Pfarrer Denk, who may be the most famous wine freak priest around the world.

March 26th, 2000

A lot of catching up to do. The Gourmet Festival. I must have had more than a 100 courses, all from great chefs from Germany, Austria, the USA and Norway and most probably over 500 wines in these 10 days. But it was rewarding to gain new friends that is our culture of wine and food. The oldest culture in the world. All events have been well attended. The wine tastings such as Grüner Veltliner presented by the champions of that discipline FS Pichler, Hirzberger, Prager and Knoll. What a treat to have them with us in person. A tasting of older Austrian Rieslings from Bründlmeyer, Mirchmair and Schloss Gobelsburg, back to 1969., a red-wine workshop of over 30 Spätburgunder (Heger, Fürst, Näkel. and other greats) from Germany, Bordeaux from Les Cins (Canon la Gafellière, Branaire, Smith-Haut Lafite, Gazin and Pontet Canet), great Blaufränkische and Cuvées from Burgenland and Thermenregion (Kollwentz, Krutzler, Triebaumer, etc) and some other exotic wines. Stuart Pigott did a great job. This form of tasting seems like a good idea. The first part is a blind tasting, then the wines are discussed and then they can be retasted again. The growers were mostly on site and gave the attendants a chance to talk to them. All wines were from the same vintage, which really made it exciting.

A dinner with 10 vintages of La Chapelle from Jaboulet, followed an afternoon tasting of more "La Chapelle" led by Nicolas Japoutier.

I had a chance to get a drop of some of the Mouton - Rothschild that were part of the Rodenstock tasting. 1952, 1947 (with a phantastique minty nose - it almost reminded me of 74 Martha's Vineyard) and the famous 1950. A wine of great fruit and total balance.

The Champagne dinner with 3 chefs reuniting 5 Michelin stars among themselves featured 1964 Moët Chandon Brut Imperial as the highlight but the other highlight of that evening was the presence and appearance of Ronnie Kole (he played piano for the last 5 US presidents and he plays so well. He started with Gershwin and really warmed our hearts with American piano music. A great man, lover of wine - I was sitting next to him at the last year's fête de fleurs in Bordeaux at the table of Jean-Michel Cazes and we got to talk about wine and food and I finally convinced to come to us for that evening. He played at the Krone, where the dinner was held, until the wee hours. What a treat for us. Make sure you get to see him when he performs in the States. Eventually he will be a guest at the 2001 Rheingau Musik Festival. I feel he has got the Riesling virus.

Maybe the best course of the week was a "Anglerdorsch" prepared by Terje Ness, the Norwegian cook that won the Bocuse d'or last year - the highest title for any chef world wide. This was so incredibly cooked to perfection it seemed from out of this world. He will soon open his new restaurant in Oslo. Before he brought the 2 stars to La Bagatelle also in Oslo. Another great fish course was done by Josef Viehauser of Le Canard in Hamburg "Seesaibling" in a phantastique sauce.

I could fill so many more pages, just thinking back to that fabulous week. But it would be much better, if those who read these lines will join us next year for the event. It will take place again beginning of March 2001.

Just a few hours after the Grand Finale, I left for the PROWEIN wine fair in Düsseldorf which has now developed into Germany's most important wine fair. I was at the stand of our German distributor Schlumberger and we were busy from day one to three. I had hardly a chance to see other stands and halls. But that is the way it should be. On the first evening I went to the launching party of a new German wine magazine "Feinschmecker Wein Gourmet" (if you get hold of this first issue you will find some good news on our Berg Schlossberg (and some people say- you will find even a good photo of myself, sitting in the vineyard). On the second evening we gave our own party together with LES CINQUE from Bordeaux at the Düsseldorf Film Museum. It was a great event. 300 people, great wines and perfect food and good piano music. To be continued next year.

Last Friday I did a wine dinner with my friend Reinhard Löwenstein at the Restaurant Burg Thurant in Alken on the lower Mosel (a beautiful place run by super people , the Kopowski. Beautiful setting and great hospitality with really warm people. I recommend it to you. I met the couple for the first time in South Africa last year. And yesterday I met Tom Christopher at the ART FRANKFURT, an art fair of very high quality. Tom Christopher from New York, whom I met in his

studio near N.Y. already last december has brought me the painting that will make the 1999 Berg Schlossberg label. An emotional moment. It will do justice to a great wine.

We also had the annual meeting of the Rheingau VDP. Unfortunately the members did not vote on a motion that I had put forward. The ban of the new oenological practices, such as addition of wood chips and foremost the usage of concentration or vaccum destillation , for all wines of this group. Admitted these practices are used in many countries around the world, but I do not want them for our Riesling.

We will never use them and hopefully I can convince my colleagues too to underwrite this thought and come up with a common decision even though I doubt that many will join me in that belief.

I know my standpoint is not popular with the modern thinking of oenology but I feel very good with my standpoint and in line with my thinking of wine as part of culture and not of an industrial activity.

Also my motion to effectively reduce the overall yield to 75 hl/hl maximum per estate has been rejected.

So I have now been catching up. In the middle of the week I will be off to VINITALY in Verona a very important international wine fair, where we will share a stand with german colleagues at the Feinschmecker Magazin Stand. I look forward also to taste many other wines at the same time and will certainly have some fun evening as well. More later.

April 5th, 2000

A quick note to say that I am back from Verona. I came back yesterday after quite a few days full of activity. Also with good food , wine and compagny. i saw quite a bit of american friends, even stayed in the same hotel as our New York and Illinois distribtors.

We shared a stand with good german colleagues and the Feinschmecker Wine and Food Magazin. A great team. Not only at the stand. Outside of the fair, tomake you water your mouth. At the evening before the start a dinner at the "in place" during the fair "Bottega Vini" 1993 Gaja Barbaresco (still closed , good tannin structure), 1993 Punotto Bussia, great depth, traditional, i liked, from the side table a taste of 1990 Cheretto Bricco Roche, excellent (there sat our norvegi-an agent Henriette Batt from Oslo, a great champ, and to finish on the request of Dirk Nieport

from Douro , who shared our table, 1995 Ornellaia and 1996 Masseto, both from Ludovico Antinori. A bit pumped up wine. Probably concentrated. I preferred the first wines. I feel uncomfortable with concentration, which makes the wines jammy and bold and as Madelaine Jakits the editor of Feinschmecker said that evening, silicon wines. I prefer to drink for my wellbeing and culture rather Merill Streep than Pamela Anderson, if you understand what I mean.

Another great day was our joint presentation for over 750 visitors on sunday at the estate of Alois Lageder in Magreid, Alto Adige. A phantastic presentation together with great italian estates, Castelle di Ama, Lageder, Cason Hirschbrunn and others, another Alois , Alois Kracher and friends from Austria, Les Cinq from Bordeaux, Canaon La Gaffelière, Brannaire, Gazin, Pontet Canet and Smith Haut Lafite - who all became good friends after having cooperated with same for some years now.

On the last monday another presentation , that time with Johann Innerhofer, our italian importer, who is a very friendly warm person.

A last dinner at a restaurant you should take a note for the atmosphere and quite a decent wine list. "La Taverna de la Via Stella" at the Via Stella close to the Arena and the balcony of Romeo and Juliet.

Back to the Rheingau yesterday. It is a long ride. Almost 800 kilometers. Ernie Loosen joined me on the way back. So we had a lot to talk about.

April 12th, 2000

Not so many things are happening. I am trying to still catch up on a lot of paperwork. Last friday I had a winemakers dinner in Wassenberg, a town closer to Aachen (Aix la Chapelle as it is also called) the town in which in 800 Charlemagne was crowned emperor, a date that was a big issue back during school days in our history lesson.

On my way back I stopped at Werner Näkels place, my collegue from the Ahr, who is just building a brand new winery. It will be a great place, quite a bit California like. Go and see it. It is in Dernau. We have also been working on a common blend of wine. But this is still an undisclosed subject. More later in the year.

Sunday, monday together with 5 vintner friends (Kesselstatt, Philipi, Näkel, Dönnhof and Fürst) we have jointly invited customers in the evening to our new cellar for anight of tasting some buld samples of 1999 vintage and for some more wine and food.

The two nights turned out to be very enjoyable, with the effect that sleep became a scarcity. Those vintners (including myself) never go to bed.

Early in the week I negotiated for a small, but excellent piece of Berg Rottland with a farmer that because of age will give up taking care of his vineyards. I will let you know if we have been successful.

Tomorrow I have the visit of two customers from Colorado and Friday I will be in Kanzem with Von Othegraven during the day and in the evening presenting a rare wine dinner in Cologne, going back with some wines from my cellar until 1949.

April 16th, 2000

A great tasting last Friday. It took place at ORANGERIE in the Augustusburg Castle - a beautiful setting - in Brühl, just outside of Cologne. The chef Ralf Bey, an extrovert with tremendous dedication undertook quite a challenge. He has never tasted German wines that old and was afraid he did find courses to match. But was outdoing himself. The courses were not only in most instances a perfect match but also beautifully prepared and tasty.

With the flight of 3 vintages Rauenthal Nonnenberg, we had quail with foie gras du Périgord with hazelnutvinegrette

Followed by a pike-perch, baked on its skin, on champagne sauerkraut. This came with the 3 wines of the 1969 vintages of which at first the Hochheimer Domdechaney stood out but its sheer opulence so typical of Hochheim wines but with more development the Rudesheim Berg Burgweg took the lead with very elegant, fresh, lean flavours. The 3 1959 were all outstanding. The Geisenheim Rothenberg Auslese from Adam Vollmer almost too young. Schloss Johannisberg Grünlack was not quite up to the others, but the Trarbacher Schlossberg Auslese was with its beautiful set of flavours and a good finish a perfect match to a classic, steamed lobster with a beautifully filled zucchini blossom. An outstanding set of wines. Whoever said or wrote 59th won't keep because of too low an acidity would have been proved wrong.

1949 Drohnhofberger Auslese from Math. Josef Clüsserath, Steinberger Auslese and Freiherr von Fahrenberg Auslese, Nepomuk Steiert from Baden was a very lively trio of this outstanding vintage. I was flabbergasted (is that the right spelling? Please advise me) by the match of flavors of the Drohnhofberger and the Basque lamb from the oven. Incredible. We finished with a 69 Höllenberg Spätburgunder Beerenauslese, a 79 Rudesheim Berg Roseneck Eiswein and a 1989

Rüdesheim Berg Rottland Trockenbeereenauslese. All representing their own style of terroir with their very special type of vinification. A delight the ripe blue cheese with a sabayone on grappa / poire williams base. With finished the evening with the 1979 Kanzem Altenberg Brut von Othegraven which Michael Broadbent described in the April issue of Decanter Magazine of page 19: "A very pale, dry, lovely, youthfully sparkling wine, which turned out to have been a - my description- reconditioned 20 year old Auslese from the Saar".

Just in case you are near Cologne call 02232- 944150 ORANGERIE and ask for Ralf Bey. You will have a memorable evening.

April 26th, 2000

Back from a short ski break in the french alps. Faboulous snow, more than I had during the New Years break. God runs from top to bottom. One night two days ago brought some more powder. And mostly sun during the day. How to get a sun tan in 2 days? No problem, go to Val d'Isère for yourself. I went with a good friend of mine, Norbert Hoderrieth, the still famous former manager of the Wegeler Estate. The recommandation for the evenings is the one and only "Elsässer Winstub", run by the charming Hubert Deiss, a wine afficionado and great connaisseur of all wines from his home regions, the Alsace. He offered among others a great bottle of wine: 1988 Cuvé Frédéric Emil from Trimbach. Still so young , fresh and fullbodies. A masterpiece.

Back in the Rheingau. Sunny days have really made the vegetation Jump. In the to sites, such as Berg Schlossberg , the first 2/3 leaves are out.

May 3rd, 2000

Back again. I was 4 days in Portugal in the Douro. Thevegetation of the vines in the colder Minho (closer to the sea) where hardly more advanced than at home. In the Douro, where the temperatures are hotter, the vines show already more than 4 to 5 leaves. it has been raining for almost 3 weeks, but that is not bad in this season, since usually the summers are very dry. More on the whys and where in the Douro eventually at a later stage.

Tomorrow I will travel with friends to the Elsass and Basel by visiting in Baden my good friend Joachim Heger and on the last day returning Bernd Philippi in the Palatinate.

On Monday I will be off to Berlin and Dresden and will therefore be back with more reporting in about another week.

May 14th, 2000

It was a great trip to Elsass. I was greatly impressed with the city of Colmar where I stayed for the first time. It has a beautiful old town and eating and drinking seems to be an obvious normal important part of life there. We also visited Schlumberger in Guebwiller, the largest private estate and visited the impressive steep vineyards with a four wheel drive. quite a scary trip. they are still using horses for some of their vineyards and they have to maintain over 50 kilometers of stone walls. Impressive. On Saturday we had a good walk up to the ferme auberge of the Grand Ballon at the very southern end of the Elsass. A beautiful summer day and great natural food at the auberge. Simple but good. Homemade ham and goat cheeses a sheer delight.

Back on Sunday evening, I prepared to leave the next morning with the train to Berlin. A tasting and meeting with the Berlin Sommelier Society on the subject of German reds, which I shared with Werne Knipser, the great red wine maker from the Pfalz. an many visits to the ever growing dynamic Berlin Restaurant scene. Many new places. Top chefs seem to open their dependence in Berlin now. Stil, Margaux, another new place of Viehäuser-Hamburg, simply called Viehäuser in the new federal Press Conference Center, Lutter and Wegner, the old traditional house, ETA Hofmann with may be the most promising new Berlin Chef Timo Raue, Guy, quite a place on three floors, the Four Seasons - the hotel of many prominent politicians - I sat at the bar next to the former President Roman Herzog, and to finish the day off a dinner at Borchardt (a bottle of 96 Rauenthal Nonnenberg went down very well) , may be the busiest place in town at night.

Back home. Thursday an interview with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on my opinion on the new Rheingau Classification, a visit of some hotel customers and on Friday I went to Kanzem on the Saar to discuss pending issues with Heidi Kegel. We will bottle the 99 vintage next week. A tasting with some good business friends on my return and in the evening a benevolent event in town.

Sekt Day. A new event, created by the German Sekt industry was on Saturday. I went to my friends place Ohlig /Kloss & Förster, just around the corner. Splendid weather, good ambiance. This morning I had finally again time to do my Sunday morning jogging in the nearby forest with our dog. We were both in good form and saw some deer crossing our way early in the morning. A great site.

The rest of the day I used to catch up with some work and enjoyed the evening sun on my terrace. The weather is still splendid and the growth in the vineyards quite spectacular. We can hardly follow with the work to do out there.

May 27th, 2000

Almost two weeks ago that I made the last notes. While the week before was a lot of travelling, this week I had enough work at home and in my hometown to do. Monday morning a meeting with Bernd Philippi on some of our international projects. In the evening the local tourist promotional board had its annual meeting. I tried to explain to the local politicians present, that Rudesheim should take part in the UNESCO project to make the Rhine Valley one of the World Heritage monuments. It is hard to convince people sometimes.

In the middle of the week Steve Metzler and his wife Almudena came with customers from the US to us. Greg Finger from his Seattle office and representatives from Texas, Florida. We had good tastings, from the 99 mostly cask samples, since quite a few wines are still fermenting and for the final dinner the next day wines matching the food back to 1983, with interesting combinations of 94 Berg Schlossberg versus Cassagne Montrachet of the same vintage, a 93 Elysium, a 90 Magnum Georg Breuer Brut and a 1897 Boal Madeira. Friday morning I left for Oporto and the Douro to return on Sunday night. I signed the contract to purchase a Quinta together with Bernd Philippi in the heart of the Douro, a long held dream. More details if I find the time may be in the NEWS section.

Monday afternoon I was mediating some talks concerning a local issue of the usage of the old Asbach site in town. Maybe I can be helpful to develop this into an attraction for our town again. Tuesday night annual meeting of Pro Tunnel, our citizen initiative that has fought long to the approval to place the railway from in front of the town into a tunnel behind the town. We learned from the government man in charge that finally the first engineering jobs have ordered and things are underway. The planned completion is in 2008. On Wednesday I was visiting customers in Cologne, 3 star Schloss Leerbach and two Star Landhaus Ville, run by a charming couple, the Potthast (in Pulheim close to Cologne). In the evening I returned to Wiesbaden to see a fabulous Ballet with family and friends by Gregor Seifried from Berlin. It was fascinating, one of the best ballets I have seen in years, the second piece a one man appearance showing a dancer (Nijinski) becoming finally insane. Next morning I had the visit of the New York Times author Asimov. We tasted through some 99 cask samples and a little vertical tasting of Berg Schlossberg and Nonnenberg. I left afterwards for Stuttgart to see some customers and give a

vertical schlossberg tasting (10 vintages) and a wine makers dinner at Hotel zum Schlossgarten , who have with Herr Stich a very motivated sommelier. I remained overnight, since my daughter still lives in that town and left later in the day.

Today took place the annual german wine tasting of FUB a leading german retailer, again in Cologne. And this evening and tomorrow I will be trying to catch up with work

It will be a home weeks ahead of me before I leave for the US on June 4.

June 3rd, 2000

A less hectic week. Visitors from Japan, a personal tour with friends on thursday, a church holiday, from Rudesheim to Assmannhausen, with a lunch stop at the Krone, a boattrip back to Rudesheim and a final meal with lots of wine at our Rudesheimer Schloss. The weather was splendid. A beautiful day.

The flowering began today in our top Rudesheim sites at the Berg. An early flowering and a good sign at the start of the growing season for the 2000 vintage.

Planning and ordering of mashines and material for our new "baby", the winery in Douro. Search for more wooden barrels for our cellars to even further increase our capacity in wood for the coming vintage.

Tomorrow departure for the trip to the US. San Francisco is the first stop. Than Seattle, Denver, Aspen (the wine and food festival) and New York.

June 18th, 2000

Back from the States since 4 days. After my return a concentrated half working day to catch up with the paperwork on my desk. I could only scratch the surface. Thursday, friday annual meeting with all our german sales agencies at Weingut Heyl zu Herrnsheim Excellent atmosphere, very productive and besides splendid wether very well prepared from the estate. Yesterday my good old friend, Juha Berglund from Finland came with his wine fan club (he not only is the owner of a wine magazine Viniilethi, but also the owner of Château Carsin in Bordeaux. Today finally quiet a successfull attempt to reduce the pile of paper on my desk to a human level. I can start seeing the walls of my office again.

I still owe you a few comments on the trip to the States. Arrival in San Francisco on Sunday the 4th and late afternoon meeting first with Kate Godwin, salesperson from our Californian wholesaler and later dinner together with Bill Sawitzki an oldtimer in the trade and also salesman for this market. We went to Farallon, trendy restaurant with very good food and a long wine list. We brought some of our wines and let the sommelier taste. Next day was making calls with Bill at many restaurants and retail stores in San Francisco and area. Presentations, tasting the wine, we brought with us in a chilled bag - very professional - hard work preaching the gospel. In the evening we met with Steve Ventrello, the owner of the wholesale business in "La Jardiniere", a top restaurant, run by Traci de Jardin, who I know from her presence at the Rheingau Gourmet Festival three years ago. Excellent food and good wines, some offered by Steve.

On Tuesday morning an early morning flight to Seattle and almost directly after arrival a lunch at EDDA, a great place, don't miss it when you come to this town, with good customers and a range of our wines and those of von Othegraven and Bürklin Wolf to match with local food. Oysters, Crab, Lobster and Fish. All excellent and so were the matches. It was really great fun and hopefully will have an effect. EDDA already is using very successfully Montosa, even by the glass. More calls in the afternoon and some restful dinner with Steve and Almudena the owners of our national importer.

Next morning staff meeting and thereafter rush to airport to catch the flight for Denver. We arrive in the evening and have dinner again with Steve Ventrello, who joined us there to accompany us to Aspen on the following day. It was his birthday and he announced his engagement with Faith, a great moment for all of us.

Late in the night arrived also the daughter of Alessandro Fernandez, the owner of Pesquera and her cousin Marie Luz, who runs their export department. So we were now a group of 7 to drive next day to day in a very large van.

Beautiful drive into the mountains. We were at over 12 000 ft. level when we passed the independence pass. Great site. Shortly thereafter we had picknick close to the river, in the sun with the view of the mountains. We opened great bottles of wine including 1996 Millennium Pesquera. Dinner in Aspen's Conundrum. An excellent restaurant with maybe the best lobster bisque in the States. Go and try for yourself.

Next morning and for the next two and a half days we held our table in the large tents of the Festival. A very joyous festival. Everybody is in good mood. The Grand Tastings are interrupted by seminars in many hotels throughout this beautiful town of Aspen. So everybody is constantly on the move during

these days. In the evening we stayed in our large apartment and cooked ourselves. There was quite a bit of talent among all of us and the great wines we opened made the food even taste better.

Sunday evening, June 11th, return to Aspen and very early morning flight to New York. Almost right from the airport I rushed to three staff training sessions to restaurants, which are or will be serving our wines. All very good and successful places. Tabla in the theatre district, Union Pacific and Cramercy Tavern in Greenwich Village. There is a smell of Riesling in the air. The wine directors of all places are really for it. If I compare to previous visits, there is less or even hardly any resistance against dry Rieslings. And the quality of our full bodied wines really gains easy acceptance. More work will be needed but we will get there.

On my last day some visits to retailers, go to crossroads on 14th street, if you look for our wines. Then a meeting with the Wine Spectator and back to the airport to catch the flight to Frankfurt. The rest I have told you.

It is now late Sunday night on the 18th. Time to close the book. Good night.

June 22nd, 2000

The very warm weather continues. It has been well up to 35 °C, which in our Part, or actually in any part of the world, is considered very warm for the season. Since there is still enough water supply in the soil, consequently the growth in the vineyards is phenomenal I have been quite a bit in our vineyards this week to check on the progress. The berries, especially in the best sites, are gaining in size every day. We are well 2 weeks in advance for the moment in comparison to the average of the last decade.

In the fields we are working on the canopy management. We are bringing the leaves under control and are even in some vineyards already starting with pruning the tops, such has been the growth. All this is hand labour. We will also in the steep, dry soils start to bring in some hay in order to cover the ground and protect it against dehydration. So there is a lot to do in the vineyards. In our Vinoteque (our shop on premise of our cellars) I have added to our assortment a selection of great antipasti, sauces, pesto, dried tomatoes, tuna in olive oil and a few other things, which I have selected from some friends I know in Italy. Since we do not have a delicatessen in town this should at least help.

With a local butcher I have also developed 3 types of air dried salamis. One from wild boar, one from stag and one from porc with Pinot Noir. They will be on stream for sale within a few days.

Tomorrow I will travel for five days to the Douro, to visit our new baby, the Quinta da Carvalhosa, in order to check on the development of the vineyards as well as start to prepare the first harvest, which should commence within the next three months.

June 30th, 2000

Back from the Douro we have progressed the preparation in our new vineyard for the harvest and have checked on the developments of the vines. Due to great weather and the excellent care of our vineyard workers the entire estate looks brilliant. The fruit set was reasonable so that we will have a moderate size harvest, just what we want to produce the best quality.

We had the time on Sunday to make a little side trip to the Rias Baixas Area to visit a good colleague, José Antonio, who produces since 1996 his own Albariño and one of the finest, if not the finest in all of Spain, called LUSCO. We visited the vineyards and tasted the 1999 vintage not only in the cellar but also over a splendid seafood lunch in a seaside restaurant in Vigo. A memorable meal.

Yesterday we composed the 1999 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg and are very happy with the blend from various barrels. We will give it some rest now and will most likely bottle within the next 4-6 weeks.

As of next week I will take a few days off for some rest with the family and will be back on my diary possibly by the middle of July.

See you then.

July 15th, 2000

Back from our vacation. We had a good time in Andalusia. It has been hot, while on the homefront unfortunately at the same time, the weather has been less than good, thunderstorm and lots of rain. Some of our vineyards have also been hit by a hailstorm, and I hope that the damage has not been too disastrous for these lots. The rain as such may actually have a positive effect to overcome a dry summer, if we get one.

So as usual there is tension and risk in our business.

Other than the seaside, early morning walks on the beach and a discrete trial to play golf (it was hard to resist since a beautiful golf course was next to the hotel), we visited Seville. My first visit there.

A georgous city. The cathedral a monumental building, showing all the wealth that this once worldwide reigning nation of Spain had won. And not far from the Cathedral the Alcazar, a palace, a mixture of morish and spanish architecture. Phantastic. The way the managed to built houses that remain cool without aircondition on day that had a high of 42° C is astonishing and the beauty and purity of the design, decoration and gardens is one of the most stimulating visits I have made to a palace of the past.

Another visit took us to Jerez and San Lucar, the small town that is the heart of the best Manzanillas produced in the world. We had a chance to taste a great collection of sherries at Bodega Hidalgo including a almost sevneny year old sherry and an eighty year old Pedro Ximenex, both from the barrel. Not far away from the bodega we had lunch in the Restaurant "Bigote" at the Bajo de Guia. If you happen to go there, do not miss it.

At the hotel, the choice of wine was not the greatest, but the local Borbadilla, a dry vinified Palomina was well made and envoyable.

July 16th, 2000

It is still raining. We have had, since I left 120 mm of rain, this is almost 25% of the annual rain. The temperatures are low, but it looks like we get back to summer early next week.

Tomorrow we will all go to the Konzert of Trumpets and orgue which we are sponsoring within the activities of the Rheingau Musik Festival. It seems like a good finish to the summer break I have had.

Addendum:

I think I owe to you the information that we have cancelled our membership in the VDP Rheingau per June 30th, effective at the end of the year. (See my comments under march 26 conc. the annual meeting). It became to difficult for our conscience to stay in that group having seen the rejection of the two motions I asked to vote for and which I find essential to master the future in particular for an association that claims to be " the forefront" of german quality wines. Our staff also supports my views in that case and that was important for me because wine is an effort of many people in an estate and they all have to have the same focus. We feel much better now. We can with all energy and devotion work on the quality of our vines and wines.

July 25th, 2000

Not that I wanted any of that, but our withdrawal from VDP membership seems to create quite an uproar. Through a leak, the information got into a wine magazine and a reporter from another paper called me and asked for the reasons of our decision. The regional VDP felt it had to publish a statement to argue against the points that I made on various occasions to explain my reasons for departing from the VDP. This action obviously caused many journalists to call and I told all of them, that I have no interest to create a controversy that is taken personally. I estimate all my colleagues for the work they do. We all know that this business really needs the whole person and only the entire devotion to this craft will lead to success, good wines and finally satisfaction. But in my view different opinions do not make enemies and wine is too enjoyable to split over it for good.

What else. I visited with Hermann Schmoranz, our cellar master at the Rauenthal Vineyards the other day. The vegetation is still in advance. But we will have to start green harvesting in about 2 weeks there. The crop looks abundant. Too much in some locations to get the best possible grapes. So we will invest in this activity.

We have also tasted all the reds and whites and made some preliminary decisions on the assemblages of our different wines. I think within another two sessions we will have come with the final conclusions on the dry Rieslings of the 99 vintage and proceed to the bottling in the next 4 weeks.

On Saturday I visited with a customer in Cologne, FUB. An important retailer and I enjoyed very much the conversation. We have created some concepts for joint presentations in January 2001 and had a good lunch at the Hanse Stube, a very good restaurant close to the famous Cathedral.

Thereafter I visited with Frau Kegel in her Cologne mention and we talked about the future of von Othegraven, over great bottles from this estate. I tasted the first time after bottling, the 99 CRU and the Auslese. I think we can all be proud, who have contributed to these wines. We finished the evening with 1971 Auslese, a fabulous 1961 Beerenauslese. A great treat.

Yesterday I received the visit of Harlad Bresselschmidt with his wife and sister in law. He owns and cooks at Aubergine, the fantastic restaurant in Cape Town. Bernd Philippi and myself, we have been there a few times and the food was great anytime.

Freddy Price, the former wine merchant from England, now turning journalist and his wife joined the party as well and we had a great tasting and than a long meal with good wines, including a very "young" bottle of 1959 Hallgartner Riesling. We sat in the garden in the sunshine and "lived".

A call from my friend HB Ullrich from the Asmannshausen Krone in the office convinced me to drive over to see some common friends and join them for another meal. A dinner on the wonderful Krone terrace. More great wines. We finished long after midnight with a suprising bottle of 1991 Rudesheim Riesling from our estate - the wine showed brilliant after all that time for a simple wine - and a 1983 Rheingau Riesling. A grand dame with a lot of life still. A good day and no headache this morning. It speaks for the wines.

July 26th, 2000

Last monday we have made the final decisions on the 1999 Berg Schlossberg blend. It will be a powerful wine. Very dense and it might take a while, till it will be able to expose its generosity. We are very happy with the wine. We will bottle within the next two weeks, just giving the wine some rest before.

Still quite a lot of commotion concerning our departure from the VDP. The letter the Rheingau VDP wrote and send to all press and top german trade generates a lot of noise and the papers pick it up. As had to be expected quite a bit of the serious reasoning gets lots that way and I can read that I have aggressively attacked the association in the internet. Thank god, that the internet documents everything. so that the reader can decide what is true or not. Actually browsing through the entire year, I find my only mention on the reasons of my departure unter July 16. I have mentioned the thoughts that move me concerning the future of our business and our position in it on and off during these years and I think to those who know us our move finally was no surprise.

I visited with Prinz Salm yesterday to give him an account of all details of what seems to have shocked him as well. Our friendship goes back a long time and I hope that it will not suffer in the long run from the philosophical difference we have on these issues. Due to the way he is educated and raised he sees things in a very long perspective and at the very end we may convene with our views. I am perhaps becoming more impatient as I get older and as I realise that I may have only another 10 or 15 years of active live as a vintner.

August 7th, 2000

Time rushes. Peter Meijer, our dutch importer visited with me on his way to a short vacation in Alsace. We had a good tasting and dinner and discussed ways to increase the awareness of the great dry white german wines in Holland. On that subject:- winetoday.com (the N.Y.Times news service) published a splendid article from Stuart Pigott on the rare dry wine treasures, even though directed more versus the US market, I think it has relevance for all german export markets.You can find it on the net easily under winetoday.com.

I spend a quite sunday and monday morning I drove through the Berg part of the Rudesheim Vineyards together with Hermann Schmoranz to make the decisions where we will have to start with the "green harvest". There will be quite a number of vineyards which will get this treatment and we are starting with the Riesling first. The reds we will attack when the "veraison" (the turning of the colour) appears so that we can see which grapes are ripening first and obviously save these and cut off the other ones. It is a meticulous process and it takes almost longer than harvesting. But we have a good crew to do it.

Last Tuesday I left for England to have lunch at Christopher's (Wellington Street), a great dining place at Covent Garden. It is very much the place for the politicians, artists and the media people and the owner Mr. Christopher has a great taste for wines and discovered our Riesling earlier this year and put them on the list. So, I send him a case of various wines and we matched them together with his most popular dishes on the menu. Most of the combinaisons worked very well. So a small step to introduce our wines in England.We will have to make similar efforts in the future to succeed. A few more business calls and a meeting with my good friend /journalist Stephen Brook to answer his questions on an interview for his latest book on wine personalities of the world to appear next year (it took place at Kensington Place in 201 Kensington Church Street, London W87LX, a very good dining place and good wine list, but unfortunately still missing our wines – somebody should tell them).

Last friday Michel Bettane, the famous french journalist from "La Revue de Presse de France" came to see me, taste some wines and we had a great lunch at Rudesheimer Schloss. The small verticals of Nonnenberg and Berg Schlossberg really showed extraordinarily well and even better with the food. Great wether allowed us to have a drive through the steepest parts of our vineyards. As always the view from the Schlossberg down to the river is overwhelming.

Yesterday was my friends Michael Kloss 60th birthday party. A good crowd in the garden of Schloss Vollrads. Since he is a Sekt producer, there was Sekt all the way. A relaxing day Tonight

after work I went to see Dr. Ambrosi, a good old time friend. Still going strong with still his vivid mind and full of plans. He leaves on top of the vineyards in Hallgarten and we had a very good conversation overlooking the rhine valley. Among other subjects I explained him my views on the issues of german wines in the world markets and what efforts will have to be done. The approach has to be focused and not overcomplicated. Almost quite to the opposite of what happens in german wine politics.

August 14th, 2000

Last tuesday, on the 8th of the month, a meeting with my friends Markus Ahr (owner of Heyl zu Herrnsheim) and Karl Eugen Graf Neipperg (owner of Graf Neipperg estate in Württemberg, to discuss some german business matters In the afternoon another meeting with Christian von Guradze of Bürklin-Wolf to talk about our ideas for the english market, where we might join forces and in the evening a pre-première of a theatre play - more a Cabaret of the still on-going Rheingau Musik Festival, this all so important event in July/August each year in our region.

the following day was dedicated to a meeting with our partner restaurant association, JEUNES RESTAURATEUR D'EUROPE. 42 great german chefs all highly ranked but aged under 45 years. They are really becoming popular. We have discussed some joined promotions.

Last friday we celebrated a birthday of a friend of us, first in the vineyards, in a beautiful setting in the late afternoon having the starters of a dinner that we finished a few hours later in our Rudesheimer Schloss. Great food served in a very imaginative way and a lot of good wine

Mr. Moretti, the owner of Bellavista, the wellknown Champagne producer from the Francia Corte in northern Italy, a neighbour of Maurizio Zanella visited with me. It is him that owns a Relais & Château hotel and has the famous Italian super-star Gualitery Marchesi working for him in the kitchen. It should be a great place to go.

On saturday Hermann Schmoranz and myself had a final tasting of our 99 wines that are still in barrel in order to determine the blends of such important wines as Nonnenberg, Berg Rottland and Montosa. A lot of work, challenging but great fun and energy gets to work at the same time.

In the evening I gave a rare wine dinner to wine friends in our cellar. Accompanied by a great dinner, prepared by Willi Mittler from the Krone in Assmannshausen, we had a great array of wines going back to 1946. Actually this was one of the best wines of the evening: 1946 Deidesheimer Geheu from Köhler. What a freshness. Also excellent 1949 Drohnhofberger Auslese,

1959 Trarbacher Schlossberg Auslese from Franz Langguth, a very small estate our family once owned and the 1990 Rüdesheim Bischofsberg Beerenauslese, a truly great wine.

Yesterday one of our agents visited with us with customers from around Münster in Westfalen, famous for the peace treaty of Münster which ended the war of 30 years in 1648. And today some catching up to do.

A walk to our Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder) vineyards to see when we should start with the green harvest. Grapes are just turning the colour (veraison), so we will start now.

Just an information, in case you are interested. The New York Times published quite an interesting article on German wines in its August 9 issue. You can read it on their homepage:

<http://www.nytimes.com/library/dining/080900germany-wine.html>

August 20th, 2000

We are amidst our annual Rüdesheim Wine Festival. It is held on the market square with the participation of 15 local growers some restaurants have tents and the atmosphere is very friendly. All kind of people show up, drink wine, order a bottle, listen to the music and dance. It started Friday and will last till tomorrow night (or should I rather say Tuesday in the early morning hours. Start at noon time the stand does not really get closed before 3 o'clock in the morning.

If you ever happen to be in the area on the 3rd weekend in August, this is when every year this event takes place. I quite like the atmosphere and I run the stand with some trainees, my daughter (actually she is the mastermind for this event already for years) and Hermann Schmoranz, the cellar master. Actually everybody is part of the team. The weather has been quite good, even though last night at 2 in the morning a rainstorm and thunder made the people get home. But this was the time to do so anyway.

A few more things happened during the week. This past Tuesday an important German journalist, writing for "Das Handelsblatt" (German equivalent to the Wall Street Journal) visited with me and wanted more details on my departing the VDP. He understood very well my arguments and if there is a good aspect to this controversy, I hope that a debate of substance over wine quality will emerge in our country and lead to an even greater effort to work on the quality of our wines, hopefully also further the understanding, that wines from my region must have a clear profile and that the yield restrictions have to be lowered as a must for the top domaines, should they really want to be called that way.

Tuesday evening we had a local political hearing on the membership of Rudesheim, as a town, to the proposed cooperation of Middle Rhine towns that apply to get the region elevated into the ranks of world cultural heritage sites of the UNESCO. There are good hopes this could happen, and the Mittelrhein, with its steep vineyards and castle could after St. Emilion become the second area worldwide to be elevated to this prestigious club. It is difficult to believe that under these circumstances, there is not yet a majority in the town parliament to vote the membership. It was a good debate and I hope it will make change still some of these rather stubborn minds.

A good friend, Walter Fink, turned 70 on Wednesday. A shoe retailer, producer and musician he invited his friends to a matinee of good music, wine and food. They were all there. His friends and business partners including the Hesse Minister of Culture and the national party leader of the liberals.

Yesterday Patrick St. Vincent, a Canadian, working for an L.A. advertising agency visited with me. He helps to elaborate a travel and wine homepage for a big company and I enjoyed very much his visit. I admire this young, open-minded but focused person that sees wine really as an art, rather than an object to attribute points once in a while in a publication. We had a very good discussion and enjoyable tasting. I met him again in the night, when he also enjoyed our wine festival.

I will taste with Hermann Schmoranz this afternoon (in an hour) the final blends for our 99 Nonnenberg, Berg Rottland and Montosa, which will be bottled later this week. They have now been assembled for a few days and this will be the final test. Tonight I will be working again at the festival. The weather has cleared, the sun is out. It should be a good day.

August 24th, 2000

Today we bottled Montosa 99. All day long. I took a bottle fresh from the bottling line to lunch with our friends Wagenpfeil from Bonn, who love wines and who I will join this coming December for being introduced as a chevalier de tastevin at Clos de Vougeot on December 2. We sat in the garden of the Rudesheimer Schloss and enjoyed the weather, the food and the wine.

This past Monday, we concluded the Rudesheim Weinfest after 4 days. It became a great night with excellent ambiance and even though it began to rain late in the evening it did not spoil the fun. Hermann Schmoranz and his crew went to our storage and brought back a tent, placed it in the middle of our stand on top of the seats and we were sheltered at once. A great experience. Friends, the Landrat – chief of the district – and our representative at the national assembly (Bundestag) in Berlin all joined the fun.

I went to Kanzem the day after, to check on the vineyards and to make some decisions concerning doing some green harvesting in some areas of the slope. In the overall the amount of grapes are reasonable, but we want to do as good as we can and lift the burden of some of the vines, that look a bit overcropped.

Tomorrow I expect a journalist from DER SPIEGEL who wants to have some informations for a forthcoming wine article in his magazine.

August 30th, 2000

Last saturday in the early morning departure vor Vienna to see Alois Kracher and his friends who are inaugurating a new winery. Hans SCHWARZ, a butcher in Andau, who has since many years vineyards and used to supply some of his grapes to Alois, is now opening up with the help of Alois Kracher and Manfred Krankl from L.A. (Campanile, La Brea Bakery and Sine qua non vineyards) a "garage" winery, brand new, that makes from Burgenlad grapes New World wines, white red and rosé. Journalists, gastronoms, importers and producers from all over the world came for the occassion. It was gigantic. After saturday afternoons get together with colleagues, sunday was a day packed with great events and some of the finest wines in the world. To start Krachers 13 wines of the 1998 collection of dessert wines.

The Rieslings of FX Pichler, Hirzberger, Knoll and Prager thereafter. A visit of the vineyards of SCHWARZ, the presentation of the 3 new wines of this remarkable winery and to finish the presentation of Krachers new import portfolio - FINE WINE TRADE in Gols. Dinner in a big tent and two blues bands to finish off this phantastic day.

Next morning departure from Vienna to Frankfurt.

Today I inspected some Spätburgunder Vineyards near Hochheim, where eventually I can buy grapes later in the season. They are quite a bit in advance in that part of the Rheingau. This afternoon tasting of what is left in the cellar. We will do a last bottling of the 1999 wines in the next two weeks. Than we will start to prepare the cellar for the new harvest. I suppose it might start in about 5 weeks from now.

Tomorrow we have a meeting to discuss the 2001 Rheingau Gourmet Festival. Later an interview by Alles Über Wein, a german wine magazine on the subject of my departure from the VDP. An invitation in the evening to Frankfurt and on Friday a trip to Düsseldorf, where I will participate in a presentation of a very good customer of ours, who recently opened a fine wine shop in the city.

That will leave the weekend to catch up and recover.

September 9th, 2000

I have to report staccato style. I arrived this afternoon from a short trip to the Douro to complete the preparations for the first harvest of the new Quinta da Charvalhosa. The builders have been working on a concrete platform so that we can put up the fermentation tanks. I did extensive shopping to start something like a small household for the harvest crew.

I looked at all the vineyards and all varieties look good. Tinta Barocca seems to be the ripenest of the all. We will have the white grapes picked next week. But we sell them as grapes. We feel that we will start with the reds on September 23. Bernd Philippi will go there first to start the harvest. The grapes really look good. The yield is small this year. Prices are already climbing up. Our crew is currently taken some of leafs off in the grape zone to enhance the potential for the grapes to remain healthy. It is hot and dry. Yesterday it was nearly 40° Centigrade in the vineyards in the afternoon. So the women work from the very early morning at 6 until noon. Afterwards it is too hot.

Yesterday I met Dirk Nieport, the famous owner of Nieport and a good friend of us. He was in the company of the chief editor of "Revistas dos Vinhos", the leading portugese wine magazin and some american customers. Among them one, who has seen me recently in Aspen and who was here in Rudesheim 12 years ago to taste our wines. He now owns a liquor store in Oregon and 4 in British Columbia. The name escaped me, but I will find it again. The world is small. We tasted the 99 vintage wines from barriques in the cellar of Quinta da Naples. They are very appealing and his greatest red is phenominal. But it will only go in bottle in about a years time.

On the beginning of the month we employed a young girl, Larissa Ketterer, who is to take over step by step from my mother the responsibility for our store and she should develop our new "Breuer's Cellarworld" into a successful site for wine lovers as of next year.

Tomorrow afternoon I will be off to Stockholm, for a tasting of the finest 1990 wines of the world and for the Vinnordic exhibition, that starts on monday. So there is little time in between. Just enough to change cloths, look at the papers in the office and go back to the airport. The wether has improved here as of today. It was raining on and off in the beginning of the week. Now it seems to become more stable. It was already a warm sunny day today. So let us keep the fingers cross, that this should stay that way now for a while.

September 16th, 2000

A week ago, I left for Stockholm, mainly to help our agent at the Vinnordic Winefair, which started Monday. One of the owners of our importers, Mats Heyman, a wine freak invited me already two nights before to two dinners that accompany a four day wine event, I assume, unique.

A tasting of all the best vintage 1990 red wines from around the world. so I got the report of the event on the two last nights. But not only that. The wines for the dinners were all also 1990 and so I could enjoy at the Grand Hotel and the Operkelleren, all from that vintage: Chablis Grand Cru Blanchot from La Chablisienne, Barolo Brico Roche from Ceretto, Zind Humbrecht Riesling Herenweg, Corton Charlemagne from Jadot, Rauzan Segla, Côte Rôti from Guigal and Château Rieussec.

Now the winners of this fabulous event (in that order): La Mouline, Château L'Angelus, Beausejour Duffau, Château Rayas, Beaucastel, La Landonne, Pichon Baron, Chaves Catheline, Caymus Special Selection. La T[^]che, Le Pin, Petrus.

Sunday morning I jogged around one of the beautiful islands that are located in front of the harbor. It was a wonderful run.

Obviously during the fair one always meets people from all corners of the world from our trade. I was very happy to see Lynn Sherif (that at least was her maiden name) from South Africa again and we had a very long and interesting talk about German wines and she shares my view that we must develop a focused profile for our wines if we want to be successful on the world markets.

I returned late Tuesday night and Wednesday we had our shareholder meeting of our joint distribution company, die gueter, at the Schloss Marienlay estate from Annegret Reh, the Kesselstatt domaine. Gerhard Gartner prepared a gracious dinner and we had good wine sitting on the terrace long into the night.

Next morning I went to von Othegraven and looked at the vineyards. The grapes look good and have already achieved a good degree of ripeness. I assume harvest will start around October 20th.

I returned home via Kallstadt, where I met Bernd Philippi to discuss the harvest in the Douro. Bernd will leave this Monday for Portugal.

It was great to have Peter Bourne and David Madew for tasting and dinner that day. I know Peter from Australia, where he is a very well known and enthusiastic journalist.

And yesterday evening I had another good dinner with a lot of fun with Christina Fischer from Cologne, the successful gastronome and "tv sommelier" or should I say sommelière.

Early today Mr. Stockinger, the barrel maker from Austria delivered to us our second wooden vat for the red wine fermentation. We had a very good experience with the first one we bought last year. All last minute preparation for the coming harvest.

September 24th, 2000

It is late in the night. I just came back from Kanzem, where I looked at the vineyards and discussed with Herr Kraml, the cellar master, the forthcoming harvest. We anticipate a start night before the 16th of October. The grapes in Kanzem on the steep slopes, just as in Rudesheim on the steep slopes still look quite healthy. We will have to select in both cases as was usual in the last years. It has been wet and dry the last days and we are all looking forward to more stable weather conditions. The forecast these days is not so bad. Ripeness levels are good and acidities, as much I can taste in the grapes, excellent for the period.

What else happened this week. I was busy at home to inspect all vineyards again. Also we are putting the finishing touches on our press room, where we are installing an upper level for the must after pressing, so that we can do everything now by gravity from this moment onwards. We have put in a floor and this should be ready in time. On Thursday I visited customers in Cologne and gave a tasting in the evening to a wine group and last night I had my annual duty as a "Buzz boy" in our restaurant Rudesheimer Schloss. A promise I made our staff, that I would help one evening in that capacity when there is need for more help. Last night was such a day. It was good fun (and I am getting better in the serving technique, but I still will have to improve) but not being used to it, I could feel that it is quite strenuous and to say the least I fell very quickly asleep as soon as I returned home.

Weather was great today. Warm and sunny. Let us hope it will stay that way.

September 30th, 2000

This month is coming to an end and one feels that autumn and the harvest time is nearing. We are getting prepared and have installed a new area where we have the settling tanks for the must. We can now even better work with gravity.

We also got a second fermenter in "Wood" just in time, delivered by Stockinger the other day. So we are better equipped than ever, but we cannot change the weather. Unfortunately it is very unstable right now. But nevertheless we have started in some vineyards to just take of the grapes that are not 100% perfect. Spätburgunder seems to be the patient this year. but by this thorough selection method we will certainly be able to turn the vintage 2000 in delicious wine again.

We work with a small crew of some 8-10 members and we go through all Pinot Noir vineyards and leave only the grapes on the vine that look 100% ok. Nevertheless the density with 90 Oe for the unhealthy grapes, that have some botrytis and 80+ for the other reds is at least a way to cope with it.

It was also the week of Journalists, from Germany and from the States (Riesling Report).

If weather permits we will also use the Sunday tomorrow to make further progress

October 8th, 2000

I did not tell you about the interesting wines I had with friends on September 18. A little private party. 1983 Taittinger, artist bottle from the Portuguese painteress da Silva. A fantastic champagne. A 1982 Meurault "cru" from Ropitau. A great wine. Tremendous complexity and no sign of age. What a treat. 1989 Palmer, good body and still very young and a few more. It was a good evening.

Last night I came back from the Douro, where I finished the harvest on our new farm. Bernd Philippi did the first part. The weather has been splendid. The grapes healthy and greatly motivated people to work with. It is an improvised harvest we are doing there. Crushing and fermenting outside and stocking of the wines in a "garage". (I have heard that seems fashionable, but we do it for sheer necessity and so far I have the feeling, we are in for some surprises concerning the quality of the wine. The year 2000 is going to be a good start with Quinta da Carvalhosa.

Unfortunately here the weather has not yet turned to the better. Too moist, if not rain, than heavy fog. Therefore we continue to harvest the unhealthy grapes for the time being, take the leaves off in the grape zone to allow for fast drying and leave the healthy grapes on the vines to wait for the dry days. We have done this today with our Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc. Will continue to do so with the Riesling if the weather still remains unstable. The ripeness levels are not bad at all, so there is hope.

Peter Rossow, the wine maker of Mont du Toit, from the Cape, that gave me a hand in our

portugese farm, will join us in two days to learn about our harvesting methods and next week some of our US customers will be helping to pick grapes for two days.

On tuesday oct. 10 I will be in the evening in Berlin, where on "top of the Reichstag building" will take place the official launching of the Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe cookbook, which we have helped to see the day. It will be a short stay, just for a few hours, because the main area of action is the vineyards and only the vineyards these days.

October 15th, 2000

It was, as I expected a long night in Berlin and I was wise not to book a Hotel. A good number of the chefs and friends of Ralf Frenzel had a night cap in his Berlin residenz and I made it to the Railway station at 4 in the morning to catch my train at 6am. Nights in Capital can be long, but this is not only a Berlin phenomena.

We are now in the middle, or may be better first third of the harvest. We have attatched the first Riesling vineyards and after a rather wet beginning of las week since friday the wether turned dry and even sunny. So the density is increasing and we have been able to get the first musts in from Rauenthal at between 85 and 90 Oechsle. This is very encouraging.

The harvest seems to become a time of international "rencontres". As I already mentioned Pieter Roussow our winemaker from South Africa joined us for a few days and could give us compe-tent advise and exchange of information on optimising the pressing of our red grapes and it was certainly a good experience for him to be with us.

Today Hunter Smith, the son of Judy Cullum, from the Margeret River , south of Perth in Australia, has arrived and will be with us for a few days (see my noted from feb. 21). Judy is very enga-ged to increase the awareness for Riesling, produces some great examples and has organised the symposium earlier this year in Sydney. I admire her work. Over the weekend we had some italien oenology students to help picking. The wanted to get an insight of what we do. And on tuesday 5 clients from Classical Wines US customers will join us to experience the harvest and see what we do.

I had a wine maker dinner last night in Mainz at the Dorinth Hotel with great food and a very good ambiance and left this morning very early by train for Utrecht , to follow the invitation of Peter Meijer , our dutch importer for his 50th birthday (and the 5th birstday of his company). He and his family are very good personal friends and I felt very much at home. The few hours were

very well spent. Back at home now and with fresh energy the harvest will continue in the morning. The moon is still shining bright on the sky and we hope for a continuation of the good weather.

October 29th, 2000

Almost two weeks since my last entry. A long time, but it passes so fast in these days of the harvest. We are out in the fields every day. Weekdays and weekends. Harvesting from 8 in the morning to 5 pm and sometimes even longer if we have to finish a vineyard site. Perfect weather conditions alternate with less perfect ones. We have to find the right moments to pick the grapes for the great wines and as I can see, we succeeded in quite some cases. The relative rainy season asked for flexibility, quick decisions and a good crew to achieve good results. I am very optimistic that we made quite a number of good decisions. High degrees of ripeness in the great sites, coupled with a perfect acidity relation, through careful selection by hand perfectly healthy grapes. The pickers are the true heroes of this vintage.

Not in abundant quantities, but some botrytised wines of very high Auslese levels have been harvested so far. This has been a particular challenge this year. But there will be some goodies for those who wish to see the number 2000 on some of these wines.

We also picked another portion of good Pinot Noir in our Drachenstein and Berg Schlossberg sites. It is just completing fermentation in our new wooden fermenter. Even though picking was the major occupation these days, we had quite a few visitors to see us.

On the 17th a group of 4 salespeople of major US customers came to help us with the harvest for two days. Mainly to get a feel for our philosophy, our area and the quality of our work.

Besides the work we also had good fun. The little group was guided by Ann Maryse from Classical Wines of Washington State, our national importer.

Some journalists came by in the evening and two tv film crew took pictures of our work. Two nights ago, we pre-tasted the wines and food for the "Sektmenu" that will take place tomorrow in a week at the occasion of the Glorious Rheingau days, which start this coming Friday evening with a Jazz night in our cellars.

Klaus Harbrecht, a close friend of our former chancellor Willy Brandt and a famous author gave a lecture of some of his works last night in our new "cellar world". The culture of literature and the culture of a cellar fitted really well. In this morning I had the chief sommelier and chef of the famous Parkhotel in Bremen as our guests.

Tomorrow we will go out again in the vineyards. Weather permitting we should be finishing the harvest by the middle of this coming week.

November 5th, 2000

Actually, we did not finish the harvest yet. We stopped on thursday, leaving almost 1 hectare with good potential for botrytised wines. The weather seems to become more stable. Temperatures are dropping. Most pickers have been leaving today for home, after celebrating our annual pickers party two nights ago. We have kept still a small, very qualified crew, for the remaining harvest. Keep the fingers crossed.

A lot going on this last week in the evenings in addition to the daily harvesting work.

A private birthday party in the family.

A winemakers dinner in Kronberg in a restaurant with very young motivated owners.

Visit Mr. Allgaier's "Zum Grünen Wald", if you happen to go there. it is right in the center of the old town.

An almost annual event "Jazz in the Cellar" in our newly renovated cellars with over 160 guests.

A great – long – night.

Today I drove to Kanzem to see the progress of the harvest and set the rules for the remaining part of the harvest. We will need a few very dry days to make further progress. I am optimistic, we will get that weather change.

Tomorrow night we celebrate the "Sekt-Gala-Night" in our cellar. A dinner with a menu by the KRONE hotel and its brilliant chef Willy Mittler with the best sparkling wines , all methode champenoise, made by the local producers: Sekthaus Solter, Ohlig, Kloss & Förster and ourselves.

I am also looking forward to the visit tomorrow of Hendrick Thoma, one of Germany's best sommeliers and one of the few german Master Sommeliers. He is a good long trusted friend.

November 26th, 2000

It has been a long time since my last entry. But I have hardly been more than a few hours at home recently. With the harvest mostly completed I had to postpone so many meetings and visits until after this moment , that now they seem to happen all at the same time.

The Sektmenu, by the way, was a great success. We did it in our newly renovated cellar. This is a splendid atmosphere.

On Friday the 10th I presented as in all the other years our annual rare wine tasting in the Rudesheimer Schloss. The oldest wine and the star of the dinner-tasting event of 24 wines was the 1900 Rauenthaler Berg Auslese, definitely of Beerenauslese level. But at that time the only mention for a sweet wine was Auslese. The price level basically defined whether it had higher concentration or not. A stunning wine. Still full of life. A monument. Excellent the 1946 Rauenthaler Baiken. I noted, very racy, elegant, total balance and the 1953 with a bread nose, almost like a champagne, deep, good substance and a long finish.

The 1965 Rudesheim Berg Lay (today part of Berg Rottland), from our late winemerchant house Scholl & Hillebrand, a great surprise from such a difficult year. Very fresh and did so well with the Loup de mer. I served three 1980 from the Rudesheimer Berg. All in excellent condition. One can still feel a bit the unripe acidities the wines may have had. But they have softened now and kept the wines very fresh. Berg Schlossberg, Berg Rottland and Berg Roseneck, all from our own vineyards. This was my first vintage in our own estate, after we sold the wine merchant house. Our 1989 Berg Rottland TBA a monument of concentration. It develops better each time I get to taste it.

Next morning I took the early train to Hamburg, where I participated at a presentation of wine of Germany's largest mail order house Hawesko. Other than showing our wines to many customers, also a good place to meet many of my colleagues. The next day, we did the same in Düsseldorf.

On the 13th, I left for New York as part of the delegation of the Mayor of Frankfurt for the annual Frankfurt meets New York event. Together with Wilhelm Weil and HB Ullrich we donate the wine for the Gala Evening, which this year took place in the famous Rainbow Room of the Rockefeller Center.

I obviously used my stay also to work with our local distributor and did a press luncheon to launch the 1999 label for the Berg Schlossberg, which had been done by Tom Christopher, a New York artist, who came for the event. So this could not have been a better occasion. The tasting was followed by lunch at the very well known Gramercy Tavern, one of the top quality dining locations in town with a very open mind concerning the wines they serve. Other than a group of very important New York restaurateurs, the Wine Spectator and the New York Times attended the event.

We combined the 1997 Rauenthal Nonnenberg and 1997 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg with sea urchin & lobster fondue with potato Purée and curry essence, a sheer delight.

In the evening the Gala Event took place and the program was dedicated to literature, with very famous authors and publishers from both sides of the Atlantic as the speakers. I was also impressed by the almost perfect English of the Frankfurt mayor.

Next day. Some more visits in the market and a lunch with customers. Directly from there, taxi to JFK airport. The plane left at 4.30 pm.

Next morning. Arrival 5.50 am in Frankfurt. My colleague Walter Bibo from the Baden estate of Heger and Fischer was expecting me already at the airport. We hopped in the car and left for Dresden. We were having a press conference at lunch to announce a red wine workshop for the following weekend. I still progressed to Berlin that afternoon and visited the market with our agent. Berlin is growing still in the most dynamic way. It is fascinating to see that. Almost too hard to keep track.

More visits next day, Friday, only to leave in the late afternoon for Frankfurt again by train.

A short night at home. My plane is leaving 7 am next morning for Zurich/Switzerland. My friend Manfred Wagner has invited for a tasting of 100 years of Château Margaux. We go through 56 vintages. It is a great opportunity. The 1900 is still in great form. Let me just mention the vintages I found very good to excellent: 1996, 1991, 1990, 1989, 1983, 1979, 1961 (even not as good as expected), 1959, 1955, 1945, 1942, 1928, 1906 and finally 1900.

Two wines of this vintage almost in one week. And both wines of great caliber. A dinner followed the event. Now in a smaller circle. Michael Broadbent, James Suckling (Wine Spectator), John Symington (from the port family), Robert Drouhin, Carl-Axel Svensson, Manfred and myself. We were treated amongst other wines with a 1961 Cos d'Estournel and a 1945 Château Latour. Two memorable experiences.

Back to Frankfurt next morning with an early flight. Change bag and car and again Walter Bibo picks me up on our way to Dresden. Red wine tasting, schooling about wines for your restaurant employees and a Gala Dinner at Bülow's Residenz (a Relais and Château House in Dresden and a must for both the restaurant and the Hotel).

Tuesday morning, November 21st, an early start to get to Leipzig. A city that has made a fabulous development these last years. It is beautiful now, has great shops and is bursting with people. What a change to 6 / 7 years ago. At Auerbach's cellar, we presented wines to the trade and restaurants. It was in this cellar, that Goethe sat down on many evenings and got the inspiration for many chapters of his famous Faust. What a historical place.

When you go to Leipzig do not miss MEDICI (which despite the name is not an Italian restaurant) - Nikolaikirchhof 5; phone 0341-2113878. Very engaged young people with dedication for wine and food.

We return the next day, but only to pick up my own car again and drive to Luxembourg. Our first presentation in that little country. Even though a neighbor, there is hardly any knowledge about our wines. But one needs to start somewhere. I went together with Helmut Dönnhof, the famous vintner from the Nahe. We were invited to a late dinner by our importers to a small very original restaurant in town. Back to the Rheingau next morning.

I will meet with Aimé Guibert this evening. He is the owner of Mas de Daumas Gassac, the Estate that has made the Languedoc-Roussillon famous some years ago. He did it all by himself. A man with great charisma and dedicated and a frightful warrior against the industrialisation of wine production. He leads a battle, that is making headlines, against the Mondavi empire, who want to plant vineyards next to his place in Aniane, north of Montpellier, but would need to destroy a natural forest to do that. That Aimé does not want.

I will see him again 2 days later at a wine event in Münster, where wines from the South of France and Germany's best Rieslings will be presented. The night before I do a wine maker dinner at a restaurant near Aachen.

Today is Sunday. At least time to catch up with the diary. Tomorrow I will stay at the winery the whole day. We will taste the wines of the vintage 2000 in barrel to get a more closer idea on the development.

December 3rd, 2000

Another quite busy week. I left last Tuesday for Berlin in the afternoon to have dinner with Stuart Pigott at his flat. I brought the salad, he cooked the fish and his wife was a brilliant host. We had a good evening. Beside a bottle of excellent Bordeaux, we drank a bottle of 2000 Riesling Polish Hill from Geoffrey Crosset, whom we visited all three of us earlier this year at his estate in Australia. It brought back good memories.

Next evening I had a wine maker dinner at Nona Weinrestaurant in Berlin-Charlottenburg (Grunewaldstrasse 10 - near Kleistpark, Tel. No. 030-215 58 38). The owner Frau Bitrich is very engaged and it has been the 50th wine dinner in her place. Quite a performance. And should you be in Berlin and look for a down to earth approach to wine and food, go and enjoy the hospitality of this place.

Coming home on Thursday afternoon I met in the evening in Mainz at Geberts Weinstuben one of the grand journalists of wine and food, Gerald Asher, and we not only had very excellent fish

at the restaurant but a good and fruitful discussion about the situation of german wine in the US. He also supports my view, that we must show top dry german wines in the US and particularly in the restaurants. These wines must have muscle and body and have to buffer the acidity. This necessitates low yields, which coincides with my credo.

Next morning I drove with friends to Burgundy for the weekend. The major purpose was my intronisation and that of my friend Gerhard Wagenpfeil as chevaliers de tastevin in Clos de Vougeot. The Chapter took place last night in this beautiful and venerable once cistercian monastery. (If you want to have a look at the ceremony look for the photographs under NEWS on this homepage). The ceremony was followed by one of these enjoyable dinners, where wine, food, fun, singing and laughter are the ingrediants of the burgundian way of life.

Before the event and this morning we visited with several growers of which I retained as most interesting the Meursault white wine estate of Domaine Roulot and Michelot in Nuits St. Georges. They make terroir wines and not block busters. They also are opposed to the inverse osmosis for concentration (Bravo!) and believe in meticulous work in the vineyards and low yields. I liked very much the concentrated 98th and the examples of 99 from the barrel.

It took us just 5 hours to return this evening. A good sign that such an excursion should be repeated. I want to visit with some more colleagues and share the knowlegde of the pinot noir, since in our own estate this grape variety takes on step by step an increasing importance.

December 4th, 2000

I went to the vineyards to oversee the pruning. We are trying to be early, so that we can spend more time than, if needed, to follow the vines in the vineyard after flowering.

This evening I started to prepare a trip of our "Kultur-Verein" for next year to Tuscany. This will be in may and we decided that we will look into the subregions of Bolgerie, Redde/Greve and Montalcino, while we will be there.

December 5th, 2000

The programm for the Rheingau Gourmet Festival 2001 is going to print today. There are quite a few highlights. You will be able to find it shortly under www.rheingau-musik-festival.de

We tasted all Pinots , red and white , vintage 2000, from the barrel this morning. They look very promising. Some are doing the malo right now.

December 10th, 2000

Last wednesday I went to Saarbrücken to present Montosa 1999 in a popular cooking channel. It will be on TV at SWF and Saarländischer Rundfunk on march 8.2001. the name of the show is "Einfach Köstlich". On the way back, I stopped at an excellent restaurant Landhaus St. Urban, Büdlicherbrück 1, 54426 Naurath Tel. 06509-914 00. The owner Harald Rüssel and his wife are very motivated in what they do. He holds one Michelin Star and offers quite imaginative accommodations in his upper floor of the hotel. So do not miss him if you are close to Trier.

Christmas season is approaching. You can feel it looking at the menus. What turkey may mean for the english speaking countries, for us it is Christmas goose. With two different groupes of friends we ha goose on thursday and friday evening. One at Breuer's Rüdesheimer Schloss and the other in the Krone in Assmannshausen. Both were excellent. There is something special about the taste of the meat. I am looking forward to the one we will share with friends over Christmas. On the second night we did an interesting red wine around the world selection. For the fun of it we did it blind. The most interesting wines proved to be a 1990 Pinot Noir from Eyrie Vineyards/Oregon, a 1996 Cabernet Sauvignon, Catena Agreto Vineyards from Mendoza/Argentina and 1998 Sommet (our) Mont du Toit Riserva from Wellington/South Africa - this wine will be released in spring of next year.

Yesterday finally a day to catch up with some work and with a long jogging session in the nearby woods. This made me feel good.

Today I will fetch Steve Metzler and Almudena, the owner of Classical Wines , our importer in the US. I look forward to spend some time with them today and tomorrow.

Now I have to finish, since I have to rush to the airport.

December 21st, 2000

I just came back from Madeira and Portugal. together with Bernd we visited our Quinta and tasted all the barrels of our first vintage.Indeed this looks very promising. Lots of fruit and body. e also had talks with the architects, since the construction of the cellar is a priority. It must be finished before the next harvest. So frequent travel to help get it done will be necessary.

The yearend festivities are fast approaching. The muddy, wet wether has changed and the feeling of winter becomes more apparent. It has been freezing for the first time this winter. That is what it should be.

We will be tasting through all wines of the last vintage in our cellar tomorrow. I look forward to that.

December 26th, 2000

Only 5 days ago I entered the last information into the my diary notes , but a lot has happened since. It started to get cold on the 21st. colder on the 22nd, but not cold enough to think about trying to get the remaining grapes home, frozen. Eiswein.

I had given up all hopes to still get something out of the grapes, that we left in the Hinterhaus and Kuhweg vineyards (both part of what is called since 1971 Bischofsberg). But the year decided to take a turn after all. I went on midnight of the 22nd to the vineyards to see what the temperature would be like. And it was minus 8 centigrade. Just the temperature we need to get the grapes frozen. They taste like a sorbet (sherbet) when you bite at them. Enough to go for Eiswein. I went to Hermann Schmoranz, my best man, to discuss the issue and foremost to see who we could mobilize to harvest with us next morning. Hopefully my two daughters were home for the christmas holidays and they were prepared to help picking the grapes. We mobilized another few, very few, and got promises that we might get some more people from the team of Johannes Leitz, when he finishes with his Eiswein harvest. And so it happened.

We started with 5 people, than the others joined and we managed between 6.30 h until 9 h to harvest our two fields, bring the grapes home and pressed them. The Oechsle reading was around 140. a good result. And it was the last chance. The sky became clouded, it started to rain and to snow and the low temperatures never came back. So we took care of the only chance we had. The year 2000 finished on a positive note. It was unexpected, but I am very grateful. The last Eiswein we produced was in 1998, on november 23, the earliest since 1977 in the rheingau according to the records. In 1996 it was december 25 when we went out early in the morning and I remember January 6 in 1996, when we had a chance to make an Eiswein. As a contrast to that period, we do not cover our vineyards with plastic foil anymore. We expose the grapes to the perils and risks of wether and i think this is for the good. Not only because I strongly feel that even specialities like an Eiswein have to be an accident of nature but also because weather on top of a site has to leave an imprint on the style of what we qualify as vintage character. The rains and winds of the last weeks have certainly cared for selecting the grapes that still until last saturday were still fixed to the vines. And so the must that came from the press was aromatic and pure.

We had good wines and company the last days. Christmas. A date when we gather with family and friends. Talk a lot, drink a lot (of good wine), but it is rewarding – for the inner benefits. This is it. The end of the year is coming soon. I will have a few hours tomorrow in my office. and than the next day drive with my daughter and some friends to the french alps. To Val d' Isère, a resort I love a lot. I will only return next year, so this is the time to say good buy, wish you a happy new Year and hope to see, hear, listen, you again next year.

Bye, Bye 2000.