

January 4th, 2001

Welcome to the year 2001. The first true year of the new millenium, as many people say. Not much happened since I wrote to you last. I came back from a short holiday from the french alps. And even though snow conditions are not spectacular yet this season, I found enough snow in Val d'Isère, my preferred place for many years. One great sunny day with some fresh snow in the morning was the gift for the new year, January 1. The day before we paid ouselve a great lunch at the best chalet-restaurant on the slopes " La Folie Douce". It is a must for those that love good wine and food and a marvellous setting. It is at the middle station of the La Daille slopes (for those who which to go), has a self-service for the crowd, a great dining room indoor and a beautiful outdoor dining place, if thewether allows. I ordered a bottle of 1994 Sociando ;Mallet at a very affordable price. The gigot of lamb was perfect. So don't miss the place should you go there. And do not miss the Taverne d'Alsace of Hubert Deiss in the evening. This is where good atmosphere mixes with good people. And do you need a night club , look for Café Face or a more cosy bar the "Aventure".

I returned two days ago. At time of the year the phone rings a bit less often, business is starting slowly again with the first orders coming in.

January 10th, 2001

Last monday, Fin Lysner visited with me. A danish journalist , so he says (really he is a professor of litterature) will write the first book oon german wines in danish. He impressed me very much. He sees wine as much as culture as we do and he differentiates between the "techno" wines and those which have been made by the traditional methods.

It is raining. Gray. I phoned Portugal, where they say the rains might bring problems in the wine regions. But the Qunita de Carvalholsa, our property is ok. They have finished pruning and we will be regrafting some of the white varieties into reds.

The last two days we had meetings with our partners in the german marketing company. Good friends after almost working 8 years together. Bürklin, Heyl, Salm, Neipperg, Kesselstatt, Castell, Meyer-Näkel, Fischer (Heger). We finished the first day of meeting last night with an long visit in the temporary wine pup of Solter and Schmoranz (our winemaker) where in great atmosphere excellent wines and good foods attracts many locals. The will keep it open for some 4 weeks. So if you happen to be here, do not miss the place.

Our group will participate in the Pro Wine and Vinexpo exhibition this year. In Bordeaux we will keep an open house on June 21 at Château Smith-Haut Lafite of our friends the Cathiard family.

I will leave for Berlin on Friday and my daughter comes back from her skiing week with friends tomorrow.

January 15th, 2001

Back from Berlin and back tonight from Kanzem, where I tasted all the new wines for the first time completely. This is very promising. Good fruit and substance. The good extract really shows. It is not a year of botrytis. You know that -in that estate. But this will largely be compensated by the dry wines we made.

In Berlin I visited the Logenhaus Wine exhibition to support our regional wholesaler, the Weincompany. They do a good job there. Friday night after the exhibition I met with Stuart Pigott, his wife and friends at "Weinstein" (don't miss it, it is just off Unter den Linden on Charlottenstrasse). The owner Roy Metzendorf is a wine freak and very down to earth. A good place. Stuart's new book will be out in autumn and we all look forward to it. We just hope somebody will publish his great books, that are such a different, intellectual and personal approach to wine, also in English.

On Saturday night, I gave a Breuer Wine and Seafood dinner after the exhibition to selected consumers that booked the event. Starting with fine Clair oysters, there was everything on the plate you could think of - you may have to go to Paris to find the same selection, all arrived live and was prepared the same day, it could not be fresher.

Bigornaux, Bulot, mussels, Prawns, Lobsterette, shrimps, Crab and Lobster. What a treat. I served 6 wines side by side from our cellars, so that the guests could try with the food and go back and forth. Really alternative wines. 1983 Rudesheim Riesling Auslese - still in great form - ,1985 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg, 1997 Rauenthal Nonnenberg, 1999 Montosa, 1999 Rudesheim Estate (may be the most versatile for the evening) and 1999 Pinot Gris).

Tomorrow I will have all the vintage 2000 wines on the table from our vineyards. I look forward to that. And on Tuesday I will depart with Bernd Philippi to Wellington, South Africa to do the assemblage for the 1999 Mont du Toit, which shall be bottled in February, to be shipped March or April.

Before I leave a note for you to eventually give me some help. Even though you most probably read my english version, may be possibly you have also looked up my german version once in a while. Through a technical mistake we lost the entire 2000 german diary (Tagebuch 2000) and cannot put it back together. Also we did not make a print out. This is a real great personal loss for me and my only hope is, that one of the readers will be able to trace it in the "browser cache". But look it up before you try to go to the Tagebuch 2000 (in german) page, because if you did that it would certainly erase your stored version of what I am missing. Should you find it - or possibly you had it printed out once, than send it to me – you could copy it and attach it to an e-mail to my personal computer e-mail adress : georg-breuer-home@t-online.de or send it to Bernhard Breuer POB 1169, D 65385 Rüdesheim.

I hope I get a note from somebody of you these days. I will certainly compensate the good news for those sending it in first by a good bottle of wine.

January 22nd, 2001

Back from the southern hemisphere. From the warm summer – I even got a sun tan on my face – to a snow covered Rheingau. We even had a delay after a stop-over in London, due to heavy snow at Frankfurt airport.

It was a good trip. The 1999 Mont du Toit is ready for bottling next week. A first assemblage of the 2000 Mont du Toit has been prepared and we can sense the potential of this great vintage. We have set some barrels aside for an eventual reserve "Le Sommet" and after the harvest which we see starting at the very end of february or first week of march, we will botte the second label , Hawequas 2000.

It has not been the hottest summer so far and the flowering took place in somewhat colder conditions . As a result the fruits are not as full, but that may become positive for the quality at the end. the look very healthy at this stage.

The days were warm but not hot with a nice brise almost all the time. Sitting at the terrace in the evening. Above at the sky the Southern Cross and from the loudspeakers in the back "La Bartoli" with arias from Mozart. Waht a voice and what a quality of life, completed with a good bottle of wine. Stephan du Toit loves good classical music, so do I. Acutually the neighbor, who owns the excellent farm and cellars of Weijnwouden is Deon van der Walt, one the finest lyrical tenors in the world.

We also met again our friend Harald Bresselschmidt of Aubergine, this great Capetown restaurant, this time once at his restaurant and before departure for a private lunch at his home. His wife, a dentist at the Cape university cooked us an indian menu served with Riesling. Sue is from India and responsible for a project concerning aids on minors. To listen to her experiences is enlightening and at the same time making one aware of this great drama HIV in Africa. 25 to 35% of all South Africans have aids. This is a fact beyond imagination. But a fact, just as powerful as the beautiful landscape and the fine wines this country can produce.

By the way have a look at our Quinta da Carvalhosa page where I have posted some good pictures from the harvest.

January 28th, 2001

Alot of food and wine this week after the return from the Cape. I met after a long time again with Norbert Holderrieth the former General Manager of the Wegeler Estates and Egbert Engelhardt the former Chef from the Michelin Star rated Graues Haus, good friends from good old times. We will go skiing as of next weekend for one week in Val d'Isère, as we have done for many of the past eight years.

Friday I drove to Alsace to be part of the agency meeting of the House of Schlumberger, our german distribution partners. We had dinner at "Aux Armes de France" in Ammerschwier, one of the great restaurants in that region that for decades now hold a Michelin Star. I was there the last time about 30 years ago and it was than the father Gartner, who was cooking. We had great wines for that evening. 1993 Roederer Christal, Hacienda de Monasterio from Rijoja, Pichon Languevielle de Lalande and a great Pinot Blanc from Schlumberger the traditional Alsace house.

Last night I went with Herman Schmoranz, our cellermaster to a Burgundy Pinot Noir tasting and dinner to the Krone in Assmannshausen. We tasted 12 wines, back to 1969. from the domaines of Romané Conti, Leroy and Armand Rousseau. I liked best the 69 Corton Bressandes from Bize Leroy, 1989 Musigny from Comte de Vogüe and 1986 Gevrey Chambertin from Armand Rousseau.

And to day I prepared with the owners of Domäne Mechthildshausen, a great restaurant close to Wiesbaden, which is part of a large agricultural farm that only works ecologically and does great food, a culinary dinner, which will take place on february 17 and which will feature the wines of Domaine Dupond Tisserandeu from Gevrey Chambertin and our wines. It will be a good evening.

The Burgundies I have tasted today were excellent, They have a clean cut, representing very well the different terroirs where the wines are grown and also live from their finesse. The str wine of all (even though still and infant - but with great potential 1999 Corton).

The Rheingau Gourmet festival will take place again this year in March. The website has just been placed and it might be worthwhile for you to glance through it (www.rheingau-gourmet-festival.de).

January 31st, 2001

Yesterday was dedicated a lot to Quinta da Carvalhosa. I was working on the architectural plans for the cellars which we have to built this year. Working across countries via e-mail on such plans seems to be a normal way of doing it. I would never have thought a few years ago that this is possible and that I would do it myself. Bernd Philippi came over to discuss with me many details and I think we have worked out a very functional plan. To finish up the day we went to the local tavern (we call it Strausswirtschaft which is open some 6 weeks in the year and allows the small farmers to sell their wine on the premiss) of Hermann Schmoranz and his friend Solter. It is a great place for meeting people. The risky thing is, one does not go to bed early once you are there.

February 12th, 2001

Back from a short holiday in the Alps together with my friend Norbert Holderieth, the former director of the Wegeler Estates. In our preferred pub/restaurant we had a few interesting bottles of wine in the evening: 1996 Grange des Pères (white) amazingly compact and fresh from the South of France, 1996 Gaisberg Riesling from Kientzler, 1998 Domaine de Trevallon - great red from Provence and a 1972 Nederburg Cabernet Sauvignon - still in great form.

I have also taken the time to write a few notes on the present debate in Germany about Classic and Selection, two wine types to be promoted in the future by the german wine information bureau. I am not finding the time to translate these notes to english, but I am sure some of you can read german and will find it on the german side of this homepage under "Tagebuch 2001" and others may use a translation mashine to get some of the basics out of it.

February 18th, 2001

Partially good news. Somebody found the first half of the 2000 diary in German, which got lost in the computer system, which has been a great shame. So it can be revisited from January until July 26. I still have the hopes that somebody does have the remaining half. Either as a print out or stored somewhere in the computer.

This week's performance. I visited with one of our agents in the Ruhrgebiet area some customers. Good vibes in the market for our wines. We met in the palatinate at Bürklins with the members of our German marketing and distribution group (9 estates from different regions in Germany). A good meeting. Brainstorming to envisage the market needs of the future. We need to even deepen the exchange also in viticulture and vinification in addition to the common sales efforts which since we started in 1992 for all of us became a success story.

Yesterday I met at the Krone in Assmannshausen with Herr Schmerfeld, a journalist of *Savoir Vivre* magazine who wants the forthcoming Rheingau Gourmet Festival. It will start on March 16. In the evening I was at a winemaker dinner at Domäne Mechthildshausen an extremely successful restaurant near Wiesbaden where I presented our wines to a 6 course dinner of the finest quality together with a Burgundian colleague, M. Chevillon of the Domaine Dupont Tisserandot in Gevrey Chambertin. A long evening. Fantastic sauces.

I returned home early this morning, since I did not want to miss my morning jog through the forest. It was brisk but great air. We have a cold sunny day.

I will depart this evening for Madeira and the Douro. We need to make progress now with the plans and authorisation to build the cellars for our Quinta near Regua. I will only be away until the 22nd.

February 23rd, 2001

Hardly any time to write a note. Came back from Portugal last night. To get all the building permissions in time is going to become a battle. On that basis the world may be quite a like. I left a few bottles of wine with the responsible persons. May be it does the trick.

We bottled today our first wines of 2000 vintage, the GB wines *Savage* and *Charm*.

Stephen Brook from the UK, an old acquaintance and good journalist friend visited with me. I enjoyed his compagny very much. We tasted all the 99 vintage. For dinner we went to the newly opened Graues Haus in Winkel. They look like wanting to make an effort. The wine list is very good. We had a 1993 J.B. Becker Wallufer Walkenberg Riesling Auslese Trocken, good with food and a 1999 Laible Riesling Spätlese Troken. He makes most probably the best Baden Riesling. Very impressive.

The cooking still has quite a way to go.

Tomorrow I leave for the Hamburger Wein Salon and will only return on monday.

February 27th, 2001

Back from Hamburg. It was quite a succesful weekend. Together with my colleagues of Die Güter, we had a culinary wine evening on friday showing 10 vintages from the 90ies to a 5 course dinner at Allegria, a young, but excellent restaurant in the Winterhuder Fährhaus, a Theater Institution in Hamburg. Hundred people attended.

Saturday and sunday was the wine show, which included a competition for the best wines and the best wine producers of the show. Everybody could enter 5 wines, and we succeeded to get for all of them A Grand prix d'honneur (4 times) and a Prix d'honneur (1x). This nominated us for the competition of Winery of the year which will be decided upon in September. A very succesful event for us.

I used monday to stay for a while with my daughter, now living in Hamburg. We had a great meal sunday night at NIL, a cult restaurant in Altona, where every sunday night a common meal is served, everybody sitting next to each other. Very good atmosphere and food. Plus a great wine list is the trademark of this place. I came home late by train, just to change my bag to leave tomorrow morning for London and Jersey.

March 1st, 2001

Back from the trip. Weather was rather bad, but a good visit. Noel Young will now represent us in the UK. I think this is good news. He and his crew are very enthusiastic and we have made some good visits to market including dinner in the evening of tuesday with Christopher Golmour at his new "Christophers" restaurant in Victoria, where he does carry our wines.

Next day flight to Jersey where I presented our wines in depth at a formal tasting event of the Victor Hugo Wine Club. The attendance was excellent and the tasting very well received. Maybe we will be getting into the market even though this was not the intention at the outset.

A bit complicated to travel back from Jersey. Flight to Gatwick, train to Victoria - with some delays- subway (tube) to Liverpool Street Station and train to Stansted and then flight to Frankfurt and back home by car. Arrival late in the evening. This is also part of a vintner's life.

March 2nd, 2001

Even though this was never an issue with the English version of my homepage, but you may have noticed that we lost the 2000 German version of my diary around the turn of the Century (actually on January 5). I had advertised this on the homepage and it is now today that somebody sent it to me via e-mail. This is very good news for me, since it represented a whole year of work and many, many long and late nights. So it is a lucky day.

We also tasted the range of the 2000 sweet wines. It has not been the ideal botrytis year, but what we have been able to assess today will give us definitely some very substantial Goldkapsel Auslese and certainly the Eiswein, the last of this century with good acidity, which we harvested on December 23.

Tomorrow I will have to depart early for Cologne. There is a presentation with many of my friends of our Pinot wines made in small oak, followed by a wine party in the evening.

Sunday morning I will move on to the PRO WEIN exhibition in Düsseldorf, which has rapidly become the most important wine show after Vinexpo in Europe.

I will be back only by the middle of next week.

March 13th, 2001

Just to let you know I am still alive. Pro Wine past. I owe you a report. Back from a long weekend trip to Austria. Another report missing. I will try to work on it tomorrow night. It is 2 am in the morning. I need some sleep. I hope to find the time tomorrow to fill you in.

The Rheingau Gourmet Festival starts thursday evening. Cal Stamenov the chef from Bernadus lodge, an old friend of mine has arrived today and we will both have an interview at a regional radio station tomorrow morning.

Good night.

March 14th, 2001

The Gourmet Festival is almost upon us. Another TV Interview tomorrow evening and than the start on Friday with the welcome party in our cellars. There will be over 200 people, some 15 vintners and 8 chefs.

Pro Wein is becoming an important wine event. Almost 3000 exhibitors. They are trying to beat Vinitaly and Vinexpo. The presentation has won stature. The stand of our german distributor, Schlumberger, was one of the best visited during the show. I had no time to see almost anything else. But it was a good show for us for the meetings, contacts and updating with customers and press. Even Michael Broadbent showed up to say hello to me. A very nice gesture. And since on t stand just in that moment a vintage port tasting took place, weboth could enjoy a 1934 Ramos Pintos, a great wine. Another remarkable wine at one of the tastings at our stand, a 1976 Pinot Gris Selection de Grain Noble. Phantastique freshness after all these years.

The evenings were long and the nights short. But this is no surprise at a wine show.

After my return sunday night, jsut a day and a half in the winery and cellars and than off to an almost annual theme tsting in a round of friends together with Stuart Pigott. A very interesting group of people gathered in the Burgenland, South of Vienna , this time. Alois Kracher, Roland Velich the producer of famous Tigmat chardonnay,, Daniel Gantenbein with his wife, probably the finest vintner in Switzerland, Dr. Ottmar Kiem -wine writer from Tessin, Jan Paoulson, great collector of old wines, Guido Janseger, the belgian journalist turned succesful vinter in the Cahors with his Chateau Mansenoble, Dirk Nieport, everybody knows him and Dorli Muhr, famous wine P Lady, Bernd Phillippi , Stuart Pigott his wife Ursula and myself. The themes were Chardonnay and great red wine Cuvées world wide. It is a privat blind tasting, which we do for Stuart and it is up to him, if he decides to , to use the results. but just so much for a tendency.

Great surprise the South African Chardonnays. Hamilton Russel Ashbourne and Mulderbosch, with Rocchioli in top scoring ranks. Eventually somewhat deceiving the burgundian whites. As to the reds.

Almost classic wines in front- or should we say new classic, Ornellaia, Sena and we were happy with a third place for Mont du Toit Le Sommet. Out of 52 wines tasted.

Great wines I noted down from the dinners. 1961 amarone from Bolla, 1985 Bussaco (this is south of Porto a very small appellation with long lasting wines. – We have been there. Try to find when next time in Portugal. It is like a feary tale or rather like a fata morgana), 1972 Vega Sicilia and 1982 Monfortino from Giacomo Bologna, both monuments.

1989 Cheval Blanc, outstanding, 1987 Tiglat Reserve O.T. Chardonnay, 1990 Achleiten Prager Smaragd Riesling, 1998 Sine Qua Non from Manfred Krankl tasted for the first wine. A monument. Will it last?. I wish it for him.

After my return on sunday I went monday morning to the Saar, to the Von Othegraven Estate. We are fighting there against the authorities, who want build a road right through this perfect vineyard of Altenberg. We thought we could by negotiation prevent this. But the do not seem to become reasonable. We need all your help. The two busiest german wine forums: <http://www.best-of-wine.com> and <http://www.wein-plus.de> have taken a public initiative. May be you can support us to.

The last two days a lot of catching up to do. As I said above the Rheingau Gourmet Festival will start this friday. So not much time left for me , but hopefully enough to report about the high-lights later on.

March 27th, 2001

Sorry. Long time no see. The Rheingau gourmet festival finished on the weeh-hours of monday morning after 10 days of fabulous events. Record attendance. Nearly 4000 people for all of the 22 events. It is already very late, actually again early morning and I am off to Munich at 6am with the train and only came back this afternoon after a presentation last evening in Aachen, so I will not be able - as I should - to go much into details. But at least I will try to give a short review.

Opening party at Breuer`s Kellerwelt with over 220 attendants. Great atmosphere and great comments from the guests for our "new" old cellars. Blind tasting of Grüner Veltliner against Chardonnay. The Grüner Veltliner had the edge. Top of the line Emmerich Knoll. The best Chardonnay by Matanzas Creek from Sonoma. (the Grüner Veltliner had a slight advantage due to it beeing 99 vintage while the others were 98 and older - but anyway). Mondavi tasting with

120 in attendance, the largest tasting. I like the great Cabernet Sauvignons including the 96 Opus One. Chateau Margaux vertical tasting. 96 vintage- great wine. 84 the big surprise and an excellent bottle of 67. Mouton Rothschild, Lafite Rothschild, Latour, Margaux, Cheval Blanc and Ausone. All vintage 1997 and side by side at the dinner on Monday the 19th. What an opportunity. Plus excellent food from Wille Mittler /Krone chef and Cal Stamenov of Bernandus Lodge (an old friend of the festival). A super idea proved to be the Restaurant excursion with 2 courses each at Franz Kellers Adlerschänke in Hattenheim, Kronenschlösschen in Hattenheim to finish at the Frankfurt 1 Star Restaurant Tigerpalast, followed by a variety show in the same establishment. An event for all senses.

Remi Kurg presented his great champagnes personally. Two other vertical tastings of Domaine de la Rectorier from Banyuls with the owner Marc Parce, a great personality, and Château de Pibarnon (more than 80 people attended) an almost monovarietal Mouvèdre. Two "découvertes" of the most excellent kind. Big Smoke, with me testing 4 different cigars - not bad for a non smoker. A phantastic menu at the Grande Finale. The 6 chefs cooked world class standard. Rolf Laudenschach and Kazuya Fukuhira from Otaro, Jürg Bischofsberger from Winterthur, Stefan Stiller of Zur Kanne in Deidesheim, Patrik Kimpel-Kronenschlösschen und Willi Mittler on his home turf the Krone in Assmannshausen. Remains to mention the kitchen party which finished the festival. 250 People attended and it ended, like many evenings at later than 3 o'clock in the morning at the bar.

Note the dates for next years event. March 8 to 17.2002. The guest country will be Spain.

April 3rd, 2001

I am leaving in one hour for the VINITALY fair in Verona. We will have a stand in hall 2 together with the german FEINSCHMECKER gourmet magazin and a number of other german growers. The fair starts tomorrow and today I will be at a presentation of our italian importer Innerhofer close to Affi.

Il travelled last week quite a bit to the market. On Monday to have a tasting for customer of our agent in Aachen and Wednesday/ Thursday in Munich to visit with customers in Bavaria. These visits are really also an opportunity to see some new parts sometime of our country.

April 11th, 2001

"This message is directly from the Verona Vinitaly wine fair. I am sitting in the press center and found a computer to compose some lines to go on my diary website.

It is the 4th time that I am here and it is a very friendly fair. Everybody seems to enjoy it. I am here again with many colleagues at the Feinschmecker Stand in Hall 2. We seem to be the "Exotic" people of the fair with German wine in Italy. but Riesling is starting to get more and more respect.

In addition to customers from Germany, I have been meeting with some of our agents. Henrietta Batt from Norway was here. also VindiVino our Chicago distributor is here and we met on the Bar of our hotel "early this morning". I have seen "obviously" Luis Kracher, who handles our wines in Austria and in a few minutes I will meet with our Skandinavian agent, Vinunic, Stefan and Mats.

I will stay until monday, when we will board again our private plain – with seven growers on board – to Frankfurt."

Upon my return on the 9th, I had the visit of our dutch importer, who came with a good client, Mr. Toolenaar, a restaurateur. We will do a press luncheon and tasting in his place in late may.

Yesterday I went to Kanzem. Another meeting with the authorities, who want to built a road across the Altenberg vineyard. We are fighting against it. A neighbor, who has a piece of vineyard on each side of the center, which is the Von Othegraven part, wants that road, so that he can reach his separated better and he has so far convinced the authorities that they should do it. There was a long article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on monday to support our view. but it will take mor efforts to win this case.

The support of everybody is useful. So if you want to join the battle send us an e-mail and we will communicate to you the adress of the Minister in charge, so that you can adress him directly.

Last night i met at the Assmannshausen Krone with HB Ullrich to start the planning for next years Rheingau Gourmet Festival. We finished the evning off with a nice meal and a good bottle of Riesling.

Today I had visitors from the swedish liquor board and other than that am still in the middle of trying to catch up with all the paperwork on my desk.

April 21st, 2001

Today I will depart for a 10 days sales trip with our importer Steve Metzler throughout the US. I will fly into California and stay over for the weekend in Napa. I am travelling with Frau Dr. Kegel and her son Philipp from the Othegraven Estate and Carolina du Toit from Mont du Toit. I will visit the new Robert Mondavi Winery, the Tokalun Project and Opus One on Sunday. Then we will work the markets. San Francisco. Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle and finally Chicago. I look forward to the trip even though it may be exhausting.

We had some very light snow on easter, this past sunday. A rare event. I haven't seen that for years. It is April weather. Changing constantly. It is fairly cold but the vineyards are in normal progress still for the season.

With friends we had a great easter lunch with beautiful wines, hosted by the owner of the Krone in Assmannshausen. A 1964 Moet & Chandon Black Label to start. 1964 Château Nenin for the main course and an excellent 1978 Palmer in Magnums. A hard to beat treat with great food.

On easter monday I left for the Douro to see after the winery and try to progress the building permission for the cellar. I have come a good way along. We will be able to start excavating for the cellar very soon. So we might finally still make our time schedule. Thanks god. The vegetation is in good progress. The shoots are between 10 and 20 inches long and in good condition. Francisco, our vineyard men is doing an excellent job.

I returned thursday afternoon, almost just to turn around and get ready for the forthcoming trip. I will be back on May 2. So long.

May 2nd, 2001

I am writing this part on a train ride from Portland/Oregon to Seattle/Washington. This is the 6th day of a trip to the west coast and I am with my friends Heidi Kegel and her son from the Von Othegraven Estate, Carolina du Toit from Mont du Toit, South Africa and 4 Spanish producers among them the Guelbenzu, owner of the famous Navarra estate.

A road show that carries us to San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle and Chicago. The daily pattern is the same. Presentation to the trade and the sales men of the regional distributors. Dinner with a few selected customers. Little else time so far in between.

But we started off in a very relaxed way. After a 10 hours flight and arrival in San Francisco, last Saturday our distributor and friend Steve Ventrello fetched us at the airport to take us to Napa Valley, where he lives and his company is located.

Check in the hotel (I stayed at Steve's place and enjoyed a round of Bocce at his private Bocce court in his garden - a relaxing, yet concentration demanding game - in my hand a bottle of Hierzberger Riesling Federspiel, 1998), shopping for the evening bar-be-que - fish from the grill, excellent, some greens and good wines. A neighbour, the Haynes, a producer of good wines from Napa, joined us with his wines.

Next morning we had an invitation from the Robert Mondavi Winery in Oakville for a visit of the just opened new To Kaloon winery. To Kaloon is the name of a famous vineyard, possibly the heart of Mondavi's top vineyard location. It stretches almost next to the reputed Martha's vineyard, Joe Heitz, a great name. I once tasted his legendary 1974 and remember visiting with him in the late 70th.

The word is gravity flow in the new winery. They have eliminated all stainless steel fermenters and replaced them by wooden fermenters from Taransaud. A huge investment. 56 of them, all in an immaculate setting.

Lunch followed, invitation by the winery in their restaurant on site and from there we went across the street to Opus One. Tour and tasting of the 97 vintage at the roof of the building. A superb view into the evening sky of the Valley. The weather was perfect. That was a day to relax. We finished the evening in a local bistro very casually.

Monday morning, drive to San Francisco, presentation at Fort Mason almost immediately followed by dinner at Farallon, by now an institution as a restaurant. We took some customers along and sat in the wine room. Quite impressive with a view of the great cellar next door.

Early flight to Los Angeles. Presentation at Chaya Brasserie, a very interested crowd showed up. They hardly left one wine out in their tasting. Between the German, South African and Spanish wines, certainly 80 wines to taste. The water grill for dinner. Excellent fish. A hot day. Next day in the paper we could read, the hottest day in the year so far.

Off to Portland next morning. Oregon is really beautiful. Green dominates. Good to see already from the plane. The city, I think I was there the last time at least 20 years ago, even though it has over 1 Million inhabitants does not provide that idea. A lot of allees and surrounded by green hills.

I enjoyed them this morning on my jog to Alta and Buena Vista, the roads that lead to the top of the hills. The weather very agreeable, so the tasting for a number of interesting potential customers. The German, South African contingent went afterwards to 750ml, an interesting mix of retail shop and wine bar. A very active owner, Rena from Canada with great ideas and an eclectic selection of wines. We took her to dinner to the Heyman restaurant, an institution. Superb fish, halibut cheeks, a speciality and we added an Oregonian wine to the menu. Serene Pinot Noir 1998. Loads of cherry on the nose good body eventually lacking some length. Not inexpensive, 50\$.

We stayed long, the wines and a wonderful dessert, 3 variations of Valrona Chocolate- hard to resist. Most people seem to go home much earlier than we, the Europeans are used to.

So here we are again. A beautiful relaxing train ride on the "Cascades" takes us this morning to Seattle. Along some fantastic views of sounds, forests and mountains. We will have a presentation again this afternoon and a dinner. Tomorrow at the offices of our national importer, Classical Wines, we will all have home made Paella. This should be a treat. Saturday we will leave for Chicago. Also a city I have not seen for quite some time, but always liked because of the location next to the lake and the fabulous architectural landmarks.

Back from Chicago this morning. Trying all day to catch up. May be will be able to report some more on Chicago later next week. Tomorrow I have a very early start with my friends to go for 4 days to Tuscany. We travel with this "boy club" over 20 years in wine areas and I look forward to the next days.

May 13th, 2001

Sorry for having been silent for so long. But if you read my notes you will understand that there was not much time in between. I have had many short nights in the last weeks and I feel my body needs to go back to a more normal pattern at least for the time being..

Back to Chicago. I still remember the restaurant from the first evening called MOD which was small, with a good winelist and really impressive food. I liked it a lot. Sunday a day off, I went with two of our group to see a baseball game, the first in my life, The Seattle Mariners against the Chicago White Sox. Chicago won, much to the surprise, since the Mariners are leaders in the league (you see, I am informed?). It is still not easy to understand the game, but I am much closer to find out what it's all about than I ever was. I seem to understand that it is very strategic. Every move they make. Almost like chess, or is this exaggerated. After a successful presentation

with our importers, VindiVino, who are very engaged and enthusiastic we had a final dinner in Chicago China Town at Penang, with loads of good food and bottles of wine brought along. I remember I had an excellent Pinot Noir from Oregon - but I admit I forgot the name. Ask Ann Sommer from Vindivino, she will probably remember.

Some shopping on the morning of our return and then a good flight back to Frankfurt.

One day trying to catch up in the office. 3 hours of sleep and then back to the airport to take a very early flight to Florenz. At arrival we drove in our rented cars right into the vineyards. First stop: Castello di Nipozzano from the Frescobaldi family. Tour of the cellars, tasting of their wines, I liked very much the Montesodi and long lunch at the winery in a wonderful setting under the roof of an ancient old house. The only day with sunshine. It became quite cold the next morning and later started to become very wet. From here we drove to San Geminiano to try to find our hotel, actually our agri turismo. some private houses of the MONTENIDOLI estate. I know the family Fgiuoli, Mother Maria Elisabetta and daughter Angelica. We were able to find the winery first and actually stayed for aperitif first - I venture to say they make one of the best, definitely most authentic white wine of Tuscany. Their Vernaccia de San Gemignono as Fiore or Carato are excellent wines. But we stayed on after these wines for a dinner prepared by Mme Fagioli herself. Actually to American women who happen to be guests as well, joined the dinner. Many courses, many wines, finishing with the pure Sagiovese "Soneo Montenedoli.

The houses where we stayed were another 8 km away and it was not easy to drive after all this wine. But we were told the police would definitely be asleep at this time of the night and there would be no risk.

Next day drive to Castelgiocondo in Montalcino. It seems so near on the map, but the roads are winding and one understands that actually most of Tuscany is mountains. Here at this estate (total size 1200 hectares of which 250 are vineyards, just to give you an idea of these aristocratic dimensions) Lucente and Luce (the joint venture wines with Mondavi) is produced, but also their Lamaione, we tasted the 1997 for lunch, excellent. This is a 100 percent Merlot. Lunch at the Castello. A wonderful person, Noris, took excellent care of us. Return to San Gemignono. Just the time to stroll through the street of this town. Quite that evening, because of the rain, otherwise full of tourists. Just outside the town we had a table reserved at Enoteca da Nisio. The food is good but the joy of wines is absolutely outstanding. Do not miss it. Loc. Sovestro, 32, Tel. 0577 941029 (<http://www.sienaol.it/enoteca>) .

Saturday morning departure for Castello di Ama. Close to Radda, near the town of Ama. This estate

is nestled really in the mountains. We drove through the clouds and it felt like a last winter day. The managing director, good friend of mine, showed us the recently redone cellars and the old cellar where they age the three Cru of the estate of which the Aparita is world famous. After an in depth tasting of their most recent wines, including those 97 that will only be released later in the year, we had a light lunch in a nearby enoteca in Radda, next to the vineyards. We left for Siena from here to visit the town and ended up in a Vinoteca, recommended by Angelica from Montenedoli. Again an excellent recommendation. (I will give you the details once I find my notes again). the owner of this place is really a wine freak and knows the wines of the world.

Sunday morning. Departure and return via the sea. We passed by Volterra and reach the sea at Marina di Cecina and had a long table reserved at ElFaro. An excellent choice, as we could find out. A fish restaurant, directly on the beach, run by an enthusiastic sailing family (you can see the trophies on the wall), but with a very good seafood and fish cuisine and also a good winelist. After many other wines, we finished with two bottles of 1996 Sassicaia. Not a bad way to finish a stay in Tuscany. Back to Florenz, the airport and arrival at midnight in Rudesheim

Two days of work in the office and the winery. The weather has changed. It is brilliant early summer weather. You can see it in the vineyards. The vines explode. Every day one or two leaves more. We are planting some Pinot Noir in an excellent site of Berg Rottland these days, to give us more variations in soil still for our red wines.

On Tuesday evening meeting with the Spanish wine promotion board to discuss next years Rheingau Gourmet Festival, where Spain will be the guest country, followed by a dinner at the Krone with a fabulous collection of Spanish wines, back to 1964.

May 9. Visit of the market in Frankfurt with our agent. May 10 and 11. Visit of the market in Hamburg with our agent. Return late on Friday evening. Catching up with papers yesterday and still today.

I will have the first visit of an Estonian wine writer this afternoon. It is good news that these countries as well are opening up now.

Tomorrow I will leave for the Saar. Together with some friends we will run a demi-marathon, starting from the Oberemmel van Kesselstatt estate and finishing with some great food, I am sure, prepared by Gerhard Gartner at their home.

May 18th, 2001

Not much time. We tasted through the cellar today and made the first blends of the Cru and Montosa. It is very enjoyable what we can look forward to.

But just before I go on a trip tomorrow for Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne and Holland, just to let you have a proof of my running attempt earlier this week.

The route was from Oberemmel via Wiltingen to Ockfen, than up the Scharzhofberger, passing Egon Müllers Estate and back to Oberemmel.

May 21st, 2001

Back after 4 days of intensive travel The Gala evenings together with my friend Jean Luc Pepin from Domaine de la Vogüé was very intense but also exiting. Three evenings with the same wines combined to the food of three restaurants is quite an experience. I must say that in every case the wines matched very well. We started in Hamburg at the Restaurant of the beautiful Hotel Jacob on the river Elbe. A marvellous setting and a great sommelier, who is also a Master Sommelier, Hendrik Thoma. There is great respect for him in the scene in Germany. We than continued to Berlin the next day to do the Gala Dinner at the First Floor of the Palace Hotel. The food was really outstanding. The Chef Buchholz dessert every bit of the Michelin Star he has. We had a wonderful dessert made from the Misselfruit (I never had before) which went perfectly with the 1993 Rüdesheim Bischofsberg Beerenauslese. And we concluded the trip in Cologne, where we had dinner in an exceptional setting , the private collection of a world travelled hunter, adventurer and photograph. Incredible to have these wines inthe midst of crocodiles, Lions, leppards and alll other kind of beautiful looking animals. We had among other wines a double-magnum each of 1990 Nonnenberg and 1983 Berg Schlossberg. Phantastic. As was the 1998 Musgny Vielle Vignes, obviously too young, but what a wine. Soft as silk with a nose full of finess.

This morning I drove from Cologne to Nijkerk in Holland (not too far from Amsterdamm) to do a tasting for the wine press and show our 1999 vintage. We did it at the De Salentein restaurant that actualllly is owned by the family who also own the Bernardus Estate in California, where our friend Cal Stamenov is the chef. The world is small.

Before returning I met with Jan Cremer, a famous dutch painter to discuss his visit in Rüdesheim. We will be speaking about a painting for the 2000 Berg Schlossberg.

The weather has been beautiful today. I look forward to go to the vineyards tomorrow to see how they are doing.

May 30th, 2001

Still hardly a moment to sit back and do some more writing. Excuse me. After my return from Holland I had the visit of our German distributors sales staff and we did "one day in the vineyards and cellars". This hands on experience, I think is probably the best for anybody out there selling.

Up to today there has not been any change of weather here in the Rheingau. It is simply gorgeous for the season. It feels already summer, even though really it is springtime. On ascension day I did the annual walk, eat and drink excursion with my friends. This is now an over 20 years old routine, but a beautiful one. Up the hill on a cable car. Walking down to Assmannshausen, stopping by a small pub, drinking a glass at the Assmannshausen Weinfest, having a long lunch at the famous Krone on the terrace, taking the boat back to Rudesheim and finishing the day at Rudesheimer Schloss. What do you need more? Answer: sleeping in in the morning.

Next day. Evening departure for Porto. I had to go and finally give the construction company the ok to start building the cellar. The idea is, that the construction starts early June and ends end of August. I hope things will go well and particularly in time. We need the cellar ready for the coming harvest.

Return on Sunday morning. Flying to Frankfurt, taking the train at the Airport for Leipzig, where I have a winemakers dinner in the evening at Medici, a restaurant just next to the Nikolaikirch, where in 1989 the peaceful revolution began that eventually led to the reunification of Germany and the fall of the wall. An important historic site.

Next day Visit of customers in Dresden. It is always good to return to this beautiful city on the Elbe river. I also stopped at nearby Meissen, famous for its dome but even more famous for the Meissen porcellaine.

Yesterday a visit of Greg Dexter from Santa Fe. He runs a restaurant and a wine shop. In the afternoon we tasted all the barrels of our white Pinots in order to prepare the 2000 blend for Greg Breuer Brut and our Pinot Gris. Some great material.

Today a morning trip to Kanzem and the Altenberg. We are still fighting to avoid the building of

a road through the vineyard. We had a good meeting with some government people and I start to see some light at the end of the tunnel. Our efforts and the help of many friends that have protested, seem to show some results.

Tomorrow we will put all the Rieslings from barrel on the table and make some decisions about the blends. In the evening Carolina du Toit will visit and will certainly tell me about her trip to the London Wine Trade fair and some German wine events, she has assisted.

On Friday I will travel to Münster in Westfalia for a tasting and Breuer Wine Workshop in the evening and return the next day.

June 4th, 2001

It was an excellent event. It was a first. The idea is to set each participant up with 6-8 wines, taste them together and then serve two plates (one after another) with very precise food products (i.e. airdried sausage, gouda cheese, goat cheese, terrine de poisson, game terrine, etc and then taste the wines with each of these products. It is fun and the people become an active part of the event. Since the food is cold, it is relatively easy to prepare.

Last night I went out with my good friend Egbert Engelhard, the former famous maitre of Graues Haus and his wife to a wine pub in Eltville. Gelbes Haus. It used to belong to the Langwerth von Simmern family, has now been sold and rented out to a restaurateur. Good wine list. Since we do not meet so often, it seems, we had to go to two more places to have some more wine to drink. It was a good night and put right away to sleep at home, so good that I almost forgot that I had a 9 o'clock meeting with a German TV team, who are producing a movie on the romantic Rhine. We went to the vineyards and the cellars. The fresh air was an excellent remedy to my fatigue.

tomorrow I will travel to London for the day, to discuss the consequences from us winning the price of the marketing initiative for German wines in the UK. I will report on it after my return.

Wednesday will see me together with Bernd Philippi and Pauf Fürst (from Franken) to travel to Switzerland, to visit with Daniel Gantenbein, the famous Swiss vintner, at his estate near Graubünden (Bad Ragaz/Chur). We will be tasting and discussing Pinot Noir. From there I will directly drive to the annual meeting of our German sales agencies, which this time will take place at Werner Näkel – famed German Pinot Noir vintner – on the Ahr. I will return Saturday back to Rudesheim.

June 6th, 2001

Things do not always go as planned. We did not travel to Daniel Gantenbein today. Bernd Philippi fell ill. He called me last night, so we called it off and do it another time when he is back in shape again. I also did not come back from London as planned last night. I simply missed the plane at the airport and it was the last one for the day.

If you did see a clochard asleep on a bench at Stansted Airport from midnight to 6 in the morning it was me. I just did not feel like trying to find a hotel late at night. I rather did some writing till late on one of the many empty tables and then laid down. I can assure it is not dangerous. I was not robbed and using my coat as a cushion and my jacket to keep me warm I found quite a good sleep.

By the way, I had lunch with my English distributor Noel Young at Ransomes's Dock, at 29 Ransomes Dock, London SW 11 4 ND (this is in Battersea) Tel. 01712231611, lying on a little side canal from the Thames, I can only recommend this casual place with a fabulous wine list and a great chef, Brian Lamb. We met the last time 10 years ago - He was running the famous Escargot in Soho at the time, once a memorable place - and we still remember each other. He is extremely respected and a charming man. So go and visit him when you are next in London.

June 13th, 2001

Back yesterday from the annual meeting of the German section of Jeunes Restaurateurs. The new generation of great German chefs. A lot of them Michelin starred and highly rated. We had a fantastic menu Monday night with 7 courses and 9 pairs of matching wines. Always a German wine versus an international wine. I can only tell you that the wines from Germany did extremely well and documented their top usability with food.

(Actually even though not mentioned, at the exception of the first and last pair, all wines were dry)

Here we go:

Parfait of Foie Gras with figues and Mas Amiel

1998 Nierstein Peltental Riesling Auslese, Heyl zu Herrnsheim

1998 Semillon Botrytis, Penfolds, South Eastern Australia

Cotta from Morells with poached Egg

1999 Casteller Schlossberg Silvaner, Castell'sches Domänenamt

1999 Sancerre Les Monts Domnés, Domaine Bailly Reverdy

Bacalau

1998 Rauenthal Nonnenberg, Georg Breuer

1998 Cablis Premier Cru Montmains, Drouhin

Noodles from Pike with Caviar

1998 Gaisböhl Ruppertsberg, Bürklin Wolf

2000 Elston Hawk's Bay Chardonnay, Te Mata Estate, New Zealand

Rack of venison

1999 Spätburgunder "S" , Meyer Näkel

1998 Montesodi Chianti Rufina, Castello di Nipozzano

Black Forrest Cherries

1999 Wallhäuser Felseneck Kabinett, Prinz Salm

1999 Moscato d'Asti Cascinetta, Vietti

Bon appetit.

Later in the day I have a session with the mayors office in Frankfurt to discuss this years Frankfurt meets New York in November.

June 16th, 2001

Back to base on tuesday. We blended the wines for the 2000 Rudesheim and Rauenthal Estate. the wines have good body structure. They will be bottled next week.

Wednesday, meeting with the Frankfurt City Business Organisation to discuss this years "Frankfurt

meets New York. It will take place at the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center and the focus will be on wine and food. It will take place on November 5.

Thursday, a holiday. Running through the forest in the morning. Catch up with office work later and having friends from Frankfurt in the evening. An intellectual evening, with two authors, publicists, former politicians around. We tasted through all 1999 Pinot Noir we made. I feel we made great progress. The top quality will only be released at the earliest next year, the other later this year.

Yesterday I discovered an interesting restaurant in Frankfurt. It is next to an art cinema and called Orfeo. Go there, should you be in Frankfurt. Hamburger Allee 49. It is open every day of the week. Good thought out wine list.

Today, again the forest, jogging together with our dog. Now writing these lines.

Tomorrow departure for Braunschweig, in the north of Germany, close to Wolfsburg, where the first Volkswagen – the beetle – was built.

Return on Monday and next morning early departure for Bordeaux, Vinexpo, and from there I will move on via Spain to Portugal.

July 7th, 2001

I have not given up writing this diary. but there was not a minute of time during these 3 weeks to write some lines. cuttally tomorrow evening I will be with a friend and take some advise to buy a lap-top. that should help in the future to write some lines while travelling and it should help to have a better continuation. We will see.

Actually the wine-kitchen Party at Dannenfals in Braunschweig was big success. Over 180 people and great atmosphere. Nobody really wanted to leave before 1 am in the morning, and this on a Sunday night.

On the 19th , I started with a Volkswagen stationwagon my trip to Bordeaux. Its a car from Bernd Philippi , he does not need anymore, which we will use at Quinta da Carvalhosa, our new project in the Douro.

10 hours later I arrived iat Château Canon la Gaffelière in St. Emilion and relaxed with Graf Neiperg's

family around the family table and some great bottles of wine. The next day I drove to Vinexpo and met with some German customers and importers of our wines at the German Tent Restaurant – excellent food prepared by the German section of the Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe – for a relaxed lunch with some good bottles of Breuer wines. The next day we had our traditional invitation together with my German colleagues "diegueter", Les Cinq from Bordeaux, Alois Lageder and top Italian estates as well as Alois Kracher, Tement etc from Austria. 21 European estates and over 700 visitors all at the fabulous Smith Haut Lafitte Estate. We finished this day with a relaxed evening again at Canon la Gaffelière.

Next morning early departure for Spain. With me in the car, Rui Cunha, our junior partner of Quinta da Carvalhosa and Helmut Knall the Austrian author, journalist and restaurateur from Vienna (see his homepage <http://www.winetimes.at>) First stop in Pamplona for lunch. Famous town, mainly through the works of Hemingway who wrote about the fiesta when the drive the bulls down through the narrow streets of the old town. Continuation of our trip to Logronho, where we met at Bodegas Breton our friends and US importers Steve and Almudena Metzler. A hot day for driving, so we welcomed the opportunity to taste the new wine in the cold cellar. Their prestige wine Alba de Breton has gained almost cult status in the recent years.

Late departure for Panafiel in the Duero. We arrived not before 10 pm and stayed at Hotel del Duero, just opposite a beautiful typical Castilian Castle, which sits on the top of a hill like an elegant cruise ship. Panafiel is just next to Pesquera, where we visited the new installation of the Pesquera estate. We continued our trip to the west by passing by Rueda, a region that is beginning to make its name for white wines. Quite unexpected in this hot, dry climate spot. Actually we stopped at La Seca (The Dry City) at the estate of Angel Rodriguez Vidal, called Martinsancho. He makes very genuine wines from the Viura and Verdeccho grape (which we know as Verdelho from Madeira, where in the meantime we make an excellent white wine over there, which you can drink when you visit the Island). We enjoyed a few bottles with excellent ham and local cheese.

On we went in the direction of Toro, where Alejandro Fernandez bought a couple of years ago another farm. 800 hectares in size of which he has 250 converted to vineyards. We tasted his first vintage, which will soon be on the market. 1998 La Granja. A truly great wine. And Alejandro whom we met there, since he went there very early in the morning to receive more than 100 horses to live on his pastures, tells us, possibly La Granja will become the greatest of his wines in the long term. He feels the potential is enormous. The old underground cellars, all hand carved many decades ago are a treasure in their simple architectural splendor and their quality for ageing the wines. We left in the late afternoon for Porto. More than another 400 km away.

After arriving in the late evening I covered over 2700 km on this trip so far.

Together with Helmut and some other Austrian friends we visited on Sunday the cellars of Niepoort in Vila Nova da Gaia and had the privilege to taste some of his vintage ports of the 40th, still going strong. They show a tremendous structure. Dinner with Helmut in the old town and early morning departure next day (Monday) for the Douro Valley to check on the progress of the construction work at our estate Quinta da Carvalhosa. Thank God, they started to clear the access road and as I got sign two days ago that the builders have started to dig the whole for the cellar I feel more relaxed. Afternoon appointment in Vila Real with the architects and return to Porto. Helmut is leaving the next morning and we go again back to our Quinta. We see the people from the energy office to get a new electrical line and have to buy a pick up truck for the harvest, the old one really getting too old. Late return to Porto and a good fish dinner at Casa Salto o Muo in Matosinhos, well deserved.

Early departure for Frankfurt next morning. Unfortunately I lost my mobile phone in the taxi at 5 o'clock in the morning. It was still dark. Over 300 numbers lost. I spend 5 hours last Sunday to find some of them again in my notes and fed them into the memory. I will have to find some software to save them also in my PC.

On Thursday the 28th I flew in the afternoon to Vienna to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Dorli Muhrs PR agency Wein & Partners. It was a great wine and food party. The who is who of the Austrian wine scene was there, top restaurateurs including Wolfgang Puck from Spago in Los Angeles. No use to find a hotel. I returned to the airport and slept 3 hours on a bench before my 7 am flight would take me back to Frankfurt.

Later in the day, departure with Bernd Philippi and Werner Näkel for Wadersloh, a small town close to Münster in Westfalen for a "German vintners in South Africa" night. I was glad my friends did the driving, also the next morning back home. I needed the rest of the weekend to catch up with my many papers from the last two weeks.

Monday Giles MacDonogh, travel and wine writer from the Financial Times and author of history books visited with me. It was a gorgeous day and we went to see the vineyards. The flowering has now been finished for about a good week already and the plants look in very good shape at the moment.

Cologne for a day of visits with customers was the next day's programme. Last night I met with my friends for our bowling night, which very often becomes more of a wine drinking and con-

versation evening. But that is ok, as long as we pay our fees, which once a year allows us to travel in another wine region, as we did recently to Tuscany.

This morning I went to the forest to run with my dog. Great. I needed it. This evening I will go to the summer fiesta of the no famous Rheingau Musik Festival. Among the wining and dining there will be arias from Verdi. I look forward to that. The evening will finish off with fireworks accompanied by Handel's famous music with the same name. Tomorrow I shall see some customers from a restaurant again from the Münsterland and on Monday I will be off to Munich. But this will be another story.

July 13th, 2001

Just a short note to keep you up to date. Earlier this week I spent two days in Munich (with splendid weather. The major purpose a blind tasting of nine German wines with 9 international wines. This was for the restaurants and press and very well received. A high calibre event, actually held in one of the most famous beer gardens of the town, Die Waldwirtschaft. I have not been in Munich for a long time for two days, so I used the remaining time to see many restaurants, some could be just as well in London or New York by design. See "Ederer" or "Lehnbach Palais", when you are next in Munich. If you happen to want to have a palace for yourself to wine and dine, go to the "Schlossrondell North No.6", part of the famous Nymphenburger Schloss. What a palace!!

A short visit in Franconia to see my colleagues Graf Castell the following day and more time to catch up with work at home was the major part of work for the rest of the week.

Tomorrow afternoon I will depart for a short trip to Porto, to visit our quinta in the Douro, where the work to build the cellar is gaining momentum and I have to keep track of things and to help bring it to conclusion before the harvest starts.

July 20th, 2001

Back from Portugal. I was all by myself this time. Our junior partner Rui became father on the day after my arrival. His wife Christina got a child, Martha. I visited them in the hospital. The baby was not even a day old. A marvel of nature. Dark black hair, a lively little person. A new life born into our world. It feels good.

The construction company has made quite some progress. Our road to the Quinta has been very well repaired. As opposed to before, it is almost an airstrip. The whole for the cellar has almost neared completion. There is one hard slate rock left, that needs to be attacked by TNT. This is scheduled by the next day. By the end of the following week, the floor plate and foundations will be finished. I get the feeling that we will make in time for the harvest. What other choice would we have?

Departure back to home. Tuesday morning, leaving the hotel by 5 am. Flight Porto, via Lisboa to Frankfurt. I will return to Frankfurt the same late afternoon to fetch our English importer, Noel Young, who visits the Rheingau for the first time. We do an intensive study of the area. Vineyards, cellar, taste for the first time the newly bottled 2000 vintage from bottles. It holds up to my expectations. Even tasted directly alongside the 99 vintage.

After putting Noel back on the plane the next evening, I still have the visit of my friend Christoph Dierksen (formerly van Waegeningh) from Schlumberger, our German distributor. He once was German sommelier of the year. I admire his palate. His way to describe wines is to the point. It becomes a long night and leaves me only with two hours of sleep before I have to drive this morning to Koblenz.

Meeting with Ardau, Imports, a leading importer in Germany for Spanish wines. We talk about next year's Gourmet Festival. They will participate with some of their major growers. The program really firms up and starts to look impressive. Quick visit to Kanzem, to speak to the people in charge to find a solution to the issue of bringing a road through the vineyard, which we strongly oppose.

Good news. The road seems to be no more an issue. Our battle has been successful. Details still have to be worked out, but the major thread has been rejected. Good news for all wine friends. I am also glad for Frau Kegel, the owner of the Kanzem Altenberg, that we succeeded in this battle.

On my return I have the visit of the F&B from the Dresden Hilton. He and his friend spend the rest of the day with me. Vineyards. Cellars, tasting. We finished the 2000 vintage bottles, that I had left from tasting the new vintage which Noel Young. It is convincing. Even alongside the 1999 vintage, the wines of 2000 are excellent counterparts.

Again a late night. Tomorrow I need to dive into the papers on my desk. In the evening 50th birthday of my sister in law.

Saturday meeting with my colleagues of our joint german distribution venture, diegueter, in Franconia at Castell and sunday i need to go back to Kanzem for further consultations.

July 30th, 2001

Meeting in Castell/Franconia with my german distribution colleagues (the 8 estates from other wine growing regions) to discuss future activities mainly for the german market. But we obviously find that some of our international appearances are bearing a lot of fruit also for our domestic market. The last good example was our appearance at Château Smith Haut Lafitte during Vinexpo.

We ended the evening with an exiting tasting of one wine each of us and two international wines, chosen by the owner. All at the highest possible level. It was a blind tasting.

I stayed over night since in the morning I left for Kanzem to be there for lunch and the afternoon to discuss the further planning for this year.

On Monday Stephan Dutoit arrived from his trip to London, to tell me that his southafrican wine, Mont du Toit, will now be represented over there by Corney & Barrow. He spend the evening also in Rüdesheim and my good friend Christina Fischer from Cologne joint us on my home terrace for an entertaining evening. I made both work with some bottles of wine to taste blind. Excellent the 1992 Chardonnay from Hamilton Russel in Hermanus. Despite the fact, that the bottle had some oullage, we were all totally surprised by this fine wine. Another great bottle, the 1985 Rioja from Bodegas Bilbainas, a Reserva with great personality. We also opened a bottle of "Le Sommet" the 1998 Reserve wine from Mont du Toit. A big wine. Will go on for ages.

Next evening I continued the Blind Sessions over dinner with the directors of the German Sommelier Society. We went from Semillon from Down Under to Rieslings from Alsace, from Burgundy Pinot Noir to Breuer's not yet released 1999 Pinot Noir. An entertaining evening with such great pallets around the tables. Among them Marcus del Monego, world champion among all sommeliers a few years ago.

Michel Bettane the famouns french wine writer visited with me last Thursday and we had a good tasting and a dinner at the Rüdesheim Schloss that same night. Our Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg seems to be one of the Rieslings he likes mosts and he is not shy taling about it in his magazin and on his website <http://www.magnumvinum.com>

The next day after a tasting for some restaurants school professors, it is good if they get first hand information on wine because after all they teach the staff of the next generation, I met Markus Ahr , the owner of the Heyl zu Herrnsheim Estate, and his fiancée in the evening. We tasted side by side his Nierstein Brudersberg and our Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg, both from 1996 to 2000. A challenge at a high level. All wines showed young. They actually would benefit from decanting. We tasted them throughout the evening to be able to sense the changes they make during some 4 hours.

On Saturday morning a short visit from some BBC Journalist who are researching for sites to go along with the theme of vineyards and wines. They will come and do the shooting in September. At lunch I received the visit of Jan Cremer, the famous Dutch painter (and writer), who spent the weekend with me. He will do the Berg Schlossberg label 2000 and we had a great time discovering our vineyards and the wines. I think he and his friends left with a good idea of what we do and how we enjoy what we do. After they left Sunday late afternoon, I packed my bags and still drove to my little holiday resort in the French Alps – Val d'Isère. I arrived just before one o'clock on Monday morning and will stay here for a week just by myself, to find some much needed rest.

It is the second day in the evening, when I am writing these lines. I was out all day at splendid weather conditions doing a great tour, covering vertical drops of more than 7000 feet , going over two passes both some 2800 meters high.

August 1st, 2001

Yesterday I did the Col des Fours. 2975 m high and today I managed the Gran Cocor, which took me to 3023 m in altitude. It was quite a climb. The last kilometer over a glacier when suddenly the weather changed and it became windy and cold. I had to fight to get to the summit. But what a great feeling when you are there. The mountain was the Italian border. I looked over to what is part of the Aosta Valley.

August 4th, 2001

I finished my amateur mountain week by a long run yesterday of some 10 miles and today I took the courage to rent a bike in order to climb up to the "Col d'Iseran" a pass of 3rd category whenever the Tour de France decides to take this route. Some 20 km one way from my place,

climbing from 1810m to 2764m. I have done it the last time about 5 years ago and I am glad I managed it without a stop. It was not a sunny day, which helped, but the run down, partially in the clouds was quite a chilly experience.

I will leave tomorrow early morning, Sunday August 6, again for the Rheingau. I have heard the great heat wave, which we have had has passed and pleasant summer temperatures prevail.

August 5th, 2001

Yes. Back home. I took the road from France via Neuchâtel in Switzerland to see again after almost 40 years the "Ecole de Commerce", where I learned the French language for a year. Quite a sentimental drive.

August 13th, 2001

Today 40 years ago the Berlin wall was put up. I can well remember the pictures shown on TV and in the papers at that time. It lasted almost a generation. Thanks God, this instrument of the cold war time does not exist any more.

A few days ago I was invited privately to a dinner with the following tasting of which I at least would like to share the notes with you.

At reception 1990 Comte Andoine de Dampierre Champagne. For the appetisers 1990 Batard Montrachet from Leflaive in Magnum (it was decanted and gave a good start - just for the sake of seeing its development I kept some of it for two hours later and it had lost some of its initial charm, showing the alcohol driven aromas more prominently). 1985 Château Yquem with foie gras with truffles. A classic. The wine showed brilliant acidity even after a long period of time. Bright yellow golden colour. Lots of fruit, at the end beautiful notes of real bee wax, followed by the classic 1967 Yquem. Amber colour. Very different texture. More creamy, lots of crème caramel on the nose, very clean botrytis flavour. Lasts in the glass.

The first red. 1993 Valandraud (the first vintage made was 1991). Unfortunately deceiving. At the end almost bitter, the nose spicy, yes like some of the Californian classics (it reminded me of Martha's Vineyard), but the nose was the best part. It turned later in pure coffee flavour. The 1959 Petrus that followed was fantastic. Top colour, deep flavours in the beginning. The mid mouth full of strength. A delight.

How to top that? Open a 1953 Cheval Blanc from magnum. Young, fresh in the mouth. Lively, stays long with great finish and deeps the fruit till the end.

To the two Yquem, again served for dessert a bottle of 1959 Steinberger Trockenbeerenauslese, was opened. A rosé colour, quite unusual. Flavours of roses. Great length.

More would have been difficult to cope with. Head and body seem full, but nothing hurts. I slept like a baby already in the car on the way back, let alone in bed.

August 23rd, 2001

Time flies. Helmut Horn from Chicago visited with his future wife. He founded the Master of Food and Wine in Carmel. Local wine festival over last weekend. Long days, very short nights. Not a night before 3 am to bed. But great atmosphere and good discussions, some serious, some funny.

The vineyards look excellent. I looked at them together with two salespeople from Florida. They handle our wines and have been educated on our German wines. A good day. Two more ambassadors for our wines. It is a slow process, but it's also the only one.

Temperatures are well over 30°, and that for quite a while now. Are we looking at an Indian summer? Wait and see.

Tomorrow I will leave for Madeira and then the Douro. In Madeira the harvest is starting right now.

Hopefully the construction of the cellar has now advanced. I will report.

August 24th, 2001

I am sitting at the airport in Funchal on the island of Madeira. Friends of us, the Adega San Vicente, in the North of the Island, are starting the harvest and I have accompanied Gregor Breuer (even though it looks like it, he is not related to us at all – just one of these coincidences in life), a trainee with us this year, who will assist them. They are producing in these cellars for over two years now a white and red table wine, which is a good alternative to the historic production of Madeira, the dessert wine, and therefore give the many visitors a chance to have a local table wine with their food, rather than to have to be satisfied with the wines from the

mainland only. If you happen to be in Madeira look for these wines under the name of "Enzurros" (the name of a location near Ponta Delgade in the North of the Island, where the vineyards are located). You will find in now in quite a number of restaurants here.

I left home yesterday and the weather has been just as beautiful here than at home.

I am departing tonight for Porto, where I will drive early in the morning to our Quinta da Carvalhosa in the Douro to find out about the construction progress of our cellar – badly needed for the harvest, which we assume will start within a month from now. I will fly home Sunday very early morning in order to be at a winemakers dinner together with my friends Bernd Philippi and Werner Näkel at the Fasanerie Hotel in Zweibrücken, a very famous gourmet place. The dinner will be under the program of our German and South African wines (Bernd and myself with Mont du Toit and Werner with Zwalu, his joint venture product). Monday morning Bernd and I will drive straight to Switzerland to meet with our friend and famous vintner Daniel Gantenbein, who is a legend for his red wine in his country. We will be discussing and drinking Pinot Noir and hopefully learn more about it for ourselves on this occasion, which might translate in our work at home.

A little note on the side for those that have followed the debate of putting a road right across the Kanzemer Altenberg Vineyard on the Saar, which the owner Heidi Kegel and myself as her consultant have been fighting with the help of many friends. I got the news today that this plan has finally been dropped. What a relief.

September 5th, 2001

In the train back from two days working the market in Berlin to Frankfurt and then home. Everytime I go there in 4-6 months intervals, the city seems to change. A lot of construction still going on in "Berlin Mitte" the heart, which before 1991 was the center of Eastern Berlin. It is getting very busy there, more urban everytime, let alone the area of Potsdamer Platz and soon another square to be rebuilt the Leipziger Platz. Visit of some top hotels, the famous department store KA DE WE, small wine oriented restaurants. Things move on very positively.

Since I took some notes the last time, coming back from Madeira and the Douro, I have travelled with Bernd Philippi to Switzerland to visit our friend Daniel Gantenbein in Fläsch (close to one of Europe's smallest countries: Lichtenstein) arguably the most reputed vintner in Switzerland, always sold out and specialising almost exclusively in Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Paul Fürst, another of Germany's star Pinot Noir vintners joined us and we had what one could call a private

Pinot Noir Symposium. I feel we all learned a lot from each other. There is still room to improve further. A bottle of 1992 Henry Mayer demonstrated that very well.

A visit last Friday to Von Othegraven in Kanzem to put the final touches to an agreement which will outrule definitely the idea of the authorities to put a road across this famous and unique vineyard.

The case is won. What a relief.

I would also like to give you an update of the situation in the vineyards per end of August. Indeed, they look very healthy, juice green leaves and sould grapes. Our work is to do green harvesting in the vineyards, this we do as well for Riesling as for Pinot Noir. The Pinots are just before completion of the veraison.

We also received a paper from our viticultural station giving us the statistical figures of the average temperatures in the Rheingau from 1950 onwards to today for the period June to August, called the meteorological summer. The compiled average is about 18° C. Since 1980 vintages like 1982, 1983, 1993, 1994 or 1999 exceeded this number, vintages like 1985, 1990 very well below that level and the reading for 2001 is some 18.8°C. This gives an excellent starting point. But we all know the next 6 weeks will be decisive.

September 9th, 2001

In the meantime another visit to the market. Bielefeld and Gütersloh. Two cities to the west. An excellent wine presentation on Saturday with good live music. Two English people (that came with the British Army, which was stationed in that part of Germany after the war - and never wanted to go back home) sang and played wonderfully the great songs of the 60ties. The Beatles, Rod Stewart and Knocking on Heavens door, just to name a few.

September 16th, 2001

It seems very meaningless after the terrible events this week to continue to write this journal. The world has been shaking. Terrorist airplane attacks have completely demolished the World Trade Towers in New York and part of the Pentagon in Washington. A fourth plane has crashed close to Pittsburgh. A senior official of the German Wine Institute, Mr. Adams, whom I know, was on board of this plane where apparently the courage of the passengers has prevented this plane

also to destroy a major target in the capital. I can only try to express to all people that have been hurt, that have lost a person and to the Americans as a country my deep feelings and admiration for the courage how they are coping with these disastrous events. The murderers and the people linked to them in the background must be found and put in front of a trial. All of them. We also in our country have to share the burden to support this process with all means at our disposal. Solidarity is what counts and which can help to avoid the worst.

I have been several times at the World Trade Tower, in particular to visit the famous Windows of the World Restaurant on top, where a fabulous view and a fantastic wine list was the major attraction. I also remember in these moments my first visit and stay in New York in 1964, when I got stuck in a subway following the then famous first "black-out" in history in the City. It was at the time when most people were about to leave their offices. Many got stuck in elevators for hours and so did I in a subway car until hours later firemen guided us through the tunnels onto the street. The giant paper-baskets had been lit on the street corners for people to find their way home. It was very quiet and there was no rioting or robberies, everybody was as helpful as he could be and candles were sold on the street corners. The New Yorkers showed then the courage and solidarity as we can see in the pictures that are transmitted from New York these days.

Stuart Pigott gave a culinary tasting earlier this week in our cellars with wines from Philippi, Dönnhoff, Dr. Loosen and us. A unique event. A first, since we did not have the usual change of wines at every course, but stayed with three wines throughout the meal (other than the Dr. Loosen Auslese served for dessert). A new experience, enhanced by the fact that each of the courses devoted to fish, meat and game consisted actually of two courses from the same produce but just prepared in another way.

I was also visiting customers in Sylt, a very well known island in the north of Germany, that has a spectacular culinary scene and lies very handsome in the northsea. A place to visit.

Yesterday BBC-London came to take pictures from our cellars and myself for a film showing the Rhine and the wines made here and will be aired probably next february.

I was going to be in the States as of yesterday. I had booked this trip to customers in Washington DC and New York some month ago. I cancelled it on the request of my friends over there. There are more important things to do right now . But in my thinking I am very often in the United States these days.

September 23rd, 2001

I am sitting in one of our high speed trains to Hamburg. I will contact this evening a Wine Workshop in the restaurant NIL, Am Pferdemarkt. They have a very engaged winelist and motivated personal. Despite the fact, that due to the cancellation of my visit to Washington and New York, I should have much free time, the week turned out to be quite filled with visits from many people. Last night I entertained the shop-managers from one of the finest german wine retailers FUB in Cologne, Bonn, Düsseldorf and Siegburg. Among other wines, I presented for the first time our Grauer Burgunder "B". In addition to our regular Grauer Burgunder which we market very succesfully since 1987 in Germany as of the 2000 vintage I am offering also a "Reserve" from these grapes which come from the finest vineyards on the steepest slopes. So the "B" stands for "Bergterassen", the name I wanted to give the wine, but the wine control did not allow me to use the name. I have the feeling the wine did quite well. It is very concentrated, obviously still a bit closed. We will release it in late spring of next year.

The night before, after a tasting of all 2000 Rieslings from our estate with Peter Liem from Portland, who together with Kirk Wille is publishing in the internet the now already famous "Riesling Report" (you should find it under that name in the google.com search mashine) and a tasting for salespeople from the norwegian Vinmonopolet, the state Liquor store chain, I had the visit from Peter Vaux, an old friend, who from 1974 onwards for many years, represented our former wine merchant business in the UK. He is now the UK sales manager for Racke , the large wine and spirit house in Germany, located in Bingen, just across the Rhine. It was good to see him again. He remained the charming, friendly and open minded person I knew.

On Tuesday evening I gathered some friends for some food and wine in my home and I got a few "oldies" from my cellars, which all proved to be in excellent form and served blind were mostly estimated to be from much younger vintages. 1970 Brunello from Macarini, 1971 Barolo from Montanello (more a wine under his name), which was the first estate I ever visited in Tuscany, when I spend a holiday in the late 70ies in that wine growing area. He also introduced me to my first Vino Santo, which I did not know at the time that it existed. From the two 1970 Bordeaux, I preferred the Brane Cantenac to the Cos d'Estournel.

Bernd Philippi left on the 17th for the Douro to start the preparations for the harvest 2001. We got the first grapes home yesterday in very good wether conditions. The grapes are very ripe according to his report on the phone yesterday evening and it looks like a second good vintage. The cellars – they are not completed as we had hoped. We had overestimated the capacity of the construction company. So we will have to do this harvest again in a rather improvised way and

age the wine, at least until the end of the year in our "Garage". It will be filled right up under the roof. But we will manage.

Yesterday after a period of rather cold and rainy weather since the beginning of the month, we had a bright, sunny day and it seems to hold on for a while according to the forecast. I was out in the vineyards and the grapes still look very good and healthy at this stage. But there is still some time to go before we will start with our harvest. I do not see the Riesling to be harvested before October 7th.

September 24th, 2001

This morning I left Hamburg for Bremen, the other famous harbour city on the North Sea. I was visiting the market with our agent. The center is very beautiful with the historic city hall, the cathedral and many other buildings telling of the great past of this trading town. I am now on the way to Cologne, where I will visit the market tomorrow.

In the evening I looked in at Christina Fischer's restaurant, where I still met some colleagues from Rheinhessen who presented their finest wines during the day at her place.

It became late, as can happen at Christina's place. We finished with a blind tasting of some great whites.

Next day visit of the Cologne market. A great, lively restaurant scene does exist here. After work back to Mainz by train and then onwards to a place of some friends, Gabriela Klimt, the famous restaurant chef of the Krone in Assmannshausen and her partner Dirk Würtz, the cellar master of Weingut Robert Weil. They live in a beautiful old mill, close to Gau-Odernheim in Rheinhessen and we tasted some fabulous wines from the South of France together, where they have good connections and came back from a recent visit.

Here are some tasting notes. To start: 1999 Santa Duc Selections, Vieilles Vignes Côtes du Rhône von Gigondas. Great Value for Money. For those interested send an e-mail to Markus Codier dasweinkontor@t-online.de. That is definitely worth your while. Then.

Domaines Les Aphilantehes – Cuvée des Galets a Côtes du Rhône Vintage 2000 lots of warmth and body.. followed by Chateau Curzon. A Crozes Hermitage Vintage 1999, 100% Syrah, this wine had so much more "culture and elegance and length for that matter, as a 1999 d'Ahrensberg Syrah from Australien, which I tasted the afternoon at a customer's shop. I could not find the high notes apparently this wine is always getting. Next a fantastic 1998 Grange des Pères,

from Aniane. It grows next to the legendary Mas de Daumas Gassac but it already a legend by itself. A wine for many years to come. Finally 1999 SOTANUM a Cuvée from three well known vintners from the region, Cuilleron, Gaillard and Villard. Great concentration, but almost impossible to buy some.

I slept like a stone in the peace of this mill, but got out early to catch a new train to Dortmund to visit the market with our agent. This is about the last visit I can make, since the harvest is coming nearer now every day.

The weather is holding up. It is getting warmer and it remains dry.

September 30th, 2001

Unfortunately the sunshine only lasted until midday today. Then rain has been moving in. We are starting to see that quite some berries have swollen to the point that they have cracked which unfortunately bears the risk of mold coming along. The night hopefully will remain warmer in the next days in order to allow for dropping acidity. Keep the fingers crossed.

Tomorrow I will see the Gartners on the Saar and on Monday morning we have a meeting at van Othegraven to prepare the harvest.

October 6th, 2001

Saturday morning in Regua. Douro. I have a few hours to do office work, before we will go out shopping for some material for the Quinta de Carvalhosa, where we have almost completed the harvest. One vineyard to go, but since yesterday rainy weather is prohibiting bringing in the harvest of this lot as we had anticipated. We will wait for totally dry conditions.

But most of the wine has been brought in. The last two days we filled the barrels with the wines, that had completed fermentation. Our "Garage" is getting very full now. We will make a plan this afternoon where to place the remainder of the harvest. As I had already indicated, the new cellar has not been completed in time, as we had wished. We are getting used to the "slower" pace of this country. But isn't that one of the reasons why we are also here.

Hopefully the new cellar will be finished by the end of the year, when we will transfer all barrels,

now stocked up to the ceiling, to this new facility. The basic floor has now been brought in. The irons for the walls set, so it should now progress.

The harvest of 2001 here is in the Douro, was generally not so easy, since most people harvested too much and therefore the risk of less complex wine is high. The idea of "green harvesting" is not yet much known here. We have obviously done that and therefore can count on rich, complex wines as we can see already by now. They have good tannins and will need a long time in barrels to get the balance.

Before I left home, on October 3 in the evening, our new national holiday, we started with some "light" harvesting in the morning. That means we have started to go through the vineyards with our Pinot varieties and have taken the grapes away that show signs of early botrytis. So we leave only the healthy ones and take the leaves away from the grape zone, in order to keep the remaining ones healthy and give them a further chance to ripen. Ripeness level is quite good already. High in the 80°, if we talk Oechsle.

I will return Monday evening and we will have our pickers coming from Poland the same day and we will start with the regular harvest. These last days have been much warmer than early September and are therefore bringing the still high acidities down to the balance required before we will pick.

October 8th, 2001

Porto airport. I will check in for Zurich and Frankfurt in a few minutes. The security messengers after the long expected attack from the US and their allies yesterday against Bin Laden and the Taliban could be felt. Police with arms. Nobody allowed at the airport premises without a valid ticket.

We finished the harvest yesterday. We took a gamble, despite uncertain weatherforecast to pick. I fetched the picking crew, good local people from a nearby village 3 miles from Regua at the town where our vineyard manager Francisco lives, at 7 am in the morning. We started at 7.30 am and finished the job at 5. Two hours later a big rainstorm came in. High winds helped during the day to chase the rainy clouds away. The results were good. Due to selected picking we have been able to get really top grapes in. The total harvest will be a touch larger than last year, with something over 100 barriques of the 2001 vintage now in the "garage".

I will be home tonight and look forward to get our own harvest step by step started tomorrow.

October 13th, 2001

I forgot to load the diary with the text written in Portugal due to the fact that right after my arrival have not had a minute rest. We are actually now within the beginning of the harvesting process and have started slowly and moderately. I have been covering miles and miles to see all the vineyards as often as I can in order to get the feel about the ripening curves, the health status and acidity balance, in order to make the right decision for the start of the picking in each parcelle which we have and we have vineyards in more than 50 different locations split between Rudesheim and Rauenthal. Tomorrow on Sunday we will pick Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris. The weather has been excellent these last days. Some morning fog followed by very warm sunshine and blue sky. It is a great treat to be able to be outside in the vineyards and work. A real privilege.

October 16th, 2001

The Pinot Noir from the Schlossberg turned out a real gem. Natural alcohol of more than 13%. Full ripeness. It is now in the wooden fermenter and will start fermentation by the end of the week. We could macerate until then. Some Riesling picking with good maturity levels has begun. Acidity is now falling into balance.

Quantities will be smaller than last year, as we can see. Especially the Rauenthal vineyards will only produce tiny quantities. The 2001 Nonnenberg will be very scarce.

The weather continues to be excellent. Some morning fog and in the afternoon sunshine, still enough to get a sun tan. We have not seen this for some years. We hope it goes on for a while.

October 25th, 2001

Time flies. The harvest is a 15-hour job. There is no leisure really to work on a diary. But just a short notice that you know we are alive and kicking. The results continue to be excellent. The few rainy, foggy days in between do not cloud the generally very positive picture. Maturity levels continue to be very high with an almost perfect acidity balance.

In the meantime we have even been able to do some botrytised wines in the Berg Schlossberg and Berg Rottland vineyards. An unexpected happy coincidence. We have another 10 hectares to go. It is only Riesling now left and we should need another good week, weather permitting. In the steep Berg vineyards health status of the grapes is excellent.

On Monday and Tuesday we had the visit of Josh from the Classical Wine office from Seattle, our importer, to assist to the harvest. It was refreshing to see how much he threw himself in this venture. He worked full time with great engagement in vineyards and cellar and our crew enjoyed him. There is hardly a better way to learn about wine and our philosophy than this way.

Tomorrow our Dutch importer, Peter Meijer and his wife will arrive, also to help us with the harvest over the weekend.

November 1st, 2001

We are coming slowly to the end of the harvest. Possibly we will be finished by tomorrow afternoon after almost 5 weeks harvesting. The weather has been keeping up extremely well. After a rainy afternoon yesterday, this morning we have a bright sky, the sun is out, even though temperatures have fallen and some light frost is anticipated for the following night. The leaves of the vines have changed colour. There are any green touches left and they appear in their most beautiful yellow.

I read in the paper that we had the warmest October in the last 110 years.

We have been able to gather the most valuable grapes from the Berg sites under wonderful weather conditions. The grapes were healthy through and through and it should provide for an excellent vintage. Acidities were perfectly in balance. The skin firm and full of "material" to extract.

We have taken this morning two of our best lots of Pinot Noir out of the fermenting vat and the sheer smell was wonderful. I am very optimistic also on this front.

In two days the Glorious Rheingau Days, invented 15 years ago mainly together with my friend Egbert Engelhard, will commence with the traditional "Jazz in the cellar" event in the evening in "Breuer's Cellarworld".

November 22nd, 2001

Sorry. I have not been lazy or giving up writing this diary. But a very heavy travel schedule after finishing the harvest is taking me away right now from doing the proper work on this page. I have been circulating the Republik from North to South and back since more than 10 days without interruption giving wine tastings, wine maker dinners and wine workshops

Tomorrow I will do another wine maker dinner together with Bernd Philippi at the Michelin Star restaurant "Schlossberg" from Jörg Sackmann in the famous culinary town of Baiersbronn, where 3 restaurants hold together over 7 Michelin Stars. The theme will be "from Riesling to Pinot"

If you happen to have access to the best french wine monthly "La Revue de Vins de France", try to get the november issue and read the 13 page report about germany's wines from famous Michel Bettane. This is very exiting news.

On sunday mmorning I will depart on the "Tour d'Europe" together with 8 of my german wine producer colleagues, Les Cinq from Bordeaux (Canon la Gaffellière, Gazin, Brannaire Ducru, Smith Haut Lafite and Lafon Rochet and famous italians Bruno Giacosa, Castello di Ama, Schiopetto and Alois Lageder, which will take us in 4 days to Trier, Hamburg, Berlin and Dresden.

December 2nd, 2001

Back from the tour. It was an excellent event wherever we went, even though exhausting. We travelled on a tour bus through most of the north of Germany. For some it was the first visit ever to Dresden and they were most impressed by the beauty of the city and the great efforts of reconstruction.

On the day of returning from the trip, last thursday too place the press conferenc for the 2002 programme of the Rheingau Gourmet FEstival 2002 which will take place in March 2002. In a few days you can find the programme under <http://www.rheingau-musik-festival.de> (look under rheingau gourmet festival on that page.

Two nights ago we had in a private circle a tasting of what was called "Design or not design".

We tasted from Bordeaux: 1997 Tertre Rotboeuf, 1995 Valandraud, 1995 Canon la Gaffeliere, 1995 Mondotte and 1988 Margaux. From Portugal Mouchao vintages 1963, 1990,1991, 1992, 1996, 1998, 1987 Quinta do Cotto Grande Escola 1987 and 1994, 1997 Quinta do Mauro, 1996 Redoma from Nieport and 1999 Marques de Borba Reserva.

The clear winner was Mouchao. The best vintages 1990 and 1992 in front of 1987 Quinta do Cotto, only than Tertre Rotboeuf and Canon la Gaffeliere and 1997 Quinta do Mauro. The wines from Langedoc Rousillon did not play an important role in this competition. The bes was Château Haut Fabregues.Mondotte could not convince. To light in taste and colour. Valandraud weekend

from minute to minute. Deceiving. We established the final ranking after retasting the wines an hour later again.

1988 Margaux and also 1963 Mouchao as the ripe seniors in this tasting did very well. The tasting was done together with Bernd Philippi, Hajo Becker, Paul Fürst, Wilhelm Haag und Jörg Bourgett.

Last night a large wine event took place at Domäne Mechthildshausen a great restaurant on a farm in Wiesbaden.

December 9th, 2001

Still some visits to the market. A trip to Hamburg for the annual Feinschmecker (the german gourmet magazin) Christmas party. Many friends and colleagues did come. Wilhem Haag, Werner Näkel, Bernd Philippi, Helmut Dönnhoff, Joachim Heger, August Kessler, Wilhelm Weil, The Hasselbachs, Annegret Gartner and husband to name just a few. Friday after my return on a routine check in our Bischofsberg vineyard, where we had left 15 rows of grapes for an eventual Eiswein harvest we discovered that they had been harvested already but not by us. Somebody stole these grapes. This is discouraging. What can drive people to do this to other peoples property? It is depressing also for my staff who worked hard in the vineyards all year round.

Steve Metzler from Classical Wines our importer came with his wife Almudena and their parents to visit with us. He usually comes around that time every year. We tasted some 2001 from the barrel and all wines from the vintage 2000. Last night we went to the Krone for dinner and could enjoy an evening full of music with the Johann Strauss Orchestra playing many tunes from Strauss but also from Operas other waltzes, marches and polkas. A good looking soprano was also participating. What a joyous atmosphere. People drank, ate, danced and walked away happy even though often a bit shaky and with less control over their body as usual. Steve left today for Kanzem to see the von Ethebraven Estate.

Today two reporters came to go with me to the Bischofsberg. They will write about the stolen grapes and ask the public to report of anything they had seen to this respect during the last week in the Rudesheim vineyards.

Tomorrow our Importer from Finland will come. So there is still quite some activity before the end of the year.

Hopefully we can find out who it was.

December 9th, 2001

No news yet from the police on the subject of the stolen grapes. It looks like it could be cold enough tomorrow morning for Eiswein. You can imagine that under the circumstances this hurts very much.

I was in Kanzem yesterday and hopefully it will work there. I have inspected the grapes to were prepared for Eiswein. I keep the fingers crossed. It would be the creme on the coffee after a good harvest on the Saar.

I met a very famous german Band Leader, Wolfgang Niedecken from BAP, eventually the most known Band in Germany that has been around for some 20 years (first album appeared in 1979). We found quite some parallels in our lives. Both had an early stay in New York in our youth. Both strive for authenticity in their individual work, be it musik or wine. I enjoyed the conversation with this very likeable, gentle person. And he likes to drink a glass of a good dry Riesling. We had this conversation before he appeared on stage in Trier in his dressing room.

After this intense meeting I went to the Eifel mountain with Christoph Breidenich and artist and also designer, to discuss the labels for our new Pinot Noir "B" and Grauer Burgunder "B", which will see the market in 2002 and for another project. the roject "O", which is still a total secret.

Tomorrow I will see another journalist in morning and on saturday evening will take place the tasting of great wines from the 1966 vintage. I will report.

December 16th, 2001

Here is the report. Dirk Würtz, up to the end of this year one of the three cellar masters of the Robert Weil Estate (and who has established his own estate in Rheinhessen) is partially also involved in a wine merchant ship and for his favorite clients has offered to participate in this rare tasting.

The wines have been served to a menu created by Willi Mittler from the Krone Assmannshausen.

All wines, except the opening Champagne from Pierre Peters Gran Cru were of the 1966 vintage. We began with Schloss Eltz, Eltviller Sonnenberg Riesling Auslese, very fresh, compact, hardly noticeable oxidation. Still long in the finish, even though it may be lacking a bit sweetness to

balance the foie gras. It would have been at a perfect place if served with the "best of lobster" the next course. This was served with two champagnes from Perrier Jouet, Blason de France und Belle Epoque. The first hints of bisquit and bread, but good acidity and very fine mousse. At the finish somewhat shorter than Belle Epoque, which also was sweeter in style. Both stayed remarkably firm in the glasses, even after a longer period. Superior was only an extraordinary Lanson Red Label. It seemed of a quality to which the house unfortunately has not been able to get up to since. It was sensational. The Cuvée William Deutz could not come up to the same level. Both were served to a fish course. St. Pierre in a potato crust on parsley root vegetable.

This was followed by a filled oxtail to which Bordeaux was served. Château Corbin, La Croix de Gay and Clinet. The latter one was a deception. Bitter at the finish. La Croix de Gay was the clear winner of this flight. Very fine maturity with still a lot of fruit.

The next trio was served to a rack of lamb. Grand Puy Lacoste, Calon-Segur and Pichon Lalonde. Grand Puy Lacoste seemed at the beginning over the top, but gained quite a lot with the food. Pichon offered an excellent nose, the wine has still a good structure eventually lacking some body. But does not give up and seemed better after a while, without being perfect. Calon Segur has a wild irresistible bouquet and great fruit, now almost sweet in taste.

Mouton, Haut Brion and from another region Hermitage La Chapelle from Paul Jaboulet. This wine did very well at the beginning, almost opulent, very direct, but with time it seemed becoming thinner compared to the other wines. This seems not quite fair, because for a wine of 35 years of age an excellent bottle. Whipped butter, round tannins, closed in the beginning, but then opening up, showing a great finish, this was Mouton Rothschild, then still a second growth. A lot of mint and wax at the nose. It was Mouton that remained ahead of Haut Brion

For dessert Château d'Yquem and Perrier Jouet Reserve Cuvée Rosé. The champagne had given up. The mousse had died. Yquem with slightly maderised, but good body and at the finish it seemed to breeze the flavors of pure Crème Brûlée

December 23rd, 2001

Back from Portugal today after a week travelling. Firstly two days in Madeira to see our friends there who have now vinified the third vintage and then to the Douro, where our cellar at the Quinta da Carvalhosa is nearing completion. It was cold in the Douro, so that the Oranges in our garden have all frozen. We won't have a harvest. On the other hand the first Olive Oil has been

produced and I brought home a bottle. But since my luggage cost lost between Porto and Lisboa, I have not been able to taste it yet. Hopefully it will come tomorrow, together with some great Queso de Serra, the famous sheep cheese from the mountains, which is supposed to conclude my christmas dinner in 36 hours. I travelled with Brnd and between Porto and our Quinta we saw the lawyers, bankers, glass manufacturer, bottler, construction company and we personally put in the floor cooling for our cellar. We tasted the 2001 vintage and it shows well. Very clear wines, though not having completed the Malo, which we do not see happening before the months will get warmer, possibly in April.

Francisco, our worker, has almost finished the pruning and the vineyards look very good.

Last night we concluded the visit with a dinner at Rosinha, the restaurant in Matusinhos, which despite a "difficult" look produces great food. We had a fabulous tourbot, can hardly be done any better, and after some Alvarinho of excellent quality a bottle of 95 Mouchao. A powerful wine, resembling very much the 1991 vintage, of which fortunately I still have a good number in my cellar.

It is getting late on this last Sunday before christmas. I got up at 4.30 am to catch the early plane back to Frankfurt, so the body looks forward to some rest.

December 29th, 2001

Christmas is over. We had a fondu the first evening with the family. My mother and the two daughters where all here. I served a Mazes Chambertin Pinot Noir 1996 and settled for a Montosa 1999 after a 94 Chablis Premier Cru from La Chablisienne was rather deceiving. The next day, we celebrated with more friends the traditional Christmas luncheon. I prepared two geese - entier - and with the method I am using for roasting they become very tender. My method is quite simple, after stuffing the goose and curing the outside with salt, wine and soya souce I roast the outside of the bird in a large pan, I put it in the oven, breasts down, and start by setting the temperature at 240°C, I go down every 30 Minutes 40°C and when the temperature is at 80°C, I leave that temperature until the goose is served. Since we were many we were able to go through a good selection of wines, starting with a 1983 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg and 84 Hochheimer Domchechaney, both dry and both totally fresh – while I am writing these lines I am enjoying a bottle of 1973 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg from Staatsweingut, even though the wine has notes of oxydation it is totally balanced, with excellent fruit and a great joy to drink – With the obligatory mash salad, just prepared with good olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper, nothing

else, we had a few bottles of 1999 Rudesheim Berg Rottland and followed for the main course by two of 1971 Barolo Montanello and Montesodi from Frescobaldi. Even though both great wines, at the end the Barolo had the longer and deeper finish. For the queso de serra, a sheep cheese, which is at its best over Christmas and which I bought a few days ago in Porto, we had 1994 Alba de Breton, a Rioja which shows excellent right now and a 1971 Rauenthal Baiken Auslese from Schloss Eltz, the great estate that disappeared from the scene almost some twenty years ago now.

A long night. I went jogging in the forest the next morning before my friend called for his birthday party, also a traditional event now for years. Since then I am working during the day in the office, trying to clear my desk and eventually even my office, since it needs to be restored. A goal that I have set myself for early next year.

Today, since midday heavy snow has been falling and if I look outside it really looks like winter for once. With my new winter tires I managed to get home, up our steep hill, just after dawn. Tomorrow is Sunday, so it does not really matter whether the snow stays or not. For once it is quite a nice feeling.

I do not know, if I still find time to write a few lines before the end of this year. If not, this is to say good bye to 2001, a year that seemed very different to many others. And if I were to remember one message in particular, it was the mail, that Jeff Callaghan our broker in New York sent me very shortly after the brutal attack at the World Trade Towers, when our mind seemed almost unable to settle at all, and reminded me that it would be best if anybody would continue to do what best he can and that I should go in the vineyards and cellar to continue to make wines.