

January 9th, 2003

I wish you all a good new year, despite the fears and apparent insecurity around the world at this moment. If we all give to our life and our work the very best we can do, try to not waste our time and other peoples time with useless discussons about others rather than ourselves, than we have nothing to fear for the future of this world.

I was away for a few days in the alps, in the snow, in the cold to recharge a bit the batteries. I am positively surprised that business at the very beginning of the year proves very positive, which also means I am already back in full swing in my work.

Just hardly being back, I am pleased to see that the business is picking up already quite intensively and I am hopeful time will allow us and our customers to enjoy enough prosperity that a good glass of wine can remain their daily custom.

Good news this late afternoon , when an order came in to ship 2001 Rüdesheim Estate Riesling to Versailles for the celebration of the 40th annivervy of the french-german treaty celebrated on the 22nd of January. So Jacques and Helmut will toast to a good future with this wine. Prosit and à votre santé.

January 21st, 2003

Back from a short trip to South Africa, where we helped our friends to assemble and blend the wines at Mont du Toit. Good weather, not too hot at this stage of the summer, which they feel is a bit colder than normal. But this is excellent ripening weather and should do the plants a lot of good. We went to a new quite ambitious restaurant in Wellington. The River Café, not far from the Hugenate College. Good food and friendly service. A little better choice of wines and the place is on its way. Good to see, now that excellent wines come out of Wellington that the cuisine follows.

See under "news" for an excellent rating of our 2000 Campo Ardosia. Actually in a tasting of 241 portugese wines, it came in on top with 94 points. We are pleased.

February 3rd, 2003

I came back from Portugal, visiting our vineyards from wednesday to this last saturday. Among arranging for various administrative matters – yes this also needs to be done – I mainly was trying to convince the mayor of our town in Armamar to rebuilt our accessroad to the Quinta, which had been washed away by the very heavy floods early January. This is already the second time after the catastrophical rainfalls in 2001, where we suffered from the same problem. I am glad the mayor saw the necessity to help immediately and promised to start working on it already this week. By the way, also part of the road leading from Regua to Pinhao has been destroyed by a major landslide, so that instead of driving directly from our usual hotel to the Quinta in 15 minutes, we now need 45 minutes by using a “scenic” route via Valdigem and Armamar. They say, that the road might be repaired by the end of June. Let us see.

I spent last sunday and monday in Berlin to lead some tastings and see customers.

Yesterday afternoon I drove to Schwaigern in Württemberg to see Karl Eugen Graf Neipperg, the brother of Stefan Graf Neipperg from Canon la Gafelliere, where I met in the evening and all of today with our collegues from our vintners “club” Die Güter (see under <http://www.diegueter.de>). We found that wee are doing well. Despite the slow german economy we have been able to work successfully against the trend and report increases in sales.

February 19th, 2003

Forgive me for letting you down for so long. But I must admit, I did not find the time to do any writing lately, due to a busy schedule, a short holiday break and need for some sleep at night.

I am travelling on a train today from Rüdeshheim to Schwerin, via Hamburg to stay in northern Germany for the next 7 days. I will be visiting towns, I have never been before, some of them in the eastern part of Germany, which are said to be really beautiful, located on the Baltic sea. I am really looking forward to this trip. It seems adventurous to me. Schwerin, Rostock, Stralsund and the Island of Rügen, will be some of my targets.

Yesterday I made a one day trip to Amsterdam to see our distributor, who became part of a larger organisation. For the first time, I took the “ultra” fast train from Frankfurt via Cologne (Köln), which on this lap, which always took 90 minutes, now does the same in a bit more than 60 minutes. It runs well over 300 km/h and the train hardly shakes.

On Saturday I came back from a weeks skiing with two friends in Val d'Isère. Phantastic snow conditions, blue skies for a week, almost frightening and breathtaking panoramas.

Our "traditional" restaurant, La Taverne d'Alsace, the most popular spot in town now has (under the table on recommandation) our Montosa Riesling and our Campo Ardosia. They are becoming more adventurous the French. He also handles some Californian wines on the list. If you happen to be in that town, go there for the athmosphere and for superb Sauerkraut. It can hardly be done any better. Hubert Deiss is the charming owner. With his wife they also run the beautiful Hotel Kandahar at the same address (it is useful to make a reservation at the Taverne for dinner).

I like to also share some of my tasting notes from our annual Spanish wine tasting with you, which covered over 50 years, mainly Rioja, and stems from the cellar of our friend Pepe ( in real life Josef Eicker), who runs from some decades a restaurant on the sea close to Valencia.

24 wines tasted. Here are the highlights. We started tasting from old to young, which seemed to make a lot of sense.

1950 Berberana Gran Reserva – a total surprise, still in very good form, good structure, long,

1952 Berberana Cosecha Especial – even better, very fine, elegant acidity at the finish,

1961 Faustino Grand Reserva – it seems as in Bordeaux, this was also a great year in the Rioja – compact, good body and length,

1961 Campo Viejo Grand Reserva – bouquet not quiet as firm, but still develops in the glass,

1962 Marques de Riscal Reserva – fine fruit, very elegant, vanishes at bit at the end,

1982 Marques de Riscal – young, almost a bit sweet, great elegance, develops wll in the glass,

1982 Faustino V Tinto Reserva – loads of body, very aromatic, great to dring, ( yes some of the names, which today are million bottle brands really used to be great wines in the old days),

1982 Muga, Gran Reserva – eventually the best of the 1982's, still very firm, but excellent potential.

One deception though at the end:

1999 Numanthia – apparently a much heralded wine in the market. Possibly a "point scorer", but it lacks for me everything I look for in a wine. Overextracted, with no play and elegance, not my style.

Did I tell you, why Angelo Gaja's wine Darmagi is called Darmagi??

I was invited by Claudio Filippone, who runs the Chiaro restaurant in an old monastery close to Koblenz, down the rhine ([www.restaurant-chiaro.de](http://www.restaurant-chiaro.de) ) and he served the wine blind.

It is from Piemonte, obviously, but 100% Cabernet Sauvignon – typically Gaja at a time.

When he took out the traditional piemontese vines, his father said "darmagi" it means in piemontese dialect something like; "what a pity...". But despite his fathers remark, the 1995 vintage we drank was absolutely excellent.

February 2nd, 2003

Back on the train, this time from Stralsund, an old Hanse Town on the Baltic Sea not too far away from the polish border, to Hamburg. It will be late in the evening when I arrive. I will stay over Sunday in Hamburg at my daughters apartment and will take it a bit easy after all these days on the road and three more to follow next week.

The days in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, this is the name of the north-eastern most german state, as I told you my first visit ever here, have satisfied my curiosity and even though, the cities are not yet quite rebuilt, it was easy to feel the once splendour of these famous port towns, which belonged since the beginning of the 13th century to the famous Hanse-Organisation.

The coast line along the Baltic Sea, since ever a famous most heralded landscape has fast regained its old attraction and business is developing very fast here, which was confirmed by the many conversations I had with restaurant and hotel people during my visit.

Today, splendid weather with a sunny sky, but a cold and icy breeze helped to get an idea of the beauty of the Island of Rügen, the largest german island, located just off Stralsund.

Last night I was the guest speaker at the annual reception of Frau Dr. Angela Merkel, the German opposition leader, who represents this vicinity at the German Bundestag in Berlin. She asked me to speak about wine and my profession when she visited our estate last summer and I gladly followed this invitation. So Breuer Riesling was served and many interesting conversations exchanged. It gave me again a good personal insight in the personality of this very famous woman, who proofs to be very intelligent, with a delicate charm and an aura of integrity. While she is not the actor our present chancellor seems to play so well, I much prefer her style.

February 27th, 2003

It is early morning, Thursday. In the train on the way from Hannover to Frankfurt.

After three days in Sylt, the Island in the north of our country, where relaxation, wining and dining is probably at one of its peaks in our country and where some of the finest country hotels can be found, I visited Dieter Bieslers restaurant last night in Hannover. One of the "great chefs" in Germany, who for some years now, makes an unpretentious, down to earth cusine at its best. I had the best lentils in my life last evening and the chocolate tart was overwhelming. I got to know him better, when he was a guest chef at one of the first "Master of Food and Wine" festivals in the Highland Inn in Carmel, this was probably at least 15 years ago. He later became the chef at the beautifully placed country restaurant of Schloss Johannisberg, which he left some 6 years ago, to open

his own place in his home town of Hannover. Should you be there, go and see him.

Dieter Biesler, Sophienstrasse 6, not far away from the Opera House and the Central Train Station. It is worth every minute.

I arrived back home at nine in the morning, 4 hours after I left the Hotel in Hannover.

March 3rd, 2003

Kopenhagen. A rest between the prestasting and dinner. Both are taking place in a restaurant called "Formula B" and is located on Versterbro-Gade in Kopenhagen. It has just been taken over by two young chefs, one Krisitan Moeller, worked until recently at the famous "Commandanten" Restaurant in Kopenhagen, with two Michelin Stars the most famous one in Denmark and the other, Rune Jochumsen worked in the kitchen of the chef who prepared the legendary food for the cult film "Babette's Feast". I feel we have hit it off right with the importers "Barrique Wine Import", which now represent us. They started off with Mont du Toit last year and they felt, that it might be a good idea to work with us as well. The interest at the press tasting was excellent and we will have our Rieslings and the reds from Mont du Toit for Dinner. Carolina Dutoit has just arrived and I think with the food that is planned it will be an excellent evening. How does that sound:

Lumpfish with its roe and a sauce on the basis of apples and ginger with 2000 Rudesheim Berg Rottland (this wine shows excellent at the moment), Fried anglerfish and a sauce made from chestnut, mushrooms and dry sherry with 2001 Grauer Burgunder, fermented in small oak, Croustillant of smoked rabbit and foie gras accompanied by a beetroot chutney with Hawequas 2001. Grilled sirloin, sauce bordelaise and crunchy potato with 1998 Le Sommet (when does one get that wine?), Manchego cheese with white beans and chorizo and Mont du Toit 2000 and we will finish with a Bischofsberg Auslese 1999 and Caramelised banana with white mocha icecream.

It sounds great. I will be on my way now to this dinner.

Before coming here yesterday, I travelled past Cologne, where I had a short meeting with Heidi Kegel from Von Othegraven and an evening tasting event at a restaurant in Dortmund. So instead of throwing myself in the "Carnival" season at home or along the rhine, I stayed close to good "wines" – not a bad alternative.

I shall be home tomorrow night and soon thereafter the Rheingau Gourmet Festival will start.

March 4th, 2003

I was right. It was a most memorable dinner and I can recommend anybody if in Kopenhagen to pass by the Restaurant "Formel B", Vesterbrogade 182, 1800 Frederiksberg C. Tel. 3325 1066. It is not far from the center of the city. It is open in the evening only.

I am now again on my way back to Rüdeshheim, sitting quietly in the train, looking at the misty landscape of southern Denmark. We should be hitting the ferry soon, which brings us to the German coast.

March 9th, 2003

We are in the middle of the Rheingau Gourmet Festival. Walter Schug was here for the first two days and we enjoyed his Pinot Noirs with those of Jim Clendenen, Chalone and the top German producers, Dr. Heger, Werner Näkel, Bernd Philippi and Huber. One of the most sold out events, this tasting, with over 150 people attending.

March 20th, 2003

This morning the war has started against Iraq. This is not a glorious day for humanity. One feels helpless sometimes in this world and would we not have a job which is fulfilling, life would be much more difficult.

Sorry, for not having been more prolific with my notes these days. But the Rheingau Gourmet Festival really was asking its tribute. 12 days of consecutive wining and dining. Vertical tastings of Caymus, where the 1975 and 1990 stood out (the winemaker Chris Phelps conducted the tasting), Newton with a great 1996 Merlot, Duckhorn with a gorgeous 1997 Three Palms Vineyard (Margret Duckhorn conducted the tasting), Chateau Montelena with a 1999 that I liked as well as their 1994, Insignia, where 1990 and 1993 showed marvellous – the tasting conducted by the owner Don Shelton started with their first vintage, a 1979.

Great dinners with 3 German 3 Michelin Star chefs: Harald Wohlfahrt from Schwarzwaldstuben in Baiersbronn with wines from Weil, Schloß Johannisberg and Phelps, Dieter Müller from Schloß Leerbach matching his excellent food with the wines from Caymus and Peter Jakob Kühn and Jean Claude Bourguet from Das Schiffchen in Düsseldorf, showing his light but intense cuisine with the great Rheingau wines from Hans Lang and Künstler. From California Josia Citrin from Melisse prepared a lunch

and a dinner. I still remember his oxtail crepinette, Hiro Sone and his wife Lissa Doumani from La Terra in Napa showed high class food as well as the very likeable Nancy Oakes from Boulevard in San Francisco. And what was so good about it, is that chef-friends of them accompanied them, just to be there, to help and look and enjoy the company.

You may imagine that the time after dinner at the bar of the Hotel Krone was also very good fun.

I did a long walk with guests from Assmannshausen to Rudesheim through the vineyards accompanied by Walter Schug, the once in Assmannshausen born Rheingauer now since many years a famous winemaker on his own in Sonoma and Caneiros. A master of Pinot Noir. We had a cigar luncheon at Breuer's Rudesheimer Schloss. There was a boat tour with foie gras and Beerenauslesen, just to mention some more activities. The rare wine tasting offered among other wines a superb 1945 Château Lafite and an excellent 1985 Opus One and a still very much awake 1915 Oestricher Bremerberg TBA, not to mention a phantastic 1959 Steinberger TBA. The restaurant Roulette tour finished after two gourmet stops at the Kronenschlösschen and die Ente in Wiesbaden really at the Wiesbaden Casino, where we had the dessert and could gamble in these venerable salons. A grand final party, where almost everyone was on the dancefloor, concluded this festival, one of the most successful we have had. Jim Clendenan, the famous owner of Au Bon Climat, who was also there 6 years ago at the first festival and also joined at the time a Pinot Noir tasting exclaimed: "6 year ago we needed to fly in Clive Coates from London and Mario Scheuermann from Hamburg and we gathered with 20 people around the table, today we do need neither of them and there are 110 people sharing this table – Pinot Noir and the festival have come a long way". Only to learn that Pinot Noir after Syrah is the fastest growing varietal in the US and that it is the most liked red wine with fish.

Tomorrow I will leave again for the market and have a winemaker dinner in the evening.

On Saturday our Norwegian importer comes with all his employees. More intense days to come.

March 30th, 2003

I changed the watch one hour forward. This shows spring is definitely coming. We have already warm days. The tourists sit in the gardens and the days are longer. Coming back today from Belgium I was still jogging in the forest until 8 pm to shape my body after a great meal last evening in REET, a little town close to Antwerp, where we had a winemaker dinner in the Michelin starred restaurant PASTORALE: If you happen to be there, do not miss it. There is a growing interest in Riesling from the top Belgian restaurants. This is excellent news. Even the Karmelit in Brügge,

at present the most recognized 3 Star restaurant in Belgium carries our wine on the wine list and serves it with the menu. Between hosting our norwegian importers Engelstad in Rüdesheim, travelling for an evening reception to Düsseldorf during the ProWein exhibition, preparing the first blends of our dessert wines 2002, these were busy days. All day tomorrow, I will spend in Zurich, where our importer makes a big presentation and our Campo Ardosia will be featured among other wines. A day later, a TV team will film a cooking show in our estate and than I am off till sunday for portugal to bottle the first wine of the 2001 vintage, our second wine called Ardosino.

April 12th, 2003

Kurtinig (or Cortina) in Südtirol (or Aldo Adige). I have arrived last evening for an event at the Alois Lageder Estate in Magreid, which groups many European vintners and goes on for two days, parallel to the Vinitaly event in Verona. There will be today and tomorrow presentations of our wines for many trade customers, which either come directly from the fair on a shuttle service or come by on the way to or from Germany, Switzerland or Austria. Booking is excellent as we have been told. In the evening there are two gastronomic events. Tonight the Walking Dinner with David Bouley from Danube in New York, Harald Rüssel from Landhaus St. Urban, Martin Dalsass from Lugano Restaurant Santabbonio, André Jäger from the Fischerszunft in Schaffhausen and Norbert Niderkofler from Hotel Rosa Alpina, all Michelin Star chefs and on Sunday evening a Gala-Dinner featuring Heinz Winkler from Aschau (one of the famous 3 Star Chefs), Alfonso Iaccarino, Restaurant Don Alfonso in Sant'Agata sui due Golfi and again Norbert Niederkofler. Certainly two evenings to look forward to.

Last night the vintners, which already had arrived met in nearby Kurtatsch for a get-together at the restaurant Zur Rose. By the way they have a beautiful old renaissance tavern room, which is worthwhile seeing. Daniel Gantenbein, Stefan Graf Neipperg, Alois Lageder, Joachim Heger, Werner Näkel, Bruna Giacosa, Francesco Conterno, Bernd Philippi, Helmut Dönhoff, Paul Fürst, Egon Müller and many others were there. Everybody brought some wine. It was a good evening.

I am on my way now to the presentation at Cason Hirschprunn.

Early this month, I was together with my friends and partners Bernd Philippi and Werner Näkel in Portugal for the bottling of our second wine Ardosino from the 2001 vintage. It will come on the market in a short while. The "grand vin" Campo Ardosia from the 2001 vintage will be bottled in July for launching in early autumn. Ardosino is a diminutif of Ardosia which stand for Slate soil.

I will return back home on Monday morning to receive at home a tour of important Belgian sommeliers with tasting and dinner. The Belgian market is really starting to wake up for Riesling.

April 17th, 2003

They left this morning after breakfast. We had a good tasting with them and we showed in a joint effort our wines with other Rheingau colleagues: Weil, Lang, Langwerth, Kühn and Johannishof.

Spring has come. We have temperatures during the day of some 25°C. Many trees are flowering. Bud break is only "hours" away in the best sites. So it looks really like a happy easter.

April 27th, 2003

Since a day, after weeks of dry weather, we have finally got some rain. Much needed for the vineyards now, which have all budded and in the best locations are on their 5th or 6th leaf. The Rhine water is very much on the low side and one sees suddenly islands that usually are invisible. Since we planted new vines in two recently acquired small locations at the Berg Rottland and Berg Roseneck vineyards the timing of the rain is nearly perfect. We planted Riesling and used grafted vines which scions I have selected from some of our oldest vineyards where the appearance of the grapes seemed to me qualitywise a good choice. Small berries from loose bunches. Vines with low yields. I hope to get more clonal variety this way in our vineyards, which I think is another facette of still improving of what we are doing.

I have slowed down my travel quite a bit these last ten days.

Stayed at the winery. Tasted for the first time all the barrels in our cellars from the 2002 vintage. I have heard somewhere that as opposed to 2001 the current vintage is supposed to be on the lighter side. I could not get this feeling tasting through the wines. They have good structure and body and look forward to their further ripening. Bottling is still a few months away, not before July.

A film crew from Estonia visited with us last week for the purpose of a wine feature for the Estonian TV. It is very good to see these countries awakening to the joys and culture of wine. And the people that came were very nice, knowledgeable, they have done their homework before they landed, and fully motivated for their work. A good experience. How good for the world that the iron curtain fell in 1989.

Our Norwegian importer is coming tomorrow with 6 excellent restaurateurs from Oslo to visit with us. A flying visit from Oslo to us and back. Today's low cost airlines make it possible. I look forward to see them, some I know and as I know the Norwegian people they know how to enjoy live and live for the good moments of life.

After tomorrow, I will be on my way to the Bad Raggaz Wine Festival (in Switzerland), one of the most important ones in Europe.

May 2nd, 2003

Bad Raggaz in Switzerland, resort in the Swiss Alps, close to Lichtenstein and Chur. In the middle of the mountain.

I arrived here last Tuesday for a winemaker dinner in Malans, one of the 4 villages which account for the Swiss-famous wine growing region of the "Bündner Herrschaft", at the Hotel Weisskreuz (do not miss this place when you are in the area, also for the hospitality of the people, [www.weisskreuz.com](http://www.weisskreuz.com) or phone 081 322 8161), where a once Frankfurt chef Horst Sulzmann now runs the house and shows his affection to Riesling also to his customers, who are open-minded enough to accept this. He offered the wines of Bernd Philippi, Paul Fürst and myself to a fabulous dinner. Better than many I had in the last weeks. A day later started the Bad Raggaz World Wine-Festival, the real reason to be here for a few days. It is a biannual event, that has acquired a very good following in recent years. Producers from all corners of Europe are here to show their wines at a daily "forum" and lunch and dinner events. Tonight will be the Riesling night. Yesterday evening I attended the Chardonnay and Pinot evening at the cellar of Daniel Gantenbein, one of the great winemaker stars of the area, who also is behind the festival. Meursault-Charmes 1997 of Pierre Morey was the star white and the Volney 1er Cru Taillefer 1996 a great bottle of Burgundy. But all other wines were of high calibre. Only the 1996 Pinot Noir from Kistler, that was served the night before at the casual wine maker get-together was an even finer bottle of wine, actually quite a fantastic bottle.

We also met Georg Fromm, who accompanied us to a beautiful open air lunch at the top of a nearby mountain, the Fadära Alm. Georg not only has a very well known and successful estate in Malans, near Bad Raggaz, but also owns the From Estate in Marlborough in New Zealand and is famous for his "new world" Pinots, who actually have quite a lot from the "old world".

And last night, our Australian importer, Patrik Walsh joined us for dinner. So, the world again, particularly the wine world, is small enough to fit in a basket. The festival continues through today and tomorrow, when I will take a train to get home, since Sunday morning leaves my plane for the United States.

May 12th, 2003

It is early in the morning and I really should be in bed, but just a few notes, so you see, that I am

back in the Rheingau. San Francisco and Chicago were my two stops on this flying visit. I worked in the market and feel that the interest in Riesling has been growing further. The restaurants have a very open ear for this variety and Nancy Oakes for so kind to invite me at Boulevard (Embarcadero – 1 Mission at Steuart, Tel. 415- 543 6084 ) to have her glorious food with some of our wines. She prepared a fantastic fish and seafood menu, that did not leave anything to be desired and it does explain why her restaurant is met with so much success. The service on top was outstanding. Thank you Nancy for this memorable evening. Here is the mouthwatering menu:

“Fresh anchovy in sea salt and olive oil with a heirloom tomato and spring onion salsa, Sauce Baraguoile - Mini crab Louise with Sterling caviar – Sand Dabs with sea Urchine Aioli, wild herbs and Lettuces – Black Cod and Maine lobster on a bed of corn polenta, corn beurre Fondu – Day Boat Sea Scallops wrapped with Bacon “sweetbreads” Colcannon – Lamb Rib eye with fresh porcini mushroom on a bed of porcini puree, Lamb jus, Red wine Reduction”

Besides working in the market, giving a seminar to some restaurateurs I had the privilege in Chicago to have been invited by my friend Helmut to the MK restaurant. It was excellent food and together with Spring restaurant seems to have the best cuisine in town at present, they say even ahead of Charly Trotter.

Thursday night, I left Chicago, the windy but beautiful, exciting city, again and after landing changed from plain to train at Frankfurt Airport to travel to Bielefeld for a wine presentation and next day to Bremen for another two day event, only to find my home again, finally and smell the climate of the Rheingau, which from all places I have been to in the last two weeks has the warmest climate. I could see that the vines really have already long shoots and the vineyards look very good.

May 18th, 2003

In a train on the way to Dresden, they also call it „Elb-Florenz“ after the Elbe River, which traverses this city, so heavily bombed during the last war, but rebuilt bravely by the strong will of the people.

I hope to arrive there in time, since the train only started in Frankfurt after an hour delay, because I have an invitation to go to a performance at the Semper Opera, one of the finest Operas, we have in the country. This accounts for the architectural quality of the building as much as for the musical reputation of this theatre.

I traversed many cities that last week together with Stefan Count Neipperg from Bordeaux,

Château Canon La Gaffelière, Clos de L'Oratoire, Château Aiguilhe and La Mondotte.

We had joint presentation and Gala Dinners, a talk show in Cologne together with Alois Lageder und Werner Näkel, moderated by Ulrich Kienzle, a famous german TV personality. We visited Münster, Warendorf, Gütersloh, Wadersloh and Cologne. A busy schedule. There was great interest and even though wines which seem to be of great contrast, with both estates focusing on finding the expression of the region, the soil and create wines with important structure but elegance they were more than compatible at the dinners and provided divers tasting pleasure at the presentations.

I tasted through La Mondotte from 1996 to 1999 this week, as well as through Berg Schlossberg 1983, 1986 and 2001. A Nonnenberg Magnum opened proved much to young. Give it another 10 years.

May 20th, 2003

The Opera was Mozart's "Entführung aus dem Serail" – sorry but I do not have the translation on hand. A beautiful relaxing performance, which is almost an Operetta – or should we call it a baroque musical.

Yesterday we had a working session with a restaurant group, Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe, with which we cooperate. It was held at the Bülow Residenz, a 5 Star Relais & Château Hotel of extremely high standard with a phantastic quality of the food in their restaurant "Carrousel". The star chef Hermann was recently awarded shooting star of the year status and has shown us his talent in the evening during a six course menu, where one dish surpassed the other. The atlantic cod on a risotto of asparagus and wild garlic with red wine shallots was the highlight.

In the afternoon we were given a guided tour through the historique city of Dresden. Even though I have seen the city many times, each time, more buildings are renovated and the town is gaining again its old charm more and more. The famous Liebfrauenkirche, the symbol of the town will be inaugurated one year earlier than anticipated. Mark the date, it will be October 31st, 2005.

Today I saw various of our customers and also visited the "glass manufacture" of Volkswagen, in the midst of the city where in a glass building the top of the line car of this carmaker, the Pheaton is produced. On a wooden floor, the workers in white overalls, it is a scene as of the science fiction film, become reality.

Now on my way in a train from Dresden to Hamburg. I will arrive late in the evening and work the market there tomorrow to finally get back home tomorrow night.

May 31st, 2003

It has been very warm these last days and especially humid today. It all unloaded in the early afternoon in a massive thunderstorm which also brought along quite a bit of hail. I will check tomorrow morning our vineyards, whether there has been damage or not. The plants have really made a lot of progress these last 10 days. The shoots are long and it should not be too long before flowering. In which case, this would be on the early side.

I was in the Douro with my friend Werner the last weekend, to supervise the construction of our winery and to have some talks with the mayor of our town. We have now also put the labelling machine on track and can finally service also the Portuguese restaurants that have started to order some of our wine. We gain a new customer. The fantastic D.Tonho restaurant in the center of the old town in Porto, next to the Douro river, where we went for dinner on the arrival. They have absolute fantastic wine list. All the star –wines of Portugal can be found, with quite a depth of vintages and also imported wines. To my surprise I found our Mont du Toit listed, vintage 1998. In future they will also have our 2000 Campo Ardosia on the list. We drank an outstanding bottle of Albarinho, one of the best I have had.

3 days later I made another discovery in Lisbon, when I stayed at hotel Botanico for one night and the concierge sent me to a nearby winebar, which exists for some 5 years in an old water pump house. They have a great list of wines, quite a number of them by the glass and changing frequently. One of the partners is Paulo Martins, a very well known Portuguese wine critique, who also publishes, what is probably today's most important annual wine guide in Portugal.

I have settle down a bit more these days, catching up slowly with my papers and having a meeting on the beautiful terrace of the Hotel Krone in Assmannshausen to discuss the planning and ideas for next years Rheingau Gourmet Festival. We have decided to call it in future "Rheingau Gourmet & Wine Festival", because this is what it really is.

June 2nd, 2003

Here are the few missing details, I had not on hand, while writing my last entry. The wine I had in Paul Martins Winebar, which is called Chafariz da Mae d'Agua and is located in Rua da Mae d'Agua à Praca da Alegia in Lisboa, Tel. +351 213 422 079, was a 2000 Quinta do Vale Meao, from the private vineyard owned by the Olazabal family, that once was an important element in the famous Barca Velha. I loved the Alvarinho we drank at D.Thone, which was a 2000 Portal

do Fidalgo, Vinho Verde, produced by the Produtores de Moncao. More about D.Thono can be found under <http://www.dthono.com>. Their Tel. No is +351 22 200 4307.

June 8th, 2003

A long weekend. We call this holiday "Pfungsten". It lasts including monday and it remembers, so the church says, the day when the apostels learned to speak different languages to be able to go out and preach the gospel.

It is very warm for the season. The flowering is concluded, even in the less good locations. Well in advance of the average date. The average for the last decade was June 19th and this year the warmest places, near the river, finished already in the last days of May.

I spent two days earlier this week in the "Marken", south of Emiglia Romana, or one could also say east of Tuscany on the adriatic coast. The flowering was not any more advanced than here in the Rheingau. So we seem to live in the right place. We had a superb luncheon in Pesaro, close to the sea at the entrance of the harbour. Great codfish and good wine. Verdicchio. I did not know it can be so alcoholic. Later in the day a thunderstorm and hail. It looked like little heaps of snow, next to the road.

Yesterday lunch with our belgian importer, who is very succesful with our wines in a lot of top restaurants in his country. The sommeliers interest is even awakening now for mor mature wines, to share with their customers the experience of a vertical tasting. We sat in the garden atmosphere of our own restaurant, eating, drinking and listening to the music of the piano player.

Tomorrow a customer will come to have a 1945 Mouton recorked. We will try to help him. Some light rain cooled off the heat a bit today. This was good. I will sleep well.

June 20th, 2003

Time flies. The weather continues to be excellent, the grapes have already reached quite a size. I was travelling last week finally less. An overnight stay in Cologne with a presentation at one of our good customers.

Early this week. A tasting and wine maker dinner in Roermond – Holland, not too far from the german border. An excellent attendance with good food in a Michelin Star restaurant in a beautiful setting. I had an early breakfast on the terrace. On my way back I stopped another afternoon

and evening on the Nahe to help develop a Pinot Grand Glas , which is to be a companion for the already existing Riesling Grand glas. It is quite a process and we went through many wines to start focussing on glass shapes that bring out the best in the wine. There will be another session, possibly in september, for which the manufacturer will produce a few models based on our findings. Quick return home and redeparture for Frankonia, where we surprised Paul Fürst, the vintner, to celebrate his title of winegrower of the year in the Gault Millau guide. It was my first visit at his estate, which sits nicely on a hillside overlooking the Main valley. We were well treated with a number of wines from his private cellar.

I had to leave early next morning to catch a train from this rather remote town to get to Berlin, visiting a few customers and having dinner with Stuart Pigott. He also showed me as a preview his latest works of art, all portraits which will be exposed soon in Berlin at a gallery. Return home this morning. Tomorrow will be entirely devoted to tasting all the 2002 Riesling wines, after their first racking, but still in barrel.

June 28th, 2003

Just back from Vinexpo, where we presented at Château Pontet Canet with our colleagues from Germany, Bordeaux, Italy and Austria our wines. More than 500 people showed up and they were excellent quality.

Last night, I arrived just in time by train via Paris, I celebrated at my old school the Abitur (Baccalaureat) of my daughter. Another achievement in the family by the next generation.

Today I appointed Wijnhuis Jeuris from Belgium as our new distributor for the Quinta da Carvalhosa wines. I think it is a good choice.

Tomorrow will be devoted to another tasting of all the 2002 still in barrel, which is most of them. I like the tension that is involved in this experience every time we do it.

July 25th, 2003

I am sitting in a beautiful home of some friends between St. Maxime and St. Tropez on the Côte d'Azur for a few days rest. I came here two days ago by plane via Nice .

The weather is splendid. The steady brise of a light wind, makes you feel the heat much less.

A house with a large garden overlooks the Bay of St. Tropez. After an early jogging tour up the hillsides and a nice swim in the pool I am finding the time to catch up a little bit with my writing. In our vineyards the growth of the vines is still excellent. Despite the very warm and dry summer, there seems to be no lack of water in the soil. On an off, we had some rainfalls, and as I sit here, I here that at home some more rain has fallen yesterday. That should help. The health status of the grapes is very good and our main task is to take off some of the excess shoots and make "air". My idea is that every grape has to be able to see the sun. Than they are well prepared to ripen well for the rest of the season.

We have bottled most of the vintage 2002 wines this week and last week. Some wines will remain in the cellar until September, when we will bottle the last wines of the vintage. Many a tasting to make the final assemblage had been carried out and I am becoming more and more convinced of the high quality of the vintage. The wines are concentrated and quite powerful.

We also tasted over 540 barrel samples from Mont du Toit last week, when Stephan du Toit brought all the samples of the 2003 vintage to Rudesheim for the first screening of this vintage. After further ageing the final decision will be made during our next stay on the cape in January next year.

Charles Metcalfe, a well know british wine writer was here last week. It has been quite a long time since important English wine press journalists have shown up. Apparently the message of Riesling is now also touching the british soil. A movie director of ARTE also has shown up sounding out the possibilities for filming a serie of great European wine growing areas.

Before coming here I spend a day in Blois on the Loire at a wedding of one of my cousins. I already stopped there some two weeks earlier, when I drove back the car from our Quinta in the Douro. What a coincidence. It was a beautiful evening in a small castle where the wedding dinner took place.

I think I already told you that we spend some time in the first week of July in the Douro to bottle the 2001 Campo Ardosa. It will come on the market eventually shortly before the end of the year.

The interest in our wines is building up also in Portugal now, where in some of the wine guides our wines of the first vintage have been prominently placed. I will go to Lisbon and Porto shortly to set up some distributors for the wines and I think we will have an excellent market in the home country of the wine.

Another good news. At the European Pinot Gris award of the german Magazin BUNTE, we were placed No. 1 with our 2001 Georg Breuer Grauer Burgunder. More than 450 wines from Germany,

Austria, Italy and France were entered in the competition. The jury was composed of some of the finest German and Austrian wine writers and sommeliers. Obviously the interest in the wine has been overwhelming as a result of it.

Two more days here. Then I will travel by train to the French alps to conclude my holidays with more fresh air and will hopefully return fit and fresh in the Rheingau at the end of the month.

July 27th, 2003

The last day. Still beautiful weather. I hear from that it has been raining on and off. Good news for the vineyards. They can well use it.

Yesterday a visit over lunch at the beautiful boat of a famous German writer, Peter Haff. He has taken over a boat from Lord Carrington, the father of one of the English foreign ministers, which was built according to the plans of the old post boats that were cruising between Scotland and France. Actually the boat was built in Scotland and it is very beautiful. A two mast sail boat. Peter Haff has cruised a few times the ocean with this boat. Everything is from the finest wood and makes the modern plastic boats alongside really look totally outdated, almost like trash. We had lunch under a sun sail on a large table on deck and it was a delightful atmosphere. Peter and his wife were the most gracious hosts.

Now it is time to turn the TV on. We will watch the final stage of the decision of this year's Tour de France. The ultimate challenge, as the French papers describe it, between Lance Armstrong and Jan Ullrich.

Tomorrow morning I will depart from Nice via train to the French alps for a few days of alpine hiking.

August 9th, 2003

Back from the alps for a week now. It was so relaxing as ever to march to the peaks every day. Even though a heat wave travels across Europe. You can escape it never better than in the mountains. It is fresh enough at 9000 feet high even at noon, and when you return in to the valley, the temperatures have already dropped again to a very acceptable level.

I saw rare alpine animals at the high altitude level. Only my limited English vocabulary prevents me to mention to you the name. In German: Gamsbock and Steinbock (in French "boudier"), if that is of any help.

The temperature hit 40°C yesterday here in the Rheingau. We will start green harvesting on Monday. We need to take away grapes from the vines so that they have a good chance to sail through this draught period. The weather pattern resembles the year 1947, I read in the papers. That is not such bad news.

August 22nd, 2003

In the train from Frankfurt to Dresden. While we ride through the beautiful green forests of Thüringen, I am sitting comfortably in a leather seat of the ICE train and finally find time again to fill the diary. There will be two evenings of wine maker dinners at the Bellevue Hotel in Dresden, which is superbly located, just opposite of the famous Semper Opera, the palaces of the former Kings of Saxony and the Liebfrauenkirche which will soon be reconstructed to its former glory after the brutal bombing of Dresden in World War II. Klaus Zimmerling, one of the best and finest vintners of Saxony will join me for the events and I will stay with him tomorrow during the day. Sunday early morning is departure again for home.

Home, the Rheingau. Despite the dry weather during the last months, our vines are still doing fine. We have started two weeks ago with intensive green harvesting, up to 50% of the crop, to allow the plants to get away with the small water supply they have and at least are able to bring to maturity than reduced yields. It is a hard job in these temperatures, which are still very high, even though since about a good at least the night temperatures have dropped sensibly. We are out there with more than 10 people everyday to do that.

I was in Portugal last week to see over the construction work which is taking place and should give us a covered press house for the first time this year. It looks like this will be the case. The harvest looks like being almost as usual as far as the timing is concerned. We look at a time after September 20th. The plants look well. They have still sufficient water supply. So no fear.

My return was followed by our local wine festival "Rüdesheimer Weinfest", which also always draws a number of good friends, some I only see once a year and then at the Weinfest, back to their hometown. So the nights can be very long, interrupted only on Monday night by a sudden rainfall, which I welcomed a lot. The vineyards appreciated it.

David Schildknecht, the American wine writer visited, after I last wrote some notes, and tasted through the vintage 2002. And I also had a visit of a group of vintners and journalists, mostly German, that were all born in the famous vintage of 1953, now 50 years old. Joel Payne, Armin Diel,

Gerhard Grans, Werner Näkel, Richard Drautz and some from Luxembourg, Holland and the States were among them. A choice of people quite compatible with one of the greatest Rheingau vintages of the 19th century.

September 9th, 2003

I departed September 4th on a trip to Spain in order to see some of our customers and learn more about the wines (by the way: Spain is becoming one of our most important emerging markets. The curiosity of the good restaurants, a very active sommelier scene and last not least the recognition of Riesling as one of the finest grape varieties in the world has been gaining in the last years.

There are two daily flights now from our closest airport Hahn, in the Hunsrück mountains, an originally old US Army airport, now turned into a passenger and important freight moving place, to Gerona, located north of Barcelona, almost just in between the French border and this second most important Spanish city or should I say the capital of Catalunya. We learned that the will to almost become independent is quite strong. Much more so than I knew. For instance the official language is Catalan and not Spanish (castillano). All legal papers exist in Catalan and are not bilingual. Anyway after touchdown of the plane one of the first moves was to have lunch at Celler de Can Roca, the restaurant run by the three Roca brothers. A two star Michelin place in Gerona ( Phone 972 22 21 57). Do not miss it when you are in the area, it is worth many detours. We were treated to a 12 course lunch, nothing opulent to fill you quickly, but everything full of taste exciting and often surprising, how products have been combined to form a greater, more interesting tasting impression. And all of this without too much ado. The wines have been carefully chosen by the "sommelier" brother of the Roca family and I will mention them: 1998 Cava von Agusti Torelli Mata Brut Nature: Xarel-lo Pairal 2001 from Can Rafols de Caus – one of the pioneers of the Penedes – aged in 500 ltr barrels; 2001 Weisses Grenache from Massa Serra, the shooting star of the D.O. Emporda Costa Brava, which extends from Gerona to the French border. 1999 Magnum Vall-llach from Priorato, a wine, so they say, made by the most beautiful woman of the Priorato, who is married to René Barbier Jun, from famous Clos Mogador. For dessert 1998 sweet Monastrell Olivares from the Jumilla to a great dessert plate which is simply called „ Anarchie “. And after all this, 4 hours later, you don't feel full. Even though to drink as a "vin de reparation" a dry white wine from the Rias-Baixas.

Next day visit of Priorato. I had never seen this wine growing area and it has an astounding natural beauty. One feels in a different world. We visited with Ricardo Pasanau who cultivates his grapes in the vineyards with the highest altitude and therefore has eventually a leaner style with a more pronounced acidity. Lunch was at Celler de l'Aspic a restaurant in Falset, recently opened,

but definitely not to be missed. A great chef-sommelier Toni Bruni, whose love for wine and food seems to be written on his face. A must on anybody's next visit to Priorato.

Saturday morning a visit to Huguet de Can Feixas, an excellent wine and cava producer in the Penedes. A great family of brothers who are growing their vines also in the higher altitudes of the area and therefore produce wine with higher finesse. The harvest had started already and the Merlot was already taken in. They expect an excellent vintage. During lunch we tasted the whole range of their wines, which by the way, have an excellent price quality ratio. Roca d'en Cesc at Career Disputation 201 was the destination for dinner in the evening. The son of the owner is the reigning sommelier champion of Catalunya and the recommendation for the "maridage", marriage of wine and food, were outstanding. Also a must when you are in Barcelona. For Sunday nights, when many places are closed I recommend the basque restaurant Irrate, very close to the ramble, who make very good food without much ado and have a good list of wines.

On the way to the Gerona airport coming from Barcelona, make a stop at Ca la Maria in Llagostera. A former patissier of El Bulli runs a down to earth place with great food and informal but attentive service by his wife. A sheer delight.

September 12th, 2003

Since three days travelling through the Baltic states with good colleagues on a mission to bring top German wines to these markets. Not an easy job. But these states are starting to show interest for quality, they will all be members of the common market as of April 1st 2004 and after all for me an opportunity to see a part of Europe I have never been.

To make a long story short. The city I am very enthusiastic about is Vilnius. I just came back from a reception in the honour of our wines from the residence of the German ambassador. The city has an almost northern Italian flair by the buildings and by the people. The amount of historic buildings and a large number has already been restored is overwhelming. The communist area has not left much of a trace, which demonstrates the strength and will of the Lithuanian people.

The fine wine scene is just emerging with a very courageous but competent attempt of a woman to found a wine club with a wine school attached to it. <http://www.vynoklubas.lt>. An activity to be supported. We had lunch at the best restaurant in town "Le Province". Good food and a good wine list in a very nice setting close to the centre of the town. A place to recommend should one be there. The talks to the trade were still vague. Everybody awaits the advent of the entry into the common market, also with the hope that some of the very stringent restrictions still employed by the liquor authorities will become a thing of the past.

Riga in Latvia is still a few years behind in the development concerning better wines. In other consumer

goods one can see a sign of forward looking. Go and see the MC shopping center, where only high class goods are shown, including food. A level that is hardly reached in many countries.

Tallinn in Estonia is possibly the most advanced of the countries. They are more Scandinavian in their approach and the influence of the very near Finland can be felt. Not only are they a leader in the IT field in the Baltic states but also they have a tremendous tourist influx from those countries which is bringing in a lot of money. The city is medieval, quite untouched and some amazing hotels have opened in the old houses. The Schlössle Hotel and coming on stream the Three Sisters Hotel are the stars. Look for them or their restaurants when you go there.

September 14th, 2003

The weather is splendid. It was a warm day and should do very well for the vineyards. The leaves of the vines are still dark green and the photosynthesis should really work very well. Before I depart for Munich tomorrow, I will have a look in the vineyards to see how close we are getting to the harvest time. I assume that Pinot Noir is going to be the first grape to collect this picking season.

September 21st, 2003

We have not seriously started the picking season. Perfect weather conditions since a bit over one week after the truly necessary light rainfalls. It is over 30 degrees Celsius during the day. Temperatures that are not common every year for late September.

The Pinot Noir has beautifully matured. Healthy skins, dark colour and a lot of flavour. We will go to Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris as of tomorrow. And by the middle of next week, maybe we attack the first Rieslings.

Yesterday, a moving day. The middle Rhine Valley sector, of which Rudesheim is part, actually the entrance door, became officially elevated into the rank of world heritage monuments.

The event took place at the beautifully gothic style Church in Oberwesel, halfway to Koblenz.

I was invited by the prime-ministers office and we went by boat from here and returned also on board of the MS Asbach, a very nice passenger boat on the Rhine.

In the evening another ceremony took place to commemorate this day especially. On the mountain, the Niederwalddenkmal a "son et lumière" show, speaking about the history of this part of Europe was performed ending with an impressive firework. Sitting on top of the Rhine, the beautiful scenery of the Rheingau to our feet, it was a fantastic evening. Over 10 000 people followed this spectacle.

I came especially back on an overnight train from Hamburg to be here in time.

In Hamburg we did a stafftraining for the people at the very famous Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten and in the evening a winemakers dinner at the almost as famous Atlantik Hotel, just across over the Binnenalster from the the Vier Jahreszeiten.

October 1st, 2003

We are now in the middle of the harvest. After having concluded with the Pinot grapes, Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris with very satisfying results, we are now concentrating since a few days on Riesling only. The ripeness levels are good and the grapes are healthy. They now reached a very good level of physiological ripeness, which is what we are looking for. Due to the hot weather, we have a number of dry grapes, very lightly infected by botrytis, which we have separated and without even trying hard, we have reached unprecedented levels of sweetness to make up for Trockenbeeren- and Beerenauslese level.

Up to today the weather was excellent and we could work under ideal conditions.

Rain has moved in this afternoon and we hope it wont stay too long.

Over the weekend I was for two days at the Quinta da Carvalhosa, our winery in the Douro.

The harvest there is completed and it looks very brilliant.

Some filmteams have visited these days, among them the famous cultural franco-german chain, ARTE, to do a sequence on the Rheingau.

Tomorrow night I am invited to go to the presentation of certificates of the first german language diploma course of the Institut of Masters of Wine.

It will be held at Kloster Eberbach and I will certainly meet many friends.

October 10th, 2003

Another week of harvesting then this vintage in our Rheingau estate will be history.

Other than in between a few days of wet weather we had excellent conditions this year.

The grapes thanked us with a very healthy appearance, high ripeness levels and fine aromas.

But it will be a short crop. The barrels are filling up in the cellar. The sound of fermenting wine is in the air. We have started to press the superb Pinot Noirs from the first week of the harvest and will lay them in the barriques.

Long days, short nights is the characteristic of harvest time. The eyes are getting smaller these days.

But the mood is good, also with the many helpers we have.

October 15th, 2003

We have finished the harvest today. A glorious finale.

Perfect grapes from the Nonnenberg, another rich Trockenbeerenauslese, which will be fermented in a small oak barrel, which will after 1989, 1991, 1999 become the fourth edition of our "Elysium". A small oak barrel fermented dessert wine much in the Sauterne Style. It will take a number of years before it will be released.

Last evening we have done the final testing of a new glass "Pinot Grand", which will be the compagnon of our already existing Riesling Grand glass and will be suited for Pinot Noirs. It will have a beautiful hand blown design and has been the unanimous choice of the quite illustre jury which we had invited. Two journalists, Norbert Lewandowski – who just finished a very personal book on his Riesling favorites, two Michelin Star chefs, Harald Rüssel and Stefan Steinheuer and two vintners, Werner Näkel and myself. I am convinced we have come to a good choice. It will take next spring until the glass will become available.

A Gala Dinner at the occasion of the 10th election of the Ruinard Trophee sommelier brought together a good crowd on wine people at Schloss Reinhartshausen sunday night.

Monday we tutored Jeune Restaurateurs d'Europe service people and took them to harvest and have them learn what it is all about to make fine wines.

And on saturday night, I took the fast train to Münster for a Gourmet Peesentation at one of our best customers, the Karstadt Gourmet Shop.

Tomorrow evening we will celebrate with our harvest crew the "end of the harvest" a traditional final dinner of the most important days of the year in a vintners calendar.

October 20th, 2003

I forgot to mention that we have developped last tuesday evening the PINTO GRAND glas, a sister glass to the RIESLING GRAND, a hand blown shaped glass fo this white grape variety that takes along the traditional design of the Riesling glasses in the major Riesling growing areas in the world: Mosel, Rheingau, Elsass. The PINOT GRAND glass will be equally hand blown and will be launched onto the market next spring.

Between visits of customers from the US and Holland, sales agents from Germany the last week came to an end and this week is starting.

Due to the high quality of our dessert wines this year, we will not endeavor to attempt to make

an Eiswein this year. God has been gracious enough and we feel we should accept this gift as it is and not become barefaced. Nature has been good to us already.

It has been a year of records.

The first leaves came around April 19th, the flowering started in the last week of May in the best locations (1976 this date was June 13th and 1959, the date was June 7th). This signifies an advance of some 16 days in relation to the 30 years average.

On June 30th we had 1137 sun shine hours (average 840), a new record since 100 years ago people started to count this fact. June and August were the warmest ever month in the region. The hottest day was on August 8th with some 40° C and the hottest night with 27° on August 13th. At the end of September, we had the lowest level of water in the river Rhine since 1802.

I took some pictures for future generations. But fortunately we had very high precipitations in February and March and again in late May to help the vines to survive the drought of the summer.

Those that reduced the crop sensibly, could fully benefit from the splendid weather conditions.

At the end of September the all time sun shine record from the phenomenal vintage 1921 was topped.

All this allowed for an unexpected production of dessert wines due to a light botrytis infection, just vital enough to punch the holes in some berries to allow for the berries to dry out.

The continuing dryness through most of the harvest enabled us to bring in vast amounts of totally healthy grapes of the highest ripeness. The musts are now all well into their fermentation.

We have finished pressing the Pinot Noirs today. We will leave now the must and wine to themselves and in peace so that it can develop itself into this nectar that we all love so much.

October 27th, 2003

Today our Spanish importer visited with us, to fetch an urgent order of Georg Breuer Brut 1999, a sparkling wine that finds more and more lovers in the fine Spanish restaurants. The market is growing on the Iberian Peninsula, something I would not have believed some 5 years ago.

Saturday evening I was invited at a Romanée Conti Tasting at Hotel Krone. Relatively recent vintages. From the first flight of Echézeaux I liked the 1995 very much today, the 1996 will have the better future, but looked almost a bit reduced this time. The 1997 is still covered under a layer of oakiness. The 1999 of the same vineyard will certainly be the grand vin of this location. Classical balance. The Grand Echézeaux of the same vintage will become an envious wine. Very opulent, extremely long finish. Next to that the 1998 vintage, very mineral had a hard stand. Alone, it would have still made a great wine. Richebourg 1973, not very much appealing. The 1980 extremely drinkable. Goes down well. La Tâche 1996 will have a great future, but was still extremely closed. To be opened again in 10 years.

It seemed Pinot Noir week, since we had another tasting of various Pinots just a few days before to say good bye to our trainee Takahiro Yamani from Japan who will leave us tomorrow and we had a great time with him. He will enter in his family's business of importing wines and fortunately we will remain in close contact in the future.

We drank among others 2001 Gantenbein, 1999 Clos des Lambray from Burgundy, 1999 Höllenberg\*\*\* from Krone, 2000 Clos de Vougeot. Visibly our exposure to Pinot Noir is increasing and it was good news to read that our Spätburgunder "B" (Pinot Noir) has been eligible for the finals of the important German Pinot Noir Cup, run by DER FEINSCHMECKER. Out of 540 entrants, we have reached the round of the last 60 wines.

Today I tasted with Hermann Schmoranz the first time completely through the cellar of the new vintage. The wines ferment well. They are already showing their good concentration. Looking at many empty recipients in the cellar, this has indeed been a short harvest in quantity, but the low yields are, what gives already this impression of power coupled with a very clean, clear fruit. So we are very confident for the future development. But for a longer period, we will now let the wines to themselves in the barrels.

November 11th, 2003

Just back from Portugal to check on the progress of the construction of our buildings at the Quinta. Hopefully most of the construction will be finished before the end of the year. This is the promise of the construction company. But even more important, we – Werner Näkel travelled with me this time – checked the 2003 wines now lying in the cellar and are very happy with the results. So in both cellars, here in the Rheingau and in the Douro there are very promising wines.

Since my last report, travel took me to quite a number of places: A wine maker dinner at the Marcobrunn restaurant, the finest dining location in the Rhein-Main-Area, so the guides say; a presentation in Hamburg; a visit in Mulhouse to speak to the eventual possible next artist on our Schlossberg label (name not yet to be revealed); Meran in Alto Adige, where at the famous Hotel Castel our Italian importer had his annual presentation for his customers.

This week will still see me at a tasting in Paris together with Michel Bettane and on Sunday depart for London to visit with our English importer.

November 26th, 2003

Back from a board meeting of our Bistro Moritz Restaurant in Wiesbaden, in which I am a partner.

After 18 months of trading, we are approaching fast the break-even point. Good news.

This morning I came back from a trip which on Saturday was leading me to Münster to the Feinschmecker Magazine annual Riesling Gala, next morning early departure for Scheveningen to assist to the Champagne Op de Zee presentation of the Perswijn Magazine. More than 1000 people came to this event in the beautifully located Kurhaus of the beach town. A good event.

In the evening I visited for the first time Camill Meijer's restaurant in Muilen, close to Amsterdam. Camill is Peter Meijer's son, our former Dutch importer, which sold his business to our new importer Wijn Verlinden, who some 5 years ago was trainee in our estate. The restaurant is very nicely decorated and has an excellent location close to one of the canals leading to the IJsselmeer. He is already quite successful. We had a good dinner, chatted about the old days and drank some good wines from Peter's private cellar.

Yesterday morning a ride back by train to Frankfurt. Visit of customers in the afternoon and then on to Gau-Odernheim to follow an invitation of Dirk Würtz, a former cellarmaster of the Weil Estate, who started his own wine business some years ago. A very relaxing evening, to which some of the Rheinhessen star vintners joined. Among them Klaus Peter Keller, Herr Gutzler and others.

I also met Herr Schreiber, who has a great web site <http://www.pinard-de-picard.de>.

Since the last entry in the diary, I was in London to visit our importer and customers, in Paris for a tasting at the Cave Nobles located near the Pantheon, assisted to the premiere of Stuart Piggot's vernissage of paintings, called the Anthology of the mighty, where he depicts various politicians in a very existing manner. We also presented the program of the forthcoming Rheingau Gourmet and Wine Festival 2004 to the German Press, with over 20 papers assisting. Very successful.

December 6th, 2003

Niklas day today. It used to be an important day, when we were young and somebody dressed like a bishop would come and read to us the good and bad works that we kids had done over the last 12 months. Obviously our parents must have given this man a lot of information about us, which may be was not fair, but it was the custom.

Besides a lot of travel, visiting customers during the day I had since my last entry in the diary, I have been to a great number of excellent dinners. Wiesbaden last Saturday, an 8 course Dinner at Domäne Mechthildshausen, 8 courses with the wines of Heger, Fürst, Philippi, Wilhelm Haag, Helmut Dönnhoff, Leitz, Kreydenweiss and ours. The day after presentation and dinner at Frühauf's in one of the "rich" neighbourhoods in Munich's south. Frühauf was once for some years the privat chef of Kanzler Kohl. Then off for a few days in Hamburg and after the return yesterday morning in the evening a winemaker dinner at a beautiful hotel in the nearby Taunus Mountain. The place is called Falkenstein Kempinski and

with the new Chef Oliver Heberlein it might head only upwards. A good place to stay if one is not in need to stay in downtown Frankfurt and at the same time not so far away. I left after a brilliant breakfast this morning.

December 9th, 2003

Back from an evening at the restaurant of the former chef of Die Ente in Wiesbaden, Herrn Langendorf, who has a restaurant in Meddesdorf in the Nahe region. Solid food, a full place and lots of wine from Helmut Dönnhoff, that combination made for a good evening.

Tomorrow morning I will drive with Hermann Schmoranz, my cellar master to Burgundy to visit some colleagues to learn. We will visit with Comte de Vogué, Claude Dugat and Nicolas Rossignol. I am very much looking forward to these two days.

December 23rd, 2003

The year is coming to an end. The telephone rings less often, and one can arrange a few things in the office, there was no time for any earlier.

Two days ago I came back from a week long visit in Portugal at our estate together with my two partners. There was a lot to do. Other than a dinner with the local mayor (here called Presidente) and the bank directors, the pre-assemblage of the 2002 vintage had to be done. Bottles to be labelled, since the sales are going from strength to strength and finally the construction of our winery is still in full swing. But the light at the end of the tunnel can be seen. They have started to move the windows and doors in and the heating is almost installed.

The visit in Burgundy was very instructive and the two day devotion to the finest Pinot Noir area was a good thing. We could here "sur place" the philosophy of great growers, see the soil of the finest locations and study the plants. I am sure we are getting some inspiration out of it.

Today I had time to put into the net on our page NEWS the wines of the Rare-Wine-Tasting that we are putting on February 14th. We will have over 25 wines and will go back to the 1904 vintage. And maybe you like to come and participate in the tasting. It would be a pleasure to see you there.

I take the opportunity to send you my best wishes for the forthcoming holiday season to all of you a happy new year. See you in 2004.