

Good Prospects for Vintage 2008

First national forecast: ca. ten million hectoliters

In Germany, the main harvest of the 2008 grape crop is now underway. The first batches of early-ripening varieties, such as Rivaner (Müller-Thurgau), Portugieser or Frühburgunder (an early-ripening cousin of Pinot Noir) have already been harvested in the Baden, Pfalz and Rheinhessen regions. According to German Wine Institute spokesperson Ernst Büscher: "As of mid-September, the growth of the crop and the development of grape aromas are promising – and bode well for the quality of the vintage in 2008."

The first estimates of the size of the 2008 harvest have just been released by the German Wine-growers' Association in Bonn – a yield of some 10 million hectoliters is expected, comparable with the average yield of recent years.

Vegetation throughout the growing season and ripening stage have been constant and without problems. Nevertheless, weather conditions during the next few weeks are extremely important, not least with regard to the harvest of later-ripening varieties, such as Riesling. As in every year, all vintners hope for an "Indian summer" with warm, sunny days – in Germany, known as a "golden October," during which late-ripening varieties continue to develop not only their natural sugar, but also their mineral content and aromas.

At this standpoint, all wine enthusiasts can look forward to a good 2008 vintage in Germany, which promises wines of substance and good fruit.

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