

January 13th, 2002

The new year is already two weeks old. The Rheingau has dressed in white. Since the new Year we have a solid snow cover. This became quite unusual in the last years. But this long frostperiod is rather positive for the vineyards. It will put the plants to rest and kills the bugs.

Our people are pruning the wines these days and we make good progress. Most wines in the cellar has now either finished their fermentation or came to a stop with the cooling of the cellar. They will take off again later in spring. We just keep the barrels full.

I spend new years eve with friends, good wine and food. A pleasant evening and I enjoyed running through the vineyards next morning. I went from my house as far as the Schlossberg vineyard. Alone with the snow and the only marks were my footsteps.

Our mother turned 80 on Jan 5th and there was quite a lot to prepare. Many relatives and friends came in her honor. We were well over a hundred people covering 4 generations and it was a great two days until they were gone again. Many we had not seen for years and a lot of young people filling the ranks.

Two days later we staged our surprise visit to our friend Werner Näkel who became the Vintner of the Year and we liked to honor him. Wilhem Haag, Paul Fürst, Helmut Dönnhof, Joachim Heger and Bernd Philippi came. It was along evening. We left the Ahr, this is were Werner has his vineyards, late next morning.

Another group of vintner met a day later in Rüdesheim. All collegues with whom we form the sales company for the german market. We had our annual meeting and two days ago we went to have a long talk followed by a good meal with some designer friends who are working on the label for our portugese wines from the Quinta da Carvalhosa, of which we will release the first vintage 2000 later in the year.

Tomorrow evening I leave with Bernd Philippi for the Cape to make the final blend of the 2000 vintage Mont du Toit. It is summer down there. So I should not forget my shorts in the bags which I will pack tonight.

January 31st, 2002

I landed in Australia yesterday coming from Singapore. This is Melbourne, a city I have been once before two years ago and I find it a very attractive town with a friendly atmosphere. Our

importer has booked a great "small" hotel. I need to give you the adress, because it is very attractive and a good choice should you, the reader make it to Melbourne one day: SHANDON; boutique accomodation, B & B, Beaconsfield Pde, St. Kilda /Vic ( a suburb from Melbourne, located directly opposite a beach), Australia 3182, Phone +61 3 95340080, <http://www.shandon1884.com.au> . The hotel has about 5 rooms. I am locating here together with Ernie Loosen and Reinhard Löwenstein. Before travelling further to the Riesling Summit in Sydney on the weekend we are working here with our australian importer, Patrik Walsh, a very knowledgeable and dedicated person.

I had a great run this morning before breakfast on the beach. Just what I needed after yesterday evenings meal and wines. Just around the corner a small little restaurant called Cicciolina (130 Acland Street , phone: 95253333) is where we had dinner. It displays the easy going atmosphere of this nice corner of Melbourne. The area seemed to me a little like North Beach in San Francisco. Service is friendly and the food not too fancy but good.

When in Melbourne, another two good restaurants to recommend where we had a staff training yesterday. The famous Langton and not far from there "ezard", both on Flinders Lane. ezard features what they call " australia free style" cuisine and they gave us a taste of it "japanese inspired oyster shooter with mirin, wasabi, tamari and seaweed, green tea soba roll", you drink it, in one shot. It was fantastic.

It has been quite a long time since my last notes in the diary, but you can imagine that I just did not find the time so far. But I will recap a little bit what happened. We departed on Jan. 14 to South Africa, for our annual visit at Mont du Toit, this is the time to put the final touches on the blend of the Mont du Toit harvested two years ago, the 2000 vintage. It will be possibly even a notch up on the 1999. Bottling will take place next week. The Hawequas blend 2001 was also made and this is up for bottling later in April/May.

Prospects so far for the current vintage look good, even though due to adverse weather conditions during flowering, the quantity will suffer, but as you can imaging, this might rather enhance the quality than not. Harvest should not begin before the end of February. Stefan Gass, the sommelier of Traube Tonbach, Germany`s number one Restaurant, Schwarzwaldstube by famous chef Harald Wohlfahrt, visited us for a day together with a journalist friend of his. And we enjoyed the good company in our family atmosphere at the winery. We tasted Perold, the most expensive South African wine and also Venwouden, Meerlust and others for dinner with a good barbecue.

Back in Germany beginning of last week, I went to see Tom Christopher from New York the artist

of our 1999 Berg Schlossberg labend and we had a dinner at the occasion of the opening of an exhibition for his new pictures at the Von Stechow gallery in Frankfurt. The next day I went to Mainz to participate in a TV wine and food show, where I could present the new Riesling glass, we have developed lately with WMF. I hope to get a good photo one of these days to put it on our homepage. The glass is based on the original concept of the Riesling glasses in the traditional european Riesling regions such as Elsass, Mosel and Rheingau, but finished with todays skills and and higher neck to captures the maximum of the fine Riesling aromas. In the evening I proceeded to s stopover to Cologne had a light meal at Fischers, my favorite place in town and continued next morning to Holland where I met with Jan Cremer, the dutch painter, who does the 2000 painting for the Berg Schlossberg.

I took the painting home and I am very pleased.

The day after in Stuttgart, I was given together with my colleagues this years "Grandissimo Award" for the most interesting vintners cooperation of the year. This is awarded annually by the german magazine "Alles über Wein". We had an excellent lunch at Mr. Klink's Wielandshöhe in Stuttgart, a restaurant overlooking the city.

Next evening was the departure for this trip to Singapore and Australia. I was in Singapore for the last time about at least 10 years ago , if not more. It has changed, actually to the better. It is a green city now and the preservation of the historic buildings has made great progress. At the same time, the city is very clean and seems quite prosperous. Our importer took me also to the bridge, where Singapore is linked to Malaysia. Even though german wine is not really a known identity in this marked, unfortunately suffering from the past "cheap and cherful" image, I feel there is a potential, if very carefully rebuilt. I visited the marked, wine shops and restaurants and did a winemaker dinner at "Amigo" a place with a very flamboyant open minded wine loving owner. I also met the Schroers family, who originally from Rüdesheim, now live and work here for a few years and avid supporters of our wines. It is good to know to have friends that far away from home. Frau Schroers worked as of recently in our hotel Rüdesheimer Schloss as a receptionist.

Ok, I am almost up to date. I have to leave now for a trade presentation in a nearby hotel.

February 6th, 2002

The trade presentation was a great success. Over 150 people showed up even though only the wines of Reinhard Löwenstein, Ernie Loosen and ourselves were shown, mostly from restaurants.

The interest in Riesling overhere is really great, the people very openminded. We also did a Riesling workshop for the local Sommelier association. The last evening we had a winemaker dinner at "La Vue du Monde" a restaurant opened two years ago by Shannon Bennet, a 26 year old great talent. He worked with Ducasse and Marco Pierre White in London and has an extreme interest in wine and works for balance between the two. He is definitely to watch. Sould you be in Melbourne you definitely have to see him.

Next morning departure for Sydney. The flight was already a little bumpy eventually announcing the heavy rainfalls that happened in the next days. But that was the only darker point on this visit. We came here for the Riesling International Tasting organised by the admirable Frankland Estate from Western Australia. A family compagny in the true sense of the word. Barrie, the father is running the cellar assisted now by his daughter Truildi, the vineyard is the job of sister Elizabeth, while brother Hunter, who was with us two vintages ago, runs the office and the 6000 sheep that form the other part of the compagny. On top of it all is Judy Cullum, the mother. She is also the dynamo and has had the foresight to install this event two years ago and under the guidance of Stuart Pigott runs this event for the good cause of Riesling. More on the compagny under [info@franklandestates.au](mailto:info@franklandestates.au) . With still dry wether on the first evening we were invited to Peter Bournes (the wine man) appartment overlooking the famous Bondi Beach. Next day, Sunday after a phantastic chinese breakfast, which actually was a brunch where small carriages with always fresh food came to the tables the Cullums invited us to a afternoon on a sailboat around the beautiful bays of Sydney. In the meantime we have met with our good collegues from Austria, Franz Hirzberger and his wife Irmgard, Emmerich Knoll father and son, Toni Bodenstein from Weingut Prager and the young brother and sister Lucas and Elisabeth Pichler from F.X. Hansjörg Rebholz arrived in the morning from Germany via Los Angelos and Alex Michalski from St. Anthony came with Stuart Pigott and Ursula Heinzemann, they had extensively visited Clare, Eden and Barossa Valley as well as the Adelaide Hills. Heaven was good to us. Just a short break of raining during our boat ride. Franklands Riesling was the drink and us was the enjoyment. The evening finished with a dinner at Otto's on the newly restaurant Woolloomooloo quays just of the Royal Botanical Garden.

On Monday morning the International Riesling Tasting took place. 32 wines from Australia, Germany, Austria, Washington State, New Zealand, Alsace and one wine from South Africa. A blind tasting of great dimension, quite unique in this depth. All wines dry and from the 1998 or 1999 vintage. From Australia I marked the following wines as being the finest and even if it may sound patriotic the german wines did all exceptionally well. Stuart Pigott had selected the 1998 Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg and it was the perfect choice. I also loved the Kallstadter Saumagen from the same vintage and some of the Austrians took it for their own wine, so much of a powerhouse was the wine.

All the following wines were tasted:

- 1999 Laka Wanaka, Rippon, Central Otago NZ
- 1999 Craighall, Dry River, Martinborough, NZ
- 1999 Burgstadter Centgrafenberg Spätlese trocken, Paul Furst, Franken
- 1999 HowardPark, Howard Park, Great Southern
- 1999 Niederhäuser Hermannshöhle Spätlese Trocken, H.Dönnhoff, Nahe
- 1999 Constantia, Klein Constatia, South Africa
- 1999 Eroica, Dr. Loosen/Ste. Michelle, Columbia Valley, Washington
- 1999 Steingarten, Orlando, High Eden
- 1999 Greenhough, Greenhough, Nelsen
- 1999 Watervale, Mitchell, Clare Valley
- 1998 Birkweiler Kastanienbusch Spätesse trocken, Rebholz, Pfalz
- 1999 Green's Hill, Lenswood, Henschke, Adelaide Hills
- 1998 Winninger Uhlen, Heymann-Löwenstein, Terrassenmosel
- 1999 Senftenberg Piri, Rivat, Nigl, Kremstal, Austria
- 1997 Cuvée Frédéric Emile, Trimbach, Alsace
- 1999 Reserve, Tamar Ridge, Tasmania
- 1998 Haardter Bürgergarten Spätesse trocken, Müller Catoir, Pfalz
- 1999 Kremser Kogl Reserve Trocken, Erich Salomon, Kremstal
- 1998 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg, Georg Breuer, Rheingau
- 1999 Nierstein Oelberg , St. Anthony, Rheinhessen
- 1999 Clare, Petaluma, Clare Valley
- 1999 Weissenhirschener Kalsu Smaragd, Prager, Wachau
- 1999 Dürnsteiner Schutt Smaragd, Errmerich Knoll, Wachau
- 1998 Kallstadter Saumagen Spät.trocken "R",Koehler-Rupprecht, Pfalz
- 1999 Grand Cru Schlossberg, Cuvée Ste. Cathérine, Faller, Alsace
- 1999 Crawford River, Crawford River, S.W. Victoria
- 1998 Hochheimer Kirchenstück Auslese trocken, Künstler, Rheingau
- 1999 Polish Hill, Grosset, Clare Valley
- 1999 Forst Jesuitengarten Spätlese trocken, J.L.Wolf, Pfalz
- 1999 Dürnsteiner Kellerberg Smaragd, F.X.Pichler, Wachau

After another chinese dinner in a small also very wine minded restaurant we joined the group again at a boaling club where the monthly jazz evening took place. Over the whole day yesterday various workshops took place on regional Riesling styles, Riesling and food and the sweet side of Riesling. Judy Frankland presented their 2001 vintage, when for the first time she has bro-

ken down her Riesling in 3 different terroirs, crus, an unprecedented move for Australia and as the debate in the final session under the guidance of James Halliday showed, the idea of terroir is fast gaining place and will certainly dominate the discussions in future and shall make Riesling even more successful. Prices for bulk Riesling is going up, new Riesling plantations are undertaken in the various regions. A sign that indicated where Riesling is going. UP! A final dinner at the new restaurant Celsius concluded the event. The food was excellent so were the wines. Some of the finest Rieslings made were on the table and I was happy to contribute some bottles of our 1983 Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg in Magnum.

It was good, even necessary to do a last jogging round in the royal garden before we had a light lunch at the Opera Bar, next to this stunning building. Again here it was enlightening to see what care is taken on the wine list, even though the venue is possibly more touristy than gourmet.

Now in the air. On the way to Singapore to change planes for Frankfurt. This is where these lines are coming from.

February 16th, 2002

I missed the plane for Montpellier and sit at Paris Airport, Charles de Gaulle. Air France had two hours delay leaving Frankfurt, so no chance to catch the flight. For consolidation, they gave me an 17 € voucher for one of the Airport restaurants. No great food to be expected, but it helps the time goes by. Tomato and mozzarella, 2 glasses of St. Emilion rouge, drinkable and a bottle of Evian. The tv-screen shows the short-programm of ice-dance-skating from the Olympics in Salt Lake City. Anyway the next plane for Montpellier left on time. It was almost 38 years ago, that I was in Montpellier the last time. Together with my brother I spent a year as guest student at the famous ENSA (Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Agronomie, section viticulture and enology). Even though I was very young then, I have found memories of that period. With the very enterprising Professeur Branas, we made excursions in most of the French wine regions, excepted Alsace, Loire and Champagne. This year, probably more than any other in my youth, left important marks in my mind about my philosophy of the traditions and importance of the regions as the true heart of the wines.

Philippe Catusse, our new importer for France fetched me at the airport and even though very late we still visited his friends, the Abbots, Australians who act as very successful and quality wine merchants for the south of France and have an exquisite taste. They live in an old house of the old town of Montpellier, a site I remembered quite well. The historic center of Montpellier is very

beautiful, full of life with today about 70000 students taking up their studies in this southern european city.

Philippe Catusse's friend, Marc Parcé, who I learnt to know and who put me in contact with. Philippe fetched me next morning and despite rainy weather – the farmers were waiting for that long enough – we went to see his vineyard, the Banyuls, close to the Spanish border. Later we fetched wines from his cellar and some food and went to Pedro Soler, his flamenco guitarist friend's home to have an extensive luncheon with more friends.

Paprika, leek and calamari was prepared over the open fire. Then mussels, spiced only with garlic and almonds, a great combination. Oysters followed and then a tartar from anchovies, a regional speciality. In the large pan "Romesco" was cooked, a form of Zarzuela, with Loup de mer, gambas and other local fish, only in a sauce of garlic, paprika and "vin de Pierre" the Banyuls which like a Sherry ripens in a barrel not filled to the top. Chocolate cakes at the finish. Even though against my habit, this had to be tried. The natural companion to the sweet Banyuls wine. We had the L'Oublée, Hors d'Age of Domaine de la Rectoire, Marc Parcé's vineyard.

The other wines of this lunch which finished only at six in the evening: 2000 La Préceptorie de Centernach (the new estate of the Parcé family in Maury, some 80 km from Banyuls). The first vintage. La Chaume Marie, a blend of Grenache blanc, Carignan Blanc and Macabeau. 1995 Jostmeyer Riesling Brand. Fresh, but unfortunately not long enough and lacking a bit of balance. It did not do well with the hors d'oeuvre but did a good job with the fresh oysters. 1996 Charles Hours Jurançon Sec from the Marseng grape – I met Charles still this evening at the pre-event reception – a wine as powerful as the producer. An analogy, which often does not seem to be an exception. 1997 Domaine de la Rectoire, L'Argile, Mide d'été, from Grenache gris. 1982 Vin de Pierre, the only wine which our guitarist host, Pedro Soler, produced as an amateur vintner. Vins de Pierre are the wines of the regions that do not get an addition of alcohol for stabilisation. No cellars, need for safeguarding were the reasons why the wines from here received the additional alcohol. A blend of Domaine de la Rectoire vintage 1994/95/96, 1998 Collioure, the dry red wine from the region, 100% Carignan, not a monster, but a wine that provides pleasure when drinking, followed by the MM (2000) La Rectoire – the Grenache, Cinsault, Mourvèdre blend. For desserts a barrel sample of 2001 La Préceptorie Cuvée II, a great wine in its making and a 1990 Brut, mûté très tard. Mon dieu. But despite or may be because of all these good wines, the head feels good. Natural wines, that owe their existence to the love and dedication of people, often do this. Made by people which know that it is not the need to be modern to make a good wine, but which know the closeness to nature, to the region and their history is the guideline for all measures.

It is only a week that I came back from Australia after almost 24 hours of flying, only interrupted by 2 hours changing of planes in Singapore. Many things to catch up in the office. A great private invitation at Egbert Engelhardt's home, my friend and former chef of the Michelin starred Graues Haus in the Rheingau. We are planning our skiing weed at the end of the months. It became a late morning with many good wines.

Good think, that other than jogging in my nearby forest, there was nothing else programmed that next day.

I looked very much forward to the next days tasting of all of our 2001 Rieslings in the cellars together with Hermann Schmoranz. A few barrels that decided not to finish the fermentation when the cellar got cold over christmas having started to ferment again. The wines of the last vintage are very dense, clean and show good fruit. One senses the low yields. I am very confident about their quality. We will see. It is still a while until we decide to make the blends and the bottlings. A few barrels will be racked shortly but most will remain on their lees for the time being.

Next day departure for Berlin for a visit of the market but also a private invitation to the home of Alfred Biolek, the most known german talk master on television. He loves wine and food and prepared an excellent dinner for us, some 15 german winegrower friends.

Last Friday evening I had time to join with our friends from the "culture club" for an evening of bowling, even though the stars of this evening were not the best bowlers, but rather the spanish wines which one of us, P  p  , who also runs a restaurant near Valencia, has brought along. The finest example was a bottle of 1964 Vina Tondonia easily in the league of great Bordeaux. Arguably even better. Other wines included 1994 Pesquera possibly to young, but demonstrating its great potential. 1982 Vina Arcanza, 1989 Protos, 1987 Imperial von Cune. Reserva A monument for the future. Interesting to find in the acidity some similar slightly green notes that I do know from our 1987 Berg Schlossberg. 1964 Faustino, perhaps the only wine that has seen his best days already. You can feel the past finesse. 1998 Presquera. Still a baby, but with all the potential for a great wine to come.

February 18th, 2002

Charles Hours, the well know producer from Jurancon, takes me to the grand tasting and presentation at a large Ch  teau near B  ziers, where Philippe Catusse has invited his customers from all



over France. More than 400 came along. We stayed in quite an extraordinary mansion. An old winery in the town of Vielleneuve les Béziers, renovated and restored to become a small hotel with only 4 rooms. Two men realised their dream of a small personalized hotel. All the details suit the mediteranian flair and it might be an interesting place to stay for whoever is in that part of the world. There is a homepage you can look at: <http://www.Lachamberte.com>).

46 estates from the Languedoc Roussillon, all hand selected, 19 estates from other parts of France, among them Billecart Salmon, Didier Dagueneau or Alphonse Mellot and as „une belle surprise“ as written in the catalogue our estate Georg Breuer. The people, restaurateurs, wine retailers and wine trade showed a surprising openness to our wines. In this “new wine” region the people seem to be so much more open to something different as in some of the conservative capitals of the world where still Bordeaux, Bourgogne, Champagne is the king. A long , but refreshing day for a German grower. It ended with a long dinner at L'Embassade, the best restaurant in town. I had a good table with Didier Daguenaud, the..... 2 Michelin Star Chef of the restaurant Lion d'Or in Roborantin close to Solonge on the Loire, a great personality, or M. Barral the shooting star from Faugères the owner of Mas Julien, one of the young Masters of the Languedoc. His 1991 Mas Julien Les Cailloutes in Magnum for dinner was a clear demonstration of his art.. Dagueneau's Silex 2000 a wine almost to “sit in”.. Phantastic the 1997 Grange des Pères, which I tasted earlier in the day. Without great noise a fabulous 1950 Châteaux Climens was served with the cheese. Oh, lala.

February 19th, 2002

I am sitting in the Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport Lufthansa Lounge between two flights. The flight will leave in a few moments to bring me back to base. A day in the office, some meetings, tastings with good old friends from Frankfurt. A day later, I will go on a sales tour which will bring me to Colgone, Sauerland, Hamburg, Berlin and back.

February 26th, 2002

Berlin. I arrived here yesterday from Wolfburg and spend the evening with Stuart Pigott and his wife, who lives in town. We tasted some of Dirk Niepoorts new white and red table wines from the Douro and a very impressive 1988 Schütt from Knoll in the Wachau. Today after visiting with some clients there is a winemakers evening at the new Hyatt Hotel at Potsdamer Platz with Riesling and Seafood. I will depart early in the morning back home by train.

Since my last notes I covered quite a lot of territory here in Germany visiting the market, retailers and restaurants, doing wine maker dinners and attended the Hamburg Weinsalon, a winefair by invitation only, that assembled high quality wine estates for two days in this town. Yesterday before arriving in Berlin I stopped at Wolfsburg, the home of Volkswagen to visit the Ritz Carlton Hotel, whose restaurant Aqua has been awarded a Michelin Star just recently, and which is build in the recently built "Autostadt", which is a grand piece of automobil adventure world on a 26 ha piece of land directly next to the auto works. I really recommand when one is the area to have a look at it. For those interested in cars it is really outstanding.

After these many intensive days of travelling almost since the beginning of the year, I will take a short skiing break beginning in two days in the french alps together with my old colleague Norbert Holderrieth and Egbert Engelhard the former Michelin Star chef of Graues Haus.

March 12th, 2002

Quite a few days of silence. The skiing was good for the body. The wether was goodand bad with one superb day towards the end. Blue skies, sunshine and fresh snowfrom the night before. What a day.

Observation. Prices went up dramatically in the resort, we have taken the trouble and pleasure to do some cooking ourselves. Chef Engelhardt was in his element and our emphasis on natural produce made for great food.

The day after the return, the festival started. We are right in the middle. There has been no night for me finishing before 3 am and possibly later. Today I have the night off. I need it to recuperate. The last dinner was from Harald Wohlfahrt, Germany's No. 1 Chef for more than a decade with 3 Michelin Stars well deserved. The wines were Rheingau Riesling and aflight of mature Bordeaux from 1970 Lafite upt to 1994 Troplong Mondot.

I I have a bit more rest, I might tell you still more about what happened in some days.

March 28, 2002

This morning I had the visit of english sommeliers and a journalist. It has been quite a while since we growers have seen them over here. Apparently the worldwide rise of interest in Riesling has

brought them to visit Pro Wein and than the Rheingau. I tried on them the new Rielsing glass which was created by WMF with our help. It is called Riesling Grand., An even though I gave them a choice between a classical Spiegelau Chianti Classico Glass and the Riesling Grant, they quite quickly went over to the new glass. I feel the wine does get much more dimension and depth and is very true to the wine.

The Rheingau-Gourmet Festival finished more than a week ago and at the end drew some 3500 people during the 12 days. And I like to mention in retrospective a few highlights which I still remember well.

On the second weekend the Priorato tasting took place. And since I only had occasionally drunk of these wines, it was a very good opportunity for me to learn about these wines. I very much liked the 1999 Clos Mogador from one of the icons of this only recently rediscovered small spanish wine growing area. René Barbier was here himself, just as much as the famous Dr. Perez whose 1998 Clos Martinet or the 1997 Cims de Porrera, which he created with the initiative from spanish singer Vall Ilach I really enjoyed. We tasted 11 powerful wines. Pasenaus Planeta, grown at very high altitude and with a higher propostion of Cabernet Sauvignon did very well also. The basic varietals of the Priorato wines are Grenache and Carignan, a variety that does hardly anywhere else so well as it does in that area. As a general impression I found that all wines with such a high standard seem to have almost sandy, yet elegant tanins. A style of texture that I have hardly encountered anywhere else. From the evening also with wines from Priorato and the Rheingau I stil remember very well the Navarra lobster and Bacalhao with red peppers and watercress, a great course cooked by Martin Iturri from the Pays Basque.

Another german 3 Michelin star chef, Dieter Müller from Schlosshotel Lerbach did an astounding performance with his menu to accompanngny great Cavas and great red wines from the north of Spain. Many highlights here. Braised cheeks from an ox with balsamicosauce and a small cabbage balanced very well by the 1996 Can Rafolfs dels Caus from Penedés and the Remirez de Ganuza Reserva from the same vintage. Writing this down makes me think of the enthusiastic Maris Martin , the manager of the Can Rafolfs dels Caus , who enjoyed so much this festival, who as I hear today, was killed in a car accident just now in Spain.

From the Cavas the Kripta Grand Reserva 1996 from Agusti Torello was quite impressive and that not only because of the peculiar bottle that is used for this wine.

Albarino from Rias Baixas and Rheingau Riesling exiting tasting. The best two varieties from each of the countries. Possibly the Riesling was more convincing in the overall, but Albarino gave a

great performance. Particularly impressive the 1997 Pazo de Senorans who stood quite well against Künstlers 1997 Hochheimer Stielweg Riesling Auslese Trocken

Another great dinner was the dedicated to great spanish wines from the north, one could have called it almost the Super Tuscans from Spain. José Ramon Andrés prepared two fantastic courses: Vongole with trout caviar and apples , lobster and ravioli with Mango and anchovis. The lightness, but at the same time aroma of these courses was impressive. On the same level Cal Stamenov from Carmel Valley prepared wild salmon with a coriander-mustert crust. The great wines of the evening. 1998 Chivite Rieserva Colleccion 125 and Roda III. Peter Sissek, the creator of Pingus presented himself his absolutely convincing 1995 Reserva Special Hacienda Monasterio, and also liked very much the 1996 Alba de Breton Reserva from Rioja.

Künstlers and Peter Jakob Kühns great dry and botrytised Rieslings were an excellent supplement to this unforgettable evening.

Our wines were served at another Dinner with the wines from Alejandro Fernandez who joined the festival for two days and stayed in our family hotel for that time. Willi Mittler the chef from the Krone created some brilliant dishes to accompany the wines. I remember well the Coquille St., Jacques with king prawns on braised Chicorée with a coconut ginger sauce not an easy task for the two Berg Schlossberg wines from 1999 und 1983. At the end, the 1983 from Doppelmagnum won the match. Star Chef Johannes King from Sylts - Germany's most beautiful island , as they say - prepared his speciality to go with 1996 Pesquera Millenium Reserva Other than that were served: 1999 and 1990 Nonnenberg (Doppelmangnum), and an almost perfect 1999 Nonnenberg Auslese for the dessert, preceded by Alejandro first vintage from his new estate in La Mancha, 1999 El Vinculo, as well as his first vintage from his other new estate close to Toro, the 1998 Dehesa La Granja as well as Condado de Haza from the nearly perfect 1996 vintage.

At a rare wine tasting was served a 1825! - Hochheimer Auslese Cabinet from the Herzoglich - Königlichem Cabinets Keller (yes this wine is 177 years old), still with its original cork- still some fruit in the nose, but than a bit dried out, but more impressive than the 1915 Johannisberger Klaus Auslese from Graf Schönborn. From a flight of 8 vintages of Cheval Blanc II voted as my favorite for the 1989 followed very closely by the 1964, which to me seemed like a very classic wines, with clear aromas. In the tasting of 4 wines from the 1961 vintage I preferred at the end Mouton in front of Ausone and Cheval Blanc.

I know there is more to report. If you want the full programm look at <http://www.rheingau-gourmet-festival.de>, and even better come and join us next year it will take place from March 6 to 17.

After the festival, all the energy goes back again to our estate. I also did a trip to Kanzem to see the entire range of wines from the 2001 vintage. They are very promising. Possibly this cold become the best performance, since I help this estate to get back on the back since 1997.

Last Sunday started the Pro Wein exhibition in Düsseldorf, which has fast been becoming a very important European wine event. More foreign visitors than ever were seen. Even Americans who before hardly ever came as they seemed to prefer Vinitaly or Vinexpo. I had visitors from many countries tasting our wines. The fair lasted for 3 days, quite exhausting, but I should say very successful. On one evening our German distributor Schlumberger invited his clients to the Meier-Näkel estate on the Ahr, about one hour by bus from the fairground. A very relaxing evening with exciting wines to taste and perfect food from two star chef Hans Stefan Steinheuer.

So now Easter is coming. Tomorrow Good Friday. A few days of less hectic which will give me time to catch up. A look at my office easily tells me what I have to do. Since the weather these days has become very beautiful, there will be time for my jogging exercises in the morning of the next four days.

Just a few days ago, we got an invitation to participate at a tasting and dinner of the "20 of the best wines of the world", which will take place at the Restaurant Laurant in Paris in two weeks. It is staged by the wine club of the Figaro. Something very exciting to look for.

April 2nd, 2002

It has become very warm. Spring is here. The buds are about to break. I took advantage of the beautiful weather. In the early morning in the forest and one afternoon on the terrace. A suntan on my head was the result. But I also did most of what I wanted to do in my office. Getting things in order. You all know this eternal problem. But with my new larger office soon to be finished I am on a good track.

Today with new energy our new Spanish importer visited with me. And the prospects in the top Spanish gastronomie, the interest in Riesling, look very bright indeed. There almost seems to be more momentum than in a market like England where past problems of mass, low quality wine still seems to be the major remembrance for German wines and even the good ones seem equally to suffer from this heritage. But we will get there as well, sooner or later.

April 9th, 2002

In the train on my way to Paris. Sunshine, I am enjoying the beautiful view of the Rhine and the vineyards. It must be one the nicest trainrides anywhere. There is some delay between Mainz and Cologne, but I hope I will make my connection to the fast train, the Thalys, for Paris in Cologne. I just came back from Porto yesterday, where I spend three days together with Bernd Philippi, our colleague Werner Näkel and my daughter Marcia, who brought all her photo gear in order to take pictures of the Quinta da Carvalhosa. The first vintage will be available for shipping later this year. So we have to start preparing some material.

It was cold an rainy these days, much less good weather than here on the Rhine. Just a few moments of sunshine, which had to be used to take the pictures. The vineyards look vera good. The shoots are out some 5-7 inches and the fruit set can already be seen on some of the vines. We tasted all barrels of the 2000 and 2001 vintage and also made the assemblage of the 2000 Quinta da Carvalhosa, first vintage. The wine will be going for shipment at the latest in September.

Two days of intense work. On Sunday we looked at the progress of our construction activities. The main cellar is nearly finished. Just the door is still missing. It looks quite majestic with the two arches.

The next step will be the press house, but we might only get to the platform until the autumn. The tempo in this country is more relaxed, but this is also the charm of things here. After a good supper at Rosinha in Matusinhos and a short night of sleep, we left yesterday very early morning for Frankfurt. Some catching up to do and now in the train.

April 10th, 2000

Quite a night in Paris. Yesterday evening. A tasting of some of the most illustrious wines in the world – even eventually not always the best possible vintages, but still - at Laurent, a two star venu close to the Champs d'Elysée/ Place de la Concorde. Under the motto "20 of the best wines in the world" I presented our 1999 Rúdeheim Berg Schlossberg. The wines "lon show"

1995 Champagne Dom Perignon, 1979 Magnum Pommery Flacon d'Exception, 1997 Alta Catena Chardonnay Altena, 2001 Claudy Bay Sauvignon Blanc, 1999 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg, 1997 Ermitage Le Meal 1997 Michel Châpoutier, 1991 Montrachet Jacques Prieur,

1998 Domaine Drouhin Pinto Noir Oregon, 1990 Grans Echezaux Domaine Romanée Conti ( is that the way the wine has to taste, animal aromas – which I do not mind, but at the same time a lot of wood) 1997 Château Margaux, 1997 Château Latour, 1997 Ch`ateau Cheval Blanc surely not the best vintages, but a concession concerning the availability),Henschke 1997 Keyneton Estate (still lacking balance between nose and mouth)– but Potential, 1987 Vega Sicilia Unico Gran Reserva, 1997 Allegrini La Poja, 1999 Clos Apalta from Chili (overretracted ?), 1998 BonnyDooon Le Cigare Volant ( the idea may be ok, but body and bouquet do not match, yet?), 1959 Vouvray Le Haut Lieu 1ère Trie – Domaine Huet – Châpeau!!!, 1982 Château Climens – rather slim, 1976 Porto Quinta do Noval.

I must admit the food was excellent. In addition to the 2000 Château Pibarnon to go with the lobster, I served the 1999 Berg Schlossberg and it was the better solution. This is what Philippe Bourguignon also conceded. Look at the menus from the turn of the century up to the 20th. Lobster and Rhine- Wine was the obvious choice.

I am sitting in the train now, taking me back from Amsterdam to Mainz, where I left my car yesterday early morning. It ist 7.30 pm. What a good idea to sit in a train rather than a car. The older one gets the more important the drivers licence seems to become. Close to Amsterdam, in the village of Oudekerk, I presented today the 2000 Rüdesheim Berg Schlossberg, in the presence of Jan Cremer, the contemporary artist who did the label for this wine, his wife Babette, the german ambassador, Dr. Edmund Duckwitz

Ron Blaauw, in Oudekerk , Jeune Restaurateur. 12 o clock. Noon. In the middle of the market place we served the apreritif, 1994 Georg Breuer Brut.

It is the 21st vintage of Berg Schlossberg, since we decided to have an artist do the upper part of the label each year. What persistence can do. Berg Schlossberg is now after Mouton the second most important collection of artist-labels done for any wine in the world.

We served the Riesling in the new Riesling Grand Glas from WMF. What a revelation. With the fish courses 1996 and 1993 Berg Schlossberg was served. The latter a perfect combination with the red mullet with a tartar of langoustine. A delight. There could not have been a better choice. Thank you Ron Blaauw.

With the not yet yet released 1999 Pinot Noir “B” (our special selection) Ron Blaauw served a smoked dove from Anjou and mushrooms.

We concluded with the rare 1999 Berg Schlossberg Auslese Goldkapsel and blue cheese from Spain and an alternative of apples and cream which did exceptionally well combine with that wine too.

This is it for today. We are now travelling from Cologne to Bonn. The asparagus fields left and right from the rail tracks seem almost ready to be harvested. White asparagus and Riesling. Something to look forward to.

April 13th, 2002

Again in the train. En route from Rüdeshheim to Lüneburg, a middleaged town in the north of Germany, about 60 kilometers south of Hamburg. The weather is changed. Gray sky, rainy. The vegetation quite a bit behind that of the Rheingau. I have never really to my knowledge been in this town, reported very beautiful in its interior.

I am doing a Georg-Breuer Wine workshop with a local fine wine shop, that is demonstrating the interest one can have by combining various wines with food.

This morning finally again at least some time to do an early jog in the forrest. Yesterday I was travelling first to the WMF factory, which produces the new Riesling glas (Riesling Grand), located in Geislingen an der Steige. I underestimated the distance. To reach this town, nestled somewhat in the mountains between Stuttgart and Munich, took more than 4 hours to reach, driving on the Autobahn, which really is no more fun to do in Germany, especially not a Friday. Stop and go all the time. We discussed the possibility to also produce a restaurant version of the glass. The project will be on. From there I proceeded to Karlsruhe to see our PR agency to draw plans up for the activities in 2002. This is actually not far from Strassburg. During the travel, I received calls from the press to still have a photo session when I am back. Somebody apparently got hold of the information, planned to only be released this Sunday in the FAZ Sonntagszeitung, that we are now offering for the first time the 2000 Rüdeshheim Orleans. No, this is not another location in town nor a wine from the Loire, but the first example from an over 7 years effort to have the first sufficiently large crop of the ORLEANS grape variety to fill a small barrel of 225 liters. Orleans used to be grown to some extent in the Rheingau up until the end of the 19th century and was mostly concentrated in the Rüdeshheim Berg, since a very hot climate is needed to ripen the grape. The last wine put in bottle was in 1920 by the Staatsweingut, also a Rüdeshheim Berg Schlossberg. Our vineyards lies in that same appellation, on the foot hill of the Ehrenfels castles which dominates the Schlossberg. So, apparently the news spread somehow and we still did the photo in our cellars to be published this morning.



April 16th, 2002

Indeed Lüneburg is a beautiful with a very medieval look in the inner city which seemed quite intact. Sunday morning I continued still with the train from Lüneburg to Dresden for the spring national meeting of the Jeunes Restaurateurs D'Europe, the German branch, which gathers many one and two Michelin star chefs. A cooking class for the journalists, a get together party and a final Gala Dinner were the main program points. They took place in the two best restaurants in town, Bühlow Residenz and Pattis. Both also have hotels. Perfect places to stay, when in this beautiful town. While I used the day of Monday to visit with some customers in town. The legendary cathedral is rising every time I come to that city. They will be taking the scaffolding off in a few weeks and work on the helmet. Return today.

Departure tomorrow for the island of Sylt in the North Sea, where we will present to some selected friends and journalists the first vintage of our Portuguese project, Quinta da Carvalhosa and will also announce that Werner Näkel has joined Bernd Philippi and myself in this venture.

April 19th, 2002

At the press dinner on the 17th of April was shown for the first time, the label for Quinta da Carvalhosa at the SANSIBAR restaurant in Sylt.

April 20th, 2002

In the plane to Washington DC. I left early this morning via Düsseldorf. All other planes were full, actually so is this one. We are flying United. We should arrive by 4 pm in the Capital, Dulles airport and I might still meet tonight for dinner with Ramon Andres, the great Chef from Jaleo, who cooked so beautifully at the Rheingau Gourmet Festival in March of this year.

It was a hectic week and an important one for the development of our activities. After leaving the Jeune Restaurateur event, which finished with a grandiose Gala Dinner cooked by Mario Pattis in Dresden, a young, but dedicated Michelin rated star chef I return back home on Tuesday only to leave again next morning together with Bernd Philippi and Werner Näkel for the Island of Sylt in the North Sea, an island famous for leisure, beach, style, wine and food. Possibly the biggest concentration of Michelin star rated restaurants on an island of only 30 km long and may be not even 3 km wide. We flew out of Düsseldorf and it takes not quite an hour and a half in a small propeller plane.

The reason for going was the launch of our first vintage Quinta da Carvalhosa, 2000. After starting the winery together with Bernd Philippi and as a local junior partner Rui Cunha, recently, as already mentioned before, Werner Näkel, the famed red wine maker from the Ahr (the name of his estate is Meyer-Näkel) has joined us and strengthened our team. Just as we do, he is also making a wine in South Africa, Zwalu and "Z" and we have been knowing us for a long period of time. Our interests in wine are similar and we all have the feeling, that it is important for our development – and may be that of German wine too – to add some more experience to what we are doing at home.

So we invited some close friends "in wine" to this small event at the famous Sansibar restaurant on the Island of Sylt. It is a cult place with a tremendous wine list and dedication to wine. Madeleine Jakits the editor in chief of Feinschmecker was our guest. So was Peter Siebenmorgen a Journalist from the Berlin Tagesspiegel and author of history book – soon to publish a biography of Franz Josef Strauss, the legendary Bavarian after war politician, a political father of the present candidate for chancellor for this September election Eduard Stoiber – Christina Fischer and Hendrik Thome, possibly two of the most well known German sommeliers. Werner Brother came and also my daughter Marcia from Hamburg who brought along the beautiful photos she shot when she was with us 10 days earlier in the Douro.

The evening became quite a feast. We brought our best wines and served the Quinta da Carvalhosa and a barrel sample of the Reserva after the anti pasti. The Quinta da Carvalhosa will make its shipping debut on September 1 this year and the reserve will not follow before another year.

Next day, Thursday, return via Düsseldorf. Werner and myself we had a big wine makers dinner still in Cologne that evening and only after that we return home to our basis.

So there was only a few hours left on Friday to catch up with things. But I very much enjoyed the vintage tasting of the 2001 barrel samples which I did with Hermann Schmoranz. Not all wines have completed the fermentation yet, but we are not in any rush and for the structure of this vintage, which brought very intense wine, so with partially tiny yields, it will only be better to give them more ripening in the barrels.

I finished that evening late at home with a good green salad which I still took the time to make. This is for me the perfect way to relax.

I left early this morning for Frankfurt airport. One of our trainees took me to the airport. I had the feeling he was more tired than me, probably he had a long night out.

April 23rd, 2002

It is still early in the morning. I came back from a long jog along the Potomac from the Georgetown Inn, my hotel, to the Lincoln Memorial. People are early up. The river is already busy with many students rowing in the early sunshine of this day. When I arrived late on Saturday on Dulles Airport, and after over an hour standing in line for immigration control, it was hot and humid. Unusually hot they said for the season. The rain persisted until yesterday. On arriving at the hotel I needed a good run and discovered the trail I took also today and a good bath. Thereafter Jose Ramon Andres, the chef, picked me up to his private home and after some common shopping, the produce available are excellent in some stores, for example Greenfields, he started to cook during the evening while we were drinking and eating. A retail friend of his brought the wines. I remember well the main course, a basque speciality "merluza con salsa verde", just done in lightly heated olive oil with garlic and the sauce not much more than grinded pearsley with olive oil. Delicious.

Steve Metzler our imported arriving from Seattle, still made it to this dinner and we decided to see the Goya exhibition at the National Gallery on Sunday. It was a phantastic collection of Goyas finest exemple that were on show. For dinner we were invited by the Washington Post wine critic Michael Franz, who recently had done quite a big piece on Riesling including ours with very favourable comments.

Michael Franz cooked himself and how. Excellent dinner with a flight of wine that would hardly ever end. Other than some of our wines such as the 1999 Nonnenberg and Berg Schlossberg, he served 2001 Mantinea – a greek young fresh white wine of unexpected good quality – 1995 Barolo from Elio Altare, 1985 Château Beaucastel (-which did show some age), an excellent 1996 Pesquera Crianza, 1990 Beaune Theuron from A. Morot, 1986 Silver Oak Cabernet Sauvignon at perfect maturity and two desserts from us. Whow!

Yesterday I went to visit the market and see retail and restaurant customers. We tasted wine with each one of them and the response to the wines was more than favourable. We ended with quite some good orders and possibilities for listings in future wine lists. It could not have gone better. In the evening at Taberna, the established top spanish restaurant in DC, our distributor Mike Franklin invited some of his top customers. Another chance to present the wines and again the response was exciting.

A good start for the week. I am waiting now for another salesman to go on tour with me.

April 26th, 2002

The week has come to end and so my visit to the States. I sitting already in the Lufthansa Lounge at JFK in New York and have still a bit time left to continue my diary.

Last Tuesday I continued my visit of the market with a represents our wholesaler in Virginia. The state looked almost like a garden this day. The sun was out and we visited a very interested lot of retailers. The response was excellent and I think we are on a very good track. In the evening I had a little salad in a nearby restaurant in Georgetown, reading my paper and went to bed early, since I was planning to go to the Union Station early in order to enjoy it a bit longer before my train left for New York. With a cup of tea I sat in the great hall of the this railway station, which I consider one of the finest in the world and enjoyed watching the activities in the early morning. My train left at 9 and it was a very comfortable ride until I reached to metropolitan city three hours later.

Check in at the Hudson Hotel, a very interesting hotel from Ian Schraeger, who is known for his ideas and extravagant hotel designs. It is very well located on 59th street, close to Columbus Circle and the Central Park.

With Jeff Callaghan, our representative in this area we started visiting retailers and restaurants for the next two days and as it is the custom, had our chilled wine with us and were met with great interest and an openness to our wines, which has been quite a change from the last visit. We are making good progress and I can see see, that we have turned the tide. In the first evening we invited some customers to the newly opened Chinaabar and on the second night in addition Bruce Sanderson and Jamal Rayyas to the Blue Hill Restaurant on 75 Washington Place. This was one of the best meals I ever had in New York and as soon as the e-mail the menu to me I will let you share it. But especially you should go there ( 212- 539 1776 ; <http://www.bluehillnyc.com>) and share their food as we did. I have nothing but praise. We found all over again the fact, that great wines go well with great food and that it is not a bit difficult to combine the Rieslings with a good cuisine or for that matter with the Mont du Toit wines from South Africa, which we served with the main course.

Since after two rainy days the weather in the nice still announced a change, I decided to get up already before 7 am this morning to have a long run through Central Park, which showed itself from its best side. Flowering trees, beautiful green lawns a brisk temperature and the early sun on a clear sky. What a great way to start a day.

This morning we visited the New Jersey market, including doing a presentation at the salesmeeting of our wholesaler in that state. Over 60 salesmen shared the room and I hope that our message got across the way I intended to. More customer visits, finally some excellent appetisers at Bolo on 23 rd Street and a visit to the Gramercy Tavern, where our Friend still found the time to taste through our wines. Checking out of the hotel and off to the airport, where I am still sitting now.

The plane should leave now soon. As much as I like New York, I am looking also very much forward to be back in the Rheingau tomorrow morning.

April 27th, 2002

I have savely arrived home. Tomorrow morning I will drive to the State Theatre in Mainz to assist to the presentation of the Wine Culture Award to Dr. Alfred Biolek "Bio", eventually the finest and most known german talk show host and multi talent, who is a avid lover of Riesling. I know him well and he deserves to be honored. He has done a lot for german Rieslings popularity.

From Mainz I will go to Kanzem to do the final blending of all the 2001 vintage wines.

May 6th, 2002

The menu of the memorable dinner at Blue Hill Restaurant in New York from late April arrived. Here is it:

1994 Georg Breuer Brut

Amuse Bouche: Onion Marmalade on toast with garlic flower and a shooter of asparagus soup with Parmesan crouton

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2000 GB Riesling Sauvage and 2000 Montosa

Salmon belly with carrot-yuzu dressing and Pike tartare with herring roe

\*\*

2000 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg and 2000 Rudesheim Berg Orleans

Crabmeat lasagna, mussel and grain mustard sauce

\*\*

1999 Rauenthal Nonnenberg and 1999 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg

Smoked sable with a pistou of spring vegetables

\*\*

2000 Hawequas and 1999 Mont du Toit

Braised beef cheeks with asparagus and pickled ramps

\*\*

Citrus salad with champagne sabaillon; warm Crepe soufflé - passion fruit sauce, Rhubarb Tart-Streusel and rhubarb sorbet

1999 Rauenthal Nonnenberg Auslese and 1999 Rüdesheim Berg Rottland Auslese Goldkapsel

It does not need any comment. It was simply great. If you need more information, go and eat at Blue Hill.

Last night I returned from a trip to Alto Adige (Südtirol) with friends. Lots of good wines, good food and endless rain. But due to the interesting sites to see, the friendly people, we kept our good humour going for those 4 days.

The highlight vintners: Alois Lageder of Magreid, Anton Schmid Oberrautner in Bozen and Peter Pliger of Kuern Hof at Brixen in the Eissacktal.

Also look for Gasthof "zum Alten Pacher" (Tel. 0472 835 717) near Neustift, close to Brixen, for a uncomplicated, but great tasting food. It is also located at the Eissacktal.

May 16th, 2002

In the cellar of our Quinta, Quinta da Carvalhosa in the Douro. We have been moving the barrels from the "garage" where we started to make the first wines from this property beginning with the vintage 2000 to the newly constructed cellar. It is only a week that the beautiful porch has been installed and thus made the cellar usable. It is a privilege to sit here now. In the middle of the cellar on a wooden table and write these notes to you. Bernd Philippi and myself have arrived here Monday night of this week to make the "assemblage" of the 2000 vintage to be bottled early in July. Almost 100 barriques of the 2000 vintage had to be racked and assembled physically and some 50 barrels of the 2001 vintage that had completed the malolactical fermentation were racked as well. Good physical exercise. Not so easy when you start. A good way to make you feel that a lot of times, at least for the body, we are doing the wrong job. This here is nature, it is manual, physical, as is the interpretation of the wine that we want to produce here. The Quinta is at the end of a valley. A perfect location. Nobody will want to drive by.

You hear the nearby River Têdo, the birds, the winds and the sun, when it shines. From a rainy start early this week, the weather has turned out to become beautiful. It is hot now. Good for the completion of the flowering here, that started already some days ago in the very warmest sites, thus at the top of hillsides that are directed towards the south.

We will finish our work here this evening, after three days of hard work. This evening we will drive to Porto to meet with friends that form a private tasting group, led by Stuart Pigott. The theme of the tasting tomorrow will be the great wines of the Iberical Island – Spain and Portugal. Different flights of wines, all blind including all the great wines of this part of the world. We will do some visits on sight with the group, the Douro – where we will come back to our own Quinta on Friday evening, Bairrada to see Louis Pato, Boussaco – to taste the wines of the unique Appellation, which is composed only by the holdings of Hotel Boussaco, close to Coimbra.

Bernd; Wener Näkel, our new partner in the Quinta da Carvalhosa, and myself will continue for two more days early next week to Alentejo, to explore and find out about the potential to eventually also do something there, which clearly together with the Douro form the finest potential wine growing areas of Portugal. We will be home Tuesday night next week.

Before coming here on my agenda I had visits to some markets in Germany. A comprehensive tasting of our Pinot Gris and Blanc from our own cellars to assess the blends to be made soon, also for the base-wine of Georg Breuer Brut, the more and more popular sparkling wine we make since vintage 1987 (now the 1997 is selling) and a traditional programme during “ascension” – day, where since of a quarter of a century with private friends we walk, eat and drink between Rudesheim, nearby Assmannshausen, back by boat to Rudesheim and ending with many Rieslings in our blood in our Rudesheimer Schloss restaurant in the Drosselgasse.

The first 4 days of May I spend in Alto Adige. This was part of our annual trip to winegrowing areas, which again we have been doing for 25 years now with local friends. It is good to have these traditions ongoing. There is no pressure this way. There is no need to invent something new, one can just let the soul relax and at the same time see and discover areas which one has barely experienced so far. We have a very rich continent in Europe. I do not know if most of us are aware of this. Despite the rain, that accompanied us almost everywhere during this trip, we came to enjoy the good food, wine and hospitality of this part of the Alps, northern Italy. A highlight, certainly the visit with Alois Lageder, a good friend and a great personality, which put this almost forgotten wine growing area by his ambition, belief and “back to the roots” philosophy for quality again in the limelight, where it deserves to be.

May 23rd, 2002

Back from Portugal. It became an extensive week, starting with racking our own barrels, making the cuvée and then spending the weekend with mainly Portuguese journalists, wine merchants and growers to visit the Symington quintas, having a taste of the new vintages from the upcoming winemakers of the Douro at the vintage house in Regua, tasting extensively Dirk Niepoort wine from the barrel (the 2001 vintage) and ending with a large tasting of 48 red wines from Spain and Portugal from 1994 to 2000, all blind.

The jury being mostly Portuguese, this certainly swung the pendulum in favour of the Portuguese wines, but still the results are very interesting. This is the range of the first 10 wines:

1999 Batuta, Douro, Dirk Niepoort  
1999 Redoma, Douro, Dirk Niepoort  
1999 Clos Manyetes, Priorato, Clos dels Llops  
2000 Icoñito, Alentejo, Cortes de Cima  
1998 Terreus, Castilla et Leon, Bodegas Mauro  
2000 Grande Escolaa, Douro, Lavradores de Feitoria  
1999 Grantom Reserva, Douro, Real Vinicola  
1999 L'Ermita, Priorato, Alvaro Palacios  
1999 Vale de Meau, Douro, Quinta do Val de Meau  
1998 Clos Mogador, Priorato, René Barbier

We continued from the Douro to Bairrada and spend an evening tasting some Dao's (which I did not like too much) and Bairradas at the famous Bussaco Hotel, formerly a monastery and castle – and were we tasted the Bussaco wines back to 1953. I particularly enjoyed the wines from the Quinta das Bageiras estate, which also showed a remarkable 1994 white Maria Gomez for dinner in a Magnum.

From there the trip continued to the Alentejo where we wanted to find out what is going on and assess the possibility for an eventual future activity down there. It is still early days. But if you are in the Borba area do not miss the Sao Rosas Restaurante in Estremoz (Tel. 268 333 345) near the Pousada, for great dining local food with excellent wines or for a more casual dinner try the Isaias in the lower town. Great atmosphere in an old cellar serving at the same time as a restaurant.

We returned from Lissabon Tuesday night and it went catching up since then. Today we replanted one part of the lower slopes of the Nonnenberg, where I did not like the drainage of the soil



and had one installed. Unfortunately the great weather of the weekend has left us again and it is a bit colder and wet – ideal on the other hand for watering the young plants.

I will be having the visit of some customers tomorrow and Saturday I am off to a presentation in the afternoon close to Bonn and to a wine makers dinner in the evening in Bielefeld.

May 28th, 2002

The winemaker dinner in Lage at Specht & Hoveler wine merchants turned out to be a fabulous event. A 6 course dinner by Michelin Star chef Balthasar from Paderborn, wines from Koehler Ruprecht-Bernd Philippi, Poderi del Paradiso, Fattoria Le Fonti and ourselves. All the owners were present. And great party music at the end. Phantastic engagement by the owners. Back to Rudesheim on Sunday. I drove along the Rhine from Bonn to home. What a beautiful ride looking at this noble and imposing river that is the Rhine. Mozart piano concerto to accompany the melodies of nature. Last night meeting and dinner at the Krone in Assmannshausen with a potential sponsor of next years Rheingau Gourmet Festival. Tasting and assemblage of the 2001 Pinot Gris Cuvée to be bottled within the next few weeks. Meeting with Cora Stefan in the evening today, a friend and author of detective stories and the owners of South African Beaumont Estate near Hermanus. Tomorrow afternoon we will celebrate with an inauguration of Gabriel Constantinescus art exhibition (he did the 1989 Berg Schlossberg label) the 50th birthday of Breuer's Rudesheimer Schloss after its reopening after the war.

May 30th, 2002

Stansted airport, that is the one that does not seem to like me. Already once, I missed a plane there which I was supposed to take back to Hahn (our closest airport between Nahe and Mosel) and it was the last one of the day. So I had to stay on the airport for a night. And this morning, I missed getting to Hahn in order to take the plane for London Stansted. But this time it was all my fault.

We celebrated last night the 50th anniversary of the opening day of our Hotel and Restaurant Breuer's Rudesheimer Schloss, which took place on the 29th of May 1952. The weather in the evening turned out to be beautiful and our guests, some press, friends and former employees, came first to assist to the opening of our art exhibition to feature the works of Gabriel Constantinsecu and than to eat and drink with us. We could sit outside in the garden and enjoy the wine and the food. Among our guests a former leader of our band, Peter Parsch, who beca-

me a known opera singer at the Mannheim theater, his son now also an accomplished singer and Nina Kremer, the daughter of a music teacher and composer Gerd Kremer, who got together and spoiled us with a classic music session. One could say Drosselgasse at its best.

So good that after a lot of 2000 Rüdeshheim Estate I still found my way well home into the bed, but obviously too happy to think about setting the alarm clock at 5 am to catch the plane at 7. Oh, my god, I woke up at my usual time at 6, all too late to get there in time. I was not happy with myself and eventually that anger really woke me up. I jumped into my cloths and in the car and drove to the airport nevertheless in the hope to find the plane delayed or get a seat on the next flight. I phoned from the car – what a good invention the mobile phone has been – and got still one the five remaining seats on the next plane leaving at 9.20 am. I phoned to Stansted airport to find out about a new connection to Jersey in the Cannel Island, my final destination for today, where I was to give a wine tasting for the Victor Huga Wine Club and the next one at 3.30 pm was already solidly booked. So the only hope was to change airports in London. A city that has got more than four, I think. Yes, a flight from Gatwick at 12.55 was the possibility. Having arrived at the airport I asked for the possibility to get there from Standsted. The airport express bus would take 3 hours. Not possible to make the connection. So I took the trains. The first one in direction of Liverpool Station. Take off at Tottenham Hale, take the Victoria Line to Victoria Station and take the Gatwick shuttle (just in case you miss a plane yourself!). And I made it in record time of one and a half. I was proud and happy. Still enough time for a tea and to pick up my mail at an internet café.

After a good flight I am now in Jersey at the hotel. It is here a beautiful day too. I went for a walk to the close waterfront and took some sunshine for an hour. I am fine now. Look forward to the tasting. 40 people are announced, and the following dinner, there was no time for lunch today. The organiser of the club is a good old friend of mine, Hamish Crosby, wine adviser, wine writer of the local paper, radio broadcaster and radio commentator. I know him for the last 25 years at least.

Back in the room before midnight. We had a very good, interested crowd for the tasting and the attention was high. The wines showed well. For dinner at the “La petite pomme”, the restaurant of “The Pomme d’or” was good. I liked the local seabass, a small fish but excellent in flavour and texture. The 1999 Berg Schlossberg we had with it, did wo well.

I have set my alarm clock already, you can imagine, and I will be off to England in the morning to meet Noel Young, our english importer for lunch and return back to Hahn in the evening.

June 3rd, 2002

In the fast ICE train from Berlin to Wiesbaden, where I parked the car. I will arrive at home well after midnight. I left on Sunday morning to travel to Hamburg, visit my daughter, who lives there and to have dinner with an interesting potential customer, with whom I shared quite a number of good wines that evening. This morning departure for Berlin to see the buyer of a restaurant group we are doing an increasing amount of business with, meet their staff. They have a number of Paris styled Bistro Restaurants under the name of Dressler and Reinhardt. See them at Kurfürstendamm and Unter den Linden. Even though, they do not have an endless list of wines, their selection is of excellent quality, good value for money and they have a sweet spot for German wines, be it Riesling or Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) Warm kitchen up to midnight and very friendly staff. Thereafter a tasting of our wines with our Berlin wholesaler Wein Compagny. A lot of new young faces, quite eager to learn.

After my return from Jersey and England I spent Saturday afternoon and evening with our graphic designer to review all our labels. Since we will by the end of the year switch to the adhesive labels, I take the opportunity to upgrade them at the same. An interesting job, which needs a lot of love for detail and an uncompromising mind.

I will be home for the rest of the week.

June 8th, 2002

The flowering has started. I was out in the vineyards, just before I returned home. I had a feeling the moment was near. In the warmest spots of Berg Schlossberg and Berg Rottland it has just begun. It is very early. Only in 2000 was it one or two days earlier. It could be a good sign. Another important event. We had the visit of the German defense minister Rudolf Scharping together with his Russian counterpart, Minister Iwanow for a short while in the garden of our Breuer's Rudesheimer Schloss restaurant. Obviously much to the amazement of the other guests of the house. We had a few glasses of wine - yes, both seem to like the Riesling - and I told them a little about the history of our area, the reasons for the tourism in our town and the culture of wine growing. Both ministers were very relaxed and in a good mood. The sun was out for the occasion. Mr. Iwanov speaks very good English and him and his entourage seemed to enjoy the easy going atmosphere in our place. I invited him to come back. He wrote some notes in our guestbook, so did Mr. Scharping.

Yesterday I had the visit of Stefan Gass, the sommelier at Traube Tonbach, arguably the best German restaurant run by Harald Wohlfahrt, the German three Michelin star chef for over 10 years now.

A monument in his own right. Stefan Gass seemed to enjoy our wines quite a bit and complimented them. There will be more Breuer wines on the new Traube Tonbach winelist

June 9th, 2002

Nothing new really happened. I did early this morning my Sunday jogging in the nearby forest. But it gave me time to reflect once again on the visit of the two defence ministers from Russia and Germany. It looked so normal, but looking back to my own life of over half a century, it did not seem to become normal at all. I have lived most of my life with the idea of the cold war, with the idea that the world would always remain splitted and that the iron curtain was there to stay and that it was hardly possible to think about friendship again between our country and Russia, which we attacked in the Second World War. I remember well the 1953 assault in Berlin against the Russians, the 1956 assault in Hungary, since as a result many Hungarian young people were coming to our area to live here and their children went to school with us. I think at least 20- to 30 were received in our high school. The Berlin Wall of 1971 is still very present in my mind and well into the 80th there seemed no hope of friendship. And yesterday I was sitting with the two defence ministers of two countries that were fighting each other in one of the worst wars in history just a little of 50 years ago. And we drank Breuer Riesling, we chatted and finished inviting us to come back. Quite a memorable day after all. I wanted to write this down.

June 10th, 2002

What a nice way to start a day. I had a message on my mailbox from an old friend and wine journalist, quite well known in European wine circles, Hanns Jannssen. He was looking for a wine last night at his finca on the island of Mallorca to go with asparagus and found a bottle of our 1985 Rudesheim Berg Schlossberg in his cellar, opened it and found it splendid and extraordinarily fresh. He would not have thought that a dry Riesling could age that well. So he took the phone in order to share his joy about the wine with me. Thank you Hanns!

We tasted all barrel samples of the 2001 vintage Riesling from our cellars this afternoon. A long session. The wines are showing very well and they have even more strength and body than we would have thought in the beginning. Things look bright. And it looks like we can now continue to prepare the wines slowly for the assemblage and bottling process, which might be just before the second half of July.

June 15th, 2002

Last tuesday. Dinner with my Sommelier friends, who during the day passed the Wine Examination of the Wine & Spirit Trust from London, held in German language for the first time in Geisenheim. We tasted a flight of 1966, the Rudesheim Bischofsberg, was the finest of the three. Of the 70s, the 1971 Kirchenpfad excelled with high concentration, good balance and lots of minerality. Difficult to match. Also tasted 1987 and 1985 Berg Rosenck, St. Nicolaus and Edelmann, the latter still very clean, good fruit and great ripeness. The perfect moment to drink this wine. The annual sales meeting in three different parts of Germany followed. Braunschweig (at Dannenfels, a young one star Michelin Chef) the first stop. Next day Bad Neuenahr (Stefan Steinheuer, two very well earned Michelin Stars) and the last meeting took place at Gasthaus Rottner in Nürnberg. Also a Michelin Star. It is only fair to say, that the atmosphere during the meetings, service and food were outstanding. A link for all these restaurants, who are all members of "Jeunes Restaurateur d'Europe", can be found under HYPERLINK "<http://www.jre.de>." Enjoy.

June 16th, 2002

Today is the visit of our English importer Noel Young with 5 sommeliers and merchants. I look forward to meet with them. They will stay with us for 2,5 days to taste, see the cellars and particularly the vineyards.

June 19th, 2002

My English friends left yesterday. We had a full programme despite the heat, which set a new record for June in Germany. As a result I think the flowering has almost already been finished. That is a good sign at this stage of the game. We visited our Rauenthal vineyards, Rudesheimer Berg, Kloster Eberbach. Had a visit of the Krone Pinot Noir estate in Assmannshausen, had dinner at the same place during a wonderful warm summer evening sitting on the terrace. Difficult to find many places to beat this. We tasted wines back to the 60's. Riesling, many of which stood still up wonderfully. The wine list at the Krone lent the guests to continue drinking special wines after dinner, a bit as a blind tasting experience. 1964 Cheval Blanc was one of them. Yesterday we followed up with a German top growers Riesling Tasting, Hyl zu Herrnheim, Gunderloch, St. Anthony, Toni Jost, Schoenleber, Bürklin Wolf, Christman, Kühn, Kirsten, Von Othegraben. All first growth dry Riesling wines. Lunch was accompanied by an international Riesling Tasting. Hirzberger, FX Pichler, Bründlmeier (Austria), Zind Humbrecht, Rieffel (Alsace),

Grosset, Delatitte , Leeuwin Estate Art Series (Australia). Quite a collection. But I must say, that I was crushed last night and slept for more than two hours on the terrace in an arm chair and when I woke up, it was still warm.

Today trip to Germany to buy a replacement for our lees filter, say hello on the way back at Philippi's place and attend the general assembly of the local Chamber of Commerce to finish the evening.

June 24th, 2002

What happened since my last entry. Yes, definitely the flowering in the vineyards is over. It happened this year under splendid and warm conditions. So possibly this might be a good sign for the vintage ?

Hermann Schmoranz and myself, we finalised all the blends for the forthcoming bottling of the 2001 vintage. There will be decent quantities of all our Crus, Berg Schlossberg, Berg Roseneck (for the second year), Berg Rottland and Nonnenberg and we are pleased with the density and body of all the wines.

Thank-You-Night for the Sponsors of the Rheingau Gourmet Festival at the Krone. A dinner on the famous terrace. A test lunch at Sashimonto, THE Sushi place in Frankfurt at the Arabella hotel, run by Mr. Sakamoto. Together with Bernd and another friend we did a first trial of combining Riesling with Japanese genuine food. An interesting task. It might develop in an event later in the year. I will actually pursue this avenue with another tasting tomorrow evening at a new Japanese restaurant in Cologne.

Invitation to a wedding of close friends last Saturday in the old town of Eltville under perfect weather conditions and yesterday the visit of well-known Danish journalist Merete Munk. We had a good tasting and dinner at the Schloss in the evening. Again in the garden. The beautiful weather which we have for almost 10 days now continues.

July 14th, 2002

This is the French national holiday. My last entry is quite a while ago. I have not given up continuing to write the diary. But there was no time left in the last three weeks.

I am trying to wrap up this period without boring you too much. On June 25, visit of our ad-agency in Zweibrücken which is working on revamping our labels. Same evening invitation to Taku, a new Asian restaurant in Cologne to work out with the chef interesting combinations of

their food and German wines, red and white. We tasted a spectrum of over 30 wines with the 6 courses of the evening. The spices used had a lot to do with the compatibility with the wines. We had most success with a 1973 Rudesheim Berg Rottland, a beautiful 1999 Nonnenberg (which I drank actually also today with some friends and which is in excellent condition at this moment), 1992 Montsant - just to dry an aged Riesling and our simple 2000 GB Riesling Sauvage. June 28. Early wake up and train ride to Regensburg, much in the south of Germany. Visit of the market with our representative. Winemaker dinner at a very engaged restaurateur in Heilinghausen (close to Regensburg). Should you be in the area, look at <http://www.landgasthof-heilinghausen.de>. The owner is Werner Faisst and he does a great job in this otherwise relatively underdeveloped culinary region. Return with the first train back to Frankfurt next morning. Rapid trip home, change of cloths, pick up my daughter, back to Frankfurt airport this time and departure for Porto a few hours later to travel to Quinta da Carvalhosa. Bernd Philippi and Werner Näkel are already there. We start bottling the first vintage, 2000, the next day. With simple equipment, mostly hand labour, with motivated Portuguese working, this is a memorable experience. Some 25 000 bottles of the grand vin and some 2500 bottles of Riserva, which will only be released in a couple of years are now resting in the cellars.

I returned on July 3rd. We start bottling our vintage 2001 on the next day for the following 5 days. so this is really bottling time.

Yesterday I had the visit of Frau Dr. Angela Merkel in our estate. The head of the German CDU and therefore opposition leader. She is a remarkable woman, having emerged with the reunification of Germany on the political scene in 1990 only. I found her attentive, interested in our subject, interest in people, eager to learn more about wine and openminded. It was her first visit to the Rheingau and first extensive tasting of Rieslings. I suppose, she understood my claim for small yields as the responsibility of vintners who own good terroir. I also think that she understands the importance of the cultural impact wine does and can have. She invited me to give a talk on wine on her next year's New Year's reception in her election district in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, close to the eastern sea.

July 22nd, 2002

I had a surprise visit today of my colleague and friend Klaus Zimmerling who runs very successfully his own estate at Dresden in Sachsen on the Elbe River. He was on his way with his wife, a Polish artist to bring some of her sculptures to a collector in Aachen. I am glad, they stopped on the way and we could share lunch together under an almost sunny sky in our Rudesheimer Schloss

restaurant. Yesterday the crew of Dressler unter den Linden, a well know Berlin restaurant, visited with us and it was really good to see so many young so motivated and interested in what we do. We had a very good time in the vineyards , cellars and on the table with good wine and food.

Since I have taken some notes the last time, Steve Metzler and his wife Almudena, our US-Importer from Seattle visited with me and we had beside all the business a very enjoyable time. For the final dinner Heidi Kegel and her cellar master from von Othegraven in Kanzem came along, a representative, Frau Sigrist came from Bürklin and a radio journalist joined in, who was on tour to make a first documentation of the "days" after the Rhine Valley became part of the "World Heritage" of the UNESCO. Despite some rain later in the night, we enjoyed ourselves with good and interesting wines (among them a 1947 Latriciers Chambertin - a very young wine for its age and a 1967 and 1969 Auslese von Othegraven. Same thing here, no sign of age for these over 30 year old bottles.

The weather, at least in our part of the world has turned around quite nicely. It is dry, not too warm, but sunshine even though the sky is clouded sometimes. Good conditions to do our work in the vineyard, which consists at that time mainly in working on the canopy, taking some leaves off, make some room, so that drying of the grapes is easily achieved in case rain or humidity is prevalent. This should help to keep the grapes later in the year as long as healthy as possible.

August 1st, 2002

The days are less hectic in summer. Christer Larsson, the famous danish Chef from Christer in New York came with his family and we enjoyed a nice lunch in our restaurant over a week ago. He sells a lot of Riesling he told me. When he did sell one bottle for 10 five year ago this has now changed to 3 bottles for 10. This is a big step forward. He sees this increasing further. Hot weather and an abundance of rain are interchanging these days. We do work in the fields and take away carefully some leaves from the grape zone to allow for the air to dry the grapes fast after rainfall. We have had some thunderstorms, but fortunately not yet hailstorms, which is the greatest danger in this period of the year.

I went to Mallorca the spanish island in the Mediterranean Sea this last weekend with Bernd Philippi to find out whether it is feasible to plant a small vineyard in a large Finca of some people we know not far from Manacor. It looks like this project may see the day next spring under the name Ses Talaioles. So might hear from it some more in the future.



We have also founded with some friends yesterday a small Espresso-Bar with a Vinothek in Wiesbaden, which will be opened in early September. I will keep you posted.

Today the State radio came to talk with me about our "Orleans", the grape variety that we have revived from a long sleep of 80 years.

August 17th, 2002

Last night start of our local annual Weinfest in Rüdesheim splendid weather conditions. Since the middle of the week, August really turned into summer. Blue skies and very warm. Right in time. Before that rain and sunshine kept changing all the time. I know you read a lot about the terrible floods in Germany these days. We on the Rhine have been very lucky this time. We have high waters, but no risk at all at this time to encounter anything nearly as tragic as in the South and east of Germany and other eastern bordering countries.

If we had the same flood here, which never, when you live on a river, can be excluded altogether, it would be a disaster. All our cellars would be completely flooded. Our rare wine collection destroyed and probably most barrels as well. I can feel when I think about such a scenario the pain our fellow Germans must suffer these days. We are with them in our heart.

I visited Madeira last week to give some advice to our friends on the forthcoming harvest and on the viticultural park they are going to build in the south, near Canical, east of the airport. Here some 8 hectares of land will be devoted uniquely to plantations of red grapes for the production of red table wine. An important project for the island in its endeavour to not only rely on the production of the fortified Madeiras. On the way back I spend two days in the Douro at our Quinta. The last racking of the remaining barrels in the "garage" of our 2001 wines was my main interest. Everything is now in the new cellar. Our new storage facility next to the cellar is nearing completion and will be ready before the harvest. This is important, so we can place there all the bottles of the 2000 harvest. The grapes look excellent at this stage. Well coloured and a moderate yield, that will be a good prospect for the coming harvest. There is enough water available for the rain throughout the year to avoid any drought. Actually on my first day it was raining, while the next day with blue sky and sunshine displayed the sheer beauty of this dramatic landscape.

I was in Bremen earlier this week to visit customers and it gave me another idea of the good comfort of train rides in our country. Starting at this at Frankfurt train station, I managed to be in Bremen (which some 500 km away from home) at 9.40 am. I took a train back in the evening

shortly after 6 pm and I was home at 11 enjoying a glass of wine before going to bed. So I had a full day of work and travelled in a very relaxed manner. A good reason to leave the car in the garage.

You remember my report on the visit to the Nimes vineyards (July 14). I just found the card of the wine bar we went on one evening in Nimes. It is absolutely to be recommended: Wine Bar and Restaurant Chez Michel. The owner is Michel Hermet a sommelier. 11, Square de la Couronne in Nimes. Tel. 04 6676 1959.

August 27th, 2002

Back from a short rest in the french alps. I did some serious promenades in the mountains, up to 3000 m high. Although alone, I enjoyed immensely the nature. The weather was not necessarily summerlike. But pleasant less warmer temperature with occasional rainfall. But that does not matter, when you walk, listen at nature, watch the animals almost emerging from the soil next to you and look at the richness in the floral life of the mountains.

This break came well into place after a 4 day long wine festival weekend. No morning earlier than 3 am. But perfect warm summernights was a great recompensation for the efforts. Many friends showed up, many you do not see all year. Salespeople from Florida enjoyed one evening with us, led by the broker of our national US Importer Clasical wine.

On the way back from the alps I passed by Straßburg in Alsace. I was not there certainly for at least some 15 years and wanted to see how the center of town, which is quite touristic as one knows shows these days. I left the city after 30 minutes. I hate to be impolied, but I was disgusted by the crowd of merchants, beggars, badly dressed mediocre musicians that gathered within the tourists from all over the world around the wonderful cathedral. May be the vast difference in life style between the "silent" alps and the touristic city made me flee so fast, or what ever it was. I just had to get this from my chest.

A trip to customers in the Ruhr on thursday and a drive with our new company VW transporter (which arrived today) to our importer in Holland will conclude the week.

September 6th, 2002

Back from holland on monday morning. Barrel tasting of our 2001 Pinot Noirs. We decided we will leave them in the barrel definately until after the harvest. Terroir Symposium at the

Geisenheim University the next day. I presented three vintages Berg Schlossberg. Mr. Humbrecht two Pinot Gris. I took the opportunity during the presentation to share with the audience of some 200 people my views, that there can be even more improvement in the representation of quality of the terroir, if we had less uniformly selected clonal material.

I have started some years ago, to select our own material by the "massale" selection method, which will give a much more diverse material, that obviously is a much more logical representative of a given soil than plants which have been in principle mostly selected because of their merits of producing sugar, or kilos or similar characteristics rather than looking for lower yields and smaller berries.

Next day Cologne. Visit of the market with a Gala Dinner in the evening at the famous Excelsior Ernst hotel, just next to the famous Cologne Cathedral. Return to the Rheingau early next morning, only to re depart in the afternoon to an annual meeting of the international Concorde Hotel group in the newly erected Hotel Main Tower in Frankfurt. Their recently opened "Brick" restaurant is currently the talk of the town. The building is in its style very much a relaunch of the architecture of the 30th.

Return this morning to the Rheingau. I visited on the way the Nonnenberg Vineyards in Rauenthal. The vines look very healthy. the berries have a tendency to be quite big and I hope that the continuation of drier weather will help to keep their size in balance.

Tomorrow evening winemaker dinner at the Steigenberger Hotel Bad Homburg, close to Frankfurt. Sunday finally a free Sunday.

September 12th, 2001

Just returned from Switzerland from a short overnight trip. Tasted from the barrel the first glass of 2001 Bischofsberg brandy, an experiment we are developing together with the famous brandy makers Asbach. The distillation was done by Rudi Kaeser, European distiller of the year 2002. There will be a first release of very small volume, possibly early next year.

Last night dinner at Landhotel Hirschen close to Aarau in Obererlinsbach. Grand Award Wine Spectator Wine list. Stunning. Nothing is missing from the world of wine. We went for the local wines. An intriguing Sauvignon Blanc from Aargau Province and some bottles of exceptional vintner Daniel Gantenbein, near Lichtenstein, in the Bündner Herrschaft.

I just returned from a dinner with Feinschmecker wine writer Ingo Swoboda at Burg Crass in Eltville. Eventually the restaurant with the best located terrace directly on the river.

The weather is still brilliant. A true indian summer. We are still "green harvesting" in some of the vineyards to reduce the yields and are starting to prepare the cellar for the forthcoming harvest. In another 4 weeks , we should be right into the harvest.

September 22nd, 2002

Election sunday in Berlin. I came here yesterday for a presentation of our wholesaler at the Krongut Bornstedt, next to Sans Souci, the castle of Frederic the Great in Potsdam. Today I visited after some long needed sleep, the new Juish Museum from Daniel Liebkind. A very special, impressive piece of architecture. The " vault of remembrance" , other than the interesting basic exhibition themes, is of particular quality and can hardly be forgotten. The sculpture on the floor, hundreds of flat faces of iron, that all seem to formulate a cry, is of great power in this dark, yet cathedral like room.

Since my last entry in the diary, I have been on a four day trip to Scandinavia. A flying visit and tasting with the Food & Wine Society near Copenhagen, where I had a chance together with Merete Munk, the journalist and her husband Arne to visit the beautiful houses at Pinjehoj . Only a few meters from the Baltic Sea. There is an ensemble of houses from Vilhelm Wohlert and Jörgen Bo, two Mies van der Rohe scholars, built from 199t to 1971. One of their most known masterpieces, perfectly integrated in the landscape of this area. Brick, glas and wood is the only material used. Another great surprise was a taste of 1996 Escencia II, from Tokay Stanza owned by Peter Vinding-Dier, the well known Danish vintner, uncle of the already legendary Peter Sissek, creator of Pingus and Monasterio from Spain. A tiny quantity of this wine was made in the first place. An Eszencia without any alcohol, unfiltered and intense fruit aromas. The few bottles made have only a content of 100 ml. Merete served Roquefort, Foie Gras and Bitter Chocolate cake with it. What a treat.

At midday I commented a tasting lunch at a nearby restaurant to the members of the Danish Wine & Food Society before I left again for the airport, not without doing a flying city tour guided by Arne.

Still last Sunday evening, flight from Copenhagen to Oslo. Next day I visited with our importer Engelstad the finest restaurant customers in town. Oslo has almost become the culinary capital of Scandinavia.

La Bagatelle, already a monument, the first two Michelin star restaurant in these countries. A new restaurant ORO, started two years ago by Terje Ness a former chef of Bagatelle. He won the Bocuse d'or some two years ago. Both have memorable cellars as well and asked me to sign the wall, next to other famous international colleagues. In the evening an excellent tasting of our Riesling, the South African Wines and a first showing of CAMPO ARDOSA 2000, our new baby from Portugal. The evening finished with the legendary fish soup of the Britt Engelstad, one of the owners of our importing company.

An early start next morning at 5.40 am to catch the plane to Gotheburg in Sweden. A tasting after lunch for the cities restaurants, some of which rank in the top of the restaurants in Sweden. Later in the afternoon, I took the train to Stockholm. A beautiful ride, to be recommended, which enables one to see the landscape across the country. The colours of the leaves are just starting to turn.

In Stockholm I stayed at Lydmar Hotel, Sturegatan 10, right in the city ( <http://www.lydmar.se>). A good recommendation for your next trip to Stockholm. The reception is bistro, bar and disco at the same time. The rooms, though small, are decorated with a lot of style and love, the staff is utterly friendly, the breakfast excellent and when you take the elevator, you can choose the music you like while you ride it.

Next day, visit of a Systembolaget store, the government liquor stores which is the only place endconsumers can buy there wine. It is obvious that bag in box, played a huge part in the business in Sweden, but also Norway. In both countries well over 30% of the wine is now consumed from bag in box. It seems to fit the idea of the people to go to the cottage as much as possible and enjoy the convenience of the pack. Amazing to see, that even Chablis has been bottled that way.

An excellent crowd turned out for the extensive tasting I gave in the afternoon. Sommeliers, Journalists and buyers from the Vinmonopol attended. It seems that we have been noticed in this market now. There is a growing demand for our top wines. An allocation of Berg Schlossberg 2000 will be available later in the year and will be absorbed by the wine freaks very quickly.

In the evening our importers manager Stefan Stjärnström invited me with some friends in the nearby Sturehof restaurant. An institution in Stockholm, which lives from an atmosphere that is not unsimilar of "La Coupole" in Paris. Together with the very knowledgeable and friendly sommelier, the laid on a memorable dinner. All wines were served blind. To start 1979 Bollinger Grand Année, still alive with the typical "british" breaded nose, followed by 1990 Rauenthal

Nonnenberg and 1989 Petaluma Riesling. The Nonnenberg now shows an incredible power and length. The Petaluma still in good form.

1986 Château Pichon Comtesse de la Lalande was next. A grandios wine. It has been a long time since I had such a good bottle of a Bordeaux. Perfect balance and power. Alongside the same Château, but vintage 1996. I had problems at first to find it a Bordeaux and opted for an European Style Californian wine. There is still a lot of oak present and I wonder if it will ever reach the perfection of the 1986.

An extremely interesting wine followed with the 1997 Amarone della Valpolicella Classico from Vigneto Alto, made by Tommaso Bussiello. Nothing of the often felt oxydised aromas could be felt. Clean fruit and great concentration. To drink a second glass was not a problem.

We finished with "Quorum 1999" . This is a Barbera d'Asti Grappa blend from Prunotto, Chiarlo and Vietti. Again a distinctive, clean cut fruit.

What a great dinner, a feast for what also was my birthday. Thank you Stefan.

After coming home this last Thursday there not much time, other than to look at the mail and pack my bags again for the trip to Berlin.

September 24th, 2002

First drizzeling rain for many days this afternoon. I went through the Rüdeshim Berg vineyards today to get an up to date picture of the status of ripeness and health of the grapes.

Very high maturity. The leaves are still plain green and still active. In a few places we will continue with the green harvest. I assume that at the end of next week we might start with some of our Pinot vineyards. The acidity balance is here slowly falling into the right place.

September 30th, 2002

I am sitting in the train, now close to Hamburg coming from Essen, where I visited customers together with our local agent. I started this morning from home, very early 6 am, via Koblenz and Cologne. It was cold at that time, but clear skies. It became a beautiful autumn day. For

lunch in a small restaurant at Margarethenhöhe, an interesting residential area of more than one hundred houses planned by the than Krupp industrial company for their workers, an ensemble which still has a very high quality factor, this is visible, we could still sit in outside in the sun.

Yesterday I was looking with my winemaker, Hermann Schmoranz, all our Rauenthal vineyards and it felt like a summer day. No sweater needed. The vineyards look good, even though about a week later in ripeness than the Rüdesheimer Berg vineyards at the same time. We had a much wetter year in Rauenthal, even though only about 15 miles away from Rüdesheim, and this shows. The soils were often colder and that delays the ripeness. But, on the other hand, the ripeness level is reaching already some 11% alcohol. For this time of the season excellent.

On Saturday we had the visit of Stuart Pigott with some of the finest Australian Riesling Growers. Stefanie Toole and Geoffrey Grosset, Judy and Barry Cullam and the O'Connell brothers from the Barossa Valley. We tasted through the Rieslings of our 2001 vintage. They have started to regain their balance after the bottling and already provide a lot of pleasure. They all stayed for lunch, but unfortunately had to leave right afterwards. Quite a pity, I would have enjoyed to have them around a bit longer. May be next time.

We are close to arrival now. I will be staying in Hamburg with my daughter and look forward to some "family" evenings in the next days while during the day I will visit some of our key customers in that market.

October 5th, 2002

Back from a last salestrip before the harvest is taking its course. I visited some accounts in the "Ruhrgebiet" Germany's industrial heart and than spent to days in the Hamburg market, visiting a good deal of the major restaurant customers, who account for some of the finest restaurants in the Country, some of them alongside the famous Elbchausée, a street composed of fabulous Villas and Gardens, just next to the river Elbe. The rich and beautiful have their homes in that part of the city. I visited the newly reopened Süllberg restaurants, a landmark about 8 kilometers from the City, overlooking the water and the little islands that start to form at the Delta of the river, before it goes to the northsea. Yesterday, our national holiday I made it a point to have lunch with my daughter and her friend (she studies in Hamburg) at Le Canard, the restaurant of Josef Viehauser. One of the great classics in Germany. He has written culinary history and he is a master of clearly defined aromas. There is never too much on the plate to take away from the major produce and the produce is as good as it can be. Salat from octopus, variation of raw

Tuna, lobster, dumplings from cod, veal cotelet and cheese for dessert. To start a 2001 Sauvignon Blanc from Sattlerhof in Steiermark followed by a bottle of 1995 Château Gazin, a beautiful elegant Pomerol, certainly now at its best. It was a feast, sitting in this autumn sunshine on the terrace overlooking the Elbe and the always busy harbor. What a treat. I took the train afterwards back home and fell asleep for most of the ride.

Today we harvested some parts of our Pinot Gris at very high ripeness levels and perfect acidity balance. As of noon, the sky became clear and the sun was out. A beautiful day.

Tomorrow we should look at some Pinot Noir. I will keep you posted.

October 13th, 2002

The harvest now is slowly getting some steam and we are pleased so far. Some Pinot Noir has now been harvested and none at less natural alcohol than 12.5%. Yesterday morning, before I left for a presentation of our Rheingau, South African and for the first time portugese wine CAMPO ARDOSA, for Münster in Westfalen, home of the famous westfalian peace treaty in 1648, we collected some more at more than 13,5%. The ripeness of the grapes has made further progress and due to the cool nights the healthyness of the grapes is still excellent.

At the beginning of the week we have unveiled the installation of a geolocial monument in front of our estate house, displaying a rare collection of soil material, up to 60 meters deep, from the Rüdeshheim Berg Rottland site. ( More information can be found in our News section).

We have rested with picking this sunday and will go on tomorrow, now with the full group of pickers since our second contingent from Poland has arrived last night. Between 25 and 30 people will now be with me in the vineyards every day.

October 21st, 2002

The harvest is in full swing. Weather changes from day to day. So good planning and anticipation is needed. So far the quality of the grapes is excellent. No grapes harvested under 11.5 to 12 % potential alcohol and that should not change. Excellent Pinot Noir grapes. Some first persuading results of botrytis wines up to TPA levels. We are now into the great dry terroirs in Rüdeshheim and Rauenthal. Every day is filled from morning 7 am to late in the evening. So not much time



to carry on with this report. Will try to keep you posted , even as now, it is already midnight.

Came back last evening from a short 2 day trip together with Werner Näkel from the Douro. Have checked the last fermenting tanks and all the wines of the 2002 vintage now in barrel. They have good length and fruit.

The first shipment of CAMPO ARDOSA will leave the Quinta exactly in one week for Germany. Finally we can start shipping the wine. The demand is growing as people are getting the news.

October 31st, 2002

We are still harvesting. From the early morning hours, till late in the evening. I am out in the vineyards most of the time with our team. Hermann Schmoranz runs the presses. Dry and wet, blue sky - gray sky, sun and rain. It is a vintage that pushes you to the limits. But the results that are rewarding. Top grapes for our dry wines as well as for dessert wines up to TBA level. Everything is possible if you catch the right moment. It is a battle. But isn't it one every year. Hardly ever we had similar ripeness levels for all grapes . We have never in addition to the Riesling had any comparably ripe Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) grapes. Our Barrique cellar has doubled in size. We have about another week to go still.

Today broke the news of a 100 pt. wine from my friend Helmut Dönnhoff. This is great news For the German rating of the growers in 2001, look at the most important wine internet site <http://www.wein-plus.de>. Under "Weinführer" you will find the region and the growers. 95 pts. for Berg Schlossberg, 93 for each Nonnenberg and Berg Roseneck are excellent results. for full details you should go to the indicated site.

November 10th, 2002

We celebrated with our pickers the end of the harvest yesterday. Thursday was the last day of picking. There are still a few grapes in the vineyards for the eventual advent of freezing temperatures (-8 minimum °C) for the making of an Eiswein and some others, where we eventually with some help of dry weather conditions with clear skies and easterly winds can possibly still pick some more Auslese qualities. But even without these expectations we are very satisfied with this year's results. Seldom did we have such high ripeness levels throughout all the vineyards with a perfect acidity balance at the same time. A good range of dessert wines have been picked of

the total of 45 picking days. At times our picking crew grew up to 30 pickers. The work in the grape reception area under the guidance of Hermann Schmoranz, our cellar master, has worked for over 6 weeks, seven days a week and hardly any less than 15 hours a day. I must compliment all our staff for this great effort which was executed in good spirit and friendly atmosphere.

I was with the crew almost every day but the last half day, when I went to join our Italian importer, Winecellar Innerhofer, in Affi, close to Verona for his annual presentation.

As of tomorrow I will start again to be on the road to visit some customers and do some events out there. My travel will take me tomorrow in the area of Bayreuth, famous for the Wagner Festival. I have never been there before in my life. So I am looking forward to it.

November 17th, 2002

Wirsberg, Coburg, near the Tscheck border. In the midst of the "Fichtelgebirge". An area where the production of china and wood carvings played a great role. The famous Rosenthal porcelain factory is located there. Many castles still tell the story of former wealth. This was my work on the first two days of the week, visiting with some good restaurants. Wednesday Luxembourg. Our distributor- even though a small market for us (but mind you the people in Luxembourg have the highest per capita consumption in Europe these days. They overtook even France and Italy)- put on his annual presentation. On Thursday our Spanish importer visited with us. Yes, there are wines from us in a number of famous Spanish restaurants. Both, dry Riesling Crus and botrytised wines, both are liked by the top chefs. The Spanish cuisine is getting a reputation of becoming Europe's most innovative cooking. They seem to set the standards in many ways. Time to go and inspect for myself. Friday, visit and winemaker dinner in Hamm a city close to Münster and today a great luncheon in Wartenberger Mühle (close to Kaiserslautern), a beautiful hidden restaurant with a few beds, a hideaway with a Michelin star awarded kitchen. The Scharff brothers today invited another Michelin star chef, Gerd Eis, from the famous Ente in Wiesbaden, to compose a partially Euro-Asiatic menu with our wines. (If you happen to be around there call 06302-92340 for reservations)

November 28th, 2002

Extremely busy. Hardly time to write some notes. Have to take my computer along for the next trips. Wine workshop for young restaurant workers of the Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe group.

Vineyards. pruning, tasting and a good dinner in the evening at Kronenschlösschen in Hattenheim. Two days trip to the Côtes d'Azur. To assist Joachim Splichal, famous restaurateur from Los Angeles, Patina, in his search to find eventually a wine estate. We looked at many places, tasted many wines and ate quite well at the Abbey de Celle, a hotel, part of the Alain Ducasse imperium, but also ate lousy at Le Sud in Le Lavandou which recently only gained the first Michelin étoile. Back home, tasting at one of our Cologne distributors FUB. I brought some very old bottles from the sixties, which much to the astonishment of the tasters were still fresh and in good shape after almost 40 years. Riesling can be amazing. Lunch with customers in Münster last Saturday followed by the traditional Riesling Gala evening at the Krautkrämer Hotel and Restaurant. Return early Sunday. Tasting of the last pressed Pinot Noirs from this year's harvest. Monday morning very early departure for the Tegernsee, south of Munich, from where we started to a three day tour, Tour d'Europe from Rottach Egern, via Stuttgart to Cologne. Our group of nine German estates, together with Les Cinq from Bordeaux (Château Canon la Gafellière, Gazin, Brannaire Ducru, Pontet Canet et Smith Haut Lafitte) and a group of four Italians; Alois Lageder, Sciopetto, Giacosa and Castello die Ama. A very successful tour with a presentation each afternoon and a walking dinner in the evening. Return early this morning by train after a long night at the Cologne Dinner. Today, I am trying to catch up. Only to leave again for a presentation at Mönchengladbach in the Ruhrgebiet tomorrow, followed in the evening by a Turkish dinner, to which I am looking forward. Saturday night the annual great German wine dinner at Domäne Mechthildshausen in Wiesbaden and on Sunday departure for Switzerland to see Daniel Gantenbein. This will give some time to breathe.

December 7th, 2002

On my way back from Hamburg to Rudesheim in the train. Last night we celebrated at the Feinschmecker offices the traditional Christmas party. Lots of good, old friends and plenty of wine. Journalists, chefs and vintners.

The day before I travelled to Berlin to visit customers and do a vintners tasting with a new customer. Feinkost (deli) John in Berlin Frohnau. He carries a tremendous assortment of fine wines from all around the world with one of the most selected programme of German wines. I also looked at some interested restaurant concepts, such as "Ganimed", a brasserie style place close to the legendary Berhold Brecht theatre and the nearby "Wein Guy", run by the well known Berlin actor Guy. It is a combination of restaurant and wine shop in one of the arches of the railway near the offices of the Chancellor.

The day before I travelled back from a private Pinot Noir symposium in Fläsch, the home town of fellow swiss vintner Daniel Gantenbein. A legend in Switzerland, whose fame has constantly grown with the top Pinot Noirs he is producing constantly. Aside from two gorgeous meals on Sunday and Monday evening (look for Gasthof Rössli, should you be in Bad Ragaz – which is close to either Lichtenstein on one side or Davos on the other side – whose owner Doris and Ueli Kellenberger are great hosts and chef at the same time ([www.roessleriragaz.ch](http://www.roessleriragaz.ch)), we tasted many wines. First Pinot Noirs from the estates of the vintners present: Werner Näkel, Bernd Philippi, Paul Fürst (who was just named vintner of the year by Gault Millau) Werner Knipser, Daniel Gantenbein, Tobias Studacher und us and discussed them in detail to find out what could still be done to improve them and to see how and at what level they fare against each other. We seemed to have made very good progress with the soon to be released 2000 Georg Breuer Spätburgunder “B”. The next days menu was accompanied by the following wines.

1947 Vosne Romanée, Van der Meulen Bottling. A truly great wine, that still holds up in the glass over a long time. 1994 Echezaux by Henry Jayer. Good wine from a very difficult vintage. Vegetal nose. 1990 Morey St. Denis, Ponsot. Extrakt, sweetness. 1993 Bourgogne, Gros Frère et Sœur, corked. 1993 Clos de la Roche by Domaine Ponsot, Cuvée vielle Vigne. Good aromas, but a bit short. 1995 Charmes Chambertin, Jean Raphet & fils. Clean, but less well structured. 1997 Mazis-Chambertin von Confuron- Contetidot, deceiving. 1998 Clos de Vougeot, Jean Grivot. Very concentrated, but closed. Lacking the sweet creamyness one expects. Will it sill come?? 1999 Charmes Chambertin, Armand Rousseau. The star of the evening next to the 1947. So much for burgundy. Than 1993 Rocchioli Reserve, Russian River Valley. Too alcoholic. Not exciting. 1999 Archery Summit, Oregon Pinot Noir. Opulent, lacks charm. 1999 Beaux Frères, Yamhill County, Oregon. The producer is the husband of Robert Parkers sister. An excellent wine. 2000 Stark, Western Cape, made by Werner Näkel. One of the best I tasted from South Afrika. Than 2001 Spätburgunder „S“ von Meyer Näkel to finish the wines from this grape variety. To finish: 1991 Montebello Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot. Not as good as I thought. 1999 Vriesenhof, 1999 Sejana Merlot, 1999 Naledi Cabernet Sauvignon. All from South Africa. Rather commercial. We finished with an astonishingly excellent Cabernet Sauvignon, vintage 1999 from Werner Knipser, grown in the Palatinate. Chapeau!! No need to take a sleeping pill after all these wines.

December 11th, 2002

Now the harvest is really finished. On a cold morning of nearly minus 8°C we harvested a Bischofsberg Eiswein. We are happy about this result, since as you might remember, last year when the conditions were equally perfect, the grapes that we had prepared for it had been sto-

len (actually no trace of the thieves have been found). A day before when already the temperatures dropped and a cold eastern wind started to blow we were also able to get our last botrytised grapes in. This should give us some good Auslese Goldkapsel and eventually Beerenauslese. This ends a very long but successful vintage season. The cellars are full again of juice with excellent potential.

The activity is calming down somewhat these days. Before leaving for Madeira and Portugal next week I will attend a few traditional pre-christmas dinners this week and I am sure we will also have one or the other bottle of good wine.

December 15th, 2002

The weather has changed and it is misty and we have a covered sky. This demonstrates well, after the few phantastic days earlier in the week which allowed us to end the harvest 2002 with a grand finale of dessert wines, how risky our profession is and the margin of making good wines is very small. But this is also the excitement of our profession. As indicated, this was also the week of the first series of christmas dinners. On thursday we had a really great meal at Zum Krug in Hattenheim where now the son of the owner has taken over the kitchen and it is exciting to see what he is able to do. We let father choose the wines of the evening and the son prepares what he feels best. And we were not deceived. It was a perfect evening I will mention a few highlights: marinated tuna with a sardine in tempura. A perfect combination : 1987 Hattenheimer Schützenhaus Riesling Spätlese with the variation of gooseliver. It could not have been a better match. A parfait of dried fruits in Gewürtztraminer as a course before the main course, medaillons of stag, was also a winner. Two nights ago with a range of other friends we had our traditional annual "goose" and went to Rauenthal at the Winzerhalle. A traditional restaurant with a new chef and he really did it very well. Last night we had our own company christmas party and the idea was that all the food was to be prepared by ourselves. One of our trainees proved to be a "masterchef" and prepared a perfect wild boar gulasch. One of our long-time polish workers excelled with great red cabbage and I did a green autumn salad to go with the smoked trout filets. We tasted many wines throughout the evening. 1982 Schloss Reinhartshausen Sekt, Taittinger Brut Reserve, 1998 Rieslings from Luxembourg, Kanzemer Altenberg from von Othegraven, Wiltinger Gottesfus from Jordan and Berg Schlossberg from us. Highly interesting to see the vintage character in all the wines which united them despite the different growing regions of the wines. 1989 Grauer Burgunder and a perfect 1996 Pully Fuisse and many other wines from Rheingau colleagues.

Today no dinner, but tomorrow we will unite at Schloss Wallhausen in the evening for our christmas get together of our group of estates "diegueter".

December 22nd, 2002

Back from the Douro together with Werner Näkel and Bernd Philippi.. We spend a few days at our Quinta and have quite a lot. The pre-assemblage of the 2001 vintage has been made. It will be an excellent vintage and we will also start to launch our second label "Ardosinio" with this vintage. We have scheduled to bottling dates and worked on the continuation of the construction plans for the Quinta. Last night, we finished our trip with the almost now traditional dinner at Rosinha in the harbour area Mathosinhos, close to Porto. A perfect fish, some Alvarinho and a bottle of 1995 Mouchao.

Our bags filled with some great queso de serra, we are sitting in the plane to bring us back to Frankfurt. I shall look for the bottles to be drunk over Christmas on my return this afternoon and in the next days till the new year, a mixture of rest, work and good food and wine will dominate the schedule. My two daughters, seldom enough these days, will both be home over Christmas.

This is to say good bye for the moment, probably until next year. After all, it was a good year, also for the business side of it.