

## The 2008 Vintage

Last year, it was difficult for me to compare 2007 with any previous vintage. This year, it is very easy! The 2008 year was in fact very similar to 2007, and the only little difference is that the flowering and therefore harvest were 2 weeks later than in 2007.

2007 being a non stressed year with average yields, we already knew that the vines were not either too rested or overly exhausted from major stress. Winter was cold enough to allow the soils to restructure themselves properly, and mid April bud-break was considered normal. The vines were growing at a reasonable pace in May and dry weather prepared for a nice flowering. Bloom started first week of June in the most precocious sites, like Brand or Herrenweg in Turckheim, and was quickly over. Around second week of June, the weather turned colder and more rainy, and any vineyard not finished to flower then started to struggle finishing the flowering. This concerned most vineyards in Alsace, especially the later ripening sites like Gueberschwihr, Hunawihl or Thann on our estate. For those vineyards, the flowering only finished around the 20<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> June when the weather became very warm again. Surprisingly, only the Muscat Ottonel suffered from serious millerandage or coulure. The other grape varieties were not too affected, so crop size was still expected to be normal.

The weather in July and August was sometimes warm and dry and then cold and rainy, creating some complications: difficulties to enter in the vineyards for spraying, more disease risks and very vigorous growth.

Most bio-dynamists are used to the fact that it is important to be able to react quickly to difficult weather. Being able to enter a vineyard quickly after rains depends on the soil structure (easier with grass than on a freshly ploughed soil!) and slope, but also on the type of equipment used. Compaction is a big worry for us, so we mostly use very small light micro tractors, mostly caterpillars, so it is quite easy to cultivate the vineyards, even under bad weather conditions.

The start of the harvest was difficult to predict, as the flowering was spread over 3 weeks, but we knew already in July that it would be a spread harvest. The biggest concern in the vineyards in 2008 was to be able to limit the huge vigour of the vines, induced by the large amount of rainfall in July. More water means more growth, bigger grapes, potentially more rot but also a much later stop of shoot growth. As long as the vines continue to grow, they do not concentrate their energy on the grapes. The result is often a spread véraison (change of colour) and this can affect the harvest quality, with too much heterogeneity in the ripeness. More than any previous year, we felt that the canopy management was crucial in controlling the way the vines wanted to grow. We no longer hedge our vines, except a few rare young vines, and this does help a lot the vines too control the vigour and not grow lateral shoots. The result is an earlier stop of growth, more homogenous ripeness, no lateral growth, smaller clusters and smaller grapes (30% in total!), but it also means a lot more manual work in order to deal with longer shoots and put them back into the canopy.

August wasn't too wet, except in the middle of the month when we experienced two days of severe storms, bringing a lot of water. The end of the month was nice again. September was cold, almost very cold, and very rainy until the 13<sup>th</sup> and after that, very dry, with no rain until the end of the harvest. October was nice with many sunny days, no rain and cooler nights until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Then the rain started and the weather deteriorated. I remember well, because we finished the harvest just before those rains.

The cool days of August and September allowed the grapes to keep a huge acidity, but also the sunny harvest period gradually brought excellent sugar and phenolic ripeness. We started the harvest on 23rd September and finished the 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

The lighter soils (Herrenweg) were harvested early because of their ability to ripen grapes quickly but also because they flowered very early. Hunawihl and Thann were harvested last. The noble rot, of very nice quality, started to develop early October, mostly on the precocious vineyard first but quickly spread on all the vineyards, but only on Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer. At the exception of the Brand vineyard where we made an SGN, all other Riesling vineyards were harvested extremely healthy. With the Pinot Gris, we feared that we would end up with only late harvest style wines, so just like in 2000; we decided to do healthy selections. Instead of selecting the noble rot to make late harvest wines, we do the opposite and select the healthy grapes to be sure to make dry wines. The remaining grapes were harvested later as VTs or SGNs. Gewurztraminer was the grape which took the longest to ripen. It really needs some warmth and sunshine as it gets closer to harvest time, so in 2008, this only happened towards the middle of October.

All grape varieties in 2008 share a huge acidity and low pH. I insist in saying that some wines have record breaking levels, but mostly in tartaric acid, sign of good ripeness. As the sugar ripeness is very high, it should again produce some exceptional wines, with great ageing potential. Most wines took a longer than usual time to finish fermentation.

The average yield on our estate was 44hl/ha (48 in the AOC vines and 32 in the Grand Crus). All vineyards are farmed with strict bio-dynamic principles.

***2008 should make wines with exceptional ageing potential.***

***Indice:*** level of sweetness on the palate. This note combines the sweetness, acidity, alcohol and overall structure of the wine. It ranges from 1 to 5. **1:** technically dry or tasting dry. **2:** not technically dry, but sweetness not apparent on the palate. Some tasters might find some roundness on the finish. **3:** medium sweetness, especially present when the wine is young and might gradually disappear with the ageing. **4:** Sweet wine **5:** High sweetness, VT in richness without the usual botrytis

## **Pinot Blanc 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 13.7° alc; Residual sweetness: 7.5 g/l; 4.6 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.3; Yields: 80 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010/2015; Average age of the vines: 33 years; Surface: 1.3 ha; Terroir: Oligocene Calcareous and gravelly soil. Indice 1.*

Pinot Blanc! Do not worry, this is our classic Pinot d'Alsace blend of Auxerrois (70%) and Pinot Blanc (30%) originating from both Herrenweg and Rotenberg vineyards, in equal proportion of red calcareous and gravelly soil. The Alsace legislation allows these kind of blends to be labelled either way, so we decided to go for the Pinot Blanc name as it was more explicit to some of our customers. The 2008 vintage was harvested perfectly healthy and with a tremendous acidity, much higher than normal and quite a high ripeness. More than ever, the decision of blending these two different types of vineyards was useful. Usually the Rotenberg brings the acidity and Herrenweg the flavours, but in 2008 it was the Herrenweg that made the acidity of the Rotenberg more enjoyable.

2/2010: quite an amazing gold colour. The nose shows immediate intense fruit flavours and is quite aromatic at this early stage. The palate is quite long and creamy. The small sweetness is perfectly integrated in the wine and the vibrant 2008 acidity makes this wine perfectly balanced. This is serious Pinot Blanc and the closest to the famous 2005 vintage that we have made. It should go perfectly with many fish dishes, poultry and many informal meals.

## **Zind 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 12.6° alc; Residual sweetness: 7.5 g/l; 4.6 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.3; Yields: 59 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010/2018; Average age: 19 years; Surface: 2 ha; Terroir: Muchelkalk calcareous (Jurassic) facing south & east. Indice 1.*

The Zind label was created in 2001 after a lengthy 'discussion' with INAO in order to allow the Chardonnay grape into the AOC Alsace. Unfortunately (or fortunately now?) our request has been refused and we had to label this wine Vin de Table. We lose the word Alsace on the label, but gain quite some freedom in making this wine as we want. Since 2004, as the vines turned 15 years old, we decided to make the Zind only from the Chardonnay (65%) and Auxerrois (35%) from the Clos Windsbuhl vineyard. The 2008 was perhaps harvested at the exact balance that we try to aim between the richness, acidity and residual sweetness. The grapes were healthy and the slow ripening late September/early October made this very easy to achieve in 2008.

2/2010: the Zind 2008 was partially fermented and aged in a large new oak cask (82hl). Unfortunately, we had to change one of our very old foudre and decided to put part of the Zind in the new one. These casks aren't as toasted as smaller barriques and the ration wine/wood is much higher so there is less influence of the oak on the wine. The structure is very clean, showing crisp acidity and a long pure mineral palate. Precise tasters will find the light wood influence mostly on the finish. Perfect in every occasion, mostly with spicy food, fish and light meals...

## **Clos Windsbuhl 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13° alc; Residual sweetness: <2 g/l; 5.4 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.1; Yields: 35 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010/2020; Average age of the vines: 19 years; Terroir: Muchelkalk calcareous (Jurassic) facing south. Indice 1.*

After the success of the 2007 vintage and because the grapes were perfectly healthy in 2008, we decided to produce again a small batch of this pure Chardonnay wine. The calcareous vineyard of the Clos Windsbuhl gives a clean crisp acidity to this grape, which matured for a long time on the vines, enjoying the excellent September and early October weather in Alsace. Like previous vintages of this wine, it is fermented in small used barrels and left on its total lees, without any racking and bottled directly from cask without ever been pumped. Only a very small amount of sulfites was added at bottling time. This wine is as close to natural as can be. It is most probable that the wine will develop sediment on the glass. Decanting is recommended after leaving the bottle in standing position for some time to allow the sediment to collect on the bottom of the glass.

2/2010: this wine shows the potential of such vintage to produce dry, crisp wines with lots of purity. The nose is already quite aromatic but begs for some more time. The palate is really dry, but the acidity is ripe so there is nothing green about this wine. The finish can be still quite strict for most palate, but this is what this grape should be all about in such a vineyard.

## **Muscat Herrenweg de Turckheim 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010, Alcohol: 14.1° alc, Residual sweetness: 11 g/l; 6.3 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.2; Yields: 33 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2023; Average age of the vines: 29 years; Surface: 0.64 ha; Terroir: Gravelly/silt; 75% Muscat d'Alsace, 25% Ottonel. Indice 2.*

A few years ago we started planting more Muscat d'Alsace in the Herrenweg vineyard, from our old vines massal selections. Gradually, the Muscat Ottonel is now disappearing from our vineyards, as we believe that this grape variety is less and less accustomed to warmer and more precocious climate conditions. Herrenweg is located in a warm and precocious area in Turckheim. The gravelly soil drains the rain water very easily, which can sometimes accentuate the drought problems. Muscat d'Alsace (or Petit Grains) is later ripening, needs less water and most of all, is capable to retain more acids in the fruits, and this shows in the 2008! This vineyard was affected by bad weather during flowering, which caused some berries to drop. It reduced the yields and increased the maturity of this wine significantly. Fermentation as hectic, over 12 months, but eventually went far.

2/2010: the nose exhibit very profound ripe Muscat aromatics. This is not the most violent Muscat made on the estate, but probably one that suggest fabulous ripeness. The palate is rich, but before alcohol or sweetness can develop, the acidity is right there to balance everything. Very long finish and intense aromas. This wine will go very well with spicy, grilled food as well as aperitif, as the sweetness is well hidden in this wine. Quite an amazing wine!

## Muscat Goldert 2008

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alc: 13.7 ° alc; RS: 2.7 g/l; 4.7 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.3; Yields: 39 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2023+; Average age of the vines: 21 years; Surface: 0.36 ha; Terroir: Oolitic calcareous, facing East, gentle slope. 90 % Muscat d'Alsace, 10 % Ottonel. Indice 1*

The Goldert Grand Cru vineyard has always enjoyed a great reputation for its Muscat grape, especially the traditional Muscat d'Alsace, more difficult to ripe properly, but capable to produce wines with great structure and ageing potential. In order to show the soil characteristics, the Muscat grape has to be harvested quite ripe, so the varietal flavours are less intensely perfumed. This means that very often, Muscat wines can be quite sweet or off dry. The Goldert 2008 was harvested very ripe, with great acidity and very healthy grapes. The fermentation never stopped, despite the fact that it lasted over 12 months, and allowed the wine to finish dry. This is a fantastic combination, as this wine really shows the vineyard character at its best.

2/2010: there is no doubt that this is made from Muscat grape on the nose, as all the grapey/fruity aromatics are there, but nicely tempered by the solid influence of the calcareous rock that add a strong sense of minerality on the nose. The palate is vibrant, fully dry and very long. It is clearly a wine that will last and age beautifully but it is also a wine that will allow fantastic food pairings, mostly with fish courses and sea food in a fusion style presentation.

## Riesling 2008

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 12.5° alc; Residual sweetness: 6 g/l; 5.3 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.1; Yields: 85 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2018; Average age of the vines: 29 years; Surface: 1.2ha, Terroir: gravely/silt on valley floor and calcareous hillsides; Indice 1*

September 2007 was a very dry month, with nice temperatures but cool nights. The Riesling grape in general on our estate ripened ideally for a long time, but never went into over ripeness. Perfect health, vibrant acidity and good phenolic ripeness mean that the Rieslings are dry, nervous, very mineral and racy in 2008. This wine mostly originates from gravely soils from the Herrenweg vineyard located in the warm village of Turckheim, but we also added some richer limestone vineyards to complete the cask. This explains why it opens quickly in its youth, showing attractive fruity flavours, but if kept for a few years, it will also develop serious minerality. Our aim was to be able to harvest an elegant potentially dry Riesling. Not having any noble rot developing was a serious help, as the richness didn't skyrocket as time passed. The fermentation was quite lazy, which explains the later bottling date, but eventually the yeast managed to transform most of the sweetness.

11/2008: still on its fine lees, but already showing classic vibrant Riesling aromas, full of fresh flowers, wet stones and a hint of minerals. The palate is elegant, harmonious, feels completely dry and finished on a refreshing acidity. Exactly what this Riesling should be!

2/2010: now bottled, this wine has opened up towards more citrus fruit and delicate aromatics. Of course, the long lees contact still impact this wine that will gradually open up towards summer. The palate shows an easy crisp character that just begs for some light fish, salad courses...

## Riesling Terroir d'Alsace 2008

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 12.8° alc; Residual sweetness: 4 g/l; 5.3 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.0; Yields: 50 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2023; Average age of the vines: 25 years; Surface: 0.75 ha; Terroir: gravely soil/silt; granite and marl; Indice 1*

A new label for a new wine? Yes and no... In fact this wine is made from the grapes that usually produced our classic Riesling Turckheim (part granite from young vines Brand and marl gravely soil just beneath it). In fact, we wanted to produce a wine that would be easy to understand for our customer eating out in restaurants. I guess everyone ordering a bottle of classic Riesling expect a nice dry wine that shows the potential of our area and which is food friendly. This is what we wanted to show in this wine behind a simple easy to understand wine label. If you read these comments, you are certainly more than an amateur of Alsace wines, but many people do not order Alsace Riesling on a wine list because they don't know what to expect. Here it is very clear.

So, of course, this wine will ONLY be available in restaurant and in France to start with.

2/2010: the ripeness level, absence of botrytis, a steady fermentation all helped to produce this classic dry style Riesling. The granitic dominance show fruity Riesling character. The palate has good balance between the crisp 2008 style and the ripeness, with excellent savoury acidity and a medium length. The finish is vivacious, but not aggressive, as the long lees contact helped to soften the acidity.

## Riesling Turckheim 2008 Lot 14T

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 13.0° alc; Residual sweetness: 19 g/l; 6.6 g/l H2SO4, pH: 2.9; Yields: 45 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2023; Average age of the vines: 25 years; Surface: 0.2 ha; Terroir: gravely soil/silt; granite and marl; Indice 2.*

Two batches of Riesling Turckheim! They should have been mixed together, but two different casks fermented very differently. This very small cask (only 100cs made) fermented slightly quicker and kept a very high acidity because, surprisingly, it didn't go through malo-lactic fermentation. The grapes originate from our warm granitic Brand vineyard, and most vintages end up in our Brand wine. I am not sure to know exactly why we didn't include it in our Brand wine. The most plausible is that I was so impressed by the oldest vines in the Brand, that I didn't want to blend them together. The oldest vines also had significant botrytis, while these grapes were harvested very healthy.

2/2010: not doubt on the nose about the origin of the grapes: very fruity and aromatic, showing early intense aromatics that can only come from granitic soils. The palate is intense, but the sweetness, that looks important, is in fact very well hidden behind the huge acidity. The finish is very crisp and lively.

## **Riesling Turckheim 2008 Lot 14B**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 13.1° alc; Residual sweetness: 22 g/l; 4.5 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.1; Yields: 45 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2023; Average age of the vines: 25 years; Surface: 0.9 ha; Terroir: gravely soil/silt; granite and marl; Indice 3*

This second batch of Riesling Turckheim shares the same origin as lot 14T: granitic precocious soils from the Brand vineyard in Turckheim. The growing conditions of 2008 allowed a higher ripeness in this area that was supported with a slight presence of noble rot. It affected the speed of fermentation (very slow) and also the amount of residual sweetness which is slightly higher. 2008 is a very healthy vintage for Riesling, except here in Brand. Some different conditions allowed for some noble rot development. The weather was exceptionally good late September and most of October, so such evolutions are normal in a warm area like Turckheim.

2/2010: the nose is incredibly open and shows intense ripe white fruit character. The influence of noble rot isn't very obvious on the nose, but it must certainly participate and add some honeyed sweeter aromas. The palate is very unctuous, round, without being obviously sweet. Indice 3 might be justified for some dry wine fanatics, but some other people would argue and perhaps only rate this wine 2, because it finishes very clean on the palate. Certainly, the aromatic style of this wine must increase the roundness sensation.

## **Riesling Gueberschwyr 2008**

*Bottling: 9/2008; Alcohol: 12.7 °alc; Residual sweetness: 9.2 g/l; 4.5 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.0; Yields: 47 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period 2012-2020; Average age of vines: 34 years; Surface: .1.05 ha; Terroir: Limestone/calcareous/siliceous, facing East and South. Gentle slope; Indice 1*

Gueberschwyr is a village located 10km south of Colmar. It enjoys a slightly cooler and less precocious climate and most of the vineyards are located on marl limestone soils. The better vineyards of the village are on the Grand Cru Goldert, where Gewurztraminer and Muscat are king, and the surrounding vineyards that enjoy cooler growing condition, can produce typical crisp mineral style Riesling wines. This grape took some time to ripen in 2008 and eventually was harvested very healthy with a huge acidity and low pH. A lower pH can increase the acid taste a lot on the palate. A 3.0 pH wine will taste much crisper than a 3.5 pH wine that has the same acidity (sorry, that's chemistry...), and usually, most of our Riesling wines are between 3.3 and 3.6, while most of the 2008s are below 3.2! The fermentation of this wine was excruciatingly slow and many 2009 had finished fermenting when we could rack this wine!

2/2010: this is one of the 2008 Riesling that show strong mineral stony aromatics on the nose, almost like wet stone. The palate is zesty and sharp, but eventually develops into a great richness with a long finish. I could not believe the analysis that showed 9g/l RS and that is why I keep the indice 1 rating. The finish is clean crisp Riesling that begs for a few more years of ageing...

## **Riesling Herrenweg de Turckheim 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 13°alc; Residual sweetness: 6.8 g/l; 5.7 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.0 Yields: 59 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2026; Average age of the vines: 33 years; Surface: 1.9 ha; Terroir: gravely soil/silt; Indice 1*

The gravely soils of Herrenweg in Turckheim often perform better when summer is cooler and when the weather isn't too dry. This is exactly what happened in 2008. *Véraison* (change of colour) was finished under cool conditions and then only the temperatures gradually became warmer. The grapes were able to ripen perfectly while retaining fabulous acidity and staying very healthy. The Herrenweg vineyard, whatever the grape variety, was harvested quite early and this also explains the higher than usual acid levels of the wines from this area, enforced by medium size crops. Like most other Riesling in 2008, the Herrenweg took 12 months to finish fermentation to a relatively low sugar level.

2/2010: the nose shows early expression of flowers and hints of minerals. This is quite a serious Herrenweg and slightly less extravagant than usual. The bio-dynamic farming must certainly allow more minerality in the wines, especially in an area which tends to produce more varietal style wines. The palate is firm, showing great acidity, very ripe, with good dry structure on the finish. It will be showing very well soon, but of course it will also develop beautifully over the next few years.

## **Riesling Clos Häuserer 2008**

*Bottling: 2/2010; Alcohol: 12.8 ° alc; Residual sweetness: 7.3 g/l; 5.3 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.1, Yields: 54 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2013-2028+; Vineyard planted in 1973; Surface: 1.2 ha; Terroir: Calcareous Marl from the Oligocene period. Very gentle slope. Indice 1*

The Clos Hauserer is nestled at the bottom of the Hengst, just under the limit of the GC vineyard. If both vineyards have the same Oligocene calcareous mother rock, the Clos Hauserer soil contains more marl. Being almost flat, it also benefits from less sun intensity, which increases the time required by the grapes to ripen properly. The rich heavy marl can sometimes generate more vigorous growth, especially on young vines, but this vineyard has now reached a balance due to its age. If noble rot can be avoided, it is relatively easy to harvest the grapes healthy and at a level of ripeness than can guarantee a steady fermentation until most of the sugars are transformed. It is also a vineyard that has the potential to keep good acidity and makes wines with a long ageing potential. The 2008 finished to ferment in October 2009.

2/2010: the nose is at the same time intense but also incredibly refrained. It has lots of minerals, wet stones and underlying citrus fruits. This the way Riesling tastes on a great calcareous soil! The palate is racy, crisp, very vivacious and long. Not intensely aromatic, it gives the sensation of discreet power and length. The palate provokes salivation while finishing dry.

## Riesling Heimbourg 2008

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.4° alc; Residual sweetness: 14.4 g/l; 5.7 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.1 Yields: 41 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2022; Average age of the vines: 14 years; Surface: 1.06 ha; Terroir: Oligocene calcareous, facing south, southwest, steep slope. Indice 2*

Vintage after vintages this vineyard shows its potential to produce intense rich style of Riesling. It is rarely completely dry, but has enough acidity and structure so it would last long enough to digest its power and hide behind a very aromatic intense style of wine. The Riesling is planted on the steepest part of the Heimbourg, the one which is exposed to the south to south-west. Heimbourg is only about 9ha big, but there are 3 distinctive parts and each one of them is better expressed with a different grape variety. The marl calcareous soil is capable to retain lots of structure in the grapes. The sun-drenched exposition and the precocious Turckheim climate allow for lots of ripeness and more sugar content in the grapes. Heimbourg and Brand are very often the sweetest Riesling wines on the estate. This was actually the fastest to ferment and therefore bottled already in September 2009.

2/2010: intense fruity Riesling nose, partially balanced with some leaner limestone influence. It already has 6 months in the bottles, so is clearly ahead of the pack in its aromatic expression, which will continue to grow in the future. The palate is generous but doesn't feel rich, because Heimbourg always has great acidity. The sweetness level could almost justify an indice 3 rating, but not with such clean crisp acidity on the finish. The calcareous vineyard really comes alive on the finish as the wine narrows to a mineral bundle.

## Riesling Clos Windsbuhl 2008

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 12.65° alc; Residual sweetness: 9 g/l; 5.2 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.0; Yields: 45 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2014-2030+; Average age of the vines: 33 years; Surface: 0.9 ha; Terroir: Muchelkalk calcareous (Jurassic), facing southeast, medium/steep slope. Indice 1.*

The Clos Windsbuhl enjoys late ripening climatic conditions, enhanced by the fact that it is located on a rocky calcareous soil at higher altitude near the neighbouring forest. Despite the south to east steep facing, it took until the middle of October to perfectly ripen these healthy grapes. Windsbuhl has this unique capacity to keep the grapes beautifully healthy until quite late, doesn't lose its acidity through long maturation, allowing the soil character to fully develop into the wine. The 2008 had a very similar structure than the 2007, but fermentation was much slower, probably due to a higher acidity, and the wine kept a hard to notice slightly higher sweetness. Just like Rangen, this wine was never racked and spent 18 months on its fermenting lees.

2/2010: the nose shows racy minerals and citrus fruit; I know that minerals do not smell, but there is an obvious sense of rocks and soil in this wine. Even the ripe acidity is noticeable on the nose! The palate is delicate, long and intense, showing great ripe acidity on the finish. The small residual sweetness is already digested by the wine. This is for long ageing, please wait!

## Riesling Rangen de Thann Clos-Saint-Urbain 2008

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 13° alc; Residual sweetness: 4 g/l; 4.2 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.2; Yields: 30 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2015-2033+; Average age of the vines: 46 years; Surface: 2.1 ha; Terroir: Sedimentary volcanic rocks, facing south, very steep slope. Indice 1*

The Rangen Grand Cru is located at the south end of Alsace, higher in altitude (350m to 450m) and enjoys a cooler late ripening climate. The soil is really the key to understand this vineyard. Made of sedimentary volcanic material, it is very rich in minerals, can produce small amounts of high quality clay, is poor in organic matter and covered with large chunks of irregular dark coloured rocks, on an ultra steep (100%) south facing hillside. The Clos Saint Urbain is a 5.5ha vineyard that my father Leonard regrouped around the small St Urbain chapel, located in the part of the Rangen that is directly above the small river Thur. Cultivating this vineyard is tough, but the results are worth it. No other vineyard is capable of influencing the personality of wine like the Rangen. In 2008, the grapes managed to ripen to perfection and stayed very healthy, despite the late harvest. The wine fermented very slowly, but like often with Rangen, right to the end. It spent also its 18 months in foudre on the fermenting lees. (Never racked!).

2/2010: if I would say that this wine had powdered volcanic rocks macerating in the cask, I am sure everybody would believe me after nosing this wine. There are so much minerals, flint stone aromas but also spices and smoky flavours on the nose. The palate is dry, intense, and very long and finishes on a salty iodine complex mouth. It appears even more mineral than the 2007, but I am happy to bet that this wine will be just as fruity and explosive in a year or two. Definitely one of my 'coup de Coeur' in 2008.

## Riesling Brand 2008

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 13.7° alc; Residual sweetness: 10 g/l; 4.8 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.1 Yields: 32 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2015-2032+; Average age of vines: 58 years; Surface: 0.7 ha; Terroir: Biotite granite, facing south. Steep slope. Indice 1.*

This wine is made from the same piece of vineyard that produced our Vieilles Vignes Brand 2007. We didn't want to call them VV in 2008 just because it is a much drier style of wine. These vines are located on the Schneckelsbourg part of the Brand, the one that has some marl and limestone deep under the granite rock. This vineyard often develops noble rot, and in 2008, there was enough of it to justify making an SGN with them. The healthy grapes that remained after the selection produced this wine. High ripeness, but steady slow fermentation, so residual sugars aren't that high.

2/2010: the nose is very intense, showing, or more, radiating, powerful rich fruity aromatics. This is not simple varietal type flavours, but typical Brand ripe fruit character. The slight presence of some noble rot that remained after the selection also adds some honey rich characteristics on the nose. The palate is quite generous and very elegant, with a forceful ripe acidity on the finish. It is a very long lasting wine on the palate. The sweetness is only slightly palatable and already into balance. Please keep!

## **Pinot-Gris 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 15.8° alc; Residual sweetness: 12 g/l; 4.2 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.5 Yields: 59 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2021+; Average age of the vines: 17 years; Surface: 1.4 ha; Terroir: gravely soil on valley floor. Indice 2*

This wine is made mostly from all our grapes from the Herrenweg vineyard blended with a few of our other vineyards in order to top up the cask. Like the other grape varieties coming from this gravely soil, Herrenweg did very well in 2008. The climate allowed great ripening while also helped to retain acidity levels usually only seen on our better calcareous vineyards. We expected this wine to ferment well, but it kept a huge sweetness for a very long time, to our despair! During the 2009 fermentations, we injected in the Pinot Gris cask the fermenting gases (made of CO<sub>2</sub> and yeasts) from the neighbouring cask that was fermenting at rocket speed. The result was quite amazing, it woke up this wine and it went through the fermentation process in a few weeks!

2/2010: the colour shows the extra ripeness: beautiful gold. The nose is powerful and intense, with lots of nutty flavours, cocoa (slight noble rot) and ripe white fruits (peach, pears). The palate feels much drier than the nose or the analysis would suggest. It is big and bold, but with very firm acidity. The wine eventually develops interesting stony flavours. This is a very complex 'varietal' wine! It will go perfectly with most poultry dishes, veal, and of course many Asian style dishes.

## **Pinot-Gris Vieilles Vignes 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 12.85° alc; Residual sweetness: 87 g/l; 4.7 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.5 Yields: 27 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2028; Average age of the vines: 63 years; Surface: 0.5 ha; Terroir: gravely soil on valley floor. Indice 5*

Pinot Gris as a grape variety can mutate very easily. It is perhaps, with Pinot Noir, the grape variety that was the most transformed in time to obtain plants that are more vigorous, fertile and high yielding. Unfortunately! This is why we keep these old vines, like a treasure, to source our massal selections of Pinot Gris plants that only have small clusters and one cluster per shoots. These very old vines were planted by Emile Zind (my grand father) in two different vineyards neighbouring the Herrenweg and enjoy similar growing conditions (gravely soils and precocious climate). We usually do not allow this type of vineyard to go too far in the development of noble rot, except for a few older vines, because when it happens, it makes delicious, well balanced wines like this 2008 vintage. Botrytis was important and the wine fermented like a late harvest.

2/2010: huge ripe fruit, quince jelly, apricot nose, playing with some more honeyed and waxy aromas. This wine shows so much ripe Pinot Gris character. The palate is very unctuous, round and has a sweetness level comparable to a VT. It actually is a very similar wine to the 2007. The finish is luscious with good acidity and big fruity flavours (quince jelly, marmalade). It already shows a lot of its potential, but has the stamina to age also very well.

## **Pinot-Gris Rotenberg 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 14.2° alc; Residual sweetness: 6g/l; 4.4 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.4, Yields: 26 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2023+; Average age of vines: 27 years; Surface: 1.2 ha; Terroir: Oligocene calcareous. West to Northwest facing. Strong slope. Indice 1*

I believe that 2008 had the perfect growing season that suited this grape variety the best. Very often in big vintages (very warm, precocious years), Pinot Gris can often ripen too quickly and develop botrytis at such a speed that we are almost obliged to produce late harvest style wines, especially in the Rotenberg which enjoys perfect late ripening conditions. In 2008, the noble rot was there, but it appeared gently, slowly and late, when the grapes were fully ripe. This gave the time to do selections. Not the usual ones, because in 2008 we did 'positive' selections: we first harvested the healthy clusters in order to make drier type wines, and left the cluster with botrytis for later harvest. So this wine is made from one of these healthy cluster selections. The aim was to obtain good ripeness, without all the elements that would push this wine into high sweetness, like the Pinot Gris Vieilles Vignes for example. The fermentation was slow (12 months) but very consistent.

2/2010: I am always apprehensive of drier style Pinot Gris as they can be quite austere in their youth. This isn't the case here. The nose shows beautiful ripe fruit, but without noble rot, there is also a strong mineral feel. The wine is not giving everything today which adds complexity. The palate tastes quite dry, but not lean. There is richness and length, with a clean salivating finish due to the beautiful acidity. It is actually quite rare to be able to produce this style of Pinot Gris.

## **Pinot-Gris Heimbουργ 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 14.3° alc; Residual sweetness: 8.2 g/l; 4.1 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.2 Yields: 35 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2013-2023+; Average age of the vines: 23 years; Surface: 1.6ha. Terroir: marl-calcareous, facing west. Indice 2*

The Heimbουργ and Rotenberg vineyards enjoy similar growing conditions. The west facing higher altitude offers a cooler and late ripening climate. The rocky aggressive but poor soil doesn't allow for a very vigorous growth. Both vineyards have a tendency to develop noble rot, but in 2008 it happened slowly, and we were able to select the healthy clusters in order to make this drier style wine. The perfect health condition, great acidity, small yields and not too much sugar content helped us to produce elegant drier style Pinot Gris. We claim ourselves to be 'non interventionist' in winemaking (horrible word), which is true, but there are some little details that can influence the direction of the wine. One of them is how the must (juice that runs out of the press) is sedimented and racked. The higher the botrytis or rot, the more severe we should be. The healthier the grapes and the more we want the wines to ferment, the more we will leave fine sediments so the yeasts will have more natural nutrients.

2/2010: profound ripe but elegant aromas. It develops classic honeyed and nutty flavours, still quite restraint, with no sweetness at all on the nose. Slightly less crisp than the Rotenberg, the Heimbουργ is a real star in 2008 and shows its potential. The palate is dry, velvety with a long finish. There is perhaps a little more richness there, hence the indice 2 rating, but will go to 1 soon.

## **Pinot-Gris Clos Windsbuhl 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.3° alc; Residual sweetness: 37 g/l; 4.5 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.5, Yields: 35 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2014-2033+; Average age of the vines: 31 years; Surface: 2.2 ha; Terroir: Muchelkalk calcareous, south/southeast facing. Medium slope. Indice 4.*

The Pinot Gris takes the biggest share of this 6ha Clos located in the heights of Hunawihl. The vines grow on a poor old calcareous soil that contains maritime deposits, sea shells... and lots of magnesium. The soil is quite thin, which helps drainage and compensate the altitude and the cooler location as it warms up quicker. It is the latest ripening vineyard we have, but it turns out to be a great advantage, as the grapes take longer to achieve full ripeness and therefore also pack up more of the soil character in the grapes. It is also in this vineyard that we were able to witness the effect of bio-dynamic cultivation as we were observing the progression of life in the soil as micro-organisms would go deeper every year and transform more and more organic material into stable humus, which is how a good soil should behave. (Of course herbicides and heavy machines would not allow this). Just like some other Pinot Gris in 2008, we selected the healthy grapes from the oldest vines in order to produce this wine. The younger vines are usually sold as part of the Calcaire bottling, but in 2008 they were incorporated in the varietal Pinot Gris. The fermentation was very slow, but the yeast could not transform all the sugars.

2/2010: This was the only Pinot Gris bottled in September 2009. It shows now elegant refined nutty aromas, almonds and a slight toast in a very pure expression. Despite the higher sweetness, the palate is very delicate and structured by a ripe acidity which leaves the finish very clean on the palate. Perhaps Indice 4 is over estimated and it will gradually go to an indice 3 feel quickly. This wine will age very well.

## **Pinot-Gris Rangen de Thann Clos-Saint-Urbain 2008**

*Bottling date: 2/2010; Alcohol: 12.55° alc; Residual sweetness: 46 g/l; 5.7 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.0; Yields: 21 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2016-2035+; Average age of the vines: 39 years; Surface: 2.9 ha; Terroir: Sedimentary volcanic rocks. South facing, very steep slope. Indice 5*

Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer often behave the same way in the Rangen, and very differently to the Riesling. In 2008, the volcanic rocky soil of the Rangen produced some very high acid Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer and allowed some noble rot to develop, especially in the bottom part of the Clos, the nearest to the river and its humidity influence. The SGN was made from a classic selection, and the rest of the grapes produced this wine. The fermentation is usually fast in the Rangen wines, but in 2008 it took some time (6 months) and was very lazy, keeping a higher amount of sweetness, certainly because of the very high acidity in the grapes. 2008 was a very balanced vintage in the Rangen, allowing the soils to be green in summer because there was enough water and with less stress and a nice late season, the grapes retained a lot of amazing acid structure.

2/2010: the nose burst of smoky and flinty flavours in a very tight almost austere style. It is obvious that the vineyard dominates the wine and time is needed to allow all the potential of the wine to come out. The palate is tight, crisp in a very elegant structure. Today, this wine is constructed on a low alcohol, delicate structure and high acidity balance. Maybe the indice 5 is exaggerated because the sweetness is in fact discreet. This is a very different Rangen to the previous vintages.

## **Gewurztraminer Gueberschwihr 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.9° alc; Residual sweetness: 6 g/l; .5.1 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.3; Yields: 54 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2010-2020; Average age of vines: 25 years; Surface: 0.2 ha; Terroir: calcareous limestone/silicium; Indice 1*

This is our only little vineyard (only 100cs produced every year) of Gewurztraminer in Gueberschwihr which is not located in the Grand Cru Goldert. The soil is made of a blend of marl, limestone and some sandstone that was eroded from the hills above and got mixed up. What differentiates this area to the neighbouring GC vineyard is the fact that we do not have much high quality clay here. (High quality clay is clay with a high exchange ratio and high capacity to fix minerals and therefore link with the humus in the soil). So less minerality and complexity in the wines, but, however, it has an interesting location for producing drier more elegant style Gewurztraminer because of a later ripening climate and good acidity.

2/2010: this wine shows elegant discreet flowers, acacia honey and a nice delicate mineral nose. This is not the huge big Gewurz style and would perhaps please more the Riesling lovers. The palate tastes almost crisp with a medium power. There is very little sweetness and tannins, so the palate has a dry velvety feel. The aromas eventually wake up on the finish. This is a very easy Gewurztraminer to use with food...

## **Gewurztraminer 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 14.2° alc; Residual sweetness: 41 g/l; 4.9 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.5 Yields: 65 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2011-2020; Average age of the vines: 30 years; Terroir: gravely soil on valley floor, marl limestone; Indice 3.*

There was no Turckheim produced in 2008, so this Gewurztraminer is mostly made from the gravely Herrenweg vineyard and we added a few grapes from other calcareous vineyards to complete the cask, just as we did for the Pinot Gris. Gewurztraminer enjoyed perfect ripening conditions in 2008: cool summer with enough water, progressively warmer September and October and dry late season. The grapes were harvested very ripe, with a little sparkle of noble rot and superb acidity levels. I thought we had reached heights in 2007, but the 2008s are even higher! All Gewurztraminer fermented quite quickly, keeping quite a lot of sweetness that was often necessary to balance the power and acidity of the wines. This is potentially our best varietal Gewurztraminer ever made.

2/2010: intense litchi, rose and herb spices! This is classic Gewurztraminer. The nose is not yet showing everything and it should increase its aromatic power in the next few years. The palate feels at first elegant, almost delicate because the acidity is there to give a strict structure. Some time on the palate and the wine will eventually reveal its richness and power.

## **Gewurztraminer Wintzenheim 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.4° alc; Residual sweetness: 70 g/l; 4.5 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.6; Yields: 54 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2025+; Average age of the vines: 51 years; Surface: 2.1 ha; Terroir: gravely soil and calcareous marls; Indice 5*

This is our usual blend of very old vines from the gravely valley floor and two of our Hengst vineyards that we declassify almost every vintage. The reunion of calcareous soil and gravely soil brings an interesting balance to the wine. Perhaps it was less necessary in 2008 as this grape variety had excellent acid levels, but usually the calcareous soil adds structure and aging potential to the blend. Both vineyard developed some noble rot and were harvest very ripe. Medium length fermentation (6 months) left an important residual sweetness, usually only seen on late harvest wines.

2/2010: very expressive nose of litchi, roses, and exotic fruit nicely balanced with interesting spices and obvious noble rot influence. Acidity doesn't smell, but it is possible to associate the nose flavours to acidity and minerality, even at this village level. The palate is round with an elegant lift and impressive length. Already showing a lot of character at this early stage, it will continue to develop for many years.

## **Gewurztraminer Herrenweg de Turckheim 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 14.1° alc; Residual sweetness: 79 g/l; 4.7 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.6; Yields: 37 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2028; Average age of the vines: 55 years; Surface: 2,6 ha; Terroir: gravely soil on valley floor; Indice 5*

Most of the Herrenweg Gewurztraminer was planted by my father or grand father between the late 40s to the early 70s. Anything planted after that date is usually declassified in our varietal wine. Gewurztraminer finds the best growing conditions in traditional marl calcareous soil, but the Herrenweg gravely soil, associated to a precocious climate, has always allowed an intense aromatic expression of this grape. The precocity of the vineyard is explained by the capacity of gravely soil to drain water and warm up quickly after rains, bringing lots of heat to the roots and therefore pushing the grapes to ripen early. When summer isn't too dry and hot, this vineyard has the capacity to produce wines with huge aromatic potential and nice structure. The vines developed significant noble rot in 2008, which explains the richness of this wine, structured like a late harvest wine.

2/2010: the nose shows the classic 2008 features: lots of flowers, intense with noble rot influence that adds spices, leathery and complexity. The palate is rich, almost decadent, very long, and unusual for Herrenweg, but also superbly balanced by a firm acidity.

## **Gewurztraminer Herrenweg de Turckheim Vieilles Vignes 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 14.3° alc; Residual sweetness: 76 g/l; 5.1 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.5; Yields: 29 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2013-2033; Average age of the vines: 62 years; Surface: 0.8 ha; Terroir: gravely soil on valley floor; Indice 5*

This wine comes from some of our oldest vineyards we have in the Herrenweg. They are usually included in our classic Herrenweg Gewurztraminer, but in 2008 they were carrying a little less crop and we ended up separating them in another cask. If the numbers would say that they are similar wines, the taste actually reveals more character and complexity. There was about 20% noble rot on the grapes and despite a normal harvest without any cluster selection; they reached very high ripeness level. It isn't our intention to produce Herrenweg wines with overly late harvest character unless nature dictates this style.

2/2010: still very floral and aromatic, but these old vines also show more spicy complex character on the nose, more restrained style and underlying power. Clearly, this wine has more to show in the future. The palate is big and powerful with a very long finish. This wine could be described as an old style Gewurztraminer and hard to believe that it doesn't come from a top hillside.

## **Gewurztraminer Heimbourg 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.8° alc; Residual sweetness: 57 g/l; 3.9 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.6; Yields: 38 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2028+; Average age of vines: planted in 1983; Surface: 1 ha; Terroir: Oligocene calcareous, facing west, severe slope. Indice 4*

As much as the valley floor vineyards allowed early ripening and fast noble rot development, the Gewurztraminer located on hillsides were actually slower to develop botrytis. The Heimbourg vineyard faces both south and west, but all the Gewurztraminer is planted on the west side at the lower part of the steep slope. The grapes take long to reach full ripeness and stay healthier much longer. It really took all the sunshine of late September and most of October to allow these grape full skin ripeness, while retaining great structure. Heimbourg produces a subtle aromatic style of wine that never is the most powerful but can be extremely seductive in its youth. The rich calcareous soil allows for spicy flavours as the wines gets older. Later harvest, under some colder weather, also explains a slower fermentation and therefore more lees contact.

2/2010: the nose shows immediately the calcareous influence: very elegant and less obvious style. The rose aroma seems more distinguished and subtle. The palate shows longer ripening because the acidity feels less aggressive and the finish is velvety. The sweetness is welcomed in this style of wine, without overpowering the structure. The Heimbourg vineyard was in great shape in 2008 and produced some long lasting elegant wines.

## **Gewurztraminer Goldert 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.6° alc; Residual sweetness: 48 g/l; 3.9 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.7; Yields: 39 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2025+; Average age/vines: 25 years; Surface: 0.6 ha; Terroir: Oolitic calcareous facing East. Gentle slope. Indice 4.*

The Goldert Grand Cru is located on the discreet East facing hillside on the north of the village of Guebenschwihr. In the past, growers used to say that you should see the old Roman church tower from the best part of the vineyard. The quality of the marl calcareous mother is reason why this vineyard is capable to produce regularly high quality aromatic wines. It gives the structure and elevates the aromatic Gewurztraminer to more complex aromatics. In 2008, the grapes started to develop some noble rot, not enough to justify stricter selections, but it did influence the richness of the wine. Of all the wines made in Alsace, Gewurztraminer is actually quite unique and perhaps one the most difficult to make. It cannot stand high yields and can turn vulgar is harvested too early. A longer ripening period may lower a little the acidity level, but guarantees more subtle flavours. The fermentation of this later picked Gewurz was lazy and stopped with some well integrated residual sweetness.

2/2010: on the first tasting notes I did of this wine, I underlined the word 'roses' three times! It is true that the Goldert vineyard is perhaps one of the most aromatic Gewurztraminer amongst the calcareous vineyard family. The 2008 shows intense floral qualities, not vulgar or perfumed, but just elegant and persisting. The palate has this structure that makes the sweetness light and pleasurable. The big structure is well hidden behind a silky aromatic wine.

## **Gewurztraminer Hengst 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alc: 14.2° alc; Residual sweetness: 47 g/l; 4.1 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.6; Yields: 28 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2013-2033+; Average age of the vines: 57 years; Surface: 1.42 ha; Terroir: Marl-Oligocene calcareous. South-south-east facing, medium to strong slope. Indice 4.*

Every year these old vines get a year older and every year we find more excuses not to add the vineyards planted in the 70s and 80s. They are located in the middle of the Grand Cru vineyard, facing south east and enjoying a very dry and warm microclimate. The character of the Hengst actually comes more from the exceptional marl calcareous soil than the climate. It allows the Gewurztraminer grape to ripen slowly, taking its time to fully mature the tough skins. Gewurztraminer is probably the grape variety that has the most problems to change colour and ripen these aggressive skin tannins. We made our first SGN in this vineyard in 2007 and thought that it would never happen again before long. However, the noble rot developed beautifully in this vineyard again in 2008 and because we had enough time and good weather forecast ahead of us, we decided to produce again an SGN Hengst in 2008. This wine is then made from the healthy clusters. Fermentation was slightly faster which suits more the wilder character of Hengst.

2/2010: Hengst is never our most flamboyant Gewurztraminer. On the opposite, it shows more leathery, spicy and mineral flavours that take a long time to open up. Just like the Clos Hauserer in Riesling, it benefits from some air contact to show all its potential. The palate is firmer, shows less the sweetness but feels more powerful and big. Even the finish has more salty flavours.

## **Gewurztraminer Clos Windsbuhl 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 12.8° alc; Residual sweetness: 56g/l; 3.4 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.7; Yields: 35 hl/ha; Optimum drinking: 2015-2033+; Average age: 38 years; Surface: 0.9 ha; Terroir: Muchelkalk calcareous, southeast facing. Medium slope. Indice 4.*

Gewurztraminer was perhaps the less obvious choice of grape in this vineyard and if previous owners didn't plant any, we would have probably not tried it ourselves. This would have been a serious mistake! The higher altitude and much cooler climate of the Windsbuhl seems prohibitive to the cultivation of Gewurztraminer, which enjoys some more heat and sunshine later in the season. The secret is certainly to wait until the ripening process is completed, and of course, work with the right massal selections. (Unfortunately most vines planted with clones in the 80s had to be pulled out). The aromatic expression and balance of the wine is completely different from the PG or Riesling from the same vineyard, but the influence of the Windsbuhl is the same: there is always a great delicacy and elegance in the Windsbuhl wine, which cannot just be explained by numbers. The 2008 shows a little influence of noble rot which associated to the fact that it was harvested late explains the slower fermentation and higher sweetness. 2/2010: there is no doubt that this is Windsbuhl on the nose. There are lots of delicate floral aromas dancing on the nose. The palate seems less powerful (lower alcohol) than other heavier calcareous soils but it doesn't take away the fact that this wine has a very long lasting and refreshing presence on the palate which eventually opens to exotic fruity aromas.

## **Gewurztraminer Rangen de Thann Clos-Saint-Urbain 2008**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 12° alc; Residual sweetness: 64 g/l; 6.1 g/l H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, pH: 3.5; Yields: 27 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2016-2033+; Average age of the vines: 45 years; Surface: 0.5 ha; Terroir: Sedimentary volcanic rocks. South facing, very steep slope; Indice 4*

The Gewurztraminer takes the smallest share of the Clos Saint Urbain: only 0.5ha, all located the nearest possible to the river to benefit from its influence on the climate (sun reflection, humidity in Autumn, less wind) and the fact that on the bottom part of the vineyard the volcanic soil is slightly richer with more finer elements and clay deep into the cracks of the volcanic mother rock. Again, just like Windsbuhl, this is not an obvious choice in this vineyard, but at the right age and with low yielding massal selection, it proves that some vineyard are capable to dominate so much this aromatic grape variety that it completely loses its varietal expression. In 2008, there was some beautiful botrytis development, not enough to justify the work of a specific selection, but enough to influence the final structure of the wine and its slow fermentation kinetic.

2/2010: the nose shouts Rangen with its smoky/flinty combination. It is almost hard to guess the grape on the nose; however, the palate reveals the luscious Gewurztraminer profile with more sweetness and floral notes. There is a huge acidity that firms up the palate and balances the more important sweetness. This is a rare balance for Rangen: lowest alcohol and highest acidity!

### **Pinot-Gris Clos Jebstal 2008 Vendange Tardive**

*Bottling date 9/2010; Alcohol: 12.8° alc; Residual sweetness: 74 g/l; 5.8 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.3; Yields: 35 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2016-2033+; Average age of the vines: 25 years; Surface: 1.3 ha; Terroir: Grey marls and gypsum. South facing, very steep slope.*

It is hard to believe that we only decided to classify one VT in 2008. It certainly can be explained by the fact that the perfect acidity of the vintage helped to hide a lot of the sweetness in the wines. However, Jebstal doesn't fail to its reputation and both wines made in 2008 from that little Clos are VT and SGN. It is located in a very warm microclimate, just under the Brand, on a very steep south facing terraced vineyard. This precocious climate explains that the vines ripen the grapes very quickly. The vines are growing on perhaps one of the richest soil on the estate: deep combination of marl and gypsum that explain the fact that the vines never suffer drought here and are capable of keeping high acidity in the grapes. The drying effect of botrytis, especially when developing fast, also concentrates acidity as well as sugars. This vineyard is capable to produce extreme concentrated wines without any effort. The vines are now slowly reaching a more mature behaviour and we can see more and more minerality and subtlety in the wines from the Clos Jebstal.

2/2010: The botrytis selection we made in this vineyard left enough botrytis so the remaining grapes were ripe enough for VT standards. The nose shows delicate nutty and toasted aromas with great minerality. This is confirmed on the palate with crisp acidity and very stony flavours. The fermentation was very slow and this wine is still today in cask on its fine lees for more 'elevation' time. It will probably be bottled in September 2010.

### **Riesling Brand 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 9.5° alc; Residual sweetness: 172 g/l; 6.8 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.2; Yields: 19 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2018-2038+; Average age of the vines: 58 years; Surface: 0.3 ha; Terroir: Biotite granite, facing south. Strong slope*

This is our fourth SGN produced on the estate and the second in the Brand vineyard (first one was in 2006). The precocious warm location of the Brand is often allowing lot of noble rot development. However, we believe that only the oldest vines can give enough structure so the wine can stand the extra amount of sweetness found in SGN. The 'Schneckeslboung' part of the Brand is in fact located just above the Clos Jebstal, so there is no coincidence that this is where we may produce this style of wine. Under the poor granitic top soil, there are some layers of marl and limestone that give more regular water supply to the vines and therefore allow more consistent botrytis. The selection was quite easy and the aim wasn't to harvest the richest style possible but to keep a balance between the potential alcohol and acidity of the grapes. The fermentation was finished during winter and the wine naturally kept a high residual sweetness and lower alcohol, balanced with a firm acidity.

2/2010: this wine is still an infant today, but already it shows beautiful delicate fruity Riesling character enhanced by the Brand personality. Today it has a more austere development than the dry Brand, but further ageing should allow this wine to fully open. The palate is an extraordinary balance between the acidity and sweetness. Very long and delicate; it will be released only in 2011.

### **Gewurztraminer Herrenweg de Turckheim 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 13.7° alc; Residual sweetness: 148 g/l; 4.5 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.8; Yields: 25 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2012-2028+; Average age of the vines: 62 years; Surface: 1 ha; Terroir: gravelly soil on valley floor.*

This particular plot in the Herrenweg is the one that already produced a special Vieilles Vignes wine in 2006 and 2007. It is located just next to our offices. The special ripening season in late 2008 allowed for some spectacular noble rot development in this vineyard. In fact, we didn't have to select berries or even clusters. This was a whole harvest! Almost 75% of the grapes were fully concentrated by botrytis and the wine became one of the easiest to harvest SGN that I ever had the chance to do. At first, I wasn't sure if this vineyard would be able to stand the power. The last time I attempted to do an SGN in the Herrenweg was in 1986 and I wasn't convinced. In 2008, we are talking about a completely different wine that doesn't need to be ashamed in front of many greater vineyards. The older vines and bio-dynamic farming have managed to give a strong mineral character to this vineyard.

2/2010: the nose shows powerful classic Gewurztraminer aromatics: roses, litchi, spices and light toasted botrytis aromas. The palate is very long, powerful and is boosted with lots of well integrated sweetness. There is an immediate sense of pleasure in this wine and it is probably very easy to understand and will surely be very enjoyable at the time of release in September 2010.

### **Gewurztraminer Hengst 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alc: 11.9° alc; Residual sweetness: 166 g/l; 4.7 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.8; Yields: 17hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2014-2038+; Average age of the vines: 57 years; Surface: 1.42 ha; Terroir: Marl-Oligocene calcareous. South-south-east facing, medium to strong slope.*

We waited until 2007 to make our first SGN Hengst and then, in 2008, we could do another SGN. Hengst has a relatively dry micro-climate, is facing south to south east and despite being protected from major winds, it doesn't really develop botrytis that easily. In the middle part of Hengst, the layer of marl is quite thin and the roots are quickly growing into the calcareous rock, quite dry and well drained which doesn't carry too much humidity that could help the development of botrytis. The old vines are also more rot resistant because they have a lower vigour. We were able to make an SGN here because 2008 really had the perfect late season climate that allowed botrytis to develop on these old vines. We also had the time and were able to wait long enough. However, secretly, we also enjoy a classic non late harvest Hengst, so making this SGN allowed us to make also a classic Hengst!

2/2010: lots of ripe fruity aromas, mostly litchi and citrus but also lots of mineral and depth. What a contrast to the Herrenweg SGN! The Hengst is clearly more introverted and complex. The palate is very rich and long, carries the sweetness very well without heaviness and last a long time. This wine is the proof that great vineyards survive to noble rot and richness.

### **Pinot-Gris Rotenberg 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 10.2° alc; Residual sweetness: 198 g/l; 6.4 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.4; Yields: 17 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2015-2038++; Average age of vines: 27 years; Surface: 1.2 ha; Terroir: Oligocene calcareous. West to Northwest facing. Strong slope.*

The Rotenberg vineyard is located on the west to north-west side of the Hengst vineyard. It does have the same interesting calcareous mother rock, but under a much thinner top soil, very rocky and rich in iron which gives the typical brick red colour to the soil. The altitude (300m) and facing contribute to both a late ripening situation and also an easiness to allow noble rot (morning fog and late evening sunshine) when the weather is favourable like in 2008. Because we felt that in 2008 the grapes had a perfect balance for producing dry wines, we decided to select first the healthy grapes in order to produce a classic Rotenberg and then select the noble rot affected clusters later once botrytis had invaded most of the berries. We only thought that we would reach VT level, but in 2008, the concentration effect was such that these clusters reached SGN level without any problem. The fact that the acidity is very high, the fermentation stopped earlier and allow for a very delicate balance.

2/2010: it only takes a few seconds or minutes for this wine to open up in the glass and shows lots of ripe fruit flavours (citrus, quince, pears...) and wonderful clean noble rot character (toast, honey). The noble rot was very pure so the nose is actually very elegant and the colour still quite clear for a wine close to 200g/l of sweetness! The palate is extremely refined and elegant. The wine might be very sweet but the potential at harvest wasn't record breaking, so there is no heaviness at all. This balance in an SGN is exactly for me what a classic SGN Pinot Gris should be.

### **Pinot-Gris Heimbourg 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 9.7° alc; Residual sweetness: 224 g/l; 7 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.4; Yields: 22 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2015-2038+ Average age of the vines: 23 years; Terroir: calcareous and marl, facing west – North West.*

The Pinot Gris in the Heimbourg is planted right at the top of this little single vineyard in Turckheim (only 9ha in total and we own 4.5ha). The top part of the vineyard is quite steep and years of erosion have left little top soil and quite a lot of calcareous rocks. It is also a vineyard which is quite exposed to the winds. These are perfect conditions for late ripening and keeping the grapes healthy late in the season, so there is no rush in going early to harvest them. These are also tough growing condition for the delicate Riesling grape or the Gewurztraminer that enjoys more protected and warmer locations, which explains the choice of Pinot Gris there. Just like in the Rotenberg, we were able to do a selection of healthy clusters in order to produce a drier style wine, and ten days later, we went to harvest the remaining botrytis affected clusters. Same surprise, it was classic SGN richness. The huge acidity (7 g/l or 10.5 g/l in tartaric acid is really big and almost unbearable on a dry wine) slowed down the fermentation and made the wine keep quite a lot of residual sweetness.

2/2010: the botrytis was so clean in 2008 that the colour of the wine remained quite clear. (This is also the effect of low pH for such rich wines). The nose is very mineral and it is almost hard to guess the richness. It takes quite a long time for this wine to open up but eventually it shows wonderful crisp citrus fruit on top of the complex minerals. The combination of lower alcohol, high sweetness and very high acids creates a perfect mouth feel and elegant finish. These SGNs will last a long time!

### **Pinot-Gris Clos Windsbuhl 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles**

*Bottling date: 9/2009; Alcohol: 10.8° alc; Residual sweetness: 188 g/l; 7 g/l H2SO4, pH: 3.5; Yields: 15 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: 2018-2038+; Average age of the vines: 41 years; Surface: 2.2 ha; Terroir: Muchelkalk calcareous, south/southeast facing. Medium slope.*

It looks like most late ripening vineyards had perfect conditions to allow the development of noble rot in 2008. The Clos Windsbuhl was taken over by the Domaine in 1987 and we made our first wines in 1988. Already 1989 showed us the potential for this vineyard to produce late harvest style wines in Pinot Gris, from vines that planted in the 70s or before, we are not quite sure! Early botrytis is very rarely a blessing as it often happens under warmer temperatures and evolves very quickly into a messy mould. Late botrytis, if there are enough dry periods so it can dry out, develops on riper grapes and stay 'cleaner' with no or less visible mould on the berries. The effect is a wonderful transformation of some components in the berries due to enzymatic reactions and a concentration of sugars, acids and some other elements. Pinot Gris is surely a more neutral grape than Riesling or Gewurztraminer, so I believe that it is the grape variety that can express perfectly the character of botrytis while respecting the vineyard personality, and this is important for the Windsbuhl.

2/2010: the colour is slightly deeper, sign of more noble rot influence and dry extract. The nose boasts the Windsbuhl character with lots of minerality and toasty savoury aromas. The palate is concentrated, hides the sweetness behind a tight acidity and lots of chalky influence. Very long and full finish with cooked salty caramel flavours. The Windsbuhl SGN is perhaps less creamy or sweet than the other SGN made in 2008, but it needs to be tasted at the end as it definitely has the strongest personality.

## Pinot-Gris Clos Jepsal 2008 Sélection de Grains Nobles Trie Speciale

*Bottling date? /? Alcohol: under 5° alc; Residual sweetness: above 350 g/l (potential alcohol: 216° Oechsles or 33% potential alc); ? g/l H2SO4, pH: ?; Yields: 12 hl/ha; Optimum drinking period: ?/?; Average age of the vines: 25 years; Surface: 1.3 ha; Terroir: Grey marls and gypsum. South facing, very steep slope.*

I do not believe that there is another vineyard in Alsace capable to so consistently produce late harvest style wines of such richness. It really is in the nature of the Clos Jepsal to allow noble rot and force us to harvest grapes with huge richness potential. The fantastic grey/green marl mixed with the gypsum rock (Jepsal is the place of Gypsum) provides the mineral frame and the structure necessary to carry so much richness and residual sugars. In exceptional years with great acidity potential like 2008, a normal SGN selection, without having to be more severe in selecting the berries, ends up with potential alcohol well above 30% (that is if all the sugar ferment through, the wine would have more than 30% alcohol). Something happens with the yeasts at such richness that the fermentation takes years to reach only 4 or 5% alcohol, leaving a huge sweetness in the wine. At these concentrations, the osmosis pressure on the membrane of the yeast is such that it must literally explode after a few days of existence. Imagine the state of our skin if we would be buried in a barrel of sugar! Today, this wine is still fermenting, very slowly, in two small 600l new casks. We have no idea when it will be finished!

2/2010: I am not sure if it makes sense to comment this wine today while still bubbling slowly. The aromas are still extremely sugary, honeyed, macerated green apples with some fermenting character. It is actually a very elegant nose but by far not accomplished yet. The palate is much more interesting today, even if fermentation isn't finished, I doubt that there will be big changes before the end. The acidity must be unbelievable as it totally masters the sweetness. The mouth texture is very rich, creamy, honeyed. The wine pours like olive oil but still has a very pale and clear colour. A work in progress, but very interesting at this stage.

This is how ripe healthy Riesling should look like....



Riesling Herrenweg 2008  
Harvested 30<sup>th</sup> September



Riesling Rangén 2008  
Harvested 20<sup>th</sup> October