

2010 Final Oregon Harvest Report

Vintage delivers high-quality fruit at lower yields that growers and winemakers say will translate to balanced, food-friendly and ageable wines

Statewide Harvest Overview

An Indian summer that began in early October and lingered through month's end created optimal conditions for Oregon's winegrowers and vintners, advancing ripening of smaller-sized grape clusters throughout the state and delivering balanced fruit with full flavor development and lower brix levels, great acidity and potentially lower alcohol levels. Winemakers who have had time to spend with the resulting wine say they are very excited to see what emerges from the barrel.

The 2010 vintage cumulative growing degree day (GrDD) values for four sites throughout the state tracked slightly down from 2008 (three to nine percent statewide), one of Oregon's most highly touted vintages.

The warm, dry harvest conditions bookended a growing season that began with a relatively dry and warm winter highlighted by the warmest January and February on record in most locations. What followed was a cool Spring and early Summer timeframe (April ^ June). According to Dr. Greg Jones, a climatologist at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon who monitors conditions throughout the state's winegrowing regions, the growing season ended with near normal to slightly cooler than normal temperatures statewide, with fewer than normal heat spikes.

Yields were lower than in typical years, due in part to early season weather conditions and crop thinning near season's end. The lower yields delivered high quality fruit, with characteristics of full phenolic ripeness, concentrated flavors and balance.

"In Oregon, each vintage is an expression of that year and this place," said Sam Tannahill, board chairman for the Oregon Wine Board. "As winegrowers who farm artisan wines, we celebrate farming on the edge. In 2010, we were rewarded with potentially very long-lived, gorgeous wines with more concentration and depth, combined with a very beautiful crystalline structure with great purity -- everything we in Oregon could ask for in a vintage."

Rogue Valley Harvest Overview

We started harvest a little later than usual and the rains intervened. Some thin skinned and tight cluster varieties suffered if they didn't get picked ahead of the rain events. Yields were variable and dependent on site characteristics as well as farming practices. Bird pressures were higher in some areas than the norm. Cluster sizes were generally smaller. The red grapes had good color, lower than usual tannins and more red fruit character than black fruit (compared to 09). Sugars were slightly lower in some varieties (mainly Rhone) and seemed about normal in Bordeaux varieties. We do have some exceptional lots of nearly every variety, again dependent on site and farming practices. This is a year that will showcase the talents and skills sets of both growers and winemakers and will set people apart. Both are equally important every year and one never does well without the other.