

Från California Wine Institute i Sverige har vi tagit emot 2007 års skörderapport. På frågan om hur och i vilken omfattning bränderna drabbat delstatens vingårdslägen har vi fått till svar att de värst eldhärjade områdena ligger norr om Los Angeles. Mer exakta uppgifter än så har vi inte fått.

Glada nyheter – 2007 ser ut att bli en fantastisk årgång för kaliforniska viner! Vi har precis fått skörderapporten från Kalifornien och här nedan kan du läsa mer om den. Bifogat finner du också en sammanställning av några citat om årets skörd från ett urval av vinmakare från olika områden i Kalifornien samt en bild som du gärna får använda.

Tidig skörd, förlängd säsong och en mindre skörd än vanligt.

I år började skörden tidigt och stannade upp mitt i när kallt väder anlände, för att sedan avslutas sent in oktober. En mild vinter med mindre regn än vanligt i kombination med en torr vår gjorde att blomningen började tidigt i vingårdarna. Trots att antalet kluster var högt i många områden gav en sparsam utveckling av bären lösa kluster med små bär. De små bären ger ju ett bättre förhållande mellan skal och juice med förhöjd kvalitet som resultat.

”2007 är en av de bästa årgångarna på senare tid” säger Vince Bonotto på Diageo Chateau & Estate Wines som har vingårdar i Napa och Monterey. “Det var en mindre skörd och jämfört med de senaste åren så var produktionen också mindre men kvaliteten är extremt god” berättar han entusiastiskt. Mark Gabrielli på Woodbridge Winery är också lyrisk “Det är goda nyheter, vi är extremt nöjda med kvaliteten på skörden 2007. Bären var små, mindre än vi sett på mer än 10 år och frukten har utvecklat intensiva druvtypiska smaker med fylliga tanniner” Vinmakare Ted Seghesio på Seghesio Family Vineyards i Sonoma har också noterat en mindre skörd än tidigare år. “Kvaliteten verkar just nu att bli förträfflig. Djupa färger och mörk frukt i unga viner med balanserad syra lovar en framgångsrik årgång.”

En till en början kylig och lugn växtsäsong värmdes upp i slutet av augusti och gjorde så att många druvsorter mognade samtidigt. ”Först var det spring, spring och få in druvorna innan sockret skulle bli för högt” säger Glenn Proctor på Ciatti Company i San Rafael. Sen när det svalare vädret kom andra veckan i september stannade skörden av i många områden och det blev ett lugnare tempo.

“Ungefär 90 % av de vita vindruvorna var skördade innan regnet kom till North Coast” berättar Bill Turrentine på Turrentine Brokerage i Novato. Cabernet Sauvignon och andra Bordeaux-sorter med kraftigare skal som är mindre känsliga för fukt kunde sitta kvar på rankorna till slutet av oktober och utveckla mogna intensiva smaker. “Cirka 98 % av alla druvor var skördade innan den 25 oktober.”

Enligt California Department of Food and Agriculture’s senaste beräkning av vindruveskörden i oktober blir den 3,2 miljoner ton vilket är lite mindre än 1% mer än skörden 2006.

CALIFORNIA VINTNERS PRAISE HIGH QUALITY 2007 WINEGRAPE HARVEST *Early Harvest, Extended Season, Lighter than Normal Crop*

CALIFORNIA HARVEST 2007 QUOTES

CARNEROS

Walter Schug, Owner/Winemaker, Schug Carneros Estate

We had a deficit of rain in the winter, making the spring soils drier. Some dried up faster than others. Vineyards with moister soils bloomed later. Growing conditions were good, with balanced weather conditions during the summer. Harvest started earlier than normal, around August 22, with all varieties and then cooled, stretching out through late October. There were plenty of grape bunches, but the small berries led to a less than anticipated crop level. I’m excited about the wines. They have higher acid and lower pH.

CENTRAL COAST

Karl Wente, 5th Generation Winemaker, Wente Family Estates, Livermore Valley

The winter months provided less rain than average; this, along with many other factors, caused the buds to burst early and all indications were that we were gearing up for an early harvest. We were picking full blast before Labor Day to get all of the early-maturing cultivars off the vine at their optimal ripeness. This was followed by a cold spell in mid-September, which slowed the sugar accumulation to a halt. During this period, flavors and tannins continued to develop, but sugar and acidity remained flat. After a few consecutive days of sunshine and temperatures in the mid-80s, we were off again. The color, flavors, tannins and acidity all matured together beautifully and early tasting reveals beautiful wines.

Philipe Coderey, Director of Viticulture and Nicole Walsh, Winegrower for Ca' del Solo, Bonny Doon Vineyard, Santa Cruz

Overall, 2007 was a cool, dry year. Bloom began and ended late at our estate Ca' del Solo vineyard, and veraison (grape color change), happened later than ever. Surprising, given the cool, dry season, harvest began about two weeks early this year with Cinsault in mid-August. In late September, the vines felt the shorter days and worked hard to catch up and ripen fully. Very low rainfall in 2007 accounted for lighter cluster weights and smaller yields, and most importantly small berries, all of which work to concentrate flavor. The quality is outstanding. Crop levels are lower than usual and the concentration of flavors and minerals is very high.

Bill Cooper, Vintner, Cooper-Garrod Estate Vineyards, Santa Cruz Mountains

In the Santa Cruz Mountains, the 2007 season's overall moderate temperatures were punctuated by only a few brief temperature spikes enabling full berry development as well as an orderly harvest. However, near drought rainfall (50 percent of normal) dropped yields by 25-35 percent. In the end, all our varieties at Cooper-Garrod — Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Viognier, and Merlot — came in with high acids and full sugar development.

Reggie Hammond, Winemaker, Ventana Vineyards, Monterey County

We had normal cluster counts but fewer and smaller berries, leading to greater skin to juice ratio, much less juice, but exceptional quality. Pinot Noir and Chardonnay quantities were down 30 - 40 percent. Yields for Syrah, Grenache and Sauvignon Blanc were normal. The cool weather during set in 2006 affected the clusters and sizing for 2007. Also, the weather in 2007 was cool during bloom. Both of these contributed to the lower crop levels. We had a few sprinkles, but not enough to cause any problems. We started picking on Sept 17. Harvest was nice, smooth and steady. Overall precipitation in Monterey County was about 75 percent of normal.

Ben Mayo, Winemaker, Eberle Winery, Paso Robles

With the severe cold weather this winter, it took nature a little more time to come out of dormancy. The cane lengths of the vines were unusually short, as was the crop. Berry size as well as cluster weights are low. The small berries pack a serious punch and the flavors are well developed. It's definitely been a unique year for winegrape growing, but the quality of the wine looks outstanding.

Kevin Sass, Winemaker, JUSTIN Vineyards and Winery, Paso Robles

The 2007 growing/harvest season has been great. The vintage should be one of the best of the decade, with ripe flavors, good acid and flavorful fruit!

Alan Kinne and Craig Reed, Winemaking Team, Martin & Weyrich Winery, Paso Robles

Martin & Weyrich Winery began harvest during the middle of a hot August and will finish in the cool of November...just in time to give thanks for another great Paso Robles vintage.

Jason Haas, General Manager, Tablas Creek Vineyard, Paso Robles

The 2007 harvest at Tablas Creek was about two weeks early, very extended, relatively light, and extremely concentrated. Three factors led to the decreased production, and probably to the increased concentration: very low rainfall last winter, cold winter temperatures, and the

natural fatigue of vines following two relatively high-yield vintages. Yields at Tablas Creek have been down about 20 percent. We have seen a high cluster count, with small clusters and small berries, terrific extraction of color and flavors and slightly lower than normal alcohol levels.

Austin Hope, Director of Viticulture and Winemaking, Treana Winery, Paso Robles

The only thing consistent about this harvest has been its inconsistency. It's kept us on our toes as farmers. In Paso Robles, we've experienced just about every weather pattern in the past two months: wind, heat spikes, extended periods of cool temperatures, and rain. The craziest part is, at 85 percent completion in our Paso Robles vineyards as of October 30, I can honestly say, the quality of the vintage looks great. It's been a fun year!

LAKE COUNTY

Jim Fetzer, Owner, Ceago Vinegarden, Lake County

We had a great harvest. It started on August 15 and ended on October 10, with a lull in the middle. Crop levels were down 15 - 20 percent. The quality looks exceptional, with ripe fruit and nicely balanced wines. We finished picking before the rains. There is no fog in summer in Lake County. Elevation is the moderating influence on temperature.

Denis Malbec, Winemaker for Six Sigma Vineyards and Winery, Lake County

“What we can say today is that we have been very patient! Most growers in Lake County were done with picking in early October due to impending cool, wet weather. I felt that our grapes at Six Sigma needed a little bit longer to reach the right flavors. As far as the rain, we only got a few showers. Certainly enough for Zinfandel or Pinot Noir to be weakened but nothing to be concerned about for the more robust Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon. The Indian summer weather during the second part of October allowed the aromatic profiles to develop and the tannins to mature and soften.

MENDOCINO

Bob Blue, Winemaker, Bonterra Vineyards, Mendocino County

I thought this was one of the gentlest harvests I can remember. The spring and summer were for the most part very mild. Coupled with the lack of rain in the winter, it translated into small berry size and very nice grape quality with good acidity, concentration and color. From a winemaking side, it was amazing how the varieties spaced out as we harvested through the season. This allowed us to use the winery in the best way to make the wines with less pressure. We did get some early October rain that had us worried, but the grapes were already sweet and the weather just put the grapes into a sugar holding pattern while the grape skins continued to mature leaving the resulting wines with deep purple colors and soft tannins.

Leonard Brutocao, Director of Vineyard Operations, Brutocao Cellars, Mendocino County

This was the earliest start we have ever had. We began harvesting Sauvignon Blanc on August 16. Everything was coming in fast, and it looked like a short harvest, but then mid-way through, it slowed down and tapered off. We waited mostly for the Cabernet Sauvignon to ripen and mature. We finished picking on Oct. 29. Quantities were down about 30 percent across the board in Mendocino County, due to the small clusters and berries. The small clusters were due to a wet spring last year and fluctuating temperatures from hot to cold during bloom in 2007. The bulk of the Pinot Noir came off by September 12. The crop level was down 35 percent from last year.

NAPA VALLEY

Bill Nancarrow, Winemaker, Duckhorn Vineyards, Napa Valley

We expected a short, furious harvest, however it ended up being the longest we have ever had. We picked Merlot in Calistoga in early September, and the Merlot in Carneros came in the third week in October. We are very happy with the quality of the wines in tanks. They have an elegant refinement. Although the yield was down about 15 percent, the wines are very pretty.

Miles, Susan and Marko Karakasevic, CHARBAY® Winery & Distillery, Napa Valley
2007 was a great harvest for our Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay. The fruit came in with plump, perfect clusters. We picked before the rains of October so our wines are already in barrels. The ripe, intense flavors of the grapes followed right through as they fermented dry. The deep red colors and the aromas remind us of harvests back in the 1990s. The small lot of Chardonnay we made is half in oak and half in stainless. It's crisp and fruity.

Larry Cherubino, Winemaker, Merryvale Vineyards

The season started 20 days earlier than last year and we have finished almost a month ahead of the 2005 and 2006 harvests. The dry spring and early veraison and general ripening conditions have helped to produce moderate to low yields with exceptional tannins and color in reds and bright fruit flavors and texture in whites. Yields are approximately 5-15 percent below the anticipated but the general quality across the board is very high.

SAN DIEGO

Alexander McGeary, President, Shadow Mountain Vineyards & Winery, Inc., San Diego

San Diego seems to be falling in line with a lot of the state. Most vineyard production was down by 50 percent. Ripening curves were flip flopped with red varieties coming in before whites as things got under way the third week of August. Everything settled down towards the end with slow ripening for late varieties. Quality looks good. Regarding the recent fires, we are whole and most wineries in the area escaped material fire damage.

SIERRA FOOTHILLS

Leon Sobon, Partner, Shenandoah Vineyards & Sobon Estate, Sierra Foothills

This past winter was very dry, even though the weather was temperate. About 70–80 percent of the vineyards in the Sierra Foothills are dry farmed and depend on ground water. Planted at elevations ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 feet, bloom is usually three to four weeks later than other regions due to the cooler climate. We began picking about 10 days earlier than usual and ended on October 24, about the normal time harvest ends. We had about a normal crop size with excellent quality. The grapes came in with an atypical chemistry, with high acid and higher, but not unhealthy, pH.

SONOMA COUNTY

Tim Bell, Director of Winemaking Operations for Kunde Estate Winery & Vineyards, Sonoma Valley, Sonoma County

In Sonoma Valley, 2007 was a tale of two harvests. Some end-of-August heat kicked ripening for Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and even some blocks of Merlot into high gear. We thought we were in for a sprint to the finish, with some blocks of red grapes threatening to ripen all at once. Then on September 11, morning cloud cover and cooler temperatures slammed the brakes on the vines. Nice even growing conditions soon prevailed, allowing for steady ripening at a moderate pace. We were able to cherry-pick grapes at peak levels of flavor and tannin development. Our last block of Cabernet reached ripeness by October 11, just ahead of a series of storms that marked the end of ripening weather for 2007.

Christina Pallmann, Winemaker, Fritz Winery, Dry Creek Valley, Sonoma County

This is a good year for Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel. Zinfandel is a fussy grape. We thinned twice to eliminate unevenly ripened clusters, in order to get even maturity and color. The early lots are exhibiting deep fruit qualities—tar, violets and black fruit.

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