



Even with heavy winter storms throughout January and into February, rainfall accumulation for the 2008 season was below average, and drought conditions persisted throughout many of the north coast appellations. A dry and sunny March allowed bud break to occur on schedule in mid-March under clear skies. Though daytime temperatures were moderate, clear nights brought low temperatures into the freezing zone at the end of March and into mid-April. Vineyard sites at both lower and higher elevations experienced these very cold nights. Multiple frost events occurred and tender new growth was damaged, while further impacting bud fruitfulness and the overall yield potential for the coming season.

Following the cold snaps, warmer, more temperature weather arrived in late spring and early summer. There were several days in mid-April that reached record breaking highs, drying much of the topsoil and ground cover. Cooler temps returned in the middle of June during bloom, resulting in shatter, thus further reducing crop load across many coastal sites.

Late June brought wildfires throughout areas in northern California, clouding the skies with smoke. July temperatures were more moderate in the high 80's, and many warmer days returned in August. The month continued on a warming trend, and harvest began on the same schedule as 2007, on August 31st. Weather finally cooled near the end of the second week of September, with cool foggy evenings. Typical foggy nights and mornings persisted, and temperatures barely rose into the high 70's during this period. A brief rain event occurred in mid-September, and a light storm followed during the first week of October. The storm was fairly insignificant, and had little effect on hanging fruit, because sunshine returned shortly thereafter. Cool nights and warm days continued to ripen grapes slowly. Grapes were harvested under cool but sunny skies, having achieved full ripeness. The season closed with a glorious Indian Summer yielding great potential for cooler sites and late season varietals.