



2011 Vintage Weather Journal

From a wine growing perspective, the 2011 vintage was one of the most nerve-racking in recent memory. Challenging conditions began in late winter and spring, posing issues for bloom and fruit set. A cool summer further delayed the onset of harvest, and rain in October and November turned our knuckles white. Mother Nature gave us a trying vintage and we had to make difficult decisions in vineyard and cellar, subsequently lowering production. Despite the odds the wines of 2011 are showing outstanding elegance, exuberance, and concentration.

The beginning of 2011 started out cool and dry before the rains delivered a significant amount of water in late winter. More storms rolled through spring followed by a few late cold snaps that posed a threat at a few of our already cool climate sites. Western Sonoma County endured a wet and windy spring that hindered fruit set and reduced bunch weights, and ultimately crop load, but also assisted in growing luxuriously small berries with deep flavor and lovely aromatics.

June came and went, July followed, and then August was here. But where was summer? The fact is the summer of 2011 consisted of many foggy mornings with unseasonably low temperatures. But what a wonderfully long and gracious summer it was. The mild temperatures extended grape hang-time and developed intricate flavors in the fruit, thus teasing out an elaborate spectrum of complexity in the wine.

The mild summer gave way to a soothing heat spell the second week of September, which reinvigorated our spirit and pushed sugar levels up in the grapes. It was just what we needed to kick start the 2011 crush. Later than usual, harvest began on September 12 with select sections of the Pinot Noir from the Hallberg vineyard. September continued with a smattering of very warm days that allowed the Pinot Noir to come in at optimum maturity and impeccably clean. Rains in October became increasing realistic and the frenzy climaxed to a nail biting harvest as we picked the Syrah from the beautiful Timbervine vineyard at daybreak, October 3rd, minutes before the rain began to fall. We brought in the remaining clusters just ahead of another storm front in early November. The fruit came in with lighter bunch weights, smaller berries, lower sugar levels, fresh acidity and beautifully nuanced.

No doubt 2011 was a challenging vintage as Mother Nature tried our patience and perseverance. Yet tasting through the wines, they elicit energy, grace, and a focused elegance. We feel the path was, and continues to be, navigated with wine quality as our priority.