



2012 Vintage Weather Journal

In 2012 Mother Nature gave us a relieving break from the dramatic 2010 and 2011 vintages, and we had near-idyllic growing conditions. Spring provided a healthy fruit set, a mellow summer allowed fruit extended hang-time, and a fairly dry fall kept mildew pressure at bay. These elements allowed us to strike that harmonious, yet often elusive, balance of keeping just enough fruit on the vine while maintaining richness, intensity, and verve.

But let's back up a bit. A drier than usual December and January eventually gave way to an intense storm just as spring was slowly emerging. March dropped nearly 8" of rain with more rains in early April. Budbreak was delayed slightly, just before a high-pressure system got comfortable over Sonoma County and pushed the vines out of dormancy, into the sunshine. The warmth and mild weather patterns continued and provided magnificent bloom conditions for a healthy fruit set.

With the exception of dense fog-filled mornings and one triple digit heat wave in July, the mild weather patterns continued throughout the summer. The nights were unseasonably cool, in the low 40's. Luckily, the vines experienced the wonderful 45-50 degree diurnal temperature variation. In this natural phenomenon, energy translocates from the roots up to the fruit and back to the roots again each day and night, building a foundation of delectable flavors and complexity. As the clusters developed, we began to notice higher crop estimations and took measures in the vineyard to reduce fruit load. The vines could now concentrate their energy and even the ripening process.

We are proud of our coastal cool climate vineyard *terroir*, yet we work with sites that are more susceptible to harsh weather patterns, which can be difficult for later ripening varieties such as Syrah and Zinfandel. However, the growing degree days of 2012 mirrored the classic 2009 vintage, and the grapes across the varieties remained on the vines long enough to develop complexity. Though a few heat spells could have potentially pushed sugars up, we preferred to pick for flavor and phenolic development as opposed to higher brix. Most of the pinot was brought in before these temperature spikes, and we are pleased with the results.

With a few new vineyard sites in 2012 and an abundant year, we were filled to the proverbial cellar brim. We practiced our minimalist approach in the winery by ensuring healthy vines and impeccable fruit in the vineyards, before it even reaches the cellar door. A keen eye kept on the vines, and painstakingly maintaining balance throughout the year, has graced us with exceptional wines, each expressing the personality of its unique growing site.