



napa valley vintners
Napa Valley Harvest 2013 Vintner Updates
August 20, 2013

*Temperatures have remained on the cool side for much of the ripening season here in **Coombsville**. What this means is that what has promised to be an 'early' harvest is settling down to look much closer to an average harvest date. We expect our Pinot Noir harvest to be as far as three weeks away, followed by Sauvignon Blanc and then Cabernet Sauvignon.*

Ken Bernards, owner and winemaker, Ancien Wines

*Being in **Carneros** – the cool corner of Napa Valley – we are always a few weeks behind the rest of the valley in terms of ripeness, so we embrace a slightly earlier harvest, as this appears to be for us. A warm dry spring caused an early bloom and a few heat spikes throughout the summer pushed the vines along. The Chardonnay and Pinot Noir have finished up veraison and we are looking to pick our first Pinot in about two weeks.*

Anthony Truchard, vintner, Truchard Vineyards

*We are enjoying an old-school summer in **Oakville** and throughout much of the valley with foggy mornings followed by clear blue skies. Although we had a heat spell in late June/early July, subsequent mild and cool temperatures have been conducive to photosynthesis. Estimated yields are greater than the five-year average, although perhaps somewhat less than 2012, and flavors are developing very well.*

Michael Salacci, winemaker, Opus One

*Reports from different growers on **Spring Mountain** indicate that veraison is about 90% done. For quite a while, most of us were thinking we were a solid two to three weeks behind 'normal' (in farming, what is normal?), but the recent cool spell has allowed a nice slow down. Most winemakers up here are expecting to pick whites in the first week of September. After an early start to bud break and flowering, I'm very excited about the potential quality of this harvest.*

Andy Schweiger, winemaker, Schweiger Vineyards

***Calistoga** is aligned with much of the Napa Valley by trending ahead of our average date of harvest. It's been a classic year for the appellation to date, with warmer up valley days counterbalanced by cooling marine air accessed through the Chalk Hill gap, keeping us several degrees cooler on average than many mid-valley locales. We're focused on finishing up veraison thinning (removal of greener clusters lagging through color change which improves wine grape quality through more even ripening of the remaining crop), which is especially critical for optimizing quality this year due to a somewhat prolonged bloom period.*

Richard Sowalsky, vice president and winemaker, Clos Pegase Winery

*With a few exceptions, we have enjoyed October-like temperatures from the earliest part of the growing season. On **Howell Mountain** overnight temperatures usually average 67-68 degrees; this year, however, we have had many nights which stayed above 70 degrees. These factors have combined to put the crop well ahead of average development. Veraison is almost complete and is a good two weeks ahead of schedule. We are doing the final thinning of our Zinfandel and although we have thinned quite a bit, I am still surprised to see such a robust crop following 2012, which was off-the-charts huge.*

Mike Lamborn, owner, Lamborn Family Vineyards

*In late July we thought that it would be possible to pick the first week of August, but the recent run of cooler weather; foggy mornings, warm afternoons and cool nights has delayed harvest somewhat from our original predictions. Nice to have the extra time to get harvest preparations wrapped up! The start date is reminiscent of 2007 and 2008...or back further to 2004. Unlike those three vintages the crop size appears to be generous and with relatively moderate temperatures all season long we are expecting a fantastic season. In **Rutherford**, the Sauvignon Blanc is coming along nicely with brix readings ranging from 17-21.*

Kristen Belair, winemaker, Honig Vineyard and Winery

*Like most other Napa Valley appellations the **Chiles Valley District** is about two weeks ahead of normal, with the Zinfandel coloring up beautifully. The Cabernet is about 75% complete. The vineyards look healthy and stress-free probably due to the relatively cool season we have experienced since bud break. The crop level seems to be a little bit higher than normal.*

Alexander Eisele, owner, Volker Eisele Family Estate

*Harvest is officially underway in **Yountville** with initial assessments indicating outstanding quality and above-average yields. Gamble Family Vineyards christened its Oakville winery by night-harvesting a portion of its Sauvignon Blanc. At Rocca Family Vineyards, we're busy with the continuing micro-management of our vine canopies, crop levels, and individual clusters. Things look great out there, and short-to-medium term forecasts are for perfect ripening weather, so we're looking forward to picking some spectacular fruit this year.*

Paul Colantuoni, consulting winemaker

*Good vintages are marked by good weather at key points in the season as the year progresses. The warm spring we experienced in 2013 was a good start to the year. Frost was again not impactful and bloom period was early and easy. Getting the crew to drop additional fruit at these final stages of the growing season is hard, but when we look at historical quality ratings by block and degree days we make decisions targeting not tons per acre but what we think gets us good vine balance for the year. Harvest of our **Mt. Veeder** Chardonnay should begin towards the end of the first week of August.*

Sander Scheer, viticulturalist, The Hess Collection

*In **Atlas Peak** 2013 has thus far shown the promise of being a wonderful vintage. A dry winter, warm spring with few frost events and warm weather in May allowed for even bud-break and flowering. A warm early summer had us initially thinking we would be up to two weeks earlier than 2012. However, the recent unseasonably cooler weather has slowed ripening in the vineyards a bit. Current estimates have us beginning to pick Pinot Noir for rosé towards the end of August with Chardonnay starting in force around the 5th of September.*

Nate Weis, Winemaker, Antica Napa Valley –An Antinori Family Wine Estate

***St Helena** is right on target for an early harvest. A dry, mild winter and an early warm spring brought flowering season in May instead of June. Summer has also been mild and relatively cool which has been very welcome as there's been little need to irrigate our well-drained soils. We harvested our first block of Sauvignon Blanc 17 days earlier than our past ten-year average. The flavors are ripe and fresh. Veraison is complete as well as green harvest and we expect our early reds, Malbec specifically, to be harvested the last day in August. Cabernet Sauvignon will follow in mid-September. It feels to me that we are going to finish the season on the warm side.*

Pam Starr, winemaker, Crocker & Star Wines