



MARIMAR ESTATE
VINEYARDS & WINERY

Harvest 2012 : A Simply Gorgeous Vintage

Sebastopol, CA – Though we faced a long and late 2012 harvest, with powdery mildew that meant dropping a lot of fruit, our spirits never sagged because the fruit looked fabulous from the beginning. Mild weather throughout the growing season meant more hang time; then a warming trend in early October helped ripen the grapes and enabled them to reach their full potential.

The Growing Season

April brought warm weather alternating with rain, which delayed fruit set. As a result, everything came two weeks late: bloom in late May, set in mid June, véraison in early to mid August. Regardless, the clusters this year were nicely sized and evenly balanced – the best we've seen in a long time.

Classic Green Valley Weather through September

Foggy mornings and sunny afternoons, typical of Green Valley, are ideal for Pinot Noir! That was the trend until late September, when a warming trend ripened the grapes to perfection. Picking was fast and furious through early October, in order to get the fruit in at the right moment.

The Only Problems: Powdery Mildew and Critters

The cool, foggy mornings and mild weather, never too warm, were much loved by powdery mildew in the Chardonnay. Because our vineyard is organic, we had to battle it constantly throughout the season and remove affected clusters before others became infected. Fortunately, the team did a remarkable job and left no blemished fruit on the vines prior to harvest.

Gophers were a pest this year. We never use poison – rather we set traps, a highly time-consuming task. Since we had such an intense workload in the vineyards, for awhile we didn't have the time to place enough traps for the pesky critters who were feasting on our vines. In the new planting at the Doña Margarita Vineyard in Sonoma Coast, we lost 12 vines in one week!

Guess what Percentage of Vineyards are Organic in Russian River Valley?

Would you have said less than 3% are certified organic? Actually, it's more like 2%, as I was fascinated to learn this summer. That tells you how difficult it is here; but we are committed because it's best for the long-term life of the vineyard – and also for the well-being of our workers.

Harvest Started September 12

We began with the Pinot Noir in the Don Miguel Vineyard, in Russian River Valley. Surprisingly enough, we started picking only a week later in the cooler Sonoma Coast – ahead of several RRV blocks. The Chardonnay harvest began on September 29; and the Albariño, which has always come in long after the Chardonnay, followed just 4 days later on October 3. Continuing the tradition, every harvest day at sunrise I took coffee, pastries, fruit and almonds to the pickers, who many days had started at 3 am. Always fun to share a break and chat with them!

The 2nd week of October was so cool that sugars actually went down, so we stopped picking our fruit until October 19! The Tempranillo, which we always harvested later than anything else, came in that day. On October 20 we picked the last block of Chardonnay – and after that, I packed my bags and was off to Europe in the evening.

Marimar Torres
Winegrower / Proprietor

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2012 HARVEST



THE BREAK OF DAWN SAW US HARVESTING IN THE FOG MOST MORNINGS – IN CLASSIC GREEN VALLEY WEATHER



BUT A FEW DAYS WE SAW BEAUTIFUL SUNRISES SOON AFTER WE STARTED PICKING!



THE TEAM LOVED COFFEE AND PASTRIES AT 6:30AM – ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY STARTED PICKING AT 3AM



CHICO & BONITA DEVOURED THE GRAPES AS SOON AS THEY WERE RIPE – AND EVEN A BIT BEFORE



AND THEY ALSO HELPED DRIVE THE NEW GATOR!



THE GRAPE CLUSTERS THIS YEAR WERE PICTURE-PERFECT: PINOT NOIR....



...AND ALBARIÑO

TEMPRANILLO...

CHARDONNAY...