

P: (800) 306-3956  
E: INFO@ELDORADOWINES.ORG



PO BOX 1614  
PLACERVILLE, CA 95667  
[www.eldoradowines.org](http://www.eldoradowines.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 17, 2015

MEDIA CONTACT: Solterra Strategies  
Joel Peterson, [joel@solterrastrategies.com](mailto:joel@solterrastrategies.com)

## **El Dorado Wineries Experience Early and Dynamic Harvest**

Early to start and finish, harvest brought lower yields and terrific intensity

November 17, 2016 (Placerville, CA) – Another successful harvest is in the books for wineries and grape growers in the El Dorado wine region. For many wineries the 2015 vintage started earlier than any other previous year and finished sooner than usual, with lower yields. The overall quality has winemakers excited about the potential, with highlights being vibrant acidity and bright aromatics. The California drought continues to have an effect on yields, but can also bring potential benefits, including rich and concentrated flavors.

“My impression of the 2015 vintage is the grapes showed terrific maturity at slightly lower sugar levels than usual and great acidity”, said Jonathan Lachs, co-owner and winemaker of Cedarville Vineyard. “It’s hard to tell definitively right now which varieties will turn out best, but our Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon were quite beautiful.”

Tucked away in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, between Sacramento and South Lake Tahoe, the El Dorado appellation is home to more than 70 wineries and nearly 2,000 vineyard acres perched at some of the highest elevations across California.

Concern due to the ongoing statewide drought was spread across the region, but growers in El Dorado were strategic. Farmers who dry farm their vineyards relied on proper crop management to ensure concentrated flavors in each cluster. Farmers who irrigate their vineyards controlled their water use to make the most of the 2015 vintage. “We strive to come as close to dry farming as possible so the drought did not directly impact us,” said vineyard owner and winemaker Paul Wofford of Wofford Acres Vineyard. Irrigated vineyards still saw lower yields than previous years. “Crop loads were very low this year as well,” said Paul Bush, owner and winemaker of Madroña Vineyards. “Although the vintage yielded less crop than past years, we saw incredible fruit with great acidity with deep, dark color.”

In addition to the drought, lower yields were also caused by weather events in early Spring, during pollination. “Our biggest challenge was rain and wind during bloom,” said winemakers of Holly’s Hill Vineyards Carrie and Josh Bendick. “The best success was being

prepared for an early harvest. Overall the quality of the fruit is high and should produce an excellent vintage.”

Winemakers from around the region all consistently reported the 2015 harvest was one of the earliest to start, and to finish. Nello Olivo, owner of Nello Olivo Winery, said, “Every year presents a different set of circumstances and 2015 was no exception. We harvested our first varietal – Primitivo - this year four weeks earlier than our historical average.”

Though there were challenges for the winemakers of El Dorado, as there is with each harvest, vintners are excited about the 2015 wines. Jonathan Pack, winemaker for Gwinllan Estate, said, “The quality of fruit this year was outstanding, we are thrilled!”

### **About El Dorado Wines**

With over 150 years of history steeped in gold and agriculture, the El Dorado region is poised for its newfound resurgence in viticulture. Unique vineyard soils and a high elevation create a superior environment for a vast array of varietals. The region is gaining recognition for its ability to grow quality grapes that exhibit a sense of place. For more information about El Dorado, visit [www.eldoradowines.org](http://www.eldoradowines.org).

###