

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE HARVEST REPORT

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A Cool Trend is Proving Excellent for Sierra Foothill's El Dorado Wine Region's 2018 Harvest.

El Dorado County, CA. (September 17, 2018)

El Dorado Winemakers and growers weigh in on the first wave of the 2018 El Dorado county harvest. Their assessments are from vineyard elevations ranging from 1200 to nearly 3,000 ft. that are planted to nearly 70 grape varieties all toll. The region's harvest story this year is a cooling trend starting in late August and extending through the time of this report. Across the board, winemakers and growers are reporting that the cooler temps have had positive impact on elements ranging from sugar levels, the pace at which varietals are coming in, and impact on labor.

Following are comments from vintners and growers from late August to Monday, September 17th, 2018. Feel free to contact them directly or contact Lee Hodo, lee_hodo@att.net / 707-332-0857 to access other winemakers in the region.

Paul Bush, Owner/Winemaker & Grower

[Madrona Vineyards & Rucksack Cellars](#)

530-644-5948

2,800 to 3,000 ft.

"The last week in August was very cool here. It not only gave us some breathing room, but it gave valuable hang time (even if it's just a week or two) for the region (where other region's may have been already picking). Had that week in late August been hot, we'd all be scrambling now, triaging what should be picked next. The weather's a gamble, and El Dorado pulled a straight flush this year.

People starting harvest is based on a combination of elevation of the vineyards, variety and wine style. Lower elevation vineyards are traditionally warmer than higher elevation vineyards. Growing the same variety with the same crop load, the lower elevation vineyards will ripen first. With that said, the variety growing matters quite a bit. We can be harvesting Gewurztraminer while Petit Verdot is still going through veraison. Flavors in my samples are showing beautifully at low brix levels. Most importantly, however, acid levels in the grapes are coming in a bit higher (and pH lower) than we traditionally have seen at the same brix levels. The weather has cooperated with us, helping retain this acid which will be important for balance (especially in the whites) and extracting color in the reds.”

Charles Mansfield

[Goldbud Farms Vineyard Management](#)

530-626-6521

“As of Saturday, September 15th, we have harvested about 250 tons of our expected 450 tons for the properties Goldbud Farms manages. We have been focusing primarily on Rhone White grapes and Rhone Reds destined for Rose production thus far. However, that is starting to shift into Grenache Noir and Cab Franc for red production. Our typical client is seeking relatively low brix across most varieties. Grenache clients usually range between 22 and 24 brix for red, while many of our Rhone White and Rose customers prefer 21 or less. Most of our clients actually focus even more attention on pH to drive harvest decisions. I'd expect to move into Syrah and Mourvedre at the beginning of October, to wrap up harvest.

This vintage has been markedly cool, especially the nighttime lows. We are seeing great physiological ripeness in the grapes with low brix and strong acid retention. For that reason, I am especially excited to try the Rosé wines being made from our grapes. The pace is fast but manageable. Our harvest crew is feeling strong with the cool temperatures staving off fatigue.”

Jonathan Pack, [JP Wine Consulting](#)

[Gwillan Estates Vineyard & Winery](#)

530-503-5379

2,318 ft.

(Gwillan Estate makes several El Dorado champagnes)

“We pick all our varieties based solely on flavor and not on Brix except for the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for champagne which are usually between 17-19 Brix. It looks like there are really balanced crop loads this year and I think that both Grenache and Malbec are really going to stand out this year.

We are a week later with the Pinot Noir for champagne and about three weeks later on everything else.

If we can keep this cool weather in the mid 70's to 80's it will turn out to be an amazing harvest. We are experiencing some nice cool nights which will help the fruit slowly ripen to perfection.”

Continued...

2018 El Dorado Harvest report continued...

Kevin Jones, owner

[Lava Cap Winery](#)

530-391-6239

2,700 elevation vineyards

“All of the white grapes processed this week including the Dolcetto have been in the high 23.5s to 24.5 brix level with perfect acidity from 3.4 to 3.5 and a TA of .6-.7. The cool weather has really held up the acidity while the grapes were ripening. Flavors are right on target, very profound apple flavors in the Chardonnay and white peach and melon flavors in the Sauvignon Blanc. Dolcetto was luscious and rich with watermelon flavors, this will be used for our Rosé.

Hopefully we see the temperatures rise this week. Our Bordeaux varieties can hang, but if we get into the rainy season, and it warms up the Zin can literally melt off the vine. To try to avoid this we can move the Zinfandel fruit along, by dropping some clusters that are a little behind the rest of the vine.”

Lexi Boeger

[Boeger Winery](#)

530-386-7673

1200 to 3,500 ft

“Slow and steady, it has been an orderly harvest. We’ve seen very even ripening and slow accumulated sugars. This year is much like the old days like when we harvested in October! Twenty-three tons of Barbera was harvested in one day from a specific zone in our vineyard that is high and flat. Mildew was a worry and there was some mitigation in August. We’ve brought in a lot of reds so far from our lower elevation vineyards including, Merlot, Barbera, Petit Syrah, and Zin.”

For More Information on El Dorado Wine Region:

www.eldoradowines.org

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