

On Harvest 2021

2021 CERTAINLY PRESENTED its share of challenges.

Fortunately, the harvest itself wasn't one of them. Day after day, pick after pick, the 2021 harvest delivered picture-perfect fruit with beautiful flavors.

If you had asked me in August if I thought this might be the case, I might have shaken my head in disbelief.

The weather pattern of 2021 was determined by warmer than normal temps and long dry spells punctuated by short, powerful rains. February brought colliding fronts of warm and cold air that produced an epic ice storm to the region. Bud break occurred in early April, a few weeks ahead of schedule, and the vines stayed ahead of schedule from there on out.

Flowering commenced June 2 at the lower elevations and gradually worked its way up the hill. A torrential mid-month rain dropped yields by 15%. Nine days later the Pacific Northwest experienced a "heat dome" event, with daytime temperatures over 100 degrees for 3 days in row, peaking at 116F in the Dundee Hills.

The vines however, thrived.

"2021 had its challenges... the harvest wasn't one of them"

We have been growing grapes for a long time, but in 2021 the vines truly astonished us. The unirrigated vines stayed pristinely green while much of the vegetation around them withered. The timing was early enough that the newly set clusters didn't show signs of trauma: the hard, BB sized berries were unaffected by the heat spike.

July, August and September continued to be dry. After June's single deluge through mid-September, we experienced an unprecedented 95 days without rain.

However, early September introduced a change in temperature pattern that saved the vintage. The fortnight before harvest is the most critical time in the ripening cycle and 2021 delivered when it counted. Nighttime temperatures plummeted into the 40s, night after night. The cold nights preserved the fragile acidity of the grapes, and the cool mornings allowed the sugars to rise slowly while flavors developed.

Picking commenced on September 10th. Our picking crew this year was small, but mighty. A core crew of just eight picked most of the grapes, with extended family coming

to help on weekends. Days were long. José christened his die-hard picking crew the "Esquadrón de la Muerte" because of their unwillingness to let a single perfect grape escape the shears.

Because of the small crew, the harvest came to the winery in small, measured doses. Yet because of the moderate weather, we were able to pick at ideal ripeness. Walking through the winery in the midst of fermentation this year was an aromatic color wheel, with Pinot gris giving off aromas of elderflower, Chardonnay giving fresh-cut peaches, and the Pinot noir showing rich strawberry and turned earth. We picked the last grapes on October 1, and filled the last barrel on October 18th.

A vintage of wine is an intimate record of how a plant experienced a growing season – literally time in a bottle. 2021 was a year of extremes and dynamic shifts in weather. The 2021 wines taste dynamic and interesting already, a true reflection of the year.



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