

Laurel Glen Vineyard



2011 HARVEST REPORT

November 1st was the last day of the 2011 harvest at Laurel Glen Vineyard. The last block to be picked was the oldest, the 1st Cabernet vines to be planted on the property in 1968.

Patrick Campbell (founder of Laurel Glen Vineyard) and Ray Kaufman (longtime LGV winemaker) showed up for the last day of my first harvest. Probably because I promised them both champagne.



Me, 'helping out.' Notice there isn't much in that bucket. Damn, those grapes tasted good!



If you think November 1 is unusually late to be picking grapes, you would be right!

What a year to become a farmer. It rained every month in 2011 except for August and September. The temperature exceeded 85 degrees perhaps a total of 30 days. This is California! Mediterranean climate, anyone? We are accustomed to

sunshine and dry weather during the growing season.

In terms of farming challenges, too much water means A LOT of extra work in the vineyard to focus the vine's energy on the fruit vs. just getting bigger. It also means a constant danger of mold and rot. Too little heat means ripeness progresses at a nail-bitingly slow pace.

The result of the challenging weather was (1) the 2nd latest start of harvest ever in the 30 year history of Laurel Glen Vineyard and (2) a yield that was about 30% smaller than average.

First Day of Harvest, Friday October 21, 2011:



The challenging weather also re-affirmed to any remaining doubters what a great site for Cabernet Sauvignon this vineyard is. The rocky soils \did a great job of draining off excess water in a timely fashion. The elevation above the fog line and the south-east orientation of the vineyard resulted in capturing every precious hour of sunlight there was in 2011.

So what will the unusual weather mean to the wines of 2011? Here's how Laurel Glen Vineyard winemaker Randall Watkins sees it, "A mild summer with no heat waves provided physiological ripeness at lower sugar levels than normal. Some thin-skinned tight-clustered varietals from cooler regions were affected by botrytis after the mild summer and fall rain showers. However, due to its thick skins and loose clusters, Cabernet Sauvignon dried out and resisted botrytis for a few weeks longer until the fruit was ready to harvest.



Potential alcohols are lower, and long hang time resulted in wines with almost no herbal character and lots of delicious berry fruit, expressing classic Laurel Glen Vineyard character. The mountain tannins in 2011 are smoother than most vintages, meaning wine structure should be more supple and velvety while young."

Randall sorting the first day's pick

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