



Fall Newsletter 2005, Volume 11

Tularosa Basin Wine Harvest Report

The spring of 2005 saw more rain than usual for the time of year and many grape growers spent a lot of time weeding earlier than normal. The harvest of 2005 was also characterized by an early spring freeze on some varieties of grapes namely Chardonnay. This freeze seemed to delay the bud break of most other varieties and reduce the quantity of others. Some vineyards saw a total loss of Chardonnay while others saw only small yields. Merlot also produced a light crop load, again probably due to the earlier spring freeze. Other grape varieties fared quite well such as Sangiovese, Viognier, Tempranillo, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. In fact, Cabernet Sauvignon suffered no known effects. Harvest began on August 06, 2005 and ended on September 27, 2005. The spring freeze seemed also to throw off the ripening order of some varieties. Tempranillo is normally one of the first varieties to be harvested, but this year it was one of the last. At first, some of the grapes were coming in with lower than expected brix (sugar content) so we had to reevaluate our harvesting dates and schedules. Overall crush (the amount of grapes produced into wine this year) was around 55,000 pounds. About 1/2 of last years crush. This is partly due to lower yields and the fact that we contracted for slightly fewer grapes this year. Many of the fruit trees in the area were hit hard by the freeze and most of the peach and apricot trees produced no crop. This we think was one reason that bird damage and pressure was really great this year. We countered the bird pressure by purchasing some 15,000 feet of bird netting. This will come in handy in the future. Quality looks outstanding in some varieties with the Tempranillo and Pinot Noir really standing out.



Vineyard expansion...

Tularosa Vineyards will be planning a 2 acre expansion to add to our current vineyard acreage of 7. This new planting will eventually bring our vineyards to a total of 9 acres. A lot of the work is done in winter laying irrigation pipe and driving grape stakes into the ground. No decision has yet been made as to what variety or varieties will be planted, but we'll give an update in the next newsletter. Vineyards have now become a mainstay in the Tularosa Basin as more vineyards have gone in and rumors of other wineries opening up in the near future. But, remember it all started here first!

Winery happenings.

Tularosa Vineyards' first port wine will be released sometime in October. Port wine is made by adding brandy and fortifying the must at ferment to preserve natural sugars in the grapes/wine. Port wine makes a great winter beverage to sip around the fireplace. It goes extremely well with nuts and chocolate. On a cold day a good glass of port is like a small glass of sunshine. TV wine club members can look forward to it in the January shipment, but it will be available for sale sometime in November.

Medals, PR etc.

So far this year has been good to Tularosa Vineyards in the medal department with 3 medals being won at the New Mexico State Fair recently. The local newspapers are definitely aware now of our growing wine industry as Tularosa Vineyards was featured several times throughout the year. Alamogordo Daily News featured Tularosa Vineyards 4 times this year and Ruidoso News 5 times so far. Sunset magazine also did an online recommendation for our 2003 Shiraz.