



## Fall Newsletter 2006, Volume 15

### Tularosa Basin grape harvest is hampered by rain.

The monsoon season brought the village of Tularosa a whopping 5.85 inches of rain in August, 2006, breaking a 1988 record of 3.83 inches. This was all preceded by months of drought. Flooding was so bad in Alamogordo that streets were closed and a Federal Emergency Management Agency station was set up. The month of July and August 2006 were the wettest in New Mexico in 112 years of records. It didn't take long for New Mexico television channels and newspapers to wonder "What's it going to do for the grape crop?" The two things most winemakers fret when it comes to rain at harvest time is sugar level in the grapes and fungus. Grapevines have tremendous root systems that search the soil for every ounce of water. When the soils are saturated with water the grape berries have a tendency to absorb water and this reduces sugar levels and when sugar levels are reduced so is the alcohol content and body of the wine. Tularosa Vineyards observed no sign of detrimental fungus (a.k.a. black rot) in vineyards this year and the Tularosa Basin came as close as ever to having such problems. While many parts of New Mexico reported a loss of crop and bad quality the Tularosa Basin was noticeably lacking from all, but the local Alamogordo Daily News features. Tularosa Vineyards began harvesting and crushing grapes on July the 28<sup>th</sup> and ended on September the 27<sup>th</sup>. Luckily, there was enough clear days and sunlight between the rains that all of the crops came in relatively timely. The toughest time was had in harvesting Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, which began smoothly on August the 11<sup>th</sup>, but was interrupted by heavy rains. We were unable to receive Cabernet grapes again until August the 18<sup>th</sup>. Finally, we finished up the Cabernet Sauvignon on August the 23<sup>rd</sup>. An 11 day wait! Patience was finally rewarded as the average sugar level at harvest for the Cabernet Sauvignon was still a remarkable 24 brix.

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Brix is the measurement winemakers use to determine ripeness levels and 24 brix is an excellent ripeness level. Experience and timing is everything when it comes to wine making and this year was a real challenge, but the grape crop came to the winery in good condition and overall grape quality is good to excellent. One very positive note is that irrigation for vineyards in July and August was almost not necessary. This year is different and difficult and some farmers reported some crop loss (notably French Colombard) and one had trouble with Zinfandel berries bursting from the rain.

### Tularosa Vineyards Wins 2 medals at Southwest Wine Competition.

Tularosa Vineyards took home two bronze medals from the Toast of Taos featuring the Southwest Wine Competition. Wineries from Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Utah and Arizona were invited to attend. Tularosa Vineyards came home with a bronze medal for our 2004 Cabernet Sauvignon and our 2004 Shiraz.

### Gewürztraminer is back!

After being sold out since May of this year, Tularosa Vineyards is pleased to announce that Gewürztraminer is back and ready to please. It is a wonderful wine with floral/spicy notes and bracing acidity. A great wine to drink with upcoming Thanksgiving Turkey and Holiday meals! Tularosa Vineyards will also be releasing our Muscat Canelli in the next few weeks.

### Dolcetto wine to return to Tularosa Vineyards Lineup!

A very unsung hero of a grape variety that originally hails from the Piedmont area of Italy. The Dolcetto grape makes a red wine that will display good tannin profile which are well integrated, thus leaving a wine with a velvety finish. Tularosa Vineyards first produced a Dolcetto in 1999 and we are pleased to announce that the 2006 Dolcetto is patiently being aged in our barrels.