

## Harvest 2008

The 2008 growing season started with below average winter rainfall, which primarily fell in early winter, for the second year in a row. This predicated smaller than average berry size and lower cluster counts. The combination of an early bud-break and freezing spring temperatures that continued for weeks on end between mid-March and mid-April had devastating effects on many vineyards in the Napa Valley. Some say this was the worst spring frost in Napa Valley in the past 30 years. Some of the young shoots were affected in our D'Adamo and Buckeye vineyards but our other vineyards amazingly escaped unscathed.

During bloom, the extremely hot temperatures coupled with high winds made for a poor berry set. Although this greatly decreased our yields, we benefited from loose medium sized Cabernet clusters.

During the summer there were many wildfires here in Northern California. Many winemakers and viticulturalists worried about the possibility that the grapes could be tainted with smoke flavors. Thankfully, not only were our Piña vineyards unaffected, but I haven't heard of any Napa Valley vineyards with this problem.

The 2008 vintage was approximately 1 week earlier than average. We had two heat-waves back to back at the beginning of harvest (end of August/early September). This resulted in some shriveled berries and very rapid sugar accumulation. These heat waves were also a contributing factor to the extremely low yields. Here at Piña Napa Valley, our grape yields are down approximately 40% lower than average.

After the initial heat waves, the weather remained very mild and temperate ensuring optimum slow ripening and extended hang time conditions. It rained on October 3rd into the 4th, but the amount of rain was very small and the good weather before and after the rain resulted in no negative effects on the crop.

At Piña Napa Valley, we began by harvesting the Ames and Firehouse vineyards on September 8<sup>th</sup> and the Stice's Stone Corral vineyard on September 12<sup>th</sup>. We continued harvesting with the D'Adamo vineyard on September 26<sup>th</sup>. We made several harvest passes through the Wolff vineyard during September and October to ensure harvesting only perfectly ripe fruit. We picked the Buckeye vineyard on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

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