

# VINTAGES

## WEATHER AND HARVEST OVERVIEW, 2000-2008



**distinct. different.**

### 2000

2000 was a slightly below average rain season, with the majority of rain coming in December and January. Early springtime weather warmed quickly with average highs near 80 degrees. Bud break was about two weeks earlier than most years, but the month of May cooled significantly, stalling bloom and berry set for a few weeks. Summer daytime temperatures returned to normal while cooler than average summer nights helped maintain good acidity in the grape. In the end, harvest was just about two weeks later than in most years.

### 2001

The 2001 growing season started with a cold winter with less than average rainfall that led to bud break in late March and a late frost that lowered yields. Bloom occurred under warm conditions followed by very warm winds that caused cluster damage in some microclimates. A protracted heat wave in the early summer kept vines under extreme stress, resulting in a smaller crop size. Summer and fall temperatures remained consistently warm, providing an optimal growing season, though yields were down 50 percent below normal for some vineyards.

### 2002

The 2002 growing season began with a warm, dry winter that yielded the lowest rainfall in five years. Bud break occurred in March with naturally reduced bud count in the grapevines. Spring remained dry and cool. June, July and August were the warmest summer months in five years. The combination of low rainfall and a very warm summer resulted in unusually small berries and clusters. Veraison came early, and the months following consisted of moderate temperatures ideal for maturing grapes over a long growing season.

### 2003

The winter months of the 2003 growing season were warm and dry. This mild winter transformed into a warm spring, which brought bud break in March. Normal hot summer temperatures held throughout fruit sizing, veraison and maturation. By harvest in late fall, fruit ripened into a perfect balance of Brix and pH.

### 2004

2004 was looking to be an ideal season with a warm spring and subsequent very early flowering unmarred by frost. A fairly mild summer followed until the end of August and beginning of September, when periods of temperatures in the high 90s caused rapid sugar jumps in the grapes. After September, cooler weather allowed fruit to hang and develop flavor, and the accelerated harvest provided protection against the earliest onset (mid-October) of the rainy season in years. Many varieties reached maturity in mid-August, one of the earliest harvests on record.



## 2005

2005's rainfall ranks as the eighth wettest year since 1869-1870 when official records began to be published in Paso Robles. The cool, wet spring was followed by a sunny and dry but relatively cool early summer, until July, when daytime highs reached 100 degrees and stayed there for a period of two weeks. Harvest began around the beginning of September and ended the first week in November. Although this harvest resulted in the largest crush on record in the state, winemakers were thrilled with the consistent high quality of wine grapes received.

## 2006

Above average winter rains and a cool spring got 2006 vineyards off to a wet and late start. After an unusual heat wave in late July/early August, cooler than normal summer weather (high 80s to low 90s) returned until September when a cooling trend and cloudy skies delayed the last stage of grape maturity by at least 10 days. Mid-September warmed again and the resulting harvest was delayed but unhurried with beautiful weather persisting into November. Winemakers reported a higher than normal crop (perhaps a shade below 2005's levels) with notable elegance, pure flavors, medium body and comparatively lower alcohol levels.

## 2007

The 2007 vintage was dominated by the cold, dry winter that preceded it. Temperatures dropped into single digits in January, which delayed the onset of flowering and reduced the vigor of the vines. Rainfall levels just 40 percent of normal further stressed the vines. The summer was moderate in temperature, producing a long, slow harvest with yields down 15 to 30 percent from 2005 and 2006. The wines were intensely flavored, dark in color, with surprisingly gentle tannins for such a powerful vintage. Winemakers report that the 2007 vintage has the potential to be a classic one for the Paso Robles region.

## 2008

2008 was a challenging vintage for most of California, with a very cold April resulting in widespread frost damage, wind during flowering causing uneven fruit set, a heat spike in August, and an unusual freeze in early October. Gorgeous weather in late October saved the vintage for many producers. Results will vary depending on varieties planted, with Bordeaux varieties particularly affected by shatter and very low yields, and early-ripening varieties impacted by the August heat spike. Overall yields were below the low levels of 2007 (as much as 50 percent less than normal), but the wines, particularly later-ripening varieties, proving to be generous in flavor and beautifully balanced.

