

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: John Segale
(916) 600-1081**

ANOTHER HARVEST FOR THE RECORD BOOKS FOR SONOMA COUNTY GRAPE GROWERS

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (October 25, 2022)— A record early start on July 29 set a fast pace for the harvest season in Sonoma County and most of the crop is already in for the year. Traditionally, harvest season for grape growers begins in mid-August and runs through early November. However, like every year, farmers dance to the rhythm of Mother Nature and every harvest has its challenges. This year, a heat spike around the Labor Day holiday weekend and rain in mid-September kept farmers in the vineyards and on their toes.

“Mother Nature always promises a harvest dance and 2022 did not disappoint,” said Karissa Kruse, president of Sonoma County Winegrowers. She added, “As with every vintage, our grape growers manage an incredible logistical process, working with their winery partners to pick and deliver the grapes at their optimal ripeness and flavor. Overall, the crop is lighter than average across most varieties for several reasons—the ongoing drought, spring frost, a heatwave and then the mid-September rains—and we’re seeing smaller berry and cluster sizes, packing a stellar quality 2022 vintage.”

Given the ongoing drought, many growers implemented water conservation efforts to minimize their water use, which could also result in a lighter crop compared to past harvests. According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, it’s the driest year to date in the last 128 years, based on data from January through August 2022.

As we head into the dormant season, our grape growers and talented vineyard workforce can pause to celebrate another great harvest, and then it’s right back to work, tending the vines for the next vintage.

Here’s a brief look at what growers are saying about the 2022 harvest from around the Sonoma County appellations:

Alexander Valley

“The 2022 Harvest has been challenging, but each harvest has its challenges, which is why they’re all unique,” said Justin Seidenfeld, senior vice president of winemaking and winegrowing at Rodney Strong Wine Estates. “This year was special because of the team that came together to make everything happen the way we wanted. So far, the wines are showing beautifully in the tanks. It’s still early, but we are off to a good start.”

Dry Creek Valley

“Mother Nature delivered another memorable harvest season in Dry Creek Valley —spring frost, a September heat spell, and drought-driven state-mandated restrictions of irrigation water use,” commented Duff Bevill, founder and partner of Bevill Vineyard Management. “But the 2022 vintage still delivered, and the winemakers were excited about the quality.”

Fort Ross-Seaview

“Exceptional quality, but yields are quite low,” said Jasmine Hirsch, general manager and winemaker at Hirsch Vineyards. “At Hirsch Vineyards, yields are about 50% of normal.”

Petaluma Gap,

“Similar tonnages to last year—30% lower than typical years, most likely due to the drought,” said Scott Welch, director of farming at Jackson Family Wines.

Russian River Valley

“It was our earliest finish of harvest ever in 45 years on Sept. 17,” said Whitney Hopkins of Hopkins River Ranch and Sonoma County Board Alternate Commissioner. “The 2022 harvest was lighter than the past few years. Drought and spring frost may have been factors.

“The quality of the 2022 vintage is good,” said Mark Sanchietti of Sanchietti Farming, Inc., “There was a little rain on the 18th of September, but it didn’t have an effect on the quality. We also had a heat spike in September that expedited harvest.”

Sonoma Valley

“This is a great year,” said Taylor Serres, owner of Serres Ranch. “The heat and the rain were nerve-racking, but the vines held it together and are producing some of the best flavors yet.”

About Sonoma County Winegrowers:

Sonoma County Winegrowers (SCW) was established in 2006 as a marketing and educational organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Sonoma County as one of the world’s premier grape growing regions. With more than 1,800 growers, SCW’s goal is to increase awareness and recognition of the quality, sustainability and diversity of Sonoma County’s grapes and wines through dynamic marketing and educational programs targeted to wine consumers and influencers around the world.

In 2014, Sonoma County’s winegrowing community embarked on a major initiative to have all Sonoma County vineyards certified sustainable. Today, 99% of the vineyard acreage in Sonoma County has completed certification by a third-party auditor making Sonoma County the most sustainable winegrowing region in the world. In addition, in 2020, SCW was a pilot partner in a climate adaptation program to learn how local farmers could create custom farm plans to be part of the climate solution and leaders in this movement. SCW’s sustainability efforts have been recognized with California’s highest environmental honor, the 2016 Governor’s Environmental and Economic Leadership Award (GEELA). Learn more at www.sonomawinegrape.org.