

2018

Vintage Report



DOMAINE CARNEROS.

TEMPERATURE

- Daily temperature was one of the defining features of the harvest.
- The temperatures were extremely mild with no significant peaks aside from the 4th of July, when we experienced a brief heat spell over 2 days.
- Start date of harvest was very typical, the middle of August.
- If not for the poor-ish set, we could have had an even larger harvest than we did. Even though berry counts per cluster were small – the berries that were there sized up and expanded to make up the cluster weight.
- The growing degree days in 2011 was 2121, and 2018 was 2096. Which means 2018 was cooler than what we regard as the coolest vintage of the last decade. While temperature tracked very close with 2011, the seasons were quite different due to the unusually late flowering in 2011. In other words, 2011 was late because it started late. 2018 was late because the cool weather allowed cell expansion to increase cropload, and this took longer to ripen.

But, at the end of the day, we love the way the wines are tasting. We got a nice range of flavors in the Pinot noir and Chardonnay cuvees. And on the still wine side the colors are deep and saturated.

TONNAGE

We had our largest harvest since 2012. This enabled us to make some finer cuts in the cellar. The result is a good supply of high quality cuvees to make our blends.

SUMMARY

The growing season combined interesting aspects of two recent vintages. As noted above the temperatures in 2018 tracked identically with 2011 but the vintages were markedly different due to flowering dates and cropload. The '18 cropload was similar to that in '12 on our ranches, and I think it was similar for the same reason – unchecked cell expansion after set due to prolonged cool weather. At the end of the day we were quite lucky that we had only one rain event the first days of October. This may have been a blessing for wineries as it gave them some breathing room to open up more tanks. Finally, perhaps the biggest anomaly of the season was the chemistry. We had historically high Malic acid levels in Pinot noir and Chardonnay which also indicated delayed ripening. 2018 will always be remembered as the year we picked Chardonnay in October.



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