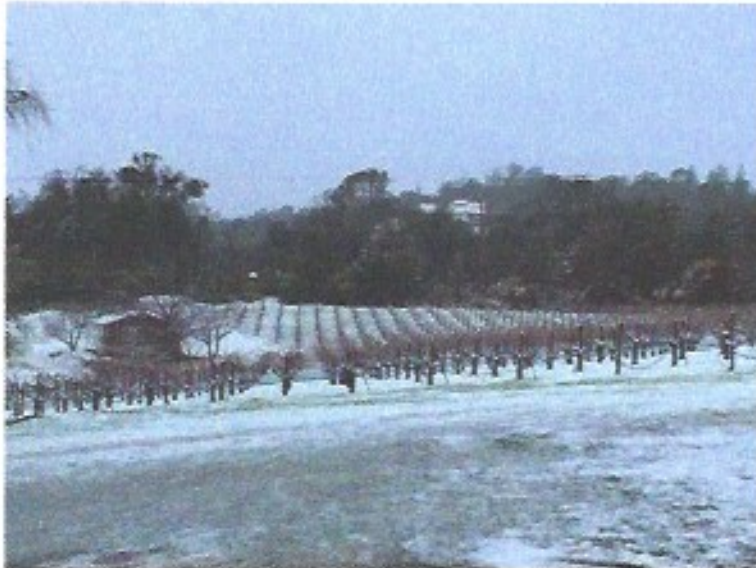


Winter Report from DAMAS Vineyards, Fiddletown California
February 17, 2017

HOLY COW! We have had more than twenty inches of rain since January 1. Rain, Rain, and yet more Rain, that's the story from here. I know--after five years of drought, we are not allowed to complain. But between you and me, there are days when I miss the sun. Our foul weather gear and rubber boots have been getting quite a workout lately.



We woke up to snow one morning in January, and had to rush out to the garden to shake the snow off the polypropylene raised bed covers and straighten out the collapsed wire hoops holding them up. Snow is a worry for our olive trees and live oaks, which still have leaves to collect the heavy snow. Our olive trees did fine, but we've had five big oak trees fall down, two on our fence. Like most of our neighbors, we'll have no shortage of firewood for years to come.

The creeks and rivers are rushing torrents, with the sound of waterfalls ringing through the woods. We have a seasonal creek that I thought dried up five years ago, but it came back this winter, flowing stronger than ever. Our next-door neighbor planted 5,000 more grape vines this year, and installed 4-inch water lines to irrigate them. That's the sort of thing that would make anyone sharing the aquifer nervous about the possibility of wells running dry next summer, so we are extra-appreciative of all the water falling from the sky this winter.

The vineyard is very soggy, but we have scattered over a ton of compost along the vine rows, and we have been "pre-pruning" our dormant, head-trained 20-year old vines. We are doing this so that we will be able to get the tractor into the vineyard (if the ground ever dries out) to mulch the canes, disc, rototill, and replant a cover crop to put nitrogen back into the soil. It would be great to start that work now, so the cover crop can get a good start before the heat turns on, but it's just too wet. All in all, we are hopeful for a good year, as we should have plenty of ground water this summer. Recently, a famous winemaker told us that he thinks wine grapes taste best when the vines are just coming out of a drought, so we look forward to testing his theory.

We have lots of olive oil in stock from the November harvest, so we have decided to hold an unprecedented **SALE** on our precious olive oil. This oil is estate-grown using organic methods, hand picked, stone milled, and unfiltered. When you buy our olive oil, you can be sure you really are getting extra virgin olive oil. If you place your order this weekend, we will have some bottling to do on yet another rainy weekend (and avoid working on tax returns, yay!). To order, email us, Thanks—stay dry!

