

DAMAS VINEYARDS WINE CLUB NEWSLETTER

AND 25TH HARVEST REPORT - FALL 2024



had several weeks of temperatures in the mid-90s, which grapes adore. The vines began to play a game of Hurry-Up, catching us a bit by surprise as the uneven skin color and green seeds and pulp appeared to mature almost overnight. Lab results indicated--suddenly and definitively--that it was time to pick NOW.



With just a few weeks of respite, this summer was relentlessly hot with temperatures in the upper 90s and multiple days over 100 degrees. The garden took the heat badly. The cucumbers went on strike early, and tomatoes seemed to cook in their skins. The winter squashes we planted did not fare well, although we got a surprise load of colorful decorative squashes that must have come from errant seeds in the compost heap.

In August, a parade of triple-digit temperatures slowed the vineyard ripening down. A normal, mid-September harvest still seemed possible--until we got a week of very cool fall weather that slowed the ripening again and had us thinking it would be a late harvest, after all--end of September or perhaps even early October. But then we



We scrambled to assemble a picking crew, leafing team, drivers, trucks, trailers, tie-downs, clean bins, forklift services, and refreshments for a September 8 harvest. We harvested seven tons that day, but due to transportation and crew scheduling constraints, we had to postpone picking the remaining fruit until the following weekend. This was a bit nerve-wracking, as we had several days of blow-torch heat and windy conditions that week, so had to continue judicious irrigating to prevent the grapes from becoming raisins. In the end, we harvested a total of nine tons of grapes with excellent-tasting juice and great color. Many thanks to the pickers, leafers, and drivers who made it all possible!

Other grape growers across northern California had similar experiences. It seemed everyone was rushing to pick and transport fruit in a frenzy at the same time. We harvested a total of nine tons this year, close to our previous (pre-drought) all-time high production. We kept almost two tons for our own label, DAMAS estate-grown Zinfandel, that will be made for us by Eric Hays of Chateau Davell (below)--the same guy who made our award winner (Double Gold, Best in Class, Best Amador Zinfandel!) in 2019. We hope the 25th harvest will be as yummy as the 20th harvest.



Let's pause a moment to reflect that this is DAMAS Vineyards' 25th commercial harvest! That's a full quarter-century of cover cropping, irrigating, fertigating, pruning, cane thinning, leaf pulling, tasting, testing, harvesting, blending, bottling, labeling, and marketing! In other words, 25 years of blood, sweat, tears, and FUN. **In honor of our 25th harvest, we're having a rare sale, with 25% off case purchases and even discounts on our EVOO for orders placed in September.**



Despite the hot weather, it's been a summer full of biking, swimming, and socializing with friends and neighbors. The Thursday night farmers' market in Plymouth has been particularly fun this summer with lots of people, music, food, wine, and local farm products. A big draw has been Stewart Lyon's baby goat, Clover, who attends every week. Clover's mom had triplets and rejected her (too many mouths to feed!), but Stewart and Andrea bottle-fed her and plan to reintroduce her to the herd soon. Mara fell in love and got to bottle-feed and cuddle her new BFF a few times!

Another highlight was the annual Farms of Amador fall fundraiser dinner, a true farm-to-fork event. DAMAS Vineyards was an event sponsor, and our estate grown olives and olive oil were incorporated into the delicious menu. Chef Andy of Crossover Kitchen catered this event and loves using our oil in his pesto and vinaigrettes. Speaking of olives, the hot summer weather hasn't fazed our olives, which look plump and plentiful, with no signs of olive fruit fly damage. We're looking forward to a November olive harvest, with DAMAS Olio Nuevo hopefully available before Thanksgiving.

Enjoy the lovely Fall weather! Until next time... 🙌

