

2019 JORDAN ALEXANDER VALLEY

Vintage Report



Bookended by heavy rains and wildfire, Mother Nature certainly put on a show in 2019. Neither the deluge nor the smoke negatively impacted Jordan's vineyards or wines, but they did brand the vintage as one we'll never forget. Despite all the challenges, we're extremely excited about the 2019 Jordan Alexander Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. It's truly a showstopper. – Maggie Kruse, winemaker

GROWING SEASON

Winter brought record-breaking rainfall, which delayed bud break into late March and early April. Combined with cool temperatures, this put us on track for a normal start time for harvest—well into September rather than the August starts we experienced during the drought years. The biggest surprise early in the growing season was the two inches of rainfall we received in early May, which is a rare occurrence in Northern California. Fortunately, many vineyards had not begun flowering due to the cool spring, so the rain did not significantly affect yields. With average temperatures throughout the summer, fruit development progressed nicely.

VINEYARDS

The final blend for the 2019 Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon began with 51 vineyard blocks from Jordan Estate and 15 family growers. We select our vineyard sites for their well-drained, gravelly soils in the warmer Alexander Valley, which allow the grapes to gain physiological maturity without sacrificing pure varietal character, bright acidity and moderate sugar levels. To ensure that we receive the best-quality fruit, Jordan's growers are paid by the acre rather than by the ton, and are further rewarded for farming decisions that enhance quality. It is this necessary combination of climate, soil and husbandry that shares a common thread with the grand cru classé Bordeaux that inspire our style of winemaking.

VITICULTURE

Due to a heavy crop that had formed by June, our vineyard crew made an aggressive pass throughout the vineyards to drop any clusters that were lagging in maturity. This practice of thinning after fruit set is a sacrifice of quantity for flavor, allowing the vines to focus their energy on growing a smaller, more flavorful crop. In August during veraison, when the grapes start to turn color and soften, we went through each vineyard block again and dropped any clusters that were unevenly ripening and behind in maturity.

HARVEST

Picking began as normal on September 13, but temperatures shifted dramatically in the middle of harvest. On September 25, the high reached 103 degrees Fahrenheit; the following day it peaked at only 69 degrees. When we began crushing merlot, we marveled at the incredible fruit flavors and intensity. This would be the second outstanding harvest in a row in which the weather cooperated and yields were above average. The last of the grapes made their way into the hopper on October 17. Six days later, the Kincadee Fire broke out in a mountainous area several miles northeast of Jordan. Despite road closures, a small crew made it into the winery to pump over the tanks and immediately close the lids to protect the wines from any smoke. A few days later, authorities issued a mandatory evacuation order for Healdsburg and the surrounding area—including Jordan. When we were finally able to return to Jordan a few days later, we quickly assessed all of the wine in tanks; they all smelled fantastic, with intense black-fruit aromas. Tannins were beautifully balanced even after pressing, and they only became smoother with aging.

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