

ESTABLISHED 1977
LAKE SONOMA
WINERY

EST. 1863
VALLEY OF THE MOON
WINERY

2019 *Sonoma Vintage Report*

2019 started off cool and cloudy, with high ground moisture from heavy rains in the winter and early spring. After a late growing start, Sonoma County experienced a heat wave in late spring, spurring vigorous growth. Early summer remained moderate, with gradual progression into flowering in mid-June. Cool, dry evenings helped retain crisp acidity in the vines as the fruit set. As with most growing seasons in Sonoma, the vineyards required extra care for canopy management: thinning shoots and leaves throughout the season to encourage airflow and sunlight in the fruiting zone. Many blocks also had a fruit thinning pass during veraison to remove unripe clusters and promote balanced ripening and elevate quality.

Ripening occurred slowly and steadily through the late summer, with Sauvignon Blanc kicking off our harvest on September 9th, followed shortly by Chardonnay. A heat spike in mid-to-late September pushed harvest into high gear for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from Carneros region and the Old Vine Zinfandel in Glen Ellen. For the remainder of the season, temperatures returned to an ideal balance of warm, dry days in the mid-70s and crisp nights below 50F: ideal conditions for the balance of harvest with later ripening Sonoma Valley Zinfandels, Petite Sirah, Malbec and Alexander Valley and Sonoma Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

The Valley of the Moon family grew with additions to the harvest cellar crew in July and August, adding some youthful experience to the seasoned veterans. With the goal of continuously improving our environmental practices, extra consideration was put into water recycling, reducing waste and improving work efficiencies. The fresh eyes on the team were able to identify and redeploy production equipment that had been tucked away in the corners of the cellar.

As expected, “public safety power shutoffs” foretold by our local utility company came to pass in September and October due to high winds and dry conditions. Luckily the new addition of a backup power generator allowed us to continue harvest and crush. There were just a few exciting days of power failure that led to some innovative teamwork to get the final lots of Lazy Dog Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon pressed off skins on November 4.

Now that we are well into winter we are pleased with the focused acidity, detail and viscosity of the white wines and supple tannin, balanced alcohol and fruit intensity of the reds as the malo-lactic fermentations complete and their full potential begins to reveal itself. Our main focus in winemaking for this vintage has been maintaining varietal authenticity through timing the picks, maintaining acidity and managing alcohol and tannin levels. This focus will continue as we proceed through oak aging – mixing new and older barrels to keep oak impact secondary to the personality of the vineyard’s fruit.

Our crew is very proud of the work we have completed this past year – and the refinements we continue to make in our winemaking. We cannot wait to get these wines out to the thirsty wine-loving public!

- Valley of the Moon and Lake Sonoma Winemaking Team