



2008 ARGYLE VINTAGE NOTES

Very dry and cold spring delayed heat accumulation leading to late bud break and late flowering. When flowering occurs in July (around end of first week in 2008), the weather is warm and sunny. This leads to excellent pollination and set of a rather large crop of grapes. But, we cannot guarantee that there is not enough sunlight and heat left in the growing season to ripen a "normal crop". Crop estimation becomes a very important feature of vineyard management! This year, the average cluster size was a bit lower than what we've seen over the last few years. If one defaults to the old, tired mantra of one cluster per shoot, they likely ended up significantly short in crop. But, its still critical to reduce crop by say ½ ton or one ton lower than normal.

The last years we had July flowering were 1991, 1993, 1996, and 1999, with none in the 2000's. Is it possible that new comers missed the historical lessons of almost ten years ago? If thinning is severe, the vine seems to miss the message that it actually has a crop to ripen. So, it is an important balancing act to get the crop not too low, and not too high, to ensure proper ripening before the rain starts and doesn't stop until next July!

August brought needed rainfall. More rain in August than any one month of March, April, and May! This shot of moisture, I am sure, helped the vine shift into veraison gear by September.

In 2008, Argyle started chipping away at sparkling fruit last days of September and first of October. Brilliant sunshine, brilliant natural acidity, and brilliant fruit flavors that seem to make some of the most memorable of Argyle Sparkling wines.

October 3 brought a good shot of rain, but less than predicted. In a normal vintage, this would not be good. But, the cold rain seemed to perk the somewhat droughty vines right up. Vintners were wringing their hands over some more predicted rain. Frost on October 11th knocked off some vineyards in the valley floor.

As usually happens, predicted rain was called off. Dry, Indian summer weather took hold. Ripening and picking occurred at a nice even pace. Last day of picking, 29 October.

White wines are bright and fruity. Nice white peach in Chardonnay, and fantastic, proper botrytis in our Riesling for very ripe Riesling flavors.

Pinots are very dark colored, berries are like biting into an apple texture. Very balanced, and seems to be something like '93 crossed with '99 character.

Rollin Soles