

HARVEST TIME 2013 AT HISTORICAL NORTHERN CALIFORNIA VINEYARDS

By: Laurie Jo Miller Farr - Sep 19, 2013

September is California Wine Month. The evenings are becoming cooler, nightfall is creeping in earlier, and the harvest moon is rising over California wine country, where ripe grapes may be picked at night by hand or machine. Floodlights pulled along by tractors illuminate vines heavy with grape bunches clipped and collected in the wee hours before dawn. Cool to the touch with bright fruit flavors, these grape clusters boasting ideal sugar levels and crisp acids are delivered to the winemakers.

THE GOLDEN STATE

Raise a glass to healthy 137-year-old Zinfandel and century-old Chardonnay vines, first planted in the Central Valley. Cheers to Pinot Noir, as well as Viognier. More than a thousand famous AVAs, which are



DISEASE

Survival of the fittest in the industry. The 18th Amendment in 1920. Those 14 years of prohibition nearly wiped out the state's production, leaving only 140 wineries in operation. Today, California has over 100,000 acres planted under vine, accounting for 90 percent of the world's supply of wine, Italy, and Spain.

JUDGMENT OF PARIS

Since the surprise results of the 1855 tasting test 30 years later, California wines beating out France's reputation, 21st-century California

GOLD RUSH DAYS

A small stone fountain at the Murrieta's Well, marks the spot where a grateful bunch of bandits 16 years later, a drink, it served as a hiding place for Robin Hood or "El Zorro" by biographical interpretations. The soil provide a hospitable environment for renowned Bordeaux wineries.

Harvesting at night, Murrieta's Well is part of Wente Family Estates, America's oldest continuously operated, family-owned winery.



CRAZY FOR WINE

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Vines planted before 1960 are classified as old by the Historical Vineyard Society. At Bechthold Vineyard in **Lodi, California**, an unusual 95 percent of the vines are 127 years old. They produce Cinsault, which is one of the more unusual varietals from the northern portion of Central Valley, 90 miles east of San Francisco and famous for its sustainable farming methods. As Camron King of the Lodi Winegrape Commission points out, "Temperatures typically vary by as much as 45 degrees from daytime highs above 90 F to nighttime lows around 50 F" in the historically rich Lodi region.

2013 grapes receiving very good comments from the winemakers.