

# Wine Industry

## Tale of two harvests in Idaho

November freeze reduces yields but not quality, winemakers say

By SEAN ELLIS  
Capital Press

CALDWELL, Idaho — Last November's bitter cold snap has significantly reduced Idaho winegrape production this year.

But vintners and growers say the smaller harvest is resulting in concentrated fruit flavors and winegrape quality is excellent.

Winemaker Martin Fujishin said some vineyards look normal but others have produced close to nothing.

"It has kind of been a tale of two harvests," he said. "There are some vineyards that didn't have anything on them and some vineyards came out of it just fine and yielded very normally."

He said the reduced harvest is due largely to the four-day November freeze, when temperatures fell suddenly from near 70 degrees to near or below zero in many parts of the Treasure Valley, where most of Idaho's winegrapes are grown.

The temperature fell to as low as minus-6 degrees in some parts of the valley.

"The plants just didn't react well to going from 70 degrees to zero degrees in three ... days," Fujishin said.

The good news, he added, is that grape quality has been superb.

"I'm super tickled with what's come in," he said.

Bitner Vineyards owner Ron Bitner estimates his production will be down by 30 to 50 percent, and he said some growers with small blocks lost everything this year.

But, he added, "The fruit looks good. It's good, clean



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Martin Fujishin, left, and Glen Lacey sort Petit Verdot grapes at Koenig Winery near Caldwell, Idaho, on Oct. 2. Fujishin and other vintners say Idaho's winegrape harvest is smaller this year but grape quality is excellent.



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Petit Verdot wine grapes wait to be sorted at Koenig Winery near Caldwell, Idaho, on Oct. 2.

fruit."

The impact of the cold snap varied a lot by location.

"I have two vineyards 1.5 miles apart," Bitner said. "One was really hammered and the other one wasn't."

"Depending on where the

location of your vineyard was, some people got hit hard," said Hat Ranch Winery owner Tim Harless.

He said his production will be down by about 15 percent "but quality looks wonderful."

Skyline Vineyards Manager Dale Jeffers estimates his total production could be down by as much as 30 to 40 percent, but he's excited about the flavor profile and quality of the grapes that have been picked.

"All the winemakers are saying the quality looks pretty good," he said. "Hopefully, it will be a winner vintage for a loser crop as far as quantity goes."

Fujishin, who teaches viticulture at Treasure Valley Community College, said vineyards on high ground tended to whether the cold snap better than vineyards lower in the valley.

The take-home message, he said, is that "having a good site is the most paramount thing to do here in Idaho and the Treasure Valley."

## Economy, social media push consumers to higher-end wines

By TIM HEARDEN  
Capital Press

DAVIS, Calif. — The refined palates of the millennial generation are pushing purchasing trends toward more expensive wines, a pair of University of California-Davis surveys has found.

California's wine industry is splitting its sales above and below the \$10-per-bottle mark as overall consumption rises and consumers put a growing emphasis on premium wines, industry leaders told the university.

While the overall increase in wine sales in recent years has been attributed to children growing up accustomed to seeing it at the dinner table and then drinking it as adults, the preference for higher-end wines might suggest it's becoming more of a beverage for special occasions.

But the improving economy in some sectors has given many millennials the spending power to enjoy higher-end wines more frequently, said Robert Smiley, a professor and dean emeritus in UCD's Graduate School of Management.

"It makes the winery owners very optimistic," Smiley told the Capital Press. "Those people are going to grow in income as they move through the demographic chain."

"We have a sector of people that are doing well," he said. "If you went back five years ago, that wasn't the case. People were trading down."

The purchasing trends were among several notable bits of information found in the surveys of the heads of 24 wine companies and of 187 California wine professionals, including grape growers and wine producers.

Among other findings is that professionals expect to face

more challenges with water availability and environmental issues such as air quality and increased traffic in wine-growing regions. Company leaders are noticing more consolidation among wholesalers and retailers, creating greater competition among wine producers as they jockey for limited shelf space in stores, according to the university.

On the subject of consumer trends, 48 percent of wine professionals agreed that wine buyers are increasingly seeking unique experiences. They're also using social media to make more of their purchases and compare varietals and tastes, the researchers say.

"The product appeals to people that are savvy with regard to the web," Smiley said. "They're learning about wine through discussions with other people and with proprietors. The product itself lends itself to the skill set of millennials. They're going online, forming groups, interacting with the winery and doing a lot of things that didn't used to happen."

The surveys come as overall wine prices and sales values are trending upward, partly because of drought-induced low grape yields. The average price per ton for all varieties in 2014 was \$743, up 4 percent from 2013, reported the National Agricultural Statistics Service. Grapes produced in Napa County averaged \$4,077 per ton last year, a 10 percent jump from 2013, according to NASS.

U.S. wine exports, 90 percent of which were from California, reached \$1.49 billion in winery revenues in 2014, the second-highest dollar value for U.S. wine exports and a 64 percent increase from five years ago, according to the San Francisco-based Wine Institute.

### Plowing a Path for the Cure

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## The Power of Exercise in Breast Cancer Survivors

By Elizabeth Mendes

Getting regular exercise is important for breast cancer survivors' continued health. Physical activity can help lessen certain side effects of treatment, such as fatigue and depression, and has been shown to reduce risk of recurrence and improve survival.

The American Cancer Society, as well as the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recommends cancer survivors get 150 minutes of moderate or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity physical activity, along with at least 2 strength training sessions, each week.

Few survivors, however, are getting enough exercise for it to be beneficial, according to a recent study conducted by the Yale Cancer Center and Yale School of Public Health. Barriers to exercise such as cost or not knowing how to get started need to be eliminated, says Melinda Irwin, Ph.D., study co-author and co-director of the cancer prevention and control program at the Yale Cancer Center.

Irwin is well versed in the vital role exercise can play in improving the lives of breast cancer survivors. She has conducted several studies about the impact of exercise on breast cancer survivors. Her early research on the topic, which was funded in part by grants from the American Cancer Society, was among the first to show that in breast cancer survivors, exercise lowers

levels of insulin and a hormone-like substance called insulin-like growth factor-1 (IGF-1). High levels of these are linked to breast cancer.

Irwin's studies have also found that women who engage in exercise after breast cancer are more likely to lose weight and body fat. Being overweight or obese has been shown to increase risk for recurrence of breast cancer and the risk of dying from it.

More recently, Irwin found that exercise also helps reduce the joint pain brought on by the hormone therapy given to some women after breast cancer surgery in order to reduce the risk of recurrence. Many women stop taking this type of medication due to the pain they experience. In Irwin's study, women who exercised were more likely to report a reduction in pain from moderate to mild. "This is important because in turn it will lead to better quality of life and better adherence to the medication, which we know strongly improves their prognosis," says Irwin.

### Bottom Line

Ultimately, when it comes to exercise, for breast cancer survivors, "anything is better than nothing," says Irwin. "Even brisk walking can be beneficial," and of course cost effective, Irwin notes.

Irwin hopes the results of her studies and others will influence the way doctors and health insurance companies handle exercise. "This research gives more information to insurance companies to say these exercise lifestyle programs are effective and you should reimburse for them."

As far as doctors go, Irwin hopes they take an even more active role in encouraging exercise in breast cancer patients. "Patients will really listen to their doctors, so it will help if we can get the doctors to remind patients of the importance of exercise and help them try to find a community [exercise] program."

She also thinks that it may benefit patients if their doctors begin a discussion about exercise at diagnosis.

During this time, "there needs to be lifestyle based discussions - we cannot wait until they are 1 to 2 years out from diagnosis," Irwin says. "Doctors need to have the discussion upfront along with other treatment options because exercise is also a treatment and can help prevent weight gain during cancer treatment."



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