



Emily Hoard/The News-Review via AP

Tempranillo grapes grow on the vine at Freed Estate winery on Sept. 29.

## Wine grape harvest underway in the Umpqua Valley

By EMILY HOARD

The (Roseburg) News-Review

ROSEBURG — Harvest is underway for wine grape growers in the Umpqua Valley, many of whom have been picking their grapes earlier than usual.

Mike and Pam Freed, owners of Freed Estate Winery in Winston, grow 12 acres of Tempranillo, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Viognier and Merlot grapes along the South Umpqua River. Originally from Hawaii, the Freeds planted their first grapes in 2000, and all Freed Estate wines are made from grapes grown on their own vineyard.

The tasting room opened three years ago and features local paintings, wood work and ceramics, as well as jewelry made by the Freed's youngest son and manager of the vineyard, Bryan Freed. An art enthusiast, Pam Freed painted the watercolor label on the wine bottles.

This season, the Freeds began picking their Viognier and Tempranillo grapes during the last week of September, and the majority of the grapes are expected to be ready for harvest by mid-October.

"The tonnage is about normal so far," Mike Freed said. "It's been a good growing season."

Mike Freed said this year's Viognier grapes were picked two weeks earlier than last year, but the timing is consistent with 2013 and 2014.

The Freeds measure the sugar content in a wine grape by degrees brix in order to know when the grapes are ripe for picking.

Though it varies per grape, 24 degrees brix is usually considered to be ripe, and the grapes go up about one degree brix per week during sunny days.

"Once a week, we do a test and randomly pick so many grapes and test the sugar, pH and acids," Pam



Emily Hoard/The News-Review via AP

Pam Freed, co-owner of Freed Estate Winery with husband Mike Freed clips a bunch of Tempranillo grapes at the Winston, Ore. winery on Sept. 29. The Freeds planted their first grapes in 2000, and all Freed Estate wines are made from grapes grown on their own vineyard.

Freed said.

"Another indicator that the grapes are ripe is when the birds start coming in droves," Mike Freed added.

Freed Estate uses multiple methods of deterring the birds from getting to the harvest before they do. Netting, shimmering bird tape, bird cannons and recordings of loud hawk screeches are some ways to scare off the birds.

Once the grapes are ready, the Freeds clip the bunches of grapes, load them into buckets and transport them into a large bin where they sort out the leaves.

The Freeds encourage wine enthusiasts to sample the fruits of their labor.

"Come by for a taste," Mike Freed said.

Becker Vineyard in Roseburg is another estate grown vineyard in the Umpqua Valley that planted its first grapes in 2000. Owner Charlie Becker started by selling the grapes to other local wineries before he opened the tasting room and began selling wine in 2008.

This season, Becker started picking his Marechal Foch grapes on Aug. 15 and said by now the harvest of his 10 varieties is coming to a close.

"We're definitely a little early this year, not incredibly early. I think most of the vineyard owners would agree that the season is just about over with. They're going to

be struggling to get the last of their grapes in," Becker said.

For Rod and Nina Pace, owners of Anindor Vineyards in Elkton, this has been a banner year for harvesting in terms of climate. Anindor, a name which includes both the owners' names spelled backwards, harvested about 40 tons of its estate fruit this season, averaging almost three tons per acre.

"This year was the earliest harvest we've done at the vineyard," Pace said. Harvest began on Sept. 1 and finished by the end of the month. Until 2013, harvest had begun in October for Anindor, but the last three years have been experiencing earlier harvests.

Pace said the warm spring and

dry summer contributed to the quality of his grape varieties, Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Gewuerztraminer, Riesling and Baco Noir. A hot August caused the grapes to ripen quickly, which Pace said was good because they were able to harvest before the rainy season.

"It's a great year for Oregon wines," Pace said.

From the 13-acre vineyard at Anindor, the grapes are made into wine at Brandborg Winery in Elkton.

"This is going to be one of the best years for Oregon Pinot and people should really be looking forward to the release of it next year," Pace said.

Greg Jones, a climatologist of 25 years and son of Abacela owners Earl and Hilda Jones, is a professor at Southern Oregon University who researches how climate affects wine grapes in Oregon and worldwide.

"The region has the tendency to be able to ripen quite a few different varieties very well because it doesn't have any extremes," Jones said.

Looking at the range of climates available for wine grape growing, Jones said the Umpqua Valley is the "sweet spot or Goldilocks type area" because it's not too hot or too cold, and it's not prone to extreme weather.

"This vintage looks pretty good and I think wine growers are going to end up being happy about it," Jones said.

This is the fourth consecutive warm vintage the Umpqua Valley has had, with good growth cycles and little pressure from pests and diseases.

"The vines showed what was happening because they were very early in terms of their growth cycles, and harvest was very early this year," he said. "People are very close to being finished, and typically the harvest goes way into the middle or late October."

## Quesadillas for dinner on Halloween

By KATIE WORKMAN

Associated Press

If you have kids, then you know that thinking about dinner on Halloween is not easy.

Getting the kids out the door with a little something in their stomachs besides candy is one of the few things you can do to wrangle a bit of order into this free-for-all holiday.

My kids are too old to really rein in their candy consumption, so I just make something simple, think of some faraway yoga pose and look forward to rooting around in their bags when they get back.

Quesadillas fit the bill nicely for Halloween: Kids can pick up the cheesy wedges by hand and eat while they look around for the missing pieces of their costumes. After they are on their way, the quesadillas pair nicely with a glass of wine for the grownups left manning the door at home (and the friends who are willing to hang out with them).

This recipe's particular combination of cheese, chicken and vegetables makes my family happy, but quesadillas are a wonderful springboard for combining all kinds of ingredients, so feel free to use what you like and what's in your fridge. If you have left-over, simply cooked chicken, use it here. If not, this is what rotisserie chickens were meant for. The olives are optional, but my kids love them.

These make fat quesadillas, which are so much more soul-satisfying than flat, under-filled ones. I'd much rather have two wedges of slightly overstuffed quesadillas than four wedges of skinny ones. If you prefer differently, use more tortillas and fill them with less stuff.

You can keep the quesadillas warm on a baking sheet in a 250-degree oven for 20 to 30



Sarah Crowder via AP

Spinach, mushroom, and chicken quesadillas.

minutes. Cut them into wedges just before serving.

In addition to sour cream and salsa, guacamole or diced avocado makes fine toppings.

Katie Workman has written two cookbooks focused on easy, family-friendly cooking, "Dinner Solved!" and "The Mom 100 Cookbook." She blogs at <http://www.themom100.com/about-katie-workman/>

### SPINACH, MUSHROOM, AND CHICKEN QUESADILLAS

Servings: 4

- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar
- 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 8 ounces sliced mushrooms, any kind, or a mix
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 cup roughly chopped spinach
- Kosher or coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
- 8 8-inch flour tortillas
- 1 cup shredded cooked chicken
- ¼ cup chopped pitted black olives (optional)
- Sour cream and salsa to serve

Combine the two cheeses in a small bowl.

Heat 2 teaspoons of the butter in a skillet with a cover over medium heat. When the butter has melted, add the mushrooms and sauté for about 8 minutes. The mushrooms will soften and probably release some liquid as they cook. Continue cooking until all of the liquid has been released, and evaporated, and the mushrooms start to brown a bit. Add the minced garlic and stir for 30 seconds. Add the spinach, season with salt and pepper, and saute for two minutes until the spinach has wilted. Turn the vegetables onto a plate and set aside.

Wipe out the skillet, then return it to medium heat and add a half teaspoon of butter. Place a tortilla in the pan and cook for 30 seconds, then flip the tortilla. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of the cheese mixture over half of the quesadilla, and distribute about ¼ (a couple of tablespoons) of both the sautéed vegetable mixture and the shredded chicken over the cheese, as well as some of the chopped olives, if desired. Top that with another 2 tablespoons of the shredded cheese. Flip the bare half of the tortilla over the filling, cover the pan, and sauté for about 2 minutes, until the bottom is golden and the cheese has started to melt, then use a spatula to flip the half-moon quesadilla, and continue to cook, uncovered, until all of the cheese is melted and the underside is browned, 2 to 3 minutes.

Remove the quesadilla to a cutting board and let it sit for a minute before you slice into two or three wedges. Repeat until all of the quesadillas are cooked. Serve with salsa and sour cream.

Nutrition information per serving: 569 calories; 259 calories from fat; 29 g fat (16 g saturated); 0 g trans fats; 87 mg cholesterol; 628 mg sodium; 48 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 31 g protein.