Airlie Winery makes the best of a sunny fall day to bring in the bounty of 2017

## By Jolene Guzman

The Itemizer-Observer

AIRLIE — Harvest season has started, stopped and started again this fall at Airlie Winery.

Some of the 2017 vintage is in barrels, while another part still hangs in the vineyard, said winery owner Mary Olson.

Monday, a harvest crew took advantage of sunny conditions to pick grapes and haul them to the winery. They may only have a few days before rains return.

Olson said the growing season has been unusual, with a wet spring, hot summer and now late-season rain.

"It's been weirder than normal, but there is no normal," she said as she plucked grapes from the vines.

Seasons like this make her grateful for the talents of the vineyard's winemaker, Elizabeth Clark.

"Not very often, but once in a while, you get a perfect vintage and all you can do is mess it up," she said. "But most of the time it takes a lot of skill, not only in the vineyard, but in the winery, as well.

Clark said this season's fruit is different that the last couple years' harvest, which produced some "big, burly wines." She likes the challenge this season presents.

"I would imagine more winemakers prefer the fruit that is coming in because it is more acid-driven, which makes more delicate flavors," she said.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Leaves on trees and vines are changing color at Airlie Hills Winery. A picking crew took advantage of favorable conditions to pick grapes on Monday.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer One of Mary Olson's dogs takes a break on Monday.



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Airlie Hills Winery owner Mary Olson was among those picking grapes on Monday. She said pickers are in high demand on the ever-more infrequent dry days this season.

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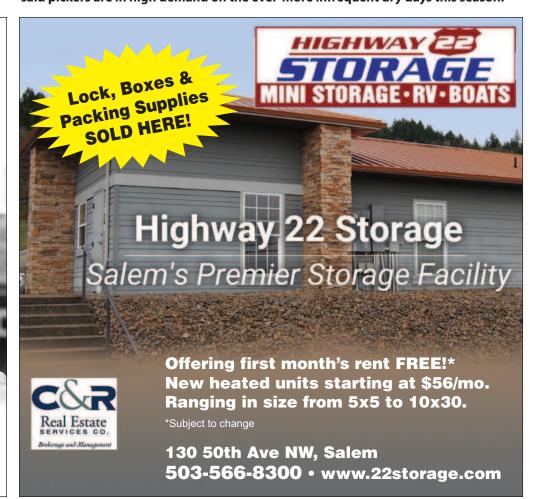
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