

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Washington State reports record wine grape harvest in 2016**

*Cabernet Sauvignon is leading grape variety with 26-percent of total harvest*

**SEATTLE** (March 1, 2017) – Washington State’s wine grape harvest hit a new record in 2016, according to the Washington State Wine Commission’s [Annual Grape Production Report](#). The report, compiled with information provided by all Washington State wineries, showed the 2016 harvest totaled 270,000 tons, a 22-percent increase over the previous year. Tonnage in 2015 was down a little compared to the previous record harvest of 227,000 tons in 2014, making the 2016 harvest the biggest ever in Washington State’s history.

Red varieties produced more tons than white, with 58-percent of the harvest. Production of red varieties showed a substantial increase of 39-percent over the previous year, compared to a 3-percent increase of white varieties. The largest share of this growth was Cabernet Sauvignon, with an increase of 23,700 tons over the previous year.

“We attribute the significant growth of our red varieties, especially Cabernet Sauvignon, to a number of positive outcomes in 2016 compared with the previous year,” said Steve Warner, president of the Washington State Wine Commission, which represents every licensed winery and grape grower in the state. “The 2016 harvest was the result of a near-perfect growing season and higher than expected grape yields. Also driving growth is the fact that new vineyard plantings are beginning to produce fruit – a trend we expect will continue in the coming years.”

Cabernet Sauvignon was the state’s top producing variety at 71,100 tons or 26-percent of the total, while Merlot was ranked second at 48,400 tons or 18-percent of the total. Chardonnay was the top white grape and third overall at 45,000 tons, while Riesling was right behind it at 41,300 tons. A sign of further growth, Washington State surpassed 900 winery licenses in 2016.

Wine grape growers received an average of \$1,157 per ton for all varieties in 2016, an increase of \$12 over the previous year. Of all the published varieties, Malbec received the highest average price per ton at \$1,587.

“2016 was a year for the record books,” Warner said. “Not only did we see our biggest harvest ever – but it was a great harvest. The weather in Eastern Washington cooled down a bit to extend the growing season and allow the grapes some extra time to mature on the vine. Our growers and winemakers are extremely excited about these wines.”

Available online:

- [2016 Wine Grape Production Report](#)
- [2016 Vintage Overview](#)



**About the Washington State Wine Commission:**

The Washington State Wine Commission represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, WSWC provides a marketing platform to raise positive awareness of the Washington State wine industry and generate greater demand for its wines. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSW is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit [www.washingtonwine.org](http://www.washingtonwine.org).

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