



WA

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WINE

2023 Vintage Overview

After a series of years that had their fair share of challenges, 2023 was a warm, relatively straightforward growing season in Washington. Quality is expected to be high, particularly for red wine grapes.

The growing season started off quite cool. This delayed bud break by 10-14 days compared to recent years. In fact, it was looking like a second, successive late start for Washington.

However, above average temperatures in May quickly caught vines up, so much so that bloom was advanced by several days from recent years. Many said that 2023 had the shortest period between bud break and bloom ever.

June was quite hot, so much so that the state was on pace for record heat accumulation in 2023. July temperatures remained above average but were not hot enough to shut vines down. As a result, the season continued rapidly advancing.

There was one major heat event in 2023. This occurred August 14th through 16th, when temperatures soared into triple digits. Given the timing, not long after veraison, this caused some damage, particularly in Syrah, where some berries and clusters shriveled.

Harvest began for sparkling wines August 16th. This was ahead of every vintage over the last decade with the exception of 2015 and 2021, which are generally considered the state's warmest and second warmest vintages respectively.

As temperatures moderated in September and October, harvest stretched out. This allowed winemakers and growers to pick at the pace they desired. Overall, while Brix were higher given the heat of the vintage, acids held.

Yields were down in Washington across the board in 2023. It is the state's lightest crop in quite some time. This was due to a number of factors. Part of it was due to market forces. Part of it was also likely due to the large crop in 2022. There was also likely some winter damage from a freeze event in December of the prior year.

Overall, Growing Degree Days in 2023 finished just below the record numbers of 2021. However, those two years accumulated their heat very differently, and 2023 is generally not considered as hot of a vintage as 2021.



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Indicator	Overview	Detail
Vintage hallmark	--	--
Growing season summary	2023 started late, caught up quickly, and then was warm throughout, with only one major heat spike	2023 started late with a late bud break but then caught up quickly and ran early for the rest of the season. Temperatures were above average May through August.
Bud break	10-14 days behind historical averages	10-14 days behind historical averages.
Bloom	2-3 days ahead of historical averages	2-3 days ahead of historical averages.
Veraison	Slightly ahead of historical averages	Slightly ahead of historical averages
Harvest	Ahead of historical averages	Harvest started in mid-August for sparkling wines. This was slightly ahead of recent historical averages.
Berry size/Cluster size	Slightly smaller than average berry and cluster sizes	Both berry and cluster sizes were slightly below average.
Yields	Well below average	The heat of the year, winter damage, and market forces led to dramatically reduced yields.
Brix	Above average	The warmth of the year led to generally elevated Brix.
Acids	At or below average	It was a warm year, but acids remained moderate despite the heat.
Disease, Pest, and Environmental pressures	Minimal	There was little notable pest and disease pressure, with the exception of some leafroller issues.