

2017 Vintage Overview

The 2017 vintage started out with a cool, wet winter, with significantly above average snowfall in eastern Washington. Going into spring, the cool trend continued. “We thought we might have another 2011 on our hands,” one winemaker said, referring to the recent, historically cool vintage.

As a result, bud break in 2017 was behind historical averages and significantly behind the most recent warm vintages of 2013-2015. Bloom was also slightly delayed.

The early part of summer saw average temperatures in the Columbia Valley followed by above average temperatures in July and August. As a result, heat accumulation was a bit above average for the season, despite the cool start. Harvest began right on schedule, perhaps even a bit early, in late August.

Wildfires occurred throughout the Pacific Northwest late in the growing season, but there is no widespread concern of smoke taint in the grapes.

In the second half of September, temperatures cooled considerably, which delayed ripening. “Things just kind of stalled,” one winemaker said. This allowed for luxurious amounts of hang time without the threat of increased sugar accumulation, stretching harvest into the first week of November. As a result, winemakers report that sugars were slightly down in 2017 whereas acid levels were up. Overall, quality is reported to be high.

Indicator	Overview	Detail
Vintage hallmark	--	--
Growing season summary	Cool start followed by above average heat accumulation, with a cooler September that decreased sugar accumulation	2017 started out quite cool and wet before temperatures moved toward normal in June and then above average in July and August. Overall, heat accumulation was slightly above historical averages. A cool September contributed to decreased sugar accumulation.
Bud break	Late	Behind historical averages due to a cool spring.
Bloom	Slightly late	Slightly behind historical averages due to a cool spring.
Veraison	About average	Warm summer temperatures caused development to somewhat catch up.
Harvest	Slightly early start and late finish	Started slightly early but then stretched out into November in some locations.
Berry size/Cluster size	Normal to slightly smaller	After 2016s above average clusters, things returned to normal.
Yields	Normal to slightly lower	Normal to slightly lower yields with very little thinning performed.
Brix	Slightly below average	September cool down held down Brix accumulation.
Acids	Slightly above average	September cool down contributed to increased acidity.
Disease, Pest, and Environmental pressures	Powdery mildew	The cool, wet weather led to powdery mildew issues in some sites, particularly in white grapes.