

## Is 2012 the Best Vintage Ever for Napa Valley?



Members of the **Napa Valley Grapegrowers** seemed almost disappointed by how little they had to report on Wednesday, September 5 at the annual harvest press conference held at PlumpJack's newest winery, Odette, in the Stags Leap district. "We're here with breaking news that 2012 is going to be the best vintage ever," joked Amy Warnock, the viticulturist for Stagecoach Vineyards on Atlas Peak.

"It's actually been warmer days but cooler nights which makes for a signature Napa Valley vintage," says Jon Ruel, the President of the Napa Valley Grapegrowers and Winemaker/COO for Trefethen Family Vineyards. Harvest is well underway (about two-three weeks earlier than last year, agreed all the vintners) for white varieties, with pinot noir and then cabernet sauvignon to follow. "Pick dates that are determined by ripeness are always preferable to pick dates determined by impending rain storms," says Warnock. Ruel announced that he has started picking for Mumm's sparkling wine and harvest for still wines will begin this week.

"There is a renewed optimism," says Jon Conover of Odette, referring to both the Giants season and the effect of the 2012 vintage on the Napa Valley industry. "The grapes aren't in the barn, but I think it's looking pretty good so far," said Conover. (Also, could be said for both.)

Even with high yields, Warnock says she is having trouble keeping up with winery client's demands and announced a few new plantings at Stagecoach, including Grenache, Sauvignon Blanc and Roussanne. She also broke the news that demand for Merlot is back on the rise.

What can we expect the 2012 vintage to taste like? Expect acidity to be nice and high, thanks to those cool nights — a great thing for white wines and for age worthy reds as well.