

EMERALD HILLS VINEYARD



On the vineyard side, harvest is complete at Emerald Hills Vineyard. Our cabernet sauvignon was harvested on October 3rd and although the crop was light, the quality should prove to be outstanding. After harvest we water the vineyard for about 12 hours to get the soil saturated and then turn the water off. We add liquid fertilizer through the drip system to give the vines the added nutrition to carry them through the winter and spring. After fertilization, the vineyard is ready to go to sleep for the winter. Our next task will be pruning the vineyard in the month of January.

A lot of people ask me about the wine making process so I will take some time in explaining what our grapes go through. From the vineyard, the grapes are picked and placed on a truck to Paso Wine Services which is a co-op like facility. They do custom crushing and also rent equipment to us as an "alternating proprietor". Once arriving at the winery, the grapes are weighed and then lifted by forklift into a hopper that empties into a destemmer. The grapes and juice are separated from the stems that hold the grapes together. After destemming, the juice and grape hulls are transferred to a large steel tank. The tank is temperature controlled and left at approximately 55 degrees F to soak on the skins for 4 days. The purpose of this step is to extract color from the grapes into the juice. After 4 days, the juice is inoculated with yeast. This step is called primary fermentation. The fermentation takes about 10 days in which the sugar in the grapes is converted into alcohol by the yeast. The wine is then taken to the press where the grapes are "pressed" to squeeze the intact grapes and extract the remaining wine and to discard the grape hulls. The wine is then transferred into barrels. We use a combination of French and Hungarian Oak which imparts beautiful round tannins and an outstanding vanilla spice component. Secondary fermentation is called maloactic fermentation where bacteria convert the last bit of sugar to alcohol to make the wine "dry". This process takes several months and is usually not complete until Spring. Every 3 months, the wine is transferred out of barrel into a tank and the barrels are washed out to remove the "lees" (dead yeast from primary fermentation). The wine is transferred back into barrel for a total of about 18 months. Monthly, the barrels are topped off with wine, due to evaporation loss, to insure little oxygen is transferred into the wine. Wine is then blended and prepared for bottling.

We hope you have a great holiday season and thank you once again for your business.

Dean & Denise McDavid
Emerald Hills Vineyard, LLC

