

# VERAISON TO HARVEST

Statewide Vineyard Crop Development Update #4



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension

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Edited by Tim Martinson and Chris Gerling

## Around New York...

### Statewide (*Chris Gerling*)

This past Tuesday, two sides of the growing season were put into focus by that most unusual of 2012 events- an honest-to-goodness rainy day. The wine grape growers in most parts of the state seemed to see Tuesday as little more than a speed bump on the autobahn this early harvest has become. For the juice industry it looked like more insult to injury, however, as the long wished-for rain finally showed up in the middle of harvest- timing that Alanis Morissette but probably not her English teacher would call ironic. The tone of the various regions is captured in the updates below. It seems like the pace of ripening- if not the pace of picking, crushing and pressing- has slowed somewhat for the remaining varieties, and while they remain ahead of, well, anything we can remember, the numbers aren't quite so crazy. There are exceptions, of course, and seeing Finger Lakes Cab Franc at 22 brix on September 17 still causes a double-take. Given the sugar numbers, the pH values seem relatively low in most grapes and locations. Long Island continues to look "normal hot," meaning a little behind upstate but still progressing nicely.

In the V&B lab, the books that record wine lots have 100 pages. Book number two has been in use for nearly a week now. In many years the 15th of September is when harvest is starting to really happen, and now it's September 21st and people are picking Riesling. To that end, V to H is a little bit thin this week. The reason? Terry Bates is picking grapes. Tim Martinson is picking grapes. The reason I'm typing at this moment and not receiving a half-ton bin at Lakewood Vineyard is that our postdoc was gracious enough to go. Two notes of interest about the numbers, and then back down to help with those grapes: 1.) Last week was similarly crazy and once the ChemWell was set up to run YANs it was left to its own devices. Something got a little clogged late in the run, so if you notice any large YAN changes between this week and last, that may be why. We apologize for any inconsistencies. 2.) The Hudson Valley Lab is conducting research in their vineyard and none of the varieties have been harvested. The fact that you still see Seyval numbers is not to suggest that you should still have Seyval in your vineyard, however. Thanks for reading. Back to crushing we go.

### Long Island (*Alice Wise and Libby Tarleton*)

The East End of Long Island avoided the worst of the late night storm on Sept. 18 We received only 0.8" of rain at LIHREC with reports of upwards of an inch elsewhere. The rain and wind appeared to be much more significant to the west. Other than



*Riesling awaiting harvest at the Cornell research vineyard in Lansing.*

Photo by Mark Nisbet

2" over two days earlier in the month, September has been dry and for the most part sunny. There is cautious optimism that the cooperative weather will persist through October.

Harvest continues in Long Island vineyards though the pace has slowed slightly. Blocks of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer came off this week. Picking for rosé wine has begun as well and will continue next week. The majority of the Chardonnay crop is still hanging. The sunny, dry weather has helped to keep any existing cluster rot in check. Overall growers are very pleased with fruit quality, Brix are moderate to high depending on crop lead. Flavors have developed and are balanced nicely with moderate acidity. The industry is having a good harvest season thus far.

The birds seem to have virtually disappeared overnight at the research vineyard. After fighting off birds from pre-veraison until after Labor Day, we now see very few. Flocks of starlings as well as robins and finches are still haunting some North Fork vineyards but overall pressure seems to be lower than earlier in the ripening season.

### Hudson Valley (*Steve Hoying*)

The harvest and crush continues to go smoothly here in the Hudson Valley with BRIX advancing steadily at approximately 1 point per week depending on variety. Yield and quality are excellent with grapes that are very clean with little sorting needed. At the Hudson Valley lab, BRIX is now over 20 on GM318, Chelois, Sauvignon blanc, GM322, Lemberger, Cabernet franc, Merlot, Landot noir, Traminette, Vidal and Noiret. This week we

harvested Chardonnay, La Crescent, Pinot gris and noir, and Seyval blanc and GM322 and 318 are next on the list!

The weather has been near perfect except for Tuesday September 18 when we had 2.3 inches of rain and a burst of high winds that temporarily knocked out power to some in the lower valley. No damage has been reported to the grape crop. Previously dry weather allowed the soil to rapidly soak up the water and we were back into the vineyard by Wednesday midmorning. Temperatures have been very pleasant with day time highs in the 70's and brisk nights. The forecast is for more of the same!

### Finger Lakes (Hans Walter-Peterson)

Finger Lakes vineyards started to harvest Riesling this week, as fruit in some locations started to hit brix and acidity levels that they normally achieve later in the year. Our sample results from the Finger Lakes this week are a little bit behind some of the numbers we're hearing from a few other vineyards, mostly around Seneca Lake, but not too far. It will be interesting to see how wineries and growers decide to harvest Riesling this year, whether to take it earlier and be consistent with numbers and flavors that are typical for the variety around here, or if some will decide to let the fruit hang longer and potentially make wines in different styles than we often see from the Finger Lakes. Maybe some of both.

Looking back at Veraison to Harvest issues from 2010, our warmest growing season to date, it looks like we're on a pretty similar ripening pace and harvest schedule for a lot of varieties. In some cases, we're even earlier this year, probably due at least in part to a lower crop level in many cases. For example, Concord harvest will likely be wrapped up in New York in the next week. Does anybody remember a Concord harvest that was done before October 1? In the immortal words of Harry Caray, "Holy cow!"

In addition to Riesling, a number of other mid-season varieties are starting to come off the vines as well, including Corot Noir, Noiret, Lemberger, Traminette and even some early Vidal fruit has been harvested. As in 2010, it sounds like wineries will be trying to take advantage of the conditions this year and let late season reds hang for a while longer, as long as they continue to remain clean.

Disease pressure remains fairly low in most cases, although the recent rains and cooler temperatures have led to some more cases of downy mildew appearing on canopies. Bunch rot issues continue to remain fairly low as well, due to the apparent low level of inoculum that was present as we entered the ripening phase of the season. This is making life a lot easier for wineries at the crush pad by requiring less sorting

### Lake Erie (Jodi Creasap Gee)

We had been waiting all summer for a day-long soak, and Tuesday we finally got rain...during the middle of harvest.

This is a less-than-ideal time to get caught up on rain for this season because there can be so many problems with a wet harvest – such as dilution of juice and hazardous and just generally unpleasant conditions. Then there is the additional problem of having any delicate fruit remaining on the vine; fruit with split skins or other damage will not only attract insect and vertebrate pests, but the sugary juice can also lead to development of rots caused by opportunistic fungi and bacteria. We are seeing some splitting in Concord berries around the Lake Erie area, and processors are moving as quickly as they can to get the fruit in, although it seems likely they will be going for a couple more weeks yet.

Concord berries seem to have shrunk slightly this week– in both weight and diameter. This could be related to sampling technique, but it is likely due to the loss of water through transpiration. Acidity in many wine grape varieties is still too high for winemakers to want to harvest yet, which is surprising, considering Concord is so low (7.33; the usual range is 12-14).

As for Niagara County, the update is worse than last week. The Niagaras are coming in from ½ to 7 (in the lucky spots) tons/acre, but the Concord vineyards are recording tonnages around ½ to 2.5 tons/acre. Berry size is still rather small (pea-sized), unlike the non-drought-stricken Lake Erie counties, and many clusters are missing shoulders. In the "heavier" sites (2-2.5 tons/acre), sugars are coming in around 15.5-16.5 Brix, and those with lower tonnages are around 18.5 Brix. Niagara County growers are also worried about vine size and maturity; although vines are hardening off for winter, they are small and seem quite weak. Some also have obvious nutrient deficiencies – again, the result of the drought this summer. They will likely be seeing the effect of this season for the next year or two to come.



The Lake Erie harvest, under sunnier-than-Tuesday skies.

Photo by Jodi Creasap-Gee

Samples reported here were collected on **Monday, September 17 & Tuesday the 18th**. Where appropriate, sample data from 2011, averaged over all sites is included. Tables from 2011 are archived at <http://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/cals/grapesandwine/veraison-to-harvest/2011.cfm>

We are again reporting berry weight, brix, titratable acidity and pH, and yeast assimilable nitrogen (YAN), as part of a joint project with Anna Katharine Mansfield and Lailiang Cheng. Graduate student Mark Nisbit is running the YAN assays as part of his Ph D project, and other students from the Enology lab are running samples (details in later issue) . - TEM

### Cabernet Franc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	E.Seneca	1.53	21.6	3.21	5.7	35
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	W.Seneca	1.37	22.1	3.08	7.5	6
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Cayuga	1.61	20.3	3.20	6.7	14
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.48	21.6	3.58	4.7	82
Lake Erie	9/18/12	Portland	1.68	19.5	3.25	8.3	144
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork	1.05	18.5	3.42	6.4	130
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork	1.55	18.8	3.27	6.8	82
<b>Average</b>			<b>1.47</b>	<b>20.3</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>70</b>
Prev Sample	9/10/2012		1.59	19.1	3.20	7.17	63
'11 Average	9/20/2011		1.52	18.1	3.27	7.7	113

### Catawba

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Keuka	2.07	18.0	2.92	10.2	0
Prev Sample	9/10/2012	Keuka	2.29	16.2	2.86	11.2	57
'11 Sample	9/27/2011		2.45	17.6	3.39	8.0	54

### Cayuga White

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes		HARVESTED					
Finger Lakes		HARVESTED					
Final Sample	9/5/2012		2.52	18.8	3.18	8.7	284
'11 Average	9/13/2011		2.39	16.0	3.00	8.8	184

### Chardonnay

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.30	22.7	3.70	5.2	202
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork S	1.66	18.7	3.49	7.1	288
<b>Average</b>			<b>1.48</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>3.60</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>245</b>
Prev. Sample	9/10/2012		1.47	20.1	3.38	7.3	204
'11 Average	9/20/2011		1.52	18.9	3.36	7.9	234

### Concord

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Keuka	3.22	17.0	3.47	5.9	202
Lake Erie	9/18/12	Portland	3.50	17.8	3.38	8.0	278
<b>Average</b>			<b>3.36</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>240</b>
Prev Sample	9/10/2012		3.20	16.5	3.32	7.4	208
'11 Sample	9/20/2011		3.40	16.6	3.24	9.7	212

## Lemberger

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Keuka	1.75	23.5	3.17	5.9	46
<i>Prev Sample</i>	9/5/2012	Keuka	1.67	22.8	3.08	7.1	40
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.55	20.9	3.24	6.1	116

## Malbec

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork S	2.49	18.4	3.46	8.8	242
<i>Prev Sample</i>	9/10/2012	North Fork S	2.48	17.6	3.36	10.2	248
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011	-	2.18	17.9	3.50	9.3	282

## Merlot

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.67	21.2	3.69	4.3	125
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork (4)	2.03	18.6	3.62	5.4	146
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork (8)	1.98	19.2	3.42	5.2	88
<b>Average</b>			<b>1.89</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>3.58</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>120</b>
<i>Prev Sample</i>	9/10/2012		1.92	18.8	3.57	5.1	105
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.64	16.8	3.58	7.1	189

## Niagara

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Lake Erie		HARVESTED					
<i>Final Sample</i>	9/5/2012	Portland	3.84	16.6	3.26	7.2	205
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		4.40	16.0	3.21	7.9	172

## Noiret

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Lake Erie	9/10/2012	Ripley	1.81	19.1	3.28	8.4	344
Hudson Valley	9/10/2012	HVL	1.53	18.6	3.45	6.2	232
Hudson Valley	9/10/2012	W HV	1.56	17.9	3.23	8.9	122
<b>Average</b>	<b>9/10/2012</b>		<b>1.63</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>3.32</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>233</b>
<i>Prev. Sample</i>	9/5/2012		1.53	18.1	3.18	9.3	265
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/13/2011		1.65	16.7	3.12	11.0	190

## Pinot Noir

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.73	23.6	3.64	5.7	233
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
<b>Prev Sample</b>	<b>9/10/2012</b>		<b>1.46</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>222</b>
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.48	19.2	3.50	6.9	243

## Riesling

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	W.Seneca	1.48	19.1	2.93	8.6	15
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	E.Seneca	1.51	19.6	3.07	8.2	60
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	W. Seneca	1.42	17.2	2.89	9.5	95
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	E.Seneca	1.48	18.4	2.99	8.2	58
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	E.Seneca	1.39	19.2	2.94	7.7	18
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Cayuga	1.48	18.6	2.98	8.8	28
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Keuka	1.30	19.5	3.09	7.6	66
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.71	19.1	3.42	6.2	194
Lake Erie	9/18/12	Fredonia	1.57	20.5	3.14	7.8	189
Long Island	9/17/12	North Fork	1.55	18.5	3.23	6.9	119
<b>Average</b>			<b>1.49</b>	<b>19.0</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>Prev Sample</i>	9/10/2012		1.50	18.2	3.03	8.8	77
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.46	17.2	3.03	9.6	107

## Sauvignon Blanc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Long Island	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
<i>Final Sample</i>	9/10/2012		1.70	20.2	3.40	7.5	141
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011	-	1.64	18.7	3.44	7.1	170

## Seyval Blanc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.65	20.3	3.36	5.3	102
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
<i>Prev Sample</i>	9/10/2012		1.71	19.4	3.39	6.3	194
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.76	18.4	3.29	7.2	136

## Traminette

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	Keuka	1.75	21.6	2.94	8.3	65
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	HVL	1.95	20.3	3.34	6.7	181
Hudson Valley	9/17/12	W HV	1.63	18.8	3.20	6.3	81
Lake Erie	9/18/12	Fredonia	1.73	21.7	3.04	8.0	78
<b>Average</b>			<b>1.76</b>	<b>20.6</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>102</b>
<i>Prev Sample</i>	9/10/2012		1.75	19.3	3.16	7.4	97
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.82	19.0	3.04	9.5	88

## Vignoles

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	% Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
Finger Lakes	9/17/12	HARVESTED					
<b>Final Sample</b>	<b>9/10/2012</b>		<b>1.32</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>163</b>
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/20/2011		1.42	22.4	3.09	11.7	149
<i>'11 Sample</i>	9/13/2011		1.37	20.4	3.05	12.4	165



*GM 318 from the HVL in Highland.*

Photo by Steve Hoying



*Auxerrois at the CCE-SC research vineyard on Long Island.*

Photo by Libby Tarleton



*Juices to be racked at the V&B lab in Geneva.*

Photo by Chris Gerling



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