

VERAISON TO HARVEST

Statewide Vineyard Crop Development Update #8



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

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Edited by Tim Martinson and Chris Gerling

Around New York...

Statewide (*Tim Martinson*).

With the 2011 harvest wrapping up, our final fruit sample (pp. 3-5) includes samples from only 9 of the 60 vineyards we have sampled this year. With so few vineyards left, there is little new to report – although sugars increased by about 0.7° brix and acids dropped below 5.0 g/l in the two Merlot vineyards we've been tracking.

Last week, I noted that despite the heat accumulations (on a par with last year), this has been a 'lower brix, moderate acid' year for wine grapes. The Concord and Niagara crop – particularly in Western New York, is the exception (see Jodi Creasap Gee's Lake Erie summary). The crop is larger than average, but with soluble solids also high. (The Washington crop, according to Rich Erdle of National Grape Cooperative, is running about 3 wk behind – as is general in Western vineyards from CA to WA-and the harvest is just getting underway there.) Notably, Western NY missed the rains that followed in the wake of Hurricane Irene and Lee – that affected the Eastern half of the state.

Reports from around New York (see regional summaries below) indicate a much better year than anyone could have expected – key factors being ample heat in spite of the overcast skies and rainfall that characterized the ripening season and the response of vineyard managers and growers to adapt to this season's challenges.

In our final issue next week, Chris Gerling will provide a seasonal wrapup, graduate student Mark Nisbet will provide a preliminary summary of results from our YAN project, and I'll generate summary graphs of ripening trends for a selection of the cultivars we have followed in *Veraison to Harvest*.

We will also distribute a brief survey (electronic, confidential) to all our readers to ask your opinion about *Veraison to Harvest*, and to gather information that will help improve this publication in the future. Look for it.

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

Merlot harvest continued the first part of this past week, ahead of yet another 2" of rainfall on Oct.19. That said, an appreciable amount of Merlot and much Cabernet Sauvignon is still hanging in the industry. In the research vineyard, we finished up all reds but Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon. We were astonished at the



Noiret at Geneva Experiment Station. *Noiret is the last variety to be harvested at the Research South farm in Geneva, NY in Dr. Justine Vanden Heuvel's training trial. Noiret and two advanced selections from Bruce Reisch's grape breeding program, NY95.0301.01 (a red variety) and NY76.0844.24 (white, muscat type) are being grown on several training systems, including high wire cordon, low cordon, and GDC (shown).*

Photos by Tim Martinson

quality of red fruit – sound berries, very little rot and tasting great. This bodes well for wine quality and will be a welcome reward for all the vineyard managers who struggled through one of the industry's more difficult seasons. As one industry veteran stated, maybe all the challenges of the season ended up making the fruit 'stronger', through adversity comes strength. Our biggest surprise was Malbec, traditionally a finicky variety that is prone to light crops and cluster rot. We had ~ 3 t/a of very sound, very tasty fruit. Merlot, Syrah, Barbera, Cabernet Franc, these all did very well.

Our only disappointment was Sangiovese, not a total loss but somewhat disappointing given the stellar performance of the others. It had some well established rot, perhaps due to the huge, compact clusters, some close to 0.5 lbs. Specific data on varieties and clones will be posted on our website this winter (<http://ccesuffolk.org/viticulture>). As a preview, the various clones of Merlot generally had the following numbers: Brix 19-20's, acids 5.2-5.8 and TA's 3.42-3.58. In conclusion, this season was humbling for most of us, and reinforced the notion that each and every decision in the vineyard is an important one.

Finger Lakes (*Hans Walter-Peterson*)

We're on the very tail end of the 2011 harvest in the Finger Lakes now. While a few places still have some late season reds (primarily Cabernet Sauvignon) still hanging, most vineyards have finished picking for the year. Catawba is the lone exception to this at this point, with harvest for a couple of larger processors scheduled to continue through next week, and possibly even a little later.

Lower sugar and optimal to low acid levels continue to be fairly regular themes to the year, although growers have been finding their reds coming in this week at 20-21° Brix. As has been the case with earlier varieties this year, even though sugar levels are lower than might be expected, the fruit that has been harvested (and made it through sorting) has nice flavors and little or no green or vegetal aromas.

The 2011 growing season will likely be remembered by growers with native and hybrid varieties as an excellent one. While disease pressure was higher, particularly early in the season for phomopsis and downy mildew, yields in most of these varieties were significantly higher than normal, while still achieving processors' ripeness standards.

For *vinifera* varieties, yields were also higher than normal in many cases, but rot and selective harvesting meant a portion of that crop was often dropped in the vineyard or sorted out at the crush pad. As with any year, assessments of the quality of this year's crop at this point are only preliminary. But despite the challenges thrown at growers and wineries this season, there is still reason for optimism about the final products that will be produced.

Lake Erie (*Jodi Creasap Gee*).

With the wrapping up of the 2011 season, I contacted our grower-cooperators to get their perspective on this growing season. Overall, most growers are pleased with the terrific growing season and higher-than expected yields. In fact, each of them used words like "exceptional," "great," and "excellent" to describe the 2011 growing season. Some growers reported the largest crops ever, across all varieties (wine grape

and Concord) this year, but they were able to find markets easily for nearly all the fruit. Fruit quality is reported as being very good, despite all the recent wet weather. Generally speaking, many growers are pleased with the quality of the mature wood in most vineyards, which looks promising for a decent 2012 season. National Grape and Grower's Cooperative should be finishing up harvest by this weekend, while Cott/Cliffstar will likely continue into next week. Walker's Fruit Basket is about three to four days away from the end of harvest, and I think the growers, processors, truckers, and everyone else involved in the industry is looking forward to the first week of November.

Walker's Fruit Basket reported the Finger Lakes fruit being abnormally ahead – by 3-4 weeks – of the Lake Erie fruit, although the quality overall was very good. There were, of course, varieties that had to be picked a little early – more due to disease than ripeness – but that likely will not affect juice quality much. The color in the red hybrids was "phenomenal" this year, although acids were fairly low overall.

As of Monday, National Grape processed just over 81,000 tons of Concord at the Westfield and North East plants, as reported in their weekly harvest update newsletter. The sugar solid average is over 16 Brix, which compares to the sugar levels we see here at CLEREL – 17, 18, 19 (and sometimes 20!) Brix. The National Grape late season Niagaras were processed at Pleasant Valley this year, and that wrapped up around October 13, with a few tons left to be processed in North East. National Grape pressed 12,247 tons of Niagaras (Avg Brix: 14.52 this year, with an extra 6,359 tons processed as the late season Niagaras (Avg Brix: 14.19).

Hudson Valley (*Steven McKay & Steve Hoying*).

Harvest is being wrapped up in the Hudson Valley this week with Cabernet Franc. Millbrook Vineyards reports flavor as "not bad", while Whitecliff Vineyard said their harvest "lacks character". All agree that the year has been too wet from August on, and this has had a negative impact on grape quality. Reports vary about vines hardening off. Hybrids with good canopies still intact are hardening off better than some of the viniferas that have suffered from downy mildew and have damaged canopies. Birds have continued to be a major problem at Millbrook, worse than in past years.

FRUIT MATURATION REPORT - 10/21/2011

Samples reported here were collected on **Monday & Tuesday, October 17-18**. Since we had only 9 samples this week (final table), we only calculated averages for a few of the cultivars that had multiple samples. Sampling last year stopped on 10/11, so there are no 'new' previous year averages. Tables from 2010 are archived at <http://grapesandwine.cals.cornell.edu/cals/grapesandwine/veraison-to-harvest/2010.cfm>.

In our final issue, we will provide summary graphs, similar to those in [2010 Veraison to Harvest #9](#) - TEM

Cabernet Franc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes		W Seneca	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/17/2011	W Cayuga	1.61	20.8	3.42	5.00	50
Hudson Valley	10/17/2011	HV Lab	1.53	18.3	3.80	5.05	181
Lake Erie			HARVEST				
Average	10/17/2011		1.57	19.6	3.61	5.03	115
Prev Sample	10/11/2011		1.47	20.2	3.40	6.9	102
'10 Final Sample	10/11/2010		1.54	22.3	3.39	6.7	75

Catawba

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes			HARVEST				
Final Sample	10/10/2011	W Cayuga	2.52	18.7	3.10	10.4	111
'10 Final Sample	10/4/2010	W Cayuga	2.35	19.1	3.32	8.5	162

Cayuga White

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/20/2011	W Keuka	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	9/20/2011	W Cayuga	HARVEST				
Final Sample	9/20/2011		2.55	16.5	3.12	8.3	168
'10 Final Sample	8/30/10		2.91	15.4	3.3	12.1	201

Chardonnay

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Seneca	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/3/2011	W Cayuga	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	HV Lab	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	Hudson Valley	HARVEST				
Long Island	10/10/2011	N Fork South	HARVEST				
Final Sample	10/11/2011		1.54	19.7	3.63	6.7	316
'10 Final Sample	9/13/2010	Final sample	1.42	21.6	3.59	6.8	246

Chenin blanc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Long Island	9/28/2011	North Fork North	HARVEST				
Final Sample	9/28/2011	North Fork North	2.20	15.2	3.20	10.0	93

Concord

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	10/17/2011	W Keuka	3.14	17.4	3.34	8.47	220
Lake Erie	10/10/2011	Portland	HARVEST				
Average							
Prev Sample	10/11/2011		3.02	18.1	3.34	8.2	254
'10 Final Sample	9/27/2010		3.22	17.1	3.61	6.6	157

Lemberger

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	E Keuka	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Seneca	HARVEST				
Average	10/10/2011	No Average Calc.					
Previous Sample	10/3/2011		1.63	20.8	3.27	5.7	79
'10 Final Sample	9/27/2010	Final Sample	2.30	21.8	3.35	7.6	70

Malbec

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Long Island	10/17/2011	North Fork South	*	20.3	3.96	8.0	223
Prev Sample	10/10/2011	North Fork South	1.84	19.4	3.82	8.2	279

Merlot

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Hudson Valley	10/17/2011	HV Lab	1.56	18.1	3.88	4.9	229
Long Island	10/17/2011	North Fork N	1.95	19.8	3.98	4.6	141
Average	10/17/2011		1.75	19.0	3.93	4.8	185
Prev Sample	10/10/2011		1.75	18.3	3.77	5.6	206
'10 Final Sample	10/4/2010	(no 10/10/2010 sample)	1.76	20.8	3.85	5.0	128

Niagara

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Lake Erie			HARVEST				
Final Sample	9/20/2011	Portland	4.40	16.0	3.21	7.9	172

Noiret

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	HV Lab	1.64	18.2	3.53	7.5	312
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	W.HV	HARVEST				
Lake Erie	10/10/2011	Ripley	HARVEST				
Average	10/11/2011		1.75	19.3	3.38	7.8	259
Prev Sample	10/3/2011		1.97	18.0	3.37	7.7	202
'10 Final Sample	10/4/2010		1.85	19.6	3.6	6.1	111

Pinot Noir

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	10/3/2011	E Seneca	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/3/2011	HV Lab	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	Hudson Valley	HARVEST				
FINAL Sample	10/3/2011	(One vineyard only)	1.43	20.0	3.85	9.5	356
Prev Sample	9/27/2011		1.72	18.7	3.68	7.6	311
'10 FinalAverage	9/20/2010	Final Sample	1.44	23.6	3.95	7.0	266

Riesling

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	E Seneca	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	E Seneca	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Seneca - LR/ST	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Seneca - NLR/NST	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	E Seneca-shoot thin	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	E Seneca - no thin	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Cayuga	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/17/2011	HV Lab	1.61	14.6	3.46	7.5	163
Lake Erie	10/10/2011	Fredonia					
Long Island	10/10/2011	Long Island					
FINAL Average	10/11/2011	(some blocks harvested)	1.52	17.6	3.17	8.0	108
Prev Sample	10/3/2011		1.69	17.7	3.09	8.4	78
'10 Final Average	10/4/2010	Final sample	1.57	18.6	3.29	8.3	98

Sauvignon Blanc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Long Island			HARVEST				
Final Sample	9/20/2011	North Fork North	1.64	18.7	3.44	7.1	170
'10 Final Sample	9/08/2010	Final Sample	1.84	19.8	3.64	8.0	242

Seyval Blanc

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/13/2011	W Cayuga	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	9/26/2011	Hudson Valley Lab	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	9/13/2011	W HV	HARVEST				
Average							
Prev Sample	9/20/2011	(only 1 block)	1.76	18.4	3.29	7.2	136
'10 Final Average	8/30/2010	Final Sample	1.64	18.3	3.46	9.3	170

Traminette

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Keuka	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Seneca	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	HV Lab	HARVEST				
Hudson Valley	10/10/2011	W HV	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	10/10/2011	W Keuka	HARVEST				
Prev. HV Lab	10/3/2011		1.83	17.0	3.42	7.3	151
Final Average	10/3/2011		1.87	19.4	3.15	8.2	115
'10 Final Sample	10/4/2010		1.68	20.5	3.31	8.3	137

Vignoles

Region	Harvest Date	Description	Ber. Wt. g.	° Brix	pH	TA g/L	YAN (ppm)
Finger Lakes	9/20/2011	W Keuka-VSP, Shoot thin	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	9/20/2011	W keuka-VSP, No Thin	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	9/20/2011	W keuka-high wire ST	HARVEST				
Finger Lakes	9/20/2011	W keuka-high wire NST	HARVEST				
Final Sample	9/20/2011		1.42	22.4	3.09	11.7	149
'10 Final Average	9/20/2010		1.65	23.2	2.19	13.3	231



The 2011 harvest is drawing to a close in New York State.

Photos by Tim Martinson



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