



WA

46°N

WINE

2020 Vintage Overview

2020 was a relatively warm year for Washington with a significantly smaller crop than average.

Bud break began in mid-April, well aligned with historical averages. Bloom was slightly advanced, beginning in the third week of May. Wind and rain contributed to some shatter at that time. Late July and early August saw some heat spikes, but, overall, it was a fairly moderate, even summer.

Harvest began the third week of August, about a week ahead of long-term averages but well aligned with many recent years. This was followed by a hot beginning of September, which led to feverish picking of early ripening varieties.

Significant wildfire smoke came in from Oregon during the second week of September, pausing harvest for nearly 10 days. The layer of smoke also stalled sugar accumulation and pushed harvest for some varieties into cooler parts of September and October. Early reports indicate limited negative impacts from the smoke.

October temperatures were above average before a freeze event. October 25th brought the growing season to a close in many regions. The warmth in October made overall heat units look higher than their impact, as much of the fruit had already been picked in warmer locations.

Overall, yield was down substantially in 2020. Growers attributed this to a large crop in 2019, a series of October 2019 freezes, and mixed weather at bloom that led to a poor set. This all contributed to significantly smaller cluster weights and berry sizes across varieties.

While the crop was smaller, the combination of smaller berries and extended hang time is traditionally a recipe for high quality wines in Washington. Many growers and winemakers were excited with the result, noting the dark color of the reds.

“Overall, the vintage is spectacular,” said one. “They’re just beautiful wines, aromatic, and dense but with levity to them.”



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Indicator	Overview	Detail
Vintage hallmark	--	--
Growing season summary	Above average overall temperatures with a smoke event in September and a significantly smaller overall crop.	2020 was a moderately warm growing season. A smoke event in September delayed ripening, pushing the vintage into the cooler part of the month. A variety of factors contributed to a significantly smaller crop.
Bud break	Aligned with historical averages	Aligned with historical averages.
Bloom	Slightly ahead of historical averages.	Aligned with historical averages.
Veraison	Slightly ahead of historical averages	A warm second half of July and early August advanced bloom.
Harvest	About a week ahead of historical averages but aligned with many recent years.	Harvest began the third week of August. This was ahead of the long-term average but historically aligned with the last decade. Wildfire smoke delayed ripening, stretching harvest out until late October.
Berry size/Cluster size	Significantly smaller	Cluster and berry sizes were significantly reduced in most varieties and locations.
Yields	Significantly below average	Smaller berry sizes and cluster weights contributed to significantly below average yields.
Brix	Average	Brix were aligned with historical averages.
Acids	Average	Acids were aligned with historical averages.
Disease, Pest, and Environmental pressures	Minimal	Little pest and disease pressure was experienced