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Washington Wine Reports Small Harvest, High Quality in 2023

Annual production report shows 159,000 tons of wine grapes were harvested last fall

SEATTLE (April 25, 2024)—Washington’s 2023 wine grape harvest was small, yet quality is extremely high. The Washington State Wine Commission’s annual [Grape Production Report](#), compiled with information provided by all Washington State wineries and growers, showed 159,000 tons of wine grapes were harvested in 2023.

“Our winegrowers were thrilled about the quality of this 2023 fruit,” said Kristina Kelley, Executive Director of the Washington State Wine Commission. “Despite the small crop, there will be plenty of world-class Washington wine coming out of this vintage.”

The growing season started off rather cool, delaying bud break for a couple weeks in the spring, but May was warmer than average which caught the vines up quickly to bloom. June was marked with hot temperatures in the Columbia Valley, but July steadied out with temperatures that were still above average but not hot enough to shut down the vines. One heat spike in August was followed by moderate temperatures in September and October, stretching out the season for winegrowers.

“The beautiful fall weather allowed winegrowers and winemakers to pick fruit at their own pace this year,” commented Kelley. “That extended hang time really allowed the flavors to develop nicely, with good acid and balance throughout.”

In 2023, farmers received an average of \$1,542 per ton, an increase of \$172 over the previous year. For the second year in a row, Cabernet Franc received the highest average price per ton.

Cabernet Sauvignon remained steady as Washington’s top variety at 48,369 tons and 30% of total production. Riesling was second at 24,357 tons or 15% of the total, followed by Chardonnay, Syrah, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Gris. These top seven varieties altogether equated to 88% of the crop. Red varieties accounted for 59% of total production. Altogether the tonnage saw a 34% decrease compared to 2022.

“The small harvest is due to a number of factors, but mostly forces in the local and national wine market,” Kelley said.

Recent data shows a decline in the overall wine market, due to multiple factors including the economy, inventory management, the growing number of beverage choices, and changes in consumer behavior. Yet within this data, Washington is seeing several opportunities for growth. According to SipSource, which measures on-and-off premise depletions, Washington wine in the \$15-\$25 price range is growing by nearly 50-percent year over year.

“We see much opportunity for even more growth in the \$15 to \$25 price range, as well as higher tiers,” Kelley said. “We are well-positioned to reach new consumers with our range of varieties and great quality at every price point. We also see opportunity to continue to grow our already strong direct-to-consumer business, by supporting small wineries and tourism to all of our regions. We will also continue to focus on our new Sustainable WA certification, allowing us to effectively communicate our commitment to healthy vineyards and communities.”



Resources for Media:

- [2023 Washington Wine Grape Production Report](#)
- [2023 Washington Wine Vintage Overview](#)
- [2023 Washington Wine Grape Harvest – Key Stats](#)

About the Washington State Wine Commission:

The Washington State Wine Commission (WSWC) represents every licensed winery and wine grape grower in Washington State. Guided by an appointed board, the mission of the WSWC is to drive growth of Washington Wine through Marketing, Communications, and Viticulture & Enology Research. Funded almost entirely by the industry through assessments based on grape and wine sales, WSWC is a state government agency, established by the legislature in 1987. To learn more, visit www.washingtonwine.org.

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