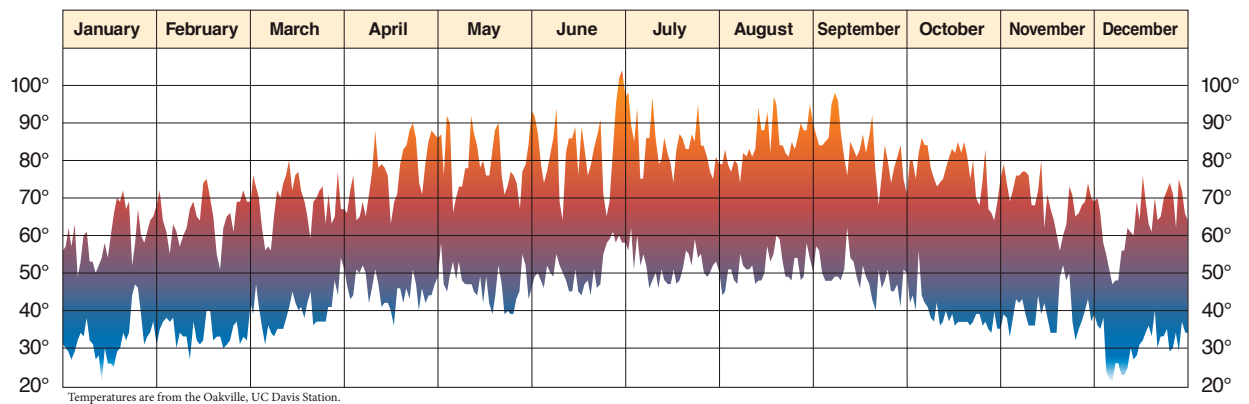




## How to Read Those Vintage Charts

### 2013 Napa Valley Vintage At A Glance



	BUD	BLOOM	VERAISON	HARVEST			
Sauvignon Blanc	■	■	■	■			
Chardonnay	■	■	■	■			
Merlot	■	■	■	■			
Cabernet Sauvignon	■	■	■	■			

■ New Growing    ■ Growing Season





At first these charts might seem to be impenetrable, but then, when you slowly get into them, there seems to be too much information...

So here are a few pointers to make this a bit simpler.

The grapevine, like all plants, has an annual cycle that follows the seasons. There are a number of key stages in the growth that will all influence the timing and quality and quantity of the harvest. Ultimately, the timing of ripening and the weather during ripening are a major key to it all.

*(continued on next page)*

## —HOW TO READ THOSE VINEYARD CHARTS, CONTINUED—

	<p><b>BUD:</b> It begins with budbreak, when the growing shoots first emerge from the buds that formed in the previous year.</p>
	<p><b>BLOOM:</b> The pivotal moment is when the tiny flower buds on the grape clusters open and bloom. The weather at this time will have a major effect on the quantity and timing harvest.</p>
	<p><b>VERAISON:</b> This French word, adopted by winegrowers around the world, describes the moment when the green hard grape berries begin to ripen and become fruit. The berries will soften, the pulp becomes translucent, and the black varieties will begin to turn purple, one berry at a time. This is the last clue as to the timing and uniformity of the harvest.</p>
	<p><b>HARVEST:</b> This is the only thing the winegrower can control. The choice of when to pick is up to each person, but the weather between veraison and harvest—hot spells, cold spells, rain—will have a significant influence on the quality of the wine from that vintage.</p>

In general, grapes ripening slowly, but completely, will yield the deepest, most complex wines. An early year, one that begins in mid-March, could expose the tender shoots to frost in April. Then, up in the Cain Vineyard, the weather could be cold and damp in May, when the vines are flowering. And if veraison comes early, the black grapes run the risk of shriveling under the hot sun of August. Thus, in the Napa Valley, we tend to prefer later harvests ... up to a point, when the weather turns cold and the rains return! Sometimes this comes in October, but sometimes we have a lovely late season even up to Halloween.

All things taken in, I like it best when our grapes ripen around the equinox, in the third week of September. At that moment, the day length is shortening most rapidly—this seems to quicken the vines and bring on that final push toward ripening.

*Chris Howell*

Christopher Howell, Wine-Grower

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