

The Winemaker's Guide to Napa Valley Harvest Season

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Hourglass Vineyards: Tony Biagi (winemaker)

The vineyard is named for its shape, a pinch in the valley between the Mayacamas and Vaca Mountains near Calistoga. It's this geographical quirk that creates a wind dynamic that cools the vineyard and slows the ripening process, leading to extremely balanced and layered 100% Cabernet wines.

In 2006, Hourglass acquired the Blueline property, also in Calistoga, which takes its name from the two "blue-line" streams that form its boundary and are the source of the vineyard's gravelly soil. It's quite similar to Bordeaux, hence why wines from this 20-acre vineyard are a classic Bordeaux blend (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, and Malbec), noted particularly for their minerality and ability to age.

THE 2017 VINTAGE

"Up until June we were worried because of the winter rains. But now we've had days of 100-degree weather that took away the water, which for the vine can be a crutch. It won't be a big crop—the berry size is going to be small—but it could be a wonderful vintage."

FIVE-YEAR PERSPECTIVE

"The run of vintages—2012, '13, '14—was phenomenal. 2016 came in as good as advertised. There's hang-time without a lot of sugar, and a lot of flavor development. You couldn't ask for a better set-up for the harvest. I love '16."

BIGGEST HARVEST CHALLENGE

"Letting it hang and being patient. Dan Duckhorn once told me, 'If you look hard enough, you'll find something to pick.'" September 27th is Tony's prediction for the harvest kick-off.

FAVORITE PLACES

"I'm at [PRESS](#) all the time. It's the winemaker country club. Have the 52-day dry-aged steak with an old Cabernet and you'll see that Napa Cabernet can age."

Tony also likes sitting on the pool deck at [Meadowood](#) after having lunch in order to catch an hour's sleep. "It's my guilty pleasure. You have to get away from the harvest sometimes."

His other new go-to: [Las Alcobas](#) in St. Helena. "A very romantic dining room."



Hourglass



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