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Wineries in Santa Cruz Mountains begin the year's harvest

By Alia Wilson
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SUMMIT -- Santa Cruz Mountains vintners who began harvesting this week say their grapes are untainted by smoke from the Lockheed Fire and, in fact, some say it's going to be a good year.

Many wineries inland of the charred wildland off Swanton Road were able to escape any potential harm from smoke, but for Beauregard Vineyards in Bonny Doon it is too early to tell whether the harvest was affected.

"Our harvest hasn't begun yet, but we are in the midst of preparing for it," Rachel Beauregard said. "We won't harvest until mid-October. We don't know whether there has been any smoke taint. We're assuming that there isn't because the grapes still had so much time to grow since the fire. We're hoping that because we have a later harvest date that there is not going to be any effect."

Mary Lindsay of Muns Vineyard in Los Gatos said because of their location their harvest is not affected by the Lockheed Fire, although it could have been a threat had the weather changed.

"It didn't come anywhere near us, but if the wind had changed and blown from the bay toward land it would have brought the fire and smoke with it, possibly right to us," Lindsay said.

Despite the concern, Lindsay said this year's harvest is proving to be better than last year's haul.

"It's going to be a really good year. We have 12 acres of pinot noir and we harvested five tons off of two acres Wednesday and did five tons more on Thursday," Lindsay said. "Everything is



Ed Muns, left, checks the grapes as his crew brings in the harvest. (Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel) And that's Mary on the right!

looking really good and we're pretty jazzed about the vintage."

Lindsay said relatively cool weather with a decent amount of rainfall from the spring contributed to the desired, slow ripening of the grapes.

Dave Moulton of Burrell School Vineyards said the winery is looking at a few more tons of grapes this year due to desirable weather conditions.

"It's very exciting. It's looking like one of the best years we've have in the past five or six years," Moulton said. "Last year, it was too cold and then too hot, but we are seeing the benefits of a mild year."

Jeff Emery of Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyards said he is considering a taint-removal process for a 2008 red that was affected by the

Summit Fire last year.

"There is one batch of wine from 08 that we wouldn't normally bottle until next summer that may have to go through a high-tech filtration system, but it's relatively costly," Emery said. "We're casually researching our options. Unfortunately the smoke taint causes a rather vomitus taste in the mouth. It's quite disgusting."

Emery said this year his vineyards were not in the path of the smoke so he has no concern for the season's harvest.



Pinot Noir grapes hang heavy on the vine as Genova Pinacho Ruiz picks... (Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel)



A robust pinot noir harvest is brought in at Muns Vineyard. (Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel)



Pinot Noir grapes are harvested at Muns Vineyard off of Summit Road. (Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel)



A grape harvester, top center, makes his way through the vines at Muns... (Shmuel Thaler/Sentinel)