

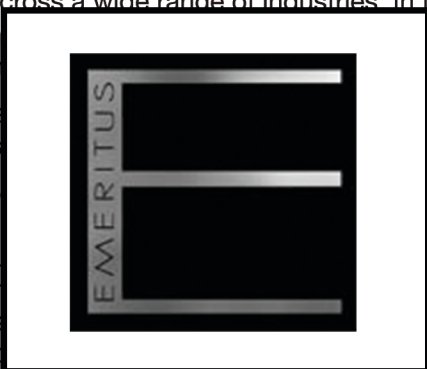
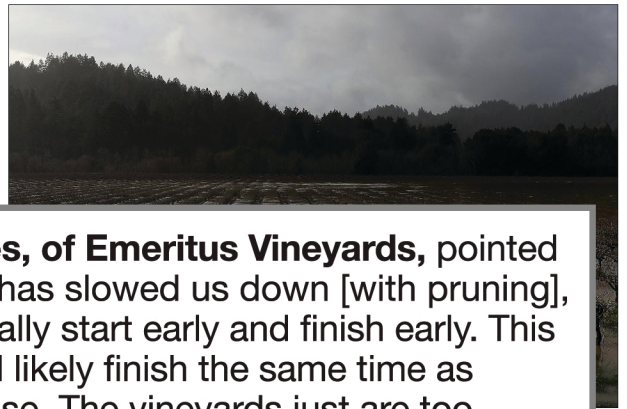
Forbes

Food & Agriculture / #WineAndDine

How This Wet, Wild Winter In California Wine Country Could Have Unexpected Benefits

FEB 23, 2017 | **Brian Freedman**, CONTRIBUTOR

Unusual weather throughout much of the United States this winter has been the subject of speculation, consternation, and obsession across the country. Springlike heat in the Mid-Atlantic and flooding rains in the West have wreaked havoc across a wide range of industries. In the past two months, in Sonoma, the latter



Brice Jones, of Emeritus Vineyards, pointed out that “it has slowed us down [with pruning], but we usually start early and finish early. This year we will likely finish the same time as everyone else. The vineyards just are too muddy to walk in and it's never good to prune when it's wet if you want to prevent disease.”

How, the California

Fortunately, vineyard have caused at least, not the trellis were flooded

vine region 2017 \ the grow s don't s then physis in vine s in the

River Valley),” there hasn't been any damage to the vineyards of Ramey Wine Cellars, David Ramey noted in an email.

Christian Gastón significant damage time to stabilize s

Not everyone was by trees coming c sight to see!”

Overall, it seems and growers remain procedures in place President and GM. “Other vineyards in the area that have been flooded should be okay too, as long as the water drains before the growing season begins.”

“2017 will be better than ever. We are dry-farmed, and since the roots are used to going down 20-25 feet for their water source, we like that this rain will fill up the soil profile for the years to come. The vines are asleep right now so the fruit won't be affected in the same way it could be if this rain came during harvest, but we will see healthy vines for this vintage and the excess water will ensure great vintages looking ahead.”

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Christopher Howell, Wine-Grower and GM at Cain Vineyard and Winery and one of the most incisive minds in the business, is taking the long view. “Our dramatic hillsides were carved over millennia by rains just like these,” he wrote in an email.

“Ironically, now that we have planted vineyards, we want nothing to change. But despite our best efforts, change is inevitable. Our cover crop has worked perfectly to prevent runoff and erosion. Thanks to our attentive crew, the surface drains have worked very well.



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