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

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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, both the Napa River and the Russian River, the latter in Sonoma County, hit flood levels.

How, then, California?

Fortunately, vineyards have at least, in the treacherous were flooded River Valley Ramey



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Vineyards in drought-stricken California, like this one in Guerneville in the Russian River Valley, could actually benefit from record rains this winter (Credit: Justin Sullivan/Getty Images).

Christian Gastón Palmaz, of Palmaz Vineyards, also dodged the proverbial bullet. “Fortunately we haven’t experienced any significant damage,” he wrote in an email. “Because the rains were late enough in the season, our cover crops had sufficient time to stabilize

Not everyone was caused by trees. That’s a sight to

Overall, it seems and growers recommend procedures in place. President and General the growing season

Christopher Hoover is taking the long view.

Rosemary Cakebread, of Gallica Wines, pointed out that, “We really won't have a handle on rainfall impact until bloom, and we still have the possibility of several more weeks of winter-like conditions. Although slightly soggy, we have been grateful for the abundant rain and snowfall in California!”

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“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.

Even so, we have seen some movement, and a few slides, for the most part, not in the vineyard. Thankfully, our vines are intact.”



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