At Bay Area Wineries, the Grapes Come to You

The 2011 growing season, which will forever be remembered as cool, damp and unpredictable for Northern California, is coming to a merciful close. But don’t feel bad if you didn’t make it up to Wine Country to experience the full thrill of harvest (trust us, the traffic was terrible anyway). This week, the grapes are coming to you.

The following urban wineries are still bringing in fruit and they wouldn’t mind one bit if you stopped by to lend a hand, taste some juice, and find out once and for all what the difference is between wild and cultured yeast.

Dogpatch WineWorks’ shiny new crushpad will be awash with Merlot and Petite Verdot from the Comalville area of Napa this week. And, to complete their Bordeaux-style blends, superstar assisant Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc will be arriving the week of October 24th. If you’re interested in playing winemaker, ask about the WineWorks’ custom crush options and next year, you can be the one deciding whether or not to inoculate.

If you’re more into Rhone varietals or would just like to know what a “Rhone varietal” is, Carotta Cellars, a label that uses the WineWorks facility, will be competing for space on the crushpad to process their Carignan, Grenache and Mourvedre this week and next. Email proprietor David Greco david@carottawine.com if you are interested in swinging by.

Dogpatch WineWorks - 2439 Third St. (at 22nd Street), 415-525-8400

You can almost hear a sigh of relief coming from the general vicinity of Bluxome Street, where the Bluxome Street Winery brought in the last of their Pinot Noir from the Russian River Valley. But don’t despair: grapes don’t become wine overnight. Visit their tasting room, which has a great view of the winemaking facility with the added benefit of not getting your feet wet. They just may let you taste the fermenting must (the resulting liquid). The magic word is please.

Bluxome Street Winery - 53 Bluxome St. (at Fourth Street), 415-543-8553

Up in Alameda, the former Naval Air Base has been under a different kind of barrage: Roek Wall Winies has brought in over 240 tons of fruit this year so far, but are waiting “with bated breath,” according to assistant winemaker Chelsea Blackburn, for the last load of Cabernet Sauvignon from Napa. With sun in the forecast, the answer to when will you harvest is, any day! Their tasting room is open Wednesday through Sunday, but to ensure there will be action on the day of your visit, we advise you call ahead.

Roek Wall Wine Company - 2301 Monarch Street (at West Tower Avenue), Alameda, 510-520-5200

By Courtney Humiston on October 18, 2011
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