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## MARYLAND GRAPE GROWERS REPORT 2010 BEST HARVEST IN YEARS

Despite extreme weather throughout the growing season, 2010 is proving to have been one of the best harvests on record. Reports from around the state indicate that that 2010 vintage will be stellar—perhaps the best in a decade.

“The quality has been phenomenal in 2010,” said Anthony Aellen of Linganore Winecellars in Mt. Airy. “We haven’t seen sugars like this in 38 years; we were pulling in Chambourcin at 25 brix.”

Greg Lambrecht of Serpent Ridge Vineyard in Westminster said the climate pattern –namely high temperatures– offered an earlier harvest than usual. “Rains were adequate – plentiful early and just enough during the regular season to keep the plants from being too stressed,” Lambrecht said.

On the Eastern Shore, some vineyard yields were lower due to a late frost, but the quality is expected to be higher than normal, according to Tom Shelton of Bordeleau Vineyards & Winery in Eden.

“We tasted our new Chardonnay this past weekend and compared it with the 2009; the 2010 is much more flavorful, has more fruit and more character,” said Rich Fuller of Port of Leonardtown Winery in Leonardtown.

Doug and Maureen Heimbuch, owners of Thanksgiving Farm, a winery and vineyard located in Anne Arundel County, said the 2010 growing season for their grapes was the best they have seen since planting grapes in 1998. The growing season was the hottest on record and rainfall was well below average, prior to harvest.

“The grapes we harvested from our vineyards this year were beautifully ripe, with low acidity, high sugar content and wonderfully ripe flavors,” said Doug Heimbuch. “We just finished pressing our 2010 Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon and those very young wines are fantastically rich and flavorful, and we fully expect our 2010 Meritage to exceed the excellent quality of our 2007 vintage,” Heimbuch said.

According to Jennie Schmidt, president of the Maryland Grape Growers Association and owner of Schmidt Vineyard Management, the significant summer drought affected Maryland’s main field crops, yet was beneficial to grape production, resulting in high quality fruit up until the fall rains.

Expect to see the first 2010 vintage white wines released in early 2011, with reds following in the summer and fall. Wine-makers statewide are thrilled for what the 2010 vintage will bring to the table.

There are currently 48 licensed wineries in Maryland. These wineries sold about 1.4 million bottles of wine in 2009, and annual sales in fiscal 2009 are estimated at over \$15 million.

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