The 2017 vintage started out with a cool, wet winter, with significantly above average snowfall in eastern Washington. Going into spring, the cool trend continued. “We thought we might have another 2011 on our hands,” one winemaker said, referring to the recent, historically cool vintage.

As a result, bud break in 2017 was behind historical averages and significantly behind the most recent warm vintages of 2013-2015. Bloom was also slightly delayed.

The early part of summer saw average temperatures in the Columbia Valley followed by above average temperatures in July and August. As a result, heat accumulation was a bit above average for the season, despite the cool start. Harvest began right on schedule, perhaps even a bit early, in late August.

Wildfires occurred throughout the Pacific Northwest late in the growing season, but there is no widespread concern of smoke taint in the grapes.

In the second half of September, temperatures cooled considerably, which delayed ripening. “Things just kind of stalled,” one winemaker said. This allowed for luxurious amounts of hang time without the threat of increased sugar accumulation, stretching harvest into the first week of November. As a result, winemakers report that sugars were slightly down in 2017 whereas acid levels were up. Overall, quality is reported to be high.