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## Wine Buzz: Grape harvest delayed

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September traditionally ushers in a key time for California's multibillion-dollar wine industry. It's the month when the state's grape harvest hits high gear, and for the past seven years, September has simultaneously been proclaimed California Wine Month by the governor.

But where are all the ripe grapes? 2011's growing season has been hampered by unseasonably cool temperatures and a wet spring, delaying the grape harvest by a few weeks compared with a typical year.

Lodi's looking at an overall light crop, with a little pinot grigio and chardonnay just starting to be picked.

"We're starting about three weeks late, but the weather's been ideal, and I think steadily we'll catch up," said Mark Chandler, executive director of the Lodi Woodbridge Winegrape Commission. "The quality looks excellent with the warm afternoons and cool evenings."

The same just about goes for the Sierra Foothills. Paul Bush, the co-owner of Madroña in El Dorado County, says he doesn't expect the bulk of his grape crops to be harvested until late September.

"The heat has helped a little, but we're a fair ways behind," Bush said. "The vines look great, and there's plenty of leaf surface, but I just wish it was three weeks earlier."

The month will still be flush with wine events, though one prominent tasting is taking the year off. Taste of Lodi, which usually touches down in late September, will not do so this year due to venue issues and a sponsorship shortfall. Chandler expects the event to return for 2012.

Here are a couple of local events tied to California Wine Month that you can check out:

**Deaver Vineyards & Winery**, 12455 Steiner Road, Plymouth, will hold a Labor Day weekend picnic Saturday with wine and live music from noon to 4 p.m. All food items under \$10.

Information: (209) 245-4099, [www.deavervineyard.com](http://www.deavervineyard.com).

**Woodbridge Winery**, 5950 E. Woodbridge Road, Acampo: Get into the patriotic spirit and grab a glass for Reds, Whites & Blues on Sept. 17. You'll find a good ol' American wine tasting with food, to boot.

Information: [www.robertmondavi.com/](http://www.robertmondavi.com/) woodbridge, (209) 365-8139.

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