



2018 bud break in Carneros AVA  
photo credit – Brittany Pederson, Renteria Vineyard Management

## 2018 Bud Break Starts Early in Napa Valley

**Napa, CA** (February 15, 2018) – After a combination of warm temperatures and relatively little winter rain, Napa Valley Grapegrowers (NVG) announces that bud break has begun in Napa Valley, marking the beginning of the winegrape growing season. “Buds on white varieties, like Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, have begun swelling and bursting on a few vines,” said Brittany Pederson, viticulturist at Renteria Vineyards and a NVG member. “In the next few days, a cold front is coming in, which will slow down bud break; however, it’s already started in some locations.”

With warm temperatures and drier soils, vines emerge from dormancy and begin to push water up from their root systems. Miniature buds on the vine, developed during the prior year, begin to swell, eventually producing shoots from the bud.

“We are seeing an early bud break – about two weeks before 2017. Over the last few years, there has been some replanting throughout the valley. Young vines go through bud break early, so that’s a contributing factor too,” said Garrett Buckland, president of the Napa Valley Grapegrowers and owner of Premiere Viticultural Services.

As spring approaches and mustard blooms throughout Napa Valley, grapegrowers have been working to prepare the vineyards for the 2018 growing season. Buckland stated, “The cover crop has grown in well and is looking very healthy. We are making sure to keep it mowed as a preventative frost protection measure.”

With the arrival of bud break, grapegrowers typically keep a close eye on nighttime temperatures and prepare for the threat of frost, which could damage the delicate shoots at their most vulnerable stage. NVG provides their members with a text and voice message-based weather alert system throughout the growing season, allowing for a

head start to prepare for what Mother Nature will bring. Right now, the NVG weather alert system is on frost watch and closely tracking nighttime temperatures.

Additionally, growers have started pruning throughout much of the valley. Pruning is a standard grapegrowing practice that helps awaken the vine from dormancy by removing the lignified vines from the previous vintage and allowing for new shoot growth.

Pederson noted, “February and March are some my favorite months in the growing season. It’s the start of something new, which is always exciting. Throughout these times we (grapegrowers) are in the vineyard putting our best practices to use, which help ensure a quality crop to come. 2018 is off to good start, and we hope it will continue.”

### **About the Napa Valley Grapegrowers**

The Napa Valley Grapegrowers is a non-profit trade organization that has played a vital role in strengthening Napa Valley’s reputation as a world-class viticultural region for 43 years. Its mission is to preserve and promote Napa Valley’s world-class vineyards. NVG represents 726 Napa County grapegrowers and associated businesses.

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