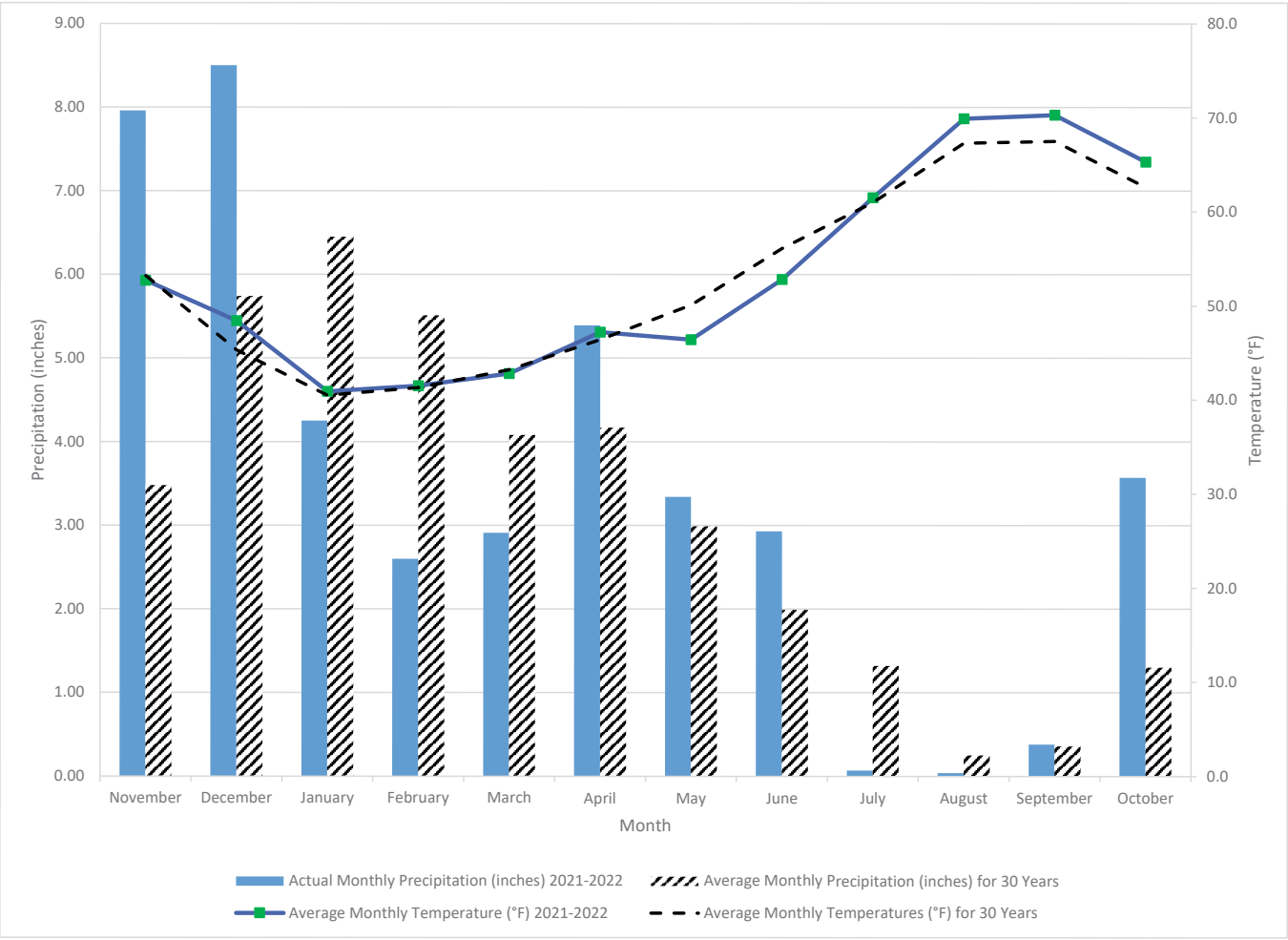
Beaux Frères

2022 Vintage Report

by Michael D. Etzel

Harvest Timeline: After bud break in late March, the Willamette Valley received an arguably unprecedented frost event in mid-April. At least half of the primary buds in our estate were lost, followed by unseasonably cold and consistently heavy rains that continued until June 20th.

With the clock set back considerably due to the cold and wet weather, the remainder of the growing season was dry with delightfully pleasant, above-average temperatures and below-average precipitation overall. Cluster counts were down, but their size made up for a lot of the diminished bud counts. Harvest began at the estate on October 1st and finished on October 15th. Fortunately, we received just 0.4 inches (10mm) of rain through the completion of harvest, an especially ideal development during the home stretch of the growing season in October. In the end, this welcomed dynamic led to the extraordinary quality of the vintage.

Vintage Adaptations: Due to thick skins (potentially the positive result of vine stress), we reduced time in the vat to promote supple tannins. We also decreased the number of extraction treatments and use of whole clusters to preserve the finesse and balance of the vintage.

Qualitative Assessment: We saw elegance, freshness, and red-toned fruit in the barreled wines. Based on our perceptions in the earliest stages of harvest, the profile of the wines convinced us to increase the use of new oak barrels by 10%. For a stylistic comparison, the 2022 vintage is akin to the classic 2008; another one for the ages that will stand the test of time in cellars over decades.