



## Cover Story

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### Crush Course

#### *An insider's view of winemaking, from vineyard to barrel*

Josh Kimball

It all gelled for me sometime in the middle of week four, right at the end of September. I was clamping hundreds of feet of hoses together, from which thousands of pounds of grapes would soon flow. It was the first chilly morning of fall—that Paso Robles inland cold that requires several layers of clothing—and a brisk wind had set in.

Bodies would streak by periodically: one going to find the forklift, another going to hook up the steam generator, one heading to help offload new barrels from a massive delivery truck, one covered in grape shit from having just dug out a tank, one heading back to check on a pumpover. All did so with a brisk sense of urgency.

There's music playing on the radio, but it's muffled by the hum of various propane, diesel, and 480-volt industrial machinery. When it was Lady Gaga on the radio, dear god, I loved those machines. A massive 21-wheeler rolled in and stopped with a hydraulic grunt, shouldering 50 tons of grapes on the bed. The winemaker headed over to greet the driver, virtually hop-scotching the spaghetti farm of hoses while en route. I got the hoses all hooked up, and began cleaning them and the pump with (in very specific order) soda ash, then citric acid, then iodine, then fresh water.

This is a harvest in full swing at a winery that produces roughly one million bottles of high quality wine a year. And all of a sudden, it clicked for me. I'd found the hard-to-explain flow of it, and the dynamism of it all—which until then was confusing and sometimes intimidating—became embraceable.

These images are a glimpse into some of the integral parts of this season's winemaking process at Peachy Canyon Winery, while others are simply a suite of the good, bad, and ugly that naturally go down in an occasionally pressurized, frantic, but ultimately rewarding and fun environment. Thirteen-hour workdays, cumulating in 75-hour work weeks, are commonplace. Δ

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