

Expert says west coast wildfires will likely mean smoky-tasting wine for years to come

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Professor of Supply Chain Management and wine industry expert Burak Kazaz says along with exacting a heavy human toll, West Coast wildfires will also affect the flavor of your favorite California wine.

Smoke from devastating wildfires isn't only filling the air along the West Coast, it's also making its way into grapes and California produced wines. And the impact may be felt and tasted for years. Kazaz, who studies the [wine industry](#) extensively, says wildfires will have a long-lasting effect on the taste and pricing of California wines.

"The fires we're seeing reported on the news are certainly bad enough," says Kazaz, "but this is the latest in a string of bad [wildfire](#) seasons along the [west coast](#)." As a result, Kazaz says consumers can expect that some of their favorite wines will have a slightly smoky [flavor](#). Grapes are covered with ash. Winemakers are debating whether to harvest earlier than planned. "There are ways that winemakers can attempt to 'mask' the smoky taste, but it's literally permeated everything, from the grapes themselves to the wooden crates and barrels used to store grapes and the finished wine product. Heavy smoke and a burnt flavor is hard to remove, and the effect is cumulative as the state has been hit hard by wildfires for the past few years."

Kazaz has created a price algorithm that provides the most accurate valuation for wine futures contracts both academically and in practice. Taking into account a variety of factors, including weather, [market fluctuations](#) and the scores assigned by leading tasting experts, Kazaz has devised a system that provides the most accurate valuation for certain kinds of wines (Bordeaux) that can be expanded to other regions and varieties. He believes implementing the use of this system may benefit consumers and producers alike, especially at a time when grapes are being damaged by smoke. "Winemakers capitalize on uninformed consumers. Prices have continued to rise for the past few years despite the damage done by smoke and despite the excess amount of grapes. Using a system of [wine](#) futures would allow for a fair price to be set for outstanding wines and for those that feature a slightly smoky flavor."

Provided by Syracuse University

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