



AS IT IS

Grapes Grown in Smoky Air Used in New Vodka

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Grapes from the Napa area of California make some of the world's most famous wines.

But what happens when nearby fires create smoke that destroys the taste of the grapes?

Nicholas Quille is a wine maker, and he did not want to find out. He remembered that when fires came near in 2017, his wine had smoky **flavors** that most people did not like.

So last year, he hurried to pick all of the merlot and malbec grapes he was growing nearby. But he was too late, and his grapes once again had a strange, smoky flavor.

The smoke can change the chemistry of the grapes and change their taste.

Quille is the winemaker who runs Crimson Wine Group.

Instead of throwing away the wine, he worked with Hangar 1 Vodka to make a new alcohol from the smoky wine.

He sent the vodka-maker some bottles of wine and they made a new product called Smoke Point vodka.

Emily Webster works for Hangar 1. She called the vodka "**gorgeous.**"

Some money from selling the vodka will go to the California Fire Foundation.

Michael Kudra is a **bartender** in San Francisco. The Reuters news agency asked him to taste the new vodka.

He said it was "smooth" and the drink reminded him of how the air smells when someone far away is cooking with fire.

Quille said his winemaking business lost money because of the bad-tasting grapes, but he is happy to know that he can make vodka again in the future if the smoke comes too close.

Scientists say the chance of fire in northern California is growing because of long periods without rain, and extreme heat resulting from climate change.

Quille said if the fires happen more often, the vodka option “needs to be **on the table.**”

I’m Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on reporting by Reuters. Susan Shand was the editor.

What would you do with grapes that had a smoky flavor? Tell us in the Comments Section and visit our Facebook page.

Words in This Story

flavor – n. a particular type of taste

gorgeous – adj. very enjoyable or pleasant

bartender – n. a person who serves drinks at a bar or restaurant

on the table – an expression meaning to consider an idea seriously
