



EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Written by Master Sommelier Tim Gaiser

First recognized at the Judgment of Paris in 1976, Napa Valley is one of the world's most important fine wine regions. However, at only 45,342 acres (18,349 hectares), it's a relatively small area, less than 15% the size of Bordeaux, and accounts for just 4% of California's total wine production. Napa Valley was granted AVA, or American Viticultural Area, status in 1981, making it the first AVA in California and the 2nd in the US.

By the numbers

16

Nested AVAs within Napa Valley AVA

1981

 1981
 (1st AVA in California; 2nd AVA in U.S.)
 Year Established

475

475 physical wineries

45,342 acres

 (18,349 hectares)
 9.5% of total California plantings
 Acreage Under Vine

159,721 tons

 (4% of California production)
 90,691,463 Liters
 Crush & Production
 (based on 2019 crush report)

79% Red
21% White

 Cabernet Sauvignon (51%), Chardonnay (13%),
 Merlot (9%), Pinot Noir (6%),
 Sauvignon Blanc (6%), and Zinfandel (3%)
 Key Varieties (based on 2019 plantings)

Climate

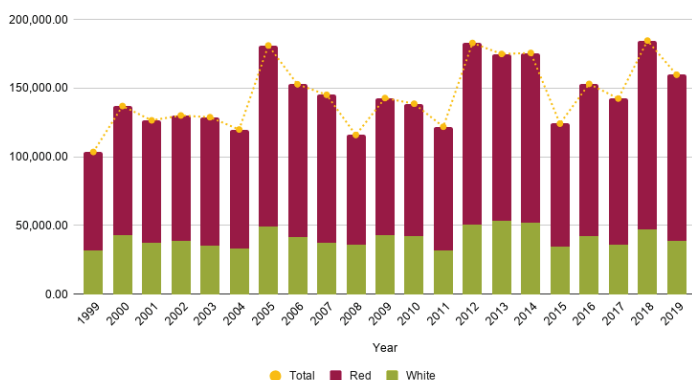
Warm-summer Mediterranean (Csb)

Key Soil Types

Volcanic, Maritime/Sedimentary, Alluvial, Colluvial

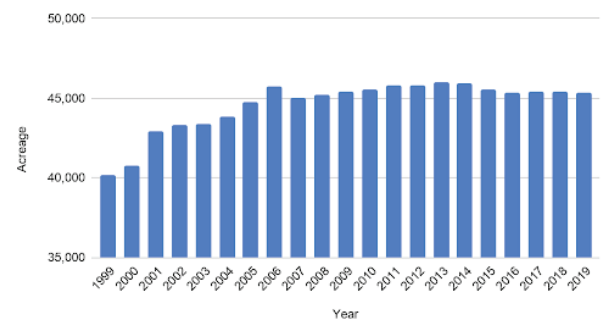
Crush Production Over 20 Years

Napa Valley Crush Report: 1999 - 2019



Planted Acreage Over 20 Years

Acreage Report: 1999 - 2019



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Overview

Napa ('na-pə) Valley is one of the world's most important fine wine regions. However, at only 45,342 acres (18,349 hectares), it's a relatively small area, less than 15% the size of Bordeaux at 296,000 acres (119,787 hectares). Napa Valley also has a very narrowly defined topography. The valley itself is just 30 miles (48 km) long and 5 miles (8 km) across at its widest point.

Napa Valley produces less than 0.4% of the world's wine and accounts for just 4% of California's total annual wine production. Average high prices of Napa Valley wines, however, account for over 25% of the state's total wine revenues. As of 2019, the Napa Valley wine industry and related businesses added more than US\$9.4 billion to the local economy, and nearly US\$34 billion in the U.S. Wine in Napa Valley was also responsible for 44,000 jobs locally and nearly 190,000 nationwide.

Napa Valley was granted AVA, or American Viticultural Area, status in 1981 (it is also part of the North Coast AVA). Since that time, 16 nested sub-AVA's have been granted. These AVA's are often subdivided into appellations located on the valley floor, hillside, and outside the valley proper. This is because differences in wine character caused by location, microclimate, and terroir can be dramatic.

- **Valley Floor AVA's:** Los Carneros (shared with Sonoma County), Coombsville, Stags Leap District, Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley, Yountville, Oakville, Rutherford, St. Helena, and Calistoga
- **Hillside AVA's:** Atlas Peak, Howell Mountain, Mt. Veeder, Spring Mountain District, Diamond Mountain District, Wild Horse Valley, and Chiles Valley

Napa Valley has long provided environmental leadership in the industry. The Napa Valley Agricultural Preserve, established in 1968, was the first of its kind in the country to set land aside specifically for agriculture. Today, nearly 90% of Napa County is under permanent or high levels of protection from development. Napa Valley is also home to the largest number by far (40%) of certified sustainable wineries in California.

As of 2019, the Napa Valley Vintners Association reported that there are approximately 700 grape growers in Napa County. Approximately 475 physical wineries in Napa County produce more than 1,000 different wine brands. Some 95% of Napa Valley wineries are family-owned. With few exceptions, most are smaller in scale. Over 70% produce less than 10,000 cases a year. Some produce less than a thousand cases annually.



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History



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The Beginnings of Wine in California

Wine came to California with the establishment of Catholic missions. Between 1769 and 1826, Franciscan monks founded 21 missions and forts along the California coast, south of Napa, between San Diego and Sonoma. With the missions came the need for sacramental wine for use during mass. The first vineyard was planted at the Mission San Diego within a few years of its founding in 1769. The first non-native vines were Listan Prieto, also known as Palomino Negro, brought to the New World from the Canary Islands. Over time the grape was planted at each new mission and became known simply as the "Mission" grape.

At first the territory that would eventually become California was under the jurisdiction of Spain. In 1821 the land came under Mexican rule. A decade later, the Mexican government sought to secularize the missions. In 1833 Mexican generals started to divide church land holdings, deeding parcels of land to military

officers and influential private citizens. As control of former church-owned vineyards came into public hands, wine could be made commercially for the first time.

In 1836, General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, namesake of the town of Vallejo, awarded the Rancho Caymus to a former employee, George Calvert Yount. The 12,000 acres (4856 hectares) included much of what is now southern Napa Valley. In 1838 or 1839, Yount planted a small patch of Mission vines that is now considered Napa Valley's first vineyard.

While Yount is credited with planting the first vineyard, John Patchett is given credit for founding the first winery in Napa Valley. Patchett planted vines in 1854 on his property, making wine in 1857, and building a cellar in 1859. Others would follow. In 1859, Samuel Brannan purchased a tract of land called Agua Caliente

("hot water") Ranch in the far north of the valley. Brannan planted over 100 acres (41 hectares) of vines and named the region Calistoga, a combination of the words California and Saratoga, New York (the latter because of its hot springs).

At the end of The Mexican War (1846-1848), California territory was ceded to the U.S. Then gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in the Sierra Foothills in 1848. In a few short years, hundreds of thousands from all corners of the globe came to California to seek their fortunes— along with scores from the East Coast and Midwest. San Francisco grew from a small coastal town to a city of over 25,000 in the space of one year, and Napa Valley also prospered.

Among those seeking to make their fortune were winemakers and vineyardists from Ohio, then the country's preeminent wine region, as well as others from major European winemaking regions. Mostly notably was Charles Krug, a German native, who founded Napa's first commercial winery in 1861. Jacob Schram, another German immigrant, founded Schramsberg in 1862 (and also planted the first hillside vineyards). In the following two decades other Europeans, mostly of Italian, Swiss, and German heritage, would start wineries in Napa Valley. In 1875 the Beringer Winery was founded by brothers Jacob and Fredrick Beringer, who previously worked for Charles Krug.

By the end of the 1880s, less than 30 years after Krug founded his winery, Napa Valley had over 140 wineries and 15,000 acres (6,070 hectares) under vine. Wines from To-Kalon, Sunny St. Helena, Inglenook, and Niebuam were winning awards in domestic and European competitions.

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History - continued



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1880's & 1890's: Phylloxera

Just as Napa Valley wines were starting to make their mark on the international stage, phylloxera struck in Napa in 1872.

By then, phylloxera was already devastating vineyards throughout France and threatened to destroy cultivation of *vitis vinifera* grapes on a global scale. In Napa, numerous remedies were tried, including flooding vineyards and using poisonous gases. George Hussmann, a German immigrant and leading expert viticulturist from Ohio, is credited with perfecting methods for grafting European vines onto American rootstocks. But less than 50% of the vineyard area planted in the 19th century survived. Grapes that had previously demanded high prices were non-existent. Many vintners rushed to plant lesser quality varieties or tore out vineyards and planted to other crops. It would literally take a century before wineries in Napa Valley equaled their pre-phylloxera number.

Prohibition

In 1909 the 16th amendment was passed establishing a Federal Income Tax.

Overnight, alcohol tax as an important source of federal government revenue vanished and the way was paved for national Prohibition to become a reality. With the passing of the 18th amendment and the Volstead Act in 1919, production, sale, and transportation of all alcoholic beverages became illegal. Some loopholes in the law, however, enabled a few wineries to survive: Wine could be made for sacramental and medicinal purposes, and each household could produce up to 200 gallons/757 liters of fruit juice a year—regardless of use. Instantly demand for winegrapes increased exponentially. More often than not, however, fruit shipped by rail cross country oxidized and arrived in poor condition. Vineyard owners responded by ripping out Cabernet Sauvignon and other fine winegrapes, replacing them with varieties that would travel well. By 1926, Napa's vineyards were made up of grapes such as Alicante Bouschet, Petite Sirah, Zinfandel, and Carignan—all hardy varieties that could withstand the harsh conditions of rail travel.

With the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, the American wine industry, most notably in Napa Valley, was left in ruins. Many of the best winemakers were gone and vineyards had been replanted to lesser grapes. The valley had to start over—in the midst of the Great Depression.

Post-Prohibition: 1930s-1950s

After Prohibition, few Napa wineries remained. Those that had survived made a living on sacramental wine and home winemaking kits.

American wine tastes had also changed during Prohibition, moving from quality dry table wines to sweet fortified wines or inexpensive blends labeled "Claret," "Burgundy," and the like. Winemaking technology and equipment were also lacking. Redwood tanks and concrete vats — both sources for microbial spoilage — were commonly used for fermentation and American Oak Bourbon barrels for aging red wines. Not until the mid-1960s was the trend reversed.

In the decade that followed the repeal, Louis M. Martini built his winery in 1933 (the first new post-Prohibition winery), Georges de Latour resurrected Beaulieu Vineyards (BV) with the hiring of André Tchelistcheff, a French-trained Russian winemaker, in 1938, John Daniel Jr. reopened Inglenook in 1939, and the Mondavi family purchased Charles Krug Winery in 1943.

Under Tchelistcheff's direction at BV, winery hygiene became paramount and smaller barrels were used for aging red wines. De Latour also wanted to produce a reserve Cabernet Sauvignon that would be a benchmark for Napa Valley wines. The result was the George de Latour Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon which quickly became one of Napa's finest wines. Tchelistcheff would go on to be one of the most influential figures in the history of Napa Valley wine. He was convinced that Napa Valley, like other great European wine regions, had distinct terroirs. Pinot Noir and white grapes did best in the cooler southern end of the valley, while Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel did better in the warmer northern part of the valley. Even into the late 1980s, André was serving as a consulting winemaker and mentor.

In 1944, seven Napa Valley wineries signed an agreement forming a non-profit trade organization called the Napa Valley Vintners Association. Today it has more than 550 members.

After World War II, the Napa Valley wine industry continued to grow slowly. Throughout the late 1940s and 1950s inexpensive sweet fortified wines were still the most popular with American consumers. It would take the right person with vision to change that. And that person was Robert Mondavi.

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1960s: Robert Mondavi and the Beginnings of the Modern Napa Valley Era

In 1943, Robert Mondavi learned that the Charles Krug Winery was for sale, and convinced his father, Cesare Mondavi, to buy it.

After attending university at Stanford, Robert and his brother Peter returned home to work with Cesare at the winery. Robert focused on sales and Peter on winemaking.

By the mid-1950s Robert Mondavi was convinced that America would someday have a fine wine culture and that in the future every restaurant table would have a bottle of wine on it. Mondavi also believed that Napa could become an international brand and the Valley a world-class wine region and destination.

After a falling out with his brother in 1965, Robert left Charles Krug. In 1966 he opened the Robert Mondavi Winery in Oakville, the Valley's first new winery since the late 1930s. The winery was revolutionary in every way, from its design to the concept of single varietal wines as the focus.

Years later, when asked about opening the winery, Mondavi was quoted as saying, "We knew then that we had the climate, the soil, and the varieties that made our own distinct style of wine that could be the equal of the great wines of the world, but it did require the winegrowing and the wisdom to know how to present it to the world."

Others quickly followed Mondavi's lead. In the 1960s several notable wineries were founded by a legendary group winemakers: Joe Heitz of Heitz Wine Cellar, Warren Winiarski of Stags Leap Wine Cellars, Don Chappellet of Chappellet Winery, Sir Peter

Newton of Sterling Vineyards, and Al Bronstein of Diamond Creek. Two in the group, Heitz and Winiarski, had worked as assistant winemakers with Mondavi.

The new generation of winemakers made use of the latest technology, including temperature-controlled stainless steel for fermentation, and aging in smaller French barriques. It was no accident then when dry wines finally overtook sweet wines in 1967 in domestic consumption and sales. It had taken over 30 years to change the post-Prohibition wine trends.

The 1960s were also a time for the Napa industry to protect the Valley for future generations. Concern over future urban encroachment in other parts of California led to the 1968 Agricultural Preserve, a landmark piece of environmental legislation that limited development within much of Napa Valley to preserve its agricultural heritage.

Foreign investment in California vineyards and wineries was inevitable. In the 1970s several Napa Valley wineries were founded with European backing: Clos du Val in 1972, Domaine Chandon in 1973, and Opus One in 1979. With the latter, Robert Mondavi figured prominently again, forming an alliance with Baron Philippe de Rothschild of the Bordeaux first-growth Château Mouton Rothschild to create a luxury-tier winery focused on a Cabernet Sauvignon-based blend.

With the surge in production and improvement in wine quality, it was only a matter of time before Napa Valley wines would take their place on the world stage. And in 1976 they did just that.

1976: The Paris Tasting

In the summer of 1976, British wine merchant Steven Spurrier set up a tasting in Paris to celebrate the 200th birthday of the U.S.

The tasting was held in a double-blind format (when you have no identifying information on the wine—neither grape variety, region nor year) featuring top wines from California and France. A panel of French judges chose the 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay and the 1973 Stag's Leap Wine Cellars S.L.V. Cabernet Sauvignon as the top wines over white Burgundies and classified growth Bordeaux. The results sent a shock wave through the international wine community, and the controversy was instant—some believe it has never fully subsided. With the tasting's results, there was a rush to buy land, plant vineyards, and open wineries in Napa Valley. By 1980 the number of wineries in the Valley had finally risen to the level of the 1880s. It had taken a century for the Napa Valley wine industry to regain its prominence after decades of challenges and setbacks.

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1980s: Post-Paris Tasting Expansion, Phylloxera, and More
 In the 1980s, expansion in vineyard planting and winery building continued at an unprecedented pace. Wine journalism also started to have a significant impact trade and consumers alike. The *Wine Advocate* (1978) and *Wine Spectator* (1979) were launched. Both used the 100-point scoring system, to rate wines.

In 1981 the AVA, or American Viticultural Area, was introduced by the federal government as the system for recognizing and codifying unique wine producing areas. Napa Valley was granted AVA, or American Viticultural Area, status in 1981 (it's also part of the North Coast AVA). Since that time, 16 nested sub-AVA's have been granted. These AVA's are often subdivided into appellations located on the valley floor, hillside, and outside the valley proper. This is because differences in wine character caused by location, microclimate, and terroir can be dramatic.

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But, as so often in Napa Valley's history, setbacks would follow successes. In 1986 a new biotype of phylloxera was found in several places in the Valley. Most vineyards established during the previous 30-plus years were planted on AXR-1 rootstock. AXR, as it is often called, was thought to be phylloxera-resistant – but it was not. AXR is a cross between the “safe” American cultivar *Rupestris* and the non-resistant *vitis vinifera* Aramon. In less than a decade, 90% of all vineyards in Napa Valley – and throughout Northern California – were infected and would ultimately have to be replanted at a cost of between US\$17,000-\$20,000 per acre.

1990s: The French Paradox, Replanting, and Cult Wines

In 1991 TV's “60 Minutes” aired a segment called “The French Paradox.” In it, French scientist Serge Renaud, Ph.D. presented findings from his research showing that by U.S. health standards, the French did everything wrong.

Despite eating a high-fat diet, smoking, and not exercising, they had half the rate of heart disease and lived 2.5 years longer. Renaud attributed the difference to higher levels of red wine consumption in France. After the segment aired, sales of red wine in North America increased by 40%. It's also worth noting that no better theory has been offered in the years since.

The massive costly replanting after phylloxera had a silver lining as owners rethought what varieties to replant, and further which rootstocks and clones worked best. Disease-resistant, low-vigor rootstocks were chosen, as well as low-yielding clones. Along with new plant material, many vineyard managers adopted VSP trellising and high-density plantings with more vines per acre. One of the results of new plant material and trellising was longer hang time needed for grapes to achieve phenolic ripeness. That in turn resulted in higher grape sugars at harvest, and bigger, riper, fruitier wines with higher alcohol levels. Most critics and consumers approved of the riper style of wines. Some did not. Regardless, these changes resulted in an overall increase in the quality of Napa Valley wines.

In the 1990s Cabernet Sauvignon's popularity continued to surge. Many vineyards, formerly planted to a wide range of different grapes from Riesling to Alicante Bouschet, were budded over to Cabernet Sauvignon with Chardonnay and Merlot just behind. By the decade's end, Cabernet Sauvignon would surpass Chardonnay as the most widely planted grape. The decade also saw the rise of cult wines, primarily Cabernet Sauvignons and Cabernet blends, produced in minuscule quantities and sold for high prices. Wineries such as Screaming Eagle, Harlan, Dalla Valle, and Colgin had lengthy wait lists to purchase the wines direct.

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The 21st Century

The 21st Century has brought myriad challenges and opportunities to Napa Valley, which has forced the region to innovate and continually elevate the quality of wines being produced.

Climate change has been one such challenge that the region is facing head on. While no one can predict the exact impacts a warming planet will have on the region, many growers and winemakers are planning for future droughts and increasingly severe heat spikes. To mitigate this threat and ensure quality, vineyard managers are replanting vineyards with the newest technology including drought-resistant root stocks, adjusting row orientation to optimize sun exposure and shading, using modern trellis design and shade cloth to protect the grapes from over exposure to sun and heat, and refining irrigation systems to use water with maximize effectiveness. This level of precision farming allows vineyard managers to grow ever higher quality grapes.

The Napa Valley is not only responding to climate change in the vineyards, it's uniting as an industry to do its part to stop it. The industry is working with the local government to create a comprehensive climate action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the entire community. The Napa Valley Vintners trade

association was the first North American wine trade association to sign onto the Porto Protocol, a consortium of industry groups and businesses committed to mitigating climate change.

The region set a goal to have every eligible vineyard and winery enrolled in the Napa Green Land & Winery programs by the end of 2020. Napa Green is a voluntary and independently certified sustainability program specifically tailored to the local wine industry aiming to reduce the overall impacts of the industry. It regulates vineyard and winery practices to minimize soil erosion, greenhouse gas emissions, water and electricity use and waste production among other things. This grape to bottle sustainability program also requires continual improvement, ensuring that wineries become more sustainable over time rather than meeting static requirements.

Innovation is not only being adopted in the vineyards. Winemakers are using the latest scientific research and technology including optical sorters, new tank designs and materials, and understanding native yeast fermentations and other innovations to elevate the quality and uniqueness of Napa Valley wines.

While the phylloxera of the past has largely been mitigated by grafting vinifera vines onto native American rootstocks, pests like glassy-winged sharpshooters, various species of leafhoppers, mealy bugs, and others continue to be major concerns. When the European Grapevine Moth was discovered in Napa County in 2009, growers quickly banded together to create a successful program to eradicate the invasive pest, which was successful in 2014. This is a great example of how the collaboration within the Napa Valley wine industry allows Napa Valley growers and winemakers to overcome threats.

Finally, global financial cycles of boom and bust have created irregularity in consumer consumption of Napa Valley wines, especially at the super-premium tier. The global financial crash of 2008 was particularly devastating for the fine wine market, but also created an opportunity for many wineries to begin selling and shipping wines directly to consumers, bypassing the traditional distribution system. Today, in the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic, wineries continue to adapt with an increased emphasis on virtual experiences and digital sales and an increased focus on global markets.

Through it all, Napa Valley has remained a benchmark for fine wine, not only the New World, but throughout the global wine community. Though the industry faces new challenges with ever-changing domestic and world consumer markets, Napa Valley wines continue to set standards for world-class quality and innovation.

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Local Terroir

Geological Influences

Napa Valley is one of the world's preeminent wine regions thanks to its unusual combination of climate, soils, and topography. Napa Valley lies east of Sonoma County. The Valley is located at the northern end of San Pablo Bay, framed on the west by the Mayacamas Mountains and by the Vaca Mountains to the east. It is 30 miles (48 km) long by 5 miles (8 km) at its widest point.

Geologically, Napa Valley is fairly young. The entire California region sits on a "transform fault zone," a place where two tectonic plates slide past each other. Here the movement of the Pacific plate and the North American plate creates the San Andreas fault zone that traverses 600 miles (966 km) through California. Over 30 million years ago, creation of this fault zone enabled periodic volcanic activity. Thus, volcanic rock over eight million years old can be found in parts of Napa Valley.

Another tectonic plate helped form Napa Valley over 40 million years ago. At that time, the Farallon plate in the Pacific was subducting, or going under, the North American plate. As one plate moved under the other, material was scraped off and deposited on the surface. Today the western part of Northern California has a myriad of mineral-rich volcanic soils, as well as sedimentary rock from both the ancient sea floor and California Central Valley.



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Mountains and River

Over the last 150-million-plus years, movement of tectonic plates and volcanic activity have created two mountain ranges that border the valley on each side: the Mayacamas Mountains to the west and the Vaca Mountains to the east, both part of the Coastal Ranges which span over 400 miles (644 km) from Humboldt County in the north to Santa Barbara County in the south.

The Mayacamas Mountains act as a rain shadow, lessening the impact of Pacific storm systems in winter, as well as overall fog and marine influence from the ocean. In the east, the Vaca range protects the Valley's vineyards from the extreme heat of the Central Valley in the summer.

Individual peaks give their names to some of Napa Valley's best-known sub-regional AVAs, home to distinctive "mountain wines." Famous peaks in the Mayacamas range include Diamond Mountain at 2,375 feet (724 meters), Mount Veeder at 2,680 feet (817 meters), and Mount St. Helena, the highest, at 4,341 feet (1,323 meters). In the Vaca range, Mount Vaca is the highest point at 2,818 feet (859 meters), with Atlas Peak at 2,663 feet (812 meters), and Howell Mountain at 1,683 feet (513 meters).

The Napa River runs approximately 55 miles (89 km) through the heart of the Napa Valley. The river rises in northwestern Napa County, just south of the summit of Mount St. Helena. It enters the valley north of Calistoga, then flows southeast past the towns of St. Helena, Rutherford, Oakville, and through the city of Napa. South of Napa it forms a tidal estuary, entering the Mare Island Strait before emptying into San Pablo Bay through the Napa-Sonoma Marsh.

The Napa River watershed is approximately 425 square miles (684 square km) in size and supports an assortment of fish and wildlife; however, the river is also prone to periodic flooding – affecting vineyards – during rainy winter months. There are 23 floods on record since 1865. The worst occurred in 1986 when over 5,000 people had to be evacuated with 250 homes destroyed and three fatalities. After that flood the Napa River Flood Project was undertaken. Construction began in 2000 and was completed by 2015.

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Local Terroir – continued



Soil Diversity

Napa Valley's diversity of soil types is a major reason the area is one of the world's preeminent wine regions. In particular, the valley's volcanic soils are especially suited to growing Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varieties. But the formation of modern day Napa's soils happened over the last several million years. During that time a combination of weather, microbial activity, and earthquakes has helped create over 100 distinct soil types, 33 different soil series, and half the world's recognized soil orders.

Volcanic soils in the Napa Valley region are the result of massive volcanic eruptions that covered Northern California over 30 million years ago. Almost all of the Vaca Range and a substantial part of the Mayacamas (particularly part of Spring Mountain and north) are primarily volcanic. Mountain appellations like the Atlas Peak AVA contain soils comprised of igneous and lava gravel rock. Here, red grapes such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot do well and the wines are deep, concentrated, and powerful.

Throughout the valley, alluvial fans between the hillsides and valley floor, called "Napa Benches" are ideally suited to growing vines. The Rutherford Bench in the Rutherford AVA is the most well-known of the Napa Benches and has long been famous for some of the valley's best Cabernet Sauvignons. On hillsides, loose weathered rock, gravel, and soil have washed downslope over time forming colluvial deposits. Coombsville AVA, in the southeastern part of the valley, has hillside colluvial soils. Outstanding Merlot, Chardonnay, Syrah and Pinot Noir are made from vineyards planted here.

On the valley floor, movement of rocks, gravel, and soil from the movement of the Napa River over time has created alluvial soils excellent for growing Cabernet family grapes. In other places on the valley floor, deeper sandy loam soils are better for white grapes such as Sauvignon Blanc. In the Los Carneros AVA at the southern end of the Valley near the San Pablo Bay, the soils are marine sedimentary clay with underlying sandstone. In particular, a mixed marine clay soil called the "Haire Series" has been successful in cultivating high quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.



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Local Terroir – continued



Climate

Napa Valley has a dry Mediterranean climate with warm summers, cooler winters, and a preponderance of rainfall between November and March. The Pacific with its cold ocean currents is the dominant influence on Napa Valley's climate. The cold air penetrates into the region through the San Pablo Bay and Petaluma wind gap in the south, and through a gap in the Mayacamas Range in the far northern parts of the valley. Fog from San Pablo Bay also mitigates hot temperatures during the growing season.

Fog plays an important role in the valley's climate and micro-climates. On average, Sonoma County has much more fog due to several west-east-situated valleys. The Mayacamas Mountains on the west side of the Valley act as a barrier to fog from the Pacific coast. However, considerable fog makes its way up-valley from San Pablo Bay and a lesser amount from the Chalk Hill Gap at the far northern end of the Valley. Fog directly impacts the diurnal shift ([hyperlink](#)), the difference between the warmest daytime temperature and coolest night time temperature. During the growing season, morning fog from San Pablo Bay makes its way up the valley as far as St. Helena. As morning temperatures rise, the fog burns off and is usually gone by early afternoon.

Typical daytime temperatures during the growing season vary depending on proximity to San Pablo Bay. In the southern part of the Valley, where there is more fog, wind, and marine influence, the average daytime temperature is 80°F (27°C). Up-valley, north of the town of St. Helena, it's significantly warmer, with daytime temperatures averaging 95°F (35°C) in summer. An exception to this rule is the northern reaches of Calistoga, where cooling breezes come through the Chalk Hill gap. The hillsides in Napa Valley are generally cooler than the valley floor due to elevation, but generally receive more hours of sun as many are above the fog line (1,600 ft/488 m). Eastern facing vineyards on the Mayacamas are generally cooler than the western facing vineyards on the Vaca Range.

As the region has a dry Mediterranean climate, over 70% of annual rainfall takes place between December and March. On average, Napa Valley receives 20 inches (51 cm) of rain. However, yearly rainfall totals vary according to location, with 22-23 inches (56-58 cm) in the city of Napa, 36-37 inches (91-94 cm) in Calistoga, and 59-60 inches (150-152 cm) at Mt. St. Helena in the far north end of the valley. The two mountain ranges receive the highest rainfall totals with less on the valley floor.

The combination of a long growing season, Mediterranean climate, and considerable diurnal shift between warm summer days and cool foggy nights are another reason why Napa Valley is one of the world's great wine regions. Further, the micro-climate variations within the valley's sub-regions, from Los Carneros in the south to St. Helena in the north help create a diversity of grape varieties grown and wines made.



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Local Terroir – continued

Sub-AVA's

Valley Floor AVA's

CALISTOGA

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Lying between the Mayacamas Range on the west and the Vaca Range on the east, the Calistoga AVA (American Viticultural Area) lies at the northernmost end of the Napa Valley. From the foot of Mount St. Helena, the appellation stretches approximately seven square miles before brushing against the St Helena, Diamond Mountain and Howell Mountain AVAs.

NAME BACKGROUND

Calistoga's colorful personality is a reflection of its history. The geothermal waters that bubble to the earth's surface here are rich in magnesium and calcium, which first attracted the Native Americans who gathered here for detoxification and purification. It wasn't just the water that attracted trailblazers: the volcanic soils attracted those who preferred wine to water, starting as early as 1862. In the early 1870s, Sam Brannan arrived. His vision was to turn the waters into a world-class spa destination to be known as the "Saratoga of California." But after imbibing a bit too much brandy at a dinner party, he misspoke, proclaiming the place the "Calistoga of Sarafoina" – and the name stuck: in 1886, the town was incorporated as Calistoga.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 300 to 1200 feet (92 to 370 m)

Rainfall: up to 60 inches (96.5 to 150 cm) annually

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Almost completely of volcanic origin, soils range from rocky, stony loam on the hillsides, to gravelly or cobbly loams on the alluvial fans, and heavier clay-silt soils in the valley center areas.

CLIMATE

Warm to hot, depending upon time of year. Calistoga AVA has the most extreme diurnal swing in Napa Valley of all AVAs, meaning the day time and night time change in temps is very large. Daytime summer temperatures may peak above 100° (38°C) and fall to low 40s° (6°C) at night due to cool afternoon and evening breezes drawn in from the Chalk Hill Gap from the Pacific.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Syrah, Petite Sirah

COOMBSVILLE

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located in the southeastern corner of the Napa Valley, tucked up against the foothills of the Vacas Range, just outside of this historic city of Napa.

NAME BACKGROUND

The Coombsville AVA is named for an area of the city of Napa called Coombsville. It's namesake was Nathan Coombs, one of the founders of the city of Napa and a large landholder there.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 100-1000 feet (30-305 m)

Rainfall: 25 inches (65 cm) annually

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Primarily weathered volcanic rock and alluvial deposits from the Vaca Range that surrounds the region

CLIMATE

Weather is moderated by its proximity to the San Pablo Bay. Daily average high temperatures can be as much as 10 degrees cooler during the hot months than most other AVAs, and heat spikes tend to be less severe.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Dominated by Cabernet Sauvignon on the hillsides with Merlot, Chardonnay, Syrah and Pinot Noir in the lower, cooler sites

LOS CARNEROS (shared with Sonoma County)

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Carneros is the only appellation located at the crossroads of two major wine regions, the Napa and Sonoma Valleys. Surrounded by Napa Road on the outskirts of the town of Sonoma to the North, the low southern hills of the Mayacamas Range and the Napa River to the East, the wetlands and hayfields skirting San Pablo Bay to the South, and to the West, the border is shared with Sonoma Valley, along the spine of hills dividing Cotati Valley (and the Petaluma Gap area) from the Sonoma Creek watershed.



EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Local Terroir – continued

NAME BACKGROUND

In the 1830s, under Mexican rule, the generals began awarding large land grants to prominent military personnel and citizens, making way for the shift from sacramental wine to commercial vineyards. The name “Los Carneros” itself is connected to one of the original land grants — Rincon de los Carneros (“corner of the rams”), but that land lies in what today is Monterey County.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

San Pablo Bay itself is the overarching influence in Los Carneros, dictating temperatures, diurnal swings (or lack of), and the potential length of the growing season across the board. The Pacific Ocean is close enough on the west to influence the vineyards to a lesser extent on the Sonoma side of the AVA.

Elevation: Sea level to 700 feet (0 to 213 m)

Rainfall: Lowest in Napa Valley: up to 24 inches (10 cm) annually.

SOIL COMPOSITION

Clay dominated, very shallow in general, with more loam and hillside alluvials in the northern section. Yields typically are restrained by the hard claypan subsoil, which prevents deep-rooting.

CLIMATE

Cool, with prevailing marine winds from the San Pablo Bay and through the Petaluma Gap to the west. High temperatures during summer rarely exceed 80°F (27°C) with less diurnal range variation.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Merlot and Syrah

OAK KNOLL DISTRICT OF NAPA VALLEY

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

The District lies at the southern reaches of Napa Valley. Its location near San Pablo Bay means it is one of Napa’s cooler AVAs.

NAME BACKGROUND

Captain Joseph W. Osborne, with the Gold Rush booming, settled in California in 1850. The following year he purchased a large tract of land three miles south of Yountville and named it Oak Knoll. In 1852 he brought vine cuttings introducing some of the first European grape varieties to California.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: sea level to 800 feet (244 m)

Rainfall: 36 inches (90 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

The valley’s largest alluvial fan formed by Dry Creek creates the defining feature of the district. The northwest area is composed of volcanically derived soils, with stony or gravelly consistency. South and east areas are transitional from gravel to silty clay loam.

CLIMATE

Moderate to cool: marine air and fog can remain until late-morning. Late afternoon breezes frequently occur, maintaining slightly cooler temperatures than upper valley. Mid-summer temperatures may reach 92° F (33°C) and drop to around 50°F (10°C) at night.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Merlot, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling

OAKVILLE

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located in the heart of Napa Valley, this two mile (3 km) wide AVA extends to 1,000 feet (305 m) in elevation up the base of the Vaca Mountains to the east and 500 feet (152 m) in elevation in the Mayacamas Mountains to the west.

NAME BACKGROUND

Once a steam train stop in the late 1800s, Oakville owes its name to the dense groves of native oak which once blanketed the area.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 130 - 1000 feet (40 to 305 m).

Rainfall: 35 inches (87.5 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Primarily sedimentary gravelly alluvial loams on the western side, with more volcanic but heavier soils on the eastern side. Low to moderate fertility and fairly deep, with average water retention.



EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Local Terroir – continued



CLIMATE

Moderately warm, with temperatures commonly in the mid-90°F (34-35.5°C) range in high summer, but also still strongly affected by night and early morning fog, which helps keep acidity levels good. East side of the AVA receives warmer afternoon sun.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc

RUTHERFORD

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located south of St Helena and immediately north of Oakville, at the heart of the Napa Valley winegrowing area.

NAME BACKGROUND

Named after Thomas Lewis Rutherford, who married Elizabeth Yount, granddaughter of Napa's pioneering vigneron George C. Yount.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 155 to 500 feet (47 to 152 m).

Rainfall: 38 inches (95 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Western benchland is sedimentary, gravelly-sandy and alluvial, with good water retention and moderate fertility. The eastern side has more volcanic soils, moderately deep and more fertile.

CLIMATE

Moderately warm, still marginally influenced by early morning fog. Western bench area is cooler, with less late afternoon sun, tempered by afternoon marine winds. (This AVA averages a bit warmer than Oakville and Stags Leap District). Usual summer peak temperatures are mid-90°F (34-35.5°C) with a large diurnal range.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc

ST. HELENA

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

In the middle of Napa Valley, north of Rutherford and south of Calistoga. Boundaries defined by Zinfandel Lane to the south, Bale Lane to the north, the intersection of Howell Mountain and Conn Valley Road to the east, and the 400 foot (122 m) elevation line of the Mayacamas Mountain range to the west.

NAME BACKGROUND

AVA is centered around the town of St. Helena

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 200 to 475 feet (46 to 145 m).

Rainfall: 38 to 40 inches (95 to 101 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

South and west borders are more sedimentary, gravel-clay soils, with lower fertility and moderate water retention. Further north and to the east soils are prevalently volcanic in origin and are deeper and more fertile.

CLIMATE

Warm, due to greater protection from western hills, with less fog or wind incursions. This narrowest part of the Napa Valley floor provides more heat reflection off the hillsides. Mid-summer temperature peak is often in mid-to-high 90's (35° to 37°C).

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Syrah, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc

EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Local Terroir – continued



STAGS LEAP DISTRICT

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Often referred to as a "valley within a valley," the district is bounded on the east by the towering Stags Leap Palisades, to the west by the gently rolling hills and the Napa River, to the north by the Yountville Cross Road, and to the south by low-lying flatlands.

NAME BACKGROUND

In 1893, San Francisco entrepreneur Horace Chase built the first winery to bear the Stags' Leap name. Theories abound as to the origin of the name Stags Leap but the most well loved and oft-repeated is the legend of a stag who successfully eluded hungry hunters by leaping to freedom across the District's landmark peaks. A jagged outcropping of sheer rock and the legend of this nimble buck inspired the Stags Leap AVA name over a century ago.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: Sea level to 400 feet (20 to 123 m).

Rainfall: 30 inches (75 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Volcanic gravel-loams on the floor of the valley, with rocky hillsides, and low to moderate fertility due to hard clay subsoils.

CLIMATE

Moderately warm with afternoon marine winds acting as an "air-conditioner" to cool the warmer air radiating off the bare rocks of Stags Leap itself and the surrounding hillsides. Mid-summer temperatures can reach 100°F (37.7°C), but more regularly are in mid-90° range (34° to 36°C).

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc

YOUNTVILLE

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located in the heart of the Napa Valley, halfway between the northern shores of San Pablo Bay and the southern slopes of Mount St Helena. The AVA surrounds the town of Yountville that lies partway between the city of Napa and St Helena.

NAME BACKGROUND

Yountville is named after George C. Yount, the settler who planted Napa's very first vineyard at Rancho Caymus in the 1830s.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 20 to 200 feet (6 to 61 m).

Rainfall: 32 inches (80 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Principally gravelly silt loams, sedimentary in origin, and gravelly alluvial soils with rock, moderately fertile.

CLIMATE

Moderate, with cool marine influence and fog contributing to cool summer mornings and the strong breezes of San Pablo Bay keeping afternoons more comfortable than further up valley. Mid-summer peak temperatures may reach low 90°F (33°C), with noticeable diurnal fluctuation to the mid-50°F range (13°C).

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot



EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Local Terroir- continued



Hillside AVA's

ATLAS PEAK

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located on the western slopes of the Vaca Range, which separates the Napa and Sacramento valleys.

NAME BACKGROUND

Named for Atlas Peak, the most prominent peak in the region at 2,663 ft (812 m).

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 760 to 2600 feet (232 to 792 m).

Rainfall: 38 inches (96 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Volcanic in origin, with basaltic red color, shallow with limited water retention, so irrigation is often essential.

CLIMATE

Cool, mountain influenced with temperatures about 10–15°F (6–8°C) cooler than the valley floor in summer; above the fog line, there is low day-to-night temperature range, with summer temperatures rarely rising above 90°F (32°C)

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Known for Bordeaux varieties, with Cabernet Sauvignon most prominent. You can also find Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Malbec, Marsanne, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Sangiovese, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah and Zinfandel

CHILES VALLEY (no AVA website)

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Chiles Valley is a small AVA in the eastern hills of California's Napa Valley wine region. Chiles Valley resembles a long, thin scar slicing through the hillside between St Helena and Lake Berryessa.

NAME BACKGROUND

In 1841 Joseph Ballinger Chiles, a man from Missouri who fought in the Seminole Wars and was granted Mexican Citizenship, was given a two league piece of land known as Rancho Catacula by Governor Manuel Micheltorena. It covered the land east of St. Helena in the Chiles Valley along Chiles Creek. A claim was filed in 1852 but it wasn't until 1865 that a grant was issued to Joseph Ballinger Chiles. The Chiles House, built in 1856 is one of the oldest homes in Napa Valley.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 600 to 1200 feet (182 to 366 m).

Rainfall: 35 inches (88 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

On the valley floor, primarily alluvial soils with silty-clay composition of marine origin, with good fertility. Hillsides show more clay-loam and stony-clay composition, mostly marine in origin, with some volcanic outcropping, and less fertility.

CLIMATE

Fairly warmer summer days (mid-80°F plus/28.8 to 31°C), but due to higher elevation and summer fog at night, quite chilly at night (below 50°F/10°C). With colder winters and spring, as well as strong winds, harvest comes later than on valley floor at Oakville.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc & Zinfandel

DIAMOND MOUNTAIN DISTRICT (no AVA website)

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located in the Mayacamas Mountains in the northwest portion of the Napa Valley AVA above Calistoga.

NAME BACKGROUND

Named after Diamond Mountain

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 400 to 2200 feet (122 to 671 m)

Rainfall: 40 to 55 inches (135 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Residual uplifted soils of volcanic origin, often reddish and very fine-grained, even gritty in texture, composed of both weathered sedimentary and volcanic origin.

CLIMATE

Moderately warm temperatures with lower maximum temperatures and higher minimum temperatures than the valley floor, due to topography and altitude. 50 to 90°F in growing season (10 to 32°C).

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc

EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Local Terroir- continued



HOWELL MOUNTAIN

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Due east of St. Helena. Howell Mountain is located in the Vaca Mountain Range, and the AVA itself is defined as anything above the 1,400 ft (427 m) elevation point on the mountain, so the Howell Mountain appellation is literally a mountain top on the eastern side of Napa Valley.

NAME BACKGROUND

Howell Mountain and the entire mountain range took its name from the Isaac Howell family who moved to the mountain range in 1846.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 1400 to 2600 feet (427 to 792 m).

Rainfall: 40 to 50 inches (125 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Predominantly volcanic, shallow and infertile. Drainage is high, fertility low.

CLIMATE

Located above the fog line on the eastern side of the valley, the AVA is warmer and drier than other AVAs with more hours of sunshine and little-to-no marine influence.

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Chardonnay, Viognier

MT. VEEDER

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Napa Valley, west of Napa and Yountville, within the Mayacamas Range. The only one of the five Napa Valley mountain appellations that adjoins the cool Carneros District.

NAME BACKGROUND

Mount Veeder was named for the Dutch Presbyterian pastor, Peter Veeder, who lived in Napa during the Civil War Era.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 500 to 2600 feet (152 to 792 m).

Rainfall: 35 inches (87.5 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Sedimentary based, former seabed, shallow and generally well drained, as well as more acidic, with low fertility. Most have a sandy or sandy-loam texture.

CLIMATE

Cool to moderate, with most vineyards above the fog-line, meaning warmer nights and cooler days and less diurnal range than the valley floor. Typical mid-summer high temperatures about 85°F (29°C).

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, Chardonnay

SPRING MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located at a low point in the Mayacamas Mountains on the western side of the Napa Valley. The AVA is one of the more northerly in Napa, covering 8,600 acres (3,480 hectares) of rolling vineyard, scrubland and forest in the hills just south of Diamond Mountain District and Calistoga.

NAME BACKGROUND

Named for natural springs that surface throughout the region, Spring Mountain is not a single peak, rather a group of mountains.

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 600 to 2600 feet (183 to 792 m).

Rainfall: 40 to 50 inches (125 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Primarily sedimentary; weathered sandstone/shale, loamy and friable in texture. Drainage is high, fertility low.

CLIMATE

Cool to moderate depending on elevation and aspect. Most vineyards sit above the fog line, providing warmer nights and cooler days than the valley floor. typical mid-summer high temperatures reach 85° (29°C).

MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Zinfandel, Chardonnay

EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Local Terroir- continued



WILD HORSE VALLEY (shared with Solano County). No AVA website

LOCATION/GEOGRAPHY

Located in the Vaca Mountains above the city of Napa. The AVA is one of the smallest in the United States, covering just 1350 hectares (3300 acres) of land on the hills above Coombsville.

NAME BACKGROUND

The very first grapes were planted in the 1880's by Joseph Volpe and Contsantino Malandrino. Back then the area was home to many wild horses, hence the name!

TOPOGRAPHY/ELEVATION/WATER SOURCES

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Elevation: 850 to 2130 feet (259 to 650 m).

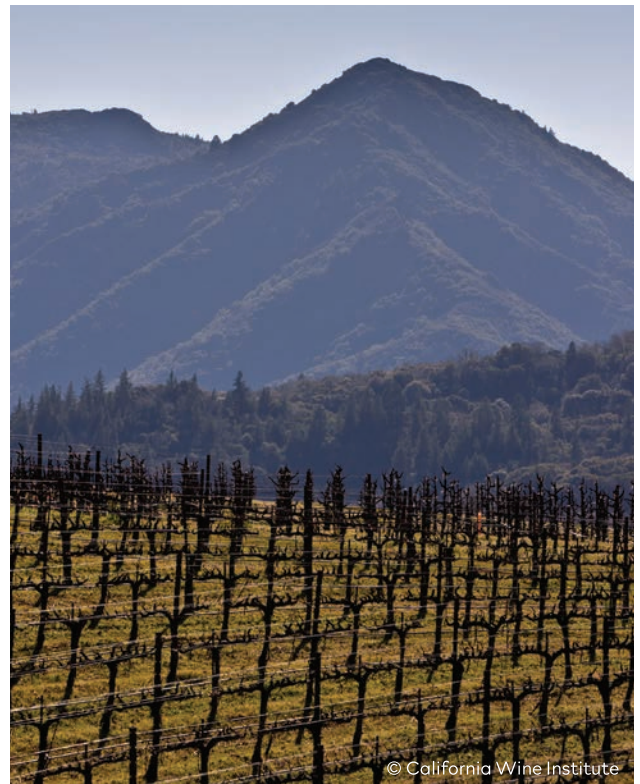
Rainfall: 35 inches (94 cm) annually.

GEOLOGY/SOIL COMPOSITION

Volcanic in origin, with basaltic red color, shallow with limited water retention, so irrigation is often essential.

CLIMATE

Due to elevation and proximity to San Pablo Bay, it is the coolest of all the Napa Valley AVAs. The air mass that passes over Carneros cools another 10 degrees by the time it rises to the AVA.



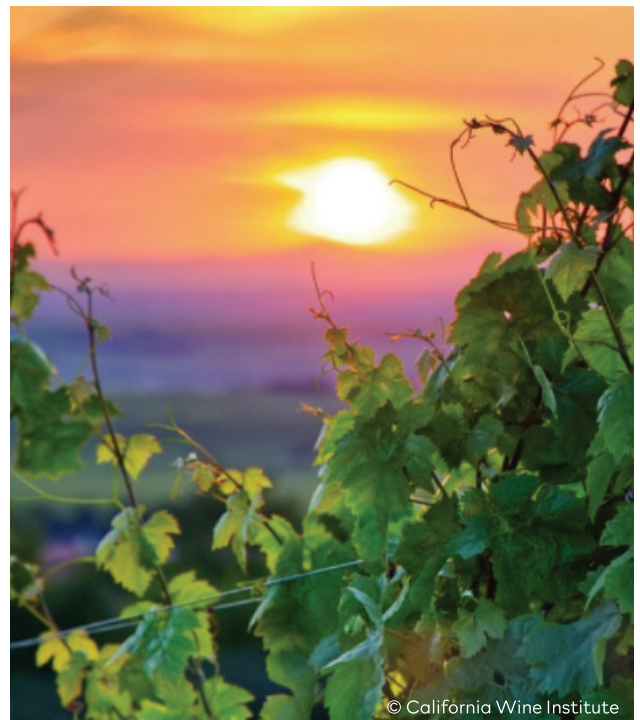
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MAIN GRAPE VARIETIES

Pinot Noir and Chardonnay



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Napa Valley



Signature Varieties

Grape Variety	Acreage	Crush/Production #s	Price Per Ton of Fruit
CABERNETSAUVIGNON	24,045 acres (9,730 hectares)	81,810 tons 46,452,681 Liters 51.2% of 2019 crush	\$7,942.93
CHARDONNAY	6,130 acres (2,480 hectares)	22,856 tons 12,977,906 Liters 14.3% of 2019 crush	\$3,031.48
MERLOT	4,294 acres (1,738 hectares)	12,356 tons 7,015,882 Liters 7.7% of 2019 crush	\$4,047.09
PINOT NOIR	2,821 acres (1,142 hectares)	8,606 tons 4,886,588 Liters 5.4% of 2019 crush	\$2,770.82
SAUVIGNON BLANC	2,812 acres (1,138 hectares)	13,258 tons 7,528,048 Liters 8.3% of 2019 crush	\$2,485.34
ZINFANDEL	1,293 acres (523 hectares)	3,590 tons 2,038,444 Liters 2.3% of 2019 crush	\$4,338.59



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Napa Valley



Benchmark Wineries



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Beaulieu Vineyards

Beaulieu Vineyard was established by Georges de Latour and his wife Fernande in 1900 near the town of Rutherford. Following the repeal of prohibition, Latour hired André Tchelistcheff, a Russian trained as a winemaker in France. Under Tchelistcheff's guidance, Beaulieu's wines quickly became some of Napa Valley's finest—a reputation that continues to this day. Tchelistcheff also became a mentor to dozens of winemakers including Mike Grgich, Joe Heitz, and Robert Mondavi. Today the George de Latour Reserve Cabernet is considered one of the valley's top red wines.

Beringer Vineyards

Founded in 1876 by brothers Jacob and Frederick Beringer, Beringer Vineyards is the oldest continuously operating winery in the Napa Valley. In 1934 after the repeal of Prohibition, the winery was the first to offer public tours, sparking wine tourism in the valley. Later, the winery's Private Reserve collection became one of Napa's benchmarks for outstanding wines. In 2015 Mark Beringer, the great, great grandson of founder Jacob Beringer returned "home" as the chief winemaker.

Chappellet Winery

On the advice of legendary winemaker Andre Tchelistcheff, Dom Chappellet settled with his family in the eastern hills high above Napa Valley in 1967. Since that time the Chappellet family has produced outstanding wines of great depth, concentration, and ageability from the steep, rugged Pritchard Hill Vineyard.

Charles Krug Winery

Charles Krug was among the first true pioneers of wine in Napa Valley. After serving as an assistant winemaker to Agoston

Haraszthy and John Pratchett, Krug established his own winery, Napa Valley's first, in 1861. Following Prohibition, the property was purchased by Cesare and Rosa Mondavi and has remained in the family since that time. Today, the winery owns 850 acres in Napa Valley from Carneros to Howell Mountain, more than half of which are planted to vineyards and sustainably farmed.

Chateau Montelena

Chateau Montelena's origins go back to 1882 when Alfred L. Tubbs purchased 254 acres north of Calistoga near Mount St. Helena. The winery's modern history dates to 1968 when Lee and Helen Paschich purchased the property and brought in James Barrett and Earnest Han as partners. In 1972 Barrett replanted the vineyard, created a winery in the historic buildings on property, and brought in Mike Grgich as winemaker. A short four years later the 1973 vintage of Chardonnay won first place in the white wine competition in the famous Judgment of Paris tasting—one of the landmark events in California wine history. Since that time the wines of Chateau Montelena have been among Napa's best.

Clos du Val Winery

After a two-year search for a vineyards site to grow and produce wines from Bordeaux varieties, Bernard Portet and John Goelet found a perfect spot in Napa Valley's Stag's Leap District. They established Clos du Val in 1972, purchasing 150 acres and planting Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and other Bordeaux varieties. The following year they purchased 180 acres in the Los Carneros region and planted Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The Clos du Val wines are known for their elegance and balance.

Diamond Creek Winery

In 1968 Al Brounstein planted three small vineyards on a remote Diamond Mountain site with Bordeaux varieties. The three vineyards, Red Rock Terrace, Gravelly Meadow, and Volcanic Hill had completely different soil types. Brounstein quickly noted that wines from the three sites were completely different in character and began to bottle them separately, becoming one of the first champions of single vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. The Diamond Creek wines have long been known for ageability, complexity, and finesse.

Domaine Chandon

Founded in 1973 by Champagne house Moët et Chandon and John Wright, Domaine Chandon is the first French-owned sparkling wine producer in Napa Valley. Domaine Chandon makes a range of classic method sparkling wines and still wines from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier. The winery is located in the town of Yountville and has vineyards in the AVA's of Los Carneros, Mt. Veeder, and Yountville.

EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Benchmark Wineries—continued



Grgich Hills Estate

Winemaker Mike Grgich rose to international fame overnight when his 1973 Chateau Montelena Chardonnay won first prize for white wines in the famed Paris Tasting in 1976. The following year Grgich and Austin Hills (of Hills Brothers Coffee) teamed up to establish Grgich Hills Cellar. In 2006 the winery went to producing estate wines only and the name was changed to Grgich Hills Estate. The winery also converted to solar energy in 2006. All the vineyards are certified organic or biodynamic.

Groth Vineyards and Winery

Dennis Groth and his wife Judy founded the winery in 1982. They initially purchased a 121-acre property near the town of Oakville. With his expertise in Bordeaux varieties, Nils Venge was hired as the winemaker. The winery achieved overnight recognition when their 1985 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon was awarded a perfect score by Robert Parker.

Harlan Estate

In 1984 Bill Harlan, a real estate developer and Napa Valley resort owner, purchased a 240-acre property with steep hillsides west of Oakville. Forty acres of the parcel was cleared and a vineyard planted to Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varieties. Bob Levy was hired as director of winemaking in 1983 and Michel Rolland has served as consulting enologist since 1989. Bill's ambition to create a first growth wine in Napa has resulted in wines of international renown that are highly sought after.

Heitz Wine Cellar

Joe Heitz was one of the first seven individuals to receive a master's degree in viticulture and enology in 1951 from U.C. Davis. After graduating he worked at Gallo and then for ten years as an assistant winemaker under the legendary André Tchelitscheff at Beaulieu Vineyard. In 1964, Heitz acquired an 1898 stone winery on 160-acres east of St. Helena. The site became the Heitz winery and family home. In 1965 Joe signed a long-term agreement to purchase Cabernet Sauvignon grapes from Tom and Martha May. The following year Heitz became the first winery in Napa Valley to bottle a single vineyard wine from Martha's Vineyard. The wine was immediately hailed as a benchmark and since that time Heitz has remained one of Napa's top Cabernet producers.

Inglenook

In 1879 Gustave Niebaum, a Finnish sea captain, established the Inglenook winery near the town of Rutherford with the intent to make great wines that would rival Europe's finest. After the repeal of Prohibition, Niebaum's great-nephew, John Daniel Jr. took over the winery and the wines were soon considered among Napa Valley's



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best. In 1975 famed director Francis Ford Coppola purchased the property and have spent the last forty years restoring the winery and vineyards to its former heritage.

Louis M. Martini Winery

In June of 1933 Louis M. Martini purchased a property south of St. Helena and built a winery—one of the first in the region to open its doors after the repeal of Prohibition. For over 80 years the winery has been home to outstanding Cabernet Sauvignon. In 2019 a significant restoration of the original winery is completed, introducing an array of world-class tasting and culinary experiences.

Opus One

In 1980 Robert Mondavi and Baron Phillippe de Rothschild of Château Mouton Rothschild announced a joint venture to produce a world-class red wine from Bordeaux varieties. The winery would be called Opus One. The inaugural 1979 vintage was released in 1984. In 1989 a new winery was built and a second wine called Overture has been produced since 1993. Now some 40 years later, Opus One remains a sought-after Napa Valley bottling.

Robert Mondavi Winery

After leaving the Charles Krug winery, Robert Mondavi founded the winery in 1966 bearing his name with sons Michael and Tim Mondavi. Their goal was to produce wines that could compete with Europe's finest. Part of the original vineyard included the To Kalon vineyard originally established in 1868 by Napa Valley pioneer H.W. Crabb. The winery has always focused on single varietal wines and is known for its dry Sauvignon Blanc, called Fumé Blanc, and Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon. The winery itself was designed in a California mission style and is now considered an architectural icon as well as host to an annual summer music festival.

EST. 1981

Napa Valley

Benchmark Wineries—continued

Schramsberg

In 1965 Jack and Jamie Davies purchased the Schramsberg winery in the hills above St. Helena. Though the winery had a long history dating back its founding by Jacob Schram in 1862, it had been in decline for years, before the Davies bought the property. They quickly set about making outstanding classic method sparkling wine. Their 1969 Blanc de Blancs was served in Beijing at the "Toast of Peace" in 1972 between then President Richard Nixon and Chinese Premier Chou Enlai. Schramsberg sparkling wines have been served by every administration since.

Screaming Eagle

Jean Phillips, a former real estate agent, bought a 57-acre Oakville vineyard in 1986. The vineyard was planted to a mix of Bordeaux varieties and a small amount of Sauvignon Blanc. In time she hired Heidi Peterson Barrett as winemaker whose initial vintage garnered a near perfect score. With an annual production of around 500 cases Screaming Eagle became one of the first cult wines and is one of the most sought-after Napa Valley wines.

Stags Leap Wine Cellars

The winery was founded in 1970 after Warren Winiarski purchased a 44-acre parcel of land in the southern end of the valley. The first vintage produced was in 1972 with Winiarski overseeing winemaking and assisted by Andre Tchelistcheff. The second vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon from 1973 was rated the top red wine at the historic Judgment of Paris in 1976 and put the winery into the international spotlight. The winery's flagship red wine, called "Cask 23," was once described by Winiarski as an "iron fist in a velvet glove."

Sterling Vineyards

English expatriate Peter Newton founded Sterling Vineyards in 1964 with the first vintage in 1969. Today the winery farms over 1,200 acres of vineyards with emphasis on Bordeaux and Burgundy varieties. The iconic winery was designed after that of the Greek island of Mykonos and is perched 300 feet above the town of Calistoga and offers panoramic views of Napa Valley.



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Partner links

Napa Valley Vintners Association

Los Carneros Wine Alliance

Coombsville Vintners and Growers

Stags Leap District Winegrowers Association

Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley

Yountville Appellation

Oakville Winegrowers

Rutherford Dust Society

Appellation St. Helena

Calistoga Winegrowers

Atlas Peak Appellation

Howell Mountain Vintners

Mt. Veeder Appellation

Spring Mountain District

Culinary Institute of America - Greystone

Culinary Institute of America - Coppia

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