

Take A Tour Through the Sonoma County Wine Region

Quality in Diversity

ALEXANDER VALLEY

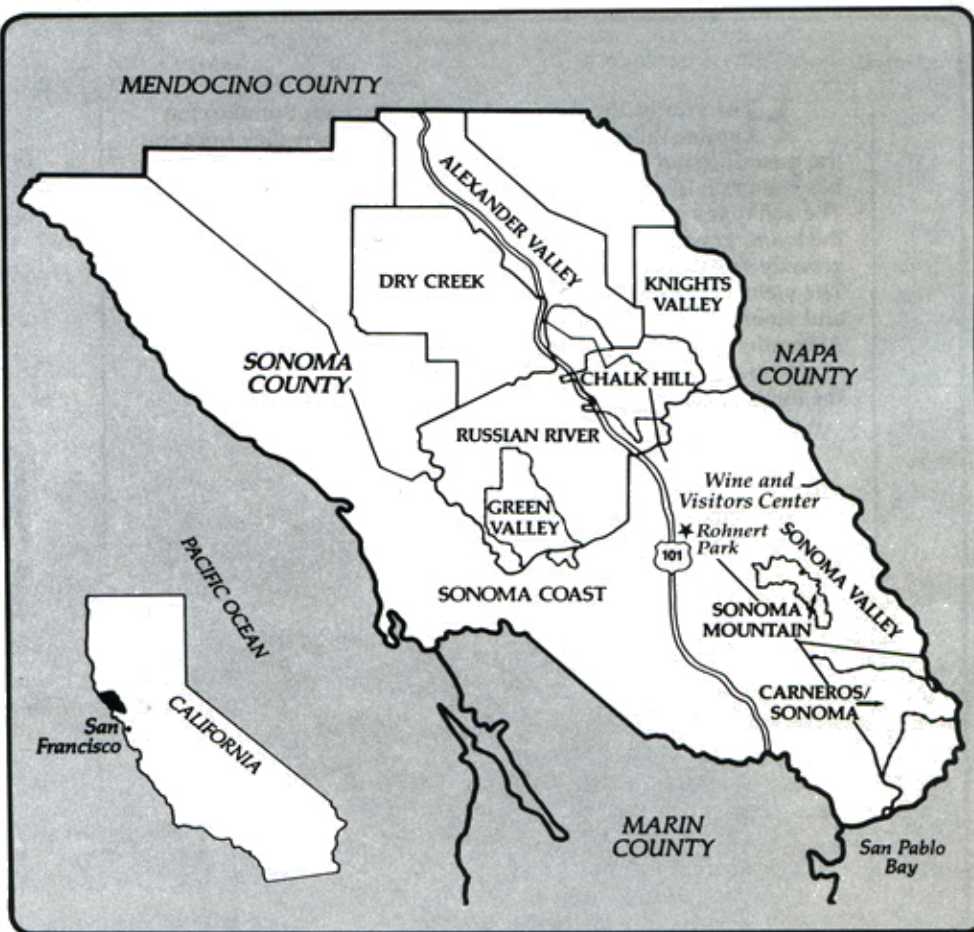
Historically, the Alexander Valley, part of the great Russian River Valley, has been rich in agriculture. The soil types generally are in the loam, gravelly loam and gravelly sandy loam category. The yields tend to be high and vines vigorous in the Alexander Valley. The change in elevation from the upper to the lower end of the Valley is only fifty feet. Summer fog flows into the valley from the Santa Rosa Plain cooling the area. This cooling has a great effect on growing conditions within the Valley. The narrowing of the Valley at either end helps to hold the fog in. Grape Acreage: 6,495

CARNEROS/SONOMA

Carneros is an area that has had its own historical identity for many years. It is on the San Pablo Bay, at the base of Napa and Sonoma Counties, and is heavily influenced by the Bay with both fog and wind. It is generally cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter than the Napa or Sonoma valleys. Primary grape varieties here are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Carneros has shallow, well drained soil types. Viticulturally, grapes have a lower chance here of developing bunch rot because of the wind blowing and drying off any rain or moisture and winemakers feel they tend to ripen at lower sugars. Grape Acreage: 6,800

CHALK HILL

Chalk Hill is named for the strata of light-colored soil that occurs in portions of this appellation. The soil is not the traditional calcium carbonate chalk of Europe, but is a white volcanic ash. Chalk Hill is primarily a hilly appellation; the grapes grow generally between 200'-800' elevation. The soil here is generally poor, loose and rocky, but well drained. It tends to be warmer than the Russian River Valley because of



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the lesser amounts of fog in the hills. It is cooled by breezes that are influenced by the relationship of Mt. St. Helena to the ocean, creating a chimney effect pulling breezes from the ocean over the Chalk Hill area. The grapes in Chalk Hill are primarily white grapes - the ratio of 9 to 1, white to red. Grape Acreage: 1,000

DRY CREEK

Most of the grapes produced in the Dry Creek appellation are produced in Dry Creek Valley. The floor of the Valley has fertile, well-drained soils and morning fog creating a climate that has produced

well known Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc grapes. On the hillside of Dry Creek Valley, red soils predominate and weather is warmer because the hills come under less fog influence. Dry Creek is a historical area for vineyards; grapes, particularly Zinfandel, have been planted there for a hundred years, and still old vineyards exist. Wines of the Dry Creek area, such as Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet, tend to have an herbal, dill, olive component that distinguishes them. Grape Acreage: 5,500

GREEN VALLEY

Green Valley is a small sub-appellation of Russian River Valley. It has heavy ocean influence; its center is only about 10 miles from the ocean, though a range of hills divides it from the ocean. It's good fruit country; not only do grapes grow well here but, apples, berries and pears as well. There are fewer higher temperature days, producing fruit of good acid, color and flavor at lower sugars. The soil is distinctive, being primarily the Goldridge series, light soil with pebbles or fractured rock and well drained. Cool weather grapes, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, predominate here, although special micro-climates can successfully ripen, even Cabernet. Grape Acreage: 1,000

KNIGHTS VALLEY

Knights Valley takes its name from Thomas Knight who arrived from Maine in 1845 to seek his fortune and became a farmer instead. Wine growing began in the valley in the 1870s and has continued until its present plantings of 1,000 acres. The climate of Knight's Valley is moderated by its proximity to the Pacific Ocean, its isolation from large valleys and its low mountain elevation. The soils are characterized by low fertility; many of the soils are very rocky and gravelly, and others exhibit low pH. These soil conditions are reflected in the low production. The dominant variety planted is Cabernet Sauvignon followed by Sauvignon Blanc. Grape Acreage: 1,000

RUSSIAN RIVER

Russian River Valley is one of the largest viticultural areas in the County, and it is the sparkling wine center since it is home for several sparkling wineries, and supplies a large proportion of the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay crushed by these wineries. Its most predominant feature is climate. It has heavy rainfall and is generally cool with frequent summer-morning fog. Its geography is variable, running from heavier soil vineyards along the Russian River; up into the eastern hills toward the Coast. The majority of the vineyards are in

bench and bottom lands. They are predominantly, but not exclusively white grapes. Grape Acreage: 8,375

SONOMA COAST

Historically this area has been called "the coastal region of the county" due to its very strong marine climate influence and persistent fog intrusion. The "coastal cool" microclimate classification identifies the area as having a cumulative sunlight exposure duration of less than 1,000 hours and a temperature of 70 degrees to 90 degrees from April through October. Sonoma Coast is one of the largest viticulture regions within the county borders, covering approximately 750 square miles with 11,452 acres of grapevines. This is approximately one-third of the total grapevine acreage in the county. Grape Acreage: 11,452

SONOMA MOUNTAIN

The Sonoma Mountain sub-appellation was approved in February, 1985. Its approximately 600 acres are in an area dominated by the upland terraces of the Spreckles-Feita soil association, and are characterized climatically by more moderate temperature fluctuations than

those on the Sonoma Valley floor. The 400 to 600 foot elevation of the vineyards places them beyond the reach of low-lying summer fog, maximizing the sunlight hours they receive. The most successful Sonoma Mountain Wines have been Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Grape Acreage: 633

SONOMA VALLEY

Sonoma Valley is generally regarded as the birthplace of California Viticulture, as vineyards were planted as early as 1825 by Spanish mission fathers. Today, approximately 5,900 acres of vineyards in Sonoma Valley occupy areas encompassing a broad gamut of topography, soil and climate. The climate of the Valley is moderate, with the predominately afternoon southern winds and proximity to San Pablo Bay combining to keep it fairly cool in the summer and warmer in winter. The southern Valley commonly has fog intrusion from the Santa Rosa Plains. The Sonoma Mountains protect the rest of the Valley from direct fog intrusion from the Pacific Ocean. Grape Acreage: 5,945