



**J3 Wine Portfolio – Fall 2021**  
*Connecting Boutique Wineries  
with Quality Driven Consumers*

Welcome!

The wines featured in this portfolio highlight a select of wineries that meet a specific requirement; over deliver for their price point. Each brand has been personally vetted by WSET and Sommelier Certified team members and are typically only available in limited quantity from the winery.

In addition to the wine selections, we strive to improve education. Please see the end of the portfolio for educational items for wine service, regional information, and professional tips.

I hope you enjoy these wines and they compliment your current wine program.

Enjoy,

John Trant  
Founder, Wine Enthusiast, Educator.



**ACKERMAN**  
FAMILY VINEYARDS

**ACKERMAN FAMILY VINEYARDS - NAPA VALLEY  
CALIFORNIA**  
Establish 2003  
Overall Production: 1,500 cases

**OWNER:** Lauren Ackerman, philanthropist and visionary. In 1994, she moved to the Napa Valley when she and her former husband purchased a 16-acre vineyard property in the Coombsville AVA. They started making wine in 1995 and eventually began selling commercially, starting with the 2003 vintage. Today, Lauren owns/manages Ackerman Family Vineyards, a boutique producer of cabernet sauvignon wines from the organically farmed Stonehaven vineyard.

**VINEYARD(s):** Stonehaven Vineyard, Estate

Coombsville, located at the southeastern end of the Napa Valley, is recognized for its for slow-ripening Bordeaux-style wines. The AVA distinguishes itself within the Napa Valley by its noticeably cooler climate and soil conditions, the latter a mix of well-draining river rock, mineral-rich volcanic ash along with diatomaceous soils. The vineyards are in a “horseshoe” band of hills with Mt. George and its striking 1,877-foot peak prominently dotting our horizon. An extinct and distinctive volcano is visible from just about every vineyard plot in our AVA. Oftentimes, you’ll find it shrouded in fog, with the San Pablo Bay stirring up the wind and often creating thick marine conditions – ideal conditions for growing grapes.

**WINEMAKER:** Leo Tellez, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Napan.

After graduating from San Francisco State with an International Relations degree, he pursued viticulture and enology classes at Napa Valley College and applied for his first winemaking internship at Kapcsandy Family Vineyards in Napa Valley where he worked closely with winemaker, David Sotelo, who served as an important mentor. In 2012, Leo joined celebrated winemaking consultant Denis Malbec (Malbec, his father and grandfather all worked at Chateau Latour in Bordeaux) as his assistant winemaker, working with small family-owned wineries including Kapcsandy, Blankiet, Repris, Capture, Notre Vin and Sodaro Estate walking vineyards and making wines from sites all over Napa Valley. In 2016, Leo joined Sodaro Estate in



Coombsville full time as their winemaker, working with viticulture consultant Michael Wolf and the family to craft their small-production Cabernets.

**PORTFOLIO:** Currently, the Memoir Red Wine is available in select national accounts. The Estate wines are available selectively in key accounts and markets.

2017 AFV Memoir Red Wine, Napa Valley	DTT: \$300/12 pack	SRP: \$50.00
2016 AFV Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville, Napa Valley	DTT: \$570/12 pack	SRP: \$95.00
2017 AFV Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville, Napa Valley	DTT: \$570/12 pack	SRP: \$95.00
2018 AFV Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley*	DTT: \$252/12pack	SRP: \$42.00
2019 AFV Estate Rose of Cabernet Sauvignon*	DTT: \$180/12pack	SRP: \$30.00
2016 AFV Alavigna Tosca (Sangio., Cab. Sauv.) Napa Valley*	DTT: \$450/12 pack	SRP: \$75.00

*\*library wines subject to availability, winery retreat programs also available.*

**ACCOLADES:**

- AFV Estate Cabernet Sauvignon
- 2017 - 92 points WA, 93 points Vinous, 90 points JD
- 2016 - 94 points WE, 92 points WS, 92 points WA, 91 points Vinous,
- 2015 - 92 points WA, 93 points WE
- 2014 - 92 points WE, 91 points Vinous, 90 points JD



[WWW.TURNINGTIDEWINES.COM](http://WWW.TURNINGTIDEWINES.COM)

**TURNING TIDE WINES – SANTA YNEZ VALLEY,  
 CALIFORNIA / WILLAMETTE VALLEY, OREGON**  
 Establish 2018  
 Overall Production: 1,250 cases

**OWNER** – Alisa Jacobson, Outdoor enthusiast, scuba diver, environmentalist.  
 Jacobson (who goes by “AJ”) has followed her passion for agriculture and the sciences from an early age. AJ was raised in the fertile California Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Growing up in and around farms instilled in her a lifelong desire to find ways to help protect the land and water supply and to educate people about

preserving natural resources

**VINEYARD(s):** All the vineyards that AJ works with are farmed in an environmentally conscious manner. Today, most are farmed organically or adhere to sustainable practices aimed at protecting water purity and encouraging soil and vine health.

Eola-Amity Hills | Sta. Rita Hills | Santa Ynez Valley – Estate Fruit

**WINEMAKER** – Alisa Jacobson.

Making wines from all over the world has taught AJ that wine is made in the vineyard and the healthier the soil and environment, the more alive and vibrant the wine will appear in the glass. With these notions in mind, she launched Turning Tide in 2018 with the goal of showcasing the true essence of the grapes she



harvests, all while respecting the elements each vineyard site provides—and helping turn the tide on how vineyards are farmed around the globe

**PORTFOLIO:** Sustainably farmed and sourced from organic vineyards.

2018 TT Chardonnay, Sta. Rita Hills, Santa Barbara, California	DTT: \$180/12 pack	SRP: \$29.99
2019 TT White Wine, Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Barbara, California	DTT: \$120/12 pack	SRP: \$20.00
2020 TT Red Wine, Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Barbara, California	DTT: \$150/12 pack	SRP: \$25.00
2018 TT Pinot Noir, Eola-Amity Hills, Willamette Valley, Oregon	750mL DTT: \$252/12 pack	SRP: \$42.00
	375mL DTT: \$132/12 pack	SRP: \$22.00

**ACCOLADES:**

Coming Soon

# PATEL

**PATEL – NAPA VALLEY**

Establish 2007

Overall Production: 1,000 cases

## NAPA VALLEY

**OWNER:** Raj Patel – dedicated, hands-on wine enthusiast

Raj was born in India’s state of Gujarat and settled with his family in Northern California in 1972. He attended the University of California, Davis, where an internship at Robert Mondavi Winery inspired him to what would become a lifelong interest in fine wine.

**VINEYARDS:** Coombsville, Rutherford, and Atlas Peak AVAs in Napa Valley

**WINEMAKER:** Julien Fayard – commitment to quality

With more than two decades of winemaking expertise, Julien Fayard is one of Napa Valley’s most respected winemakers producing California varietals with French finesse. He believes in producing wines with an identity, exploiting what makes each one unique. Julien’s wines are a pure expression of their terroir, highlighting the specificities and characteristics of the fruit, vineyard management, soil and climate.

**PORTFOLIO:** Ultra premium vineyard sourcing in the Napa Valley.

2019 PATEL Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley	DTT: \$360/12pack	SRP: \$60.00
2017 PATEL Red Wine (Merlot, Cabernet Franc), Napa Valley	DTT: \$225/6 pack	SRP: \$75.00
2016 PATEL Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley	DTT: \$375/6 pack	SRP: \$125.00
2016 PATEL Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville	DTT: \$450/6 pack	SRP: \$150.00
2016 PATEL Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford	DTT: \$525/6 pack	SRP: \$175.00
2016 PATEL Malbec, Napa Valley	DTT: \$375/6 pack	SRP: \$125.00

**ACCOLADES:**

PATEL Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley

2017 - 93 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

PATEL Red Wine, Napa Valley

2017 - 92 Points ~ Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

2014 - 91 Points - Robert Parker, The Wine Advocate

PATEL Malbec, Napa Valley

2016 -92 points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous

2015 - 96 Points - The Tasting Panel Magazine, Publishers Picks, Jan/Feb 2020

2014 - 94 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com



PATEL Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley  
 2016 - 93 points, Antonio Galloni, Vinous  
 2015 - 90 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com  
 PATEL Cabernet Sauvignon, Rutherford  
 2016 - 94 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com  
 2015 - 94 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com  
 2014 - 95 Points - Robert Parker Jr, The Wine Advocate  
 PATEL Cabernet Sauvignon, Coombsville  
 2016 - 95 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com  
 2015 - 95 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com  
 2014 - 94 Points - Antonio Galloni, Vinous.com

**Varietal Characteristics**

*Source: Hillary Cole, FWS, L'Atelier du Vin Consults*

VARIETAL	POPULAR REGIONS	OLD WORLD CHARACTERISITICS	NEW WORLD CHARACTERISTICS
Chardonnay	Burgundy, France; California, Australia, New Zealand	Notes of apple, citrus, honeydew, pineapple, brighter acid, usually no oak influence, except in Cote de Beaune	Lemon, apple, pear, pineapple, peach, fig, vanilla, butter, caramelized sugar, dill, coconut
Pinot Grigio/ Pinot Gris	Alsace, France (Pinot Gris) and Alto Adige and Friuli, Italy; Oregon	Citrus, pear, citrus rinds, mineral; light bodied, very crisp acidity and neutral flavors from Italy, fuller bodied from France.	Lemon, honeysuckle, orange blossom, honey, rose water, more rounded acidity.
Sauvignon Blanc	Bordeaux, Loire, New Zealand, California	Light-to-medium body, medium-to-high acidity, grapefruit, melon, citrus, some with hints of grass or herbal qualities.	Lime, green apple, kiwi, red grapefruit, green bell pepper, vanilla, passionfruit, white peach
Pinot Noir	Burgundy, France; Oregon, Germany, New Zealand	Cherry, high acid, earth, truffle	Mushroom/truffle, cherry, cola; can be soft and light-bodied with high acidity or meatier, heavier bodied
Sangiovese	Italy, California	Strawberry, cherry, plum, florals, oak.. Firm tannins, crisp acidity, light, medium, or full-bodied	More extraction, cherries, floral herbs, sandalwood, cocoa



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Merlot	France (Bordeaux and SW France, where it's called 'Cot' in Cahors); California, Italy	Brick red color (when young), faint violet on the nose, with hint of soft, spicy fruit, tobacco, tar. Palate reflects the nose; has tannic structure, but slightly softer than that of an Old World Cab Sauv. Very similar to Cab Sauv.	Brick-to-ruby red color. Fruit forward with notes of cherry, mocha, raspberry, black spices, silky texture. Much softer structure and tannins than New World Cab Sauv.
Rhone Blend (Syrah-Grenache Blend)	Southern Rhone-blend	Rich, full-bodied and leathery. Layers of blackberry, chocolate, spice; spiced berry, smoked meat, olive, black pepper, earth and gaminess.	The red Rhone blend is a very contemporary style for the New World. There isn't currently a discernible, definitive New World flavor profile for this blend at this time. Syrahs (Shiraz) from Australia will typically include eucalyptus in its profile, while those from California, for example, can range from being quite thin and peppery to being very full-bodied, extracted, and red fruit-forward.
Zinfandel	Croatia – almost entirely wiped out by 19 <sup>th</sup> Century phylloxera epidemic. In 2001, 9 Zinfandel vines were found on the Dalmatian Coast in Croatia; US, Italy	Typically purple-to-ruby red color. Red berry nose and flavors – raspberry.	Lighter in color than Cab Sauv and Merlot. Aromas and flavors of jam, blackberry, blueberry, cranberry, licorice, spice, pepper, oftentimes smokey finish. Moderate tannins, high alcohol. Oily texture, bold body.
Cabernet Sauvignon	Bordeaux, France (Cab is the dominant varietal in wines from Left Bank of Gironde River); California, Italy, Australia, Chile, Argentina	Ruby red color. Aromas and flavors of blackcurrants, moss, earth, and violet; firm, solid tannic structure. Aged in 225L French oak barrels.	Ruby red color. Aromas of vanilla, currants, green bell pepper. Flavors of black currant, green bell pepper, mint, vanilla. High tannins, high alcohol. Can be aged in any combination of Oak barrels – French, American, Hungarian, Slovenian, etc.



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## Glossary

*Source: Hillary Cole, FWS, L'Atelier du Vin Consults*

- Acidity:** the quality of wine that contributes crispness. The three main acids found in wine are tartaric acid, malic acid and lactic acid.
- After harvest:** vines continue to photosynthesize and store energy in roots and trunks. When the appropriate amount of energy has been stored, vines enter their winter dormancy period.
- Alluvial:** made up of or found in the materials that are left by the water of rivers, floods, etc.
- Blend:** the mixing of two or more different parcels of wine together to produce a consistent finished wine that is ready for bottling. Not to be confused with *co-fermenting* (defined in Glossary).
- Budbreak:** the opening of a dormant bud, when the shoot begins to grow.
- Clone:** In viticulture, a "clone" refers to a vine variety that is selected for specific qualities, which result from natural mutations. Cuttings are made from an original "mother vine" that exhibits key characteristics, such as resistance to certain diseases or desired cluster size, taste, smell, etc.
- Co-fermentation:** fermenting two or more grape varieties at the same time when producing a wine. This differs from the more common practice of blending separate wines together after fermentation.
- Complexity:** the amount of characteristics that may be found in a wine. The more descriptors in a wine's appearance, nose/bouquet, and flavors, the more complex the wine is.
- Cooperage:** a cooper's business or premises; the making of barrels and casks.
- Cross:** grape varieties that are the product of two of the same *Vitis* species, ie the offspring of two different varieties of the *Vitis vinifera* species.
- Diurnal temperature shift:** meteorological term that relates to the variation in temperature that occurs from the temperature highs and lows during the day.
- Fermentation:** the process during which sugars are converted to alcohol by yeast.
- Filtering:** a filter can be used to remove yeast cells and bacteria from the wine. Winemakers may filter a wine extensively, not at all, or to any degree in between.
- Fining:** process that removes microscopic elements such as protein particles that would cloud the wine and phenolic compounds like tannins that could cause bitterness and astringency.
- Flowering:** 40-80 days after bud break; after the initial clusters appear, the flowers start to grow in size with individual flowers becoming observable. It is during this stage of flowering that the pollination and fertilization of the grapevine takes place with the resulting product being a grape berry, containing 1-4 seeds.
- Fruit Set:** a developmental stage following flower fertilization that marks the beginning of fruit development and maturation.
- Grafting:** inserting a shoot or twig as a graft.
- Hybrid:** grape varieties that are the product of a crossing of two or more *Vitis* species, ie the offspring of a *Vitis vinifera* and *Vitis labrusca*.
- Lees contact:** leaving wine (in fermentation vessel) in contact with the dead yeast cells and small grape particles (collectively referred to as the *lees*) in an attempt to develop more flavor and texture.
- Mediterranean climate:** a climate distinguished by warm, wet winters under prevailing westerly winds and calm, hot, dry summers, as is characteristic of the Mediterranean region and parts of California, Chile, South Africa, and southwestern Australia.
- Must:** freshly pressed fruit juice that contains the skins, seeds, and stems of the fruit.
- Phylloxera:** small insects that feed on the roots and leaves of grapevines (depending on the phylloxera genetic strain). The resulting deformations on roots and secondary fungal infections can kill roots,



gradually cutting off the flow of nutrients and water to the vine. A phylloxera outbreak in Europe during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century destroyed nearly all the vineyards in Europe, most notably in France.

**Rain shadow effect:** an area having relatively little precipitation due to the effect of a barrier, such as a mountain range, that causes the prevailing winds to lose their moisture before reaching it.

**Rootstock:** a plant onto which another variety is grafted; a primary form of source from which offshoots have arisen.

**Skin contact:** also referred to as *maceration*. Process where the tannins, coloring agents, and flavor compounds soaked from the grape skins, seeds and stems into the must.

**Tannin:** a natural component found to varying degrees in the skins, seeds and stems of grapes.

**Terroir:** the “somewhereness” of a wine’s origin. The sum of all the environmental factors that influence a given vineyard, such as the amount of sunshine, soil type, altitude, amount of rain, fog, and wind).

**Toast:** the caramelization of barrel staves. The amount of "toast" can vary, ranging from light to heavy.

**Veraison:** when ripening grapes begin to soften and change color from green to either red or yellow, depending on the variety. In the northern hemisphere, veraison typically occurs anywhere from late June to mid August, depending on the climate.

**Vinification:** the art and science of making grape juice into wine.

**Vitis labrusca:** native grape of northeastern United States; origin of many cultivated varieties e.g. Concord grapes.

**Vitis vinifera:** a common European grape that is the chief source of grape varieties used for making wine.

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## **Wine Region Maps**

*Source: WineFolly.com*

Highlighting wine regions from the Pacific Coast of the United States. Each region has a unique characteristic that is expressed in the grapes grown, unique to that specific geography, climate, topography, and culture.

### California

North Coast

Central Coast

### Oregon

Willamette Valley

Southern Oregon

### Washington

Columbia Valley

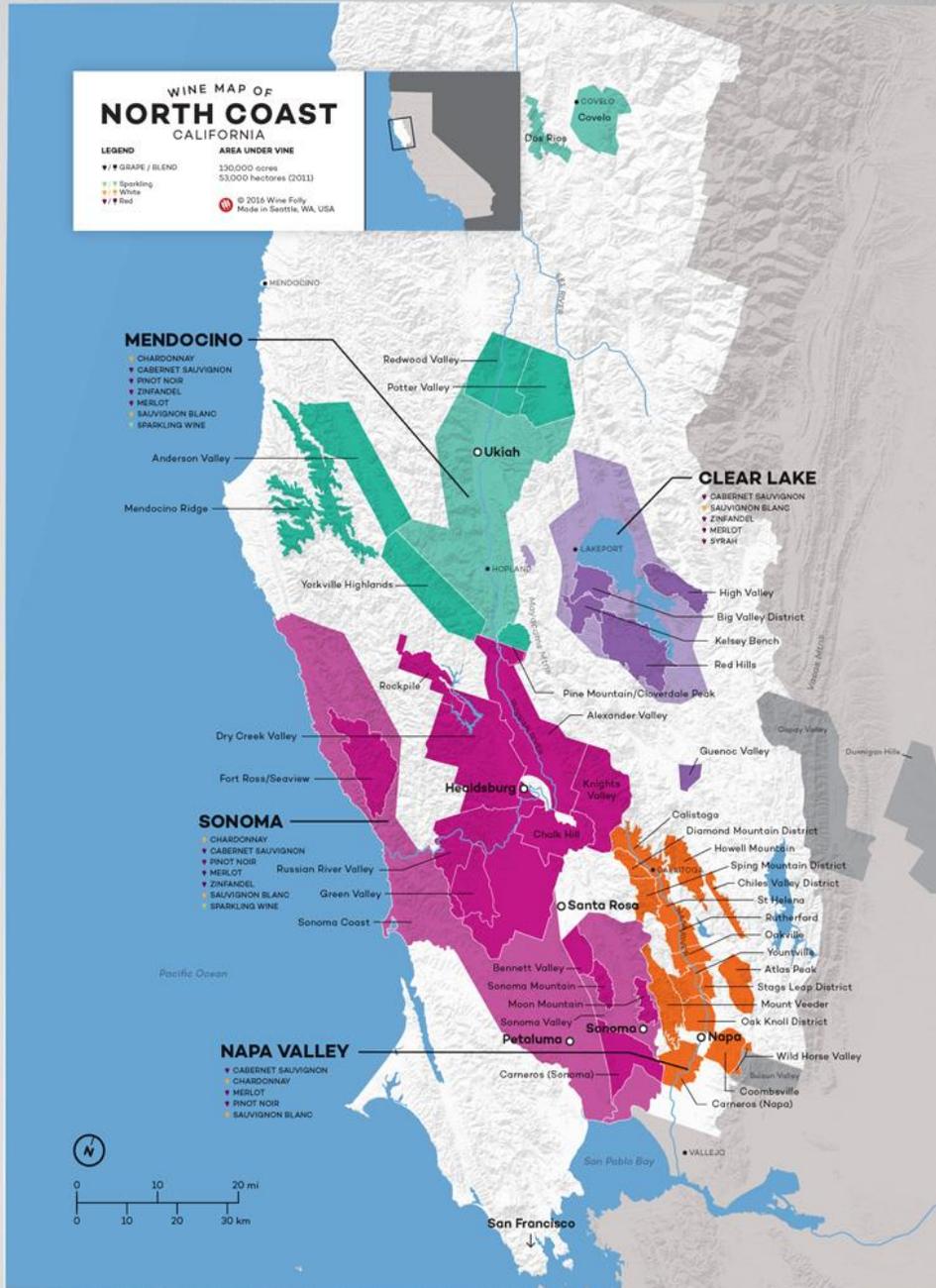


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The boundary of the **North Coast AVA** encompasses many smaller wine appellations, which generally have higher consumer appeal and therefore higher commercial value. Wine produced primarily from grapes grown in any one of these appellations will likely carry that appellation on its bottle label rather than the North Coast AVA designation. The North Coast AVA designation is primarily used on bottles of wine created by blending wines from several counties or American Viticultural Areas.

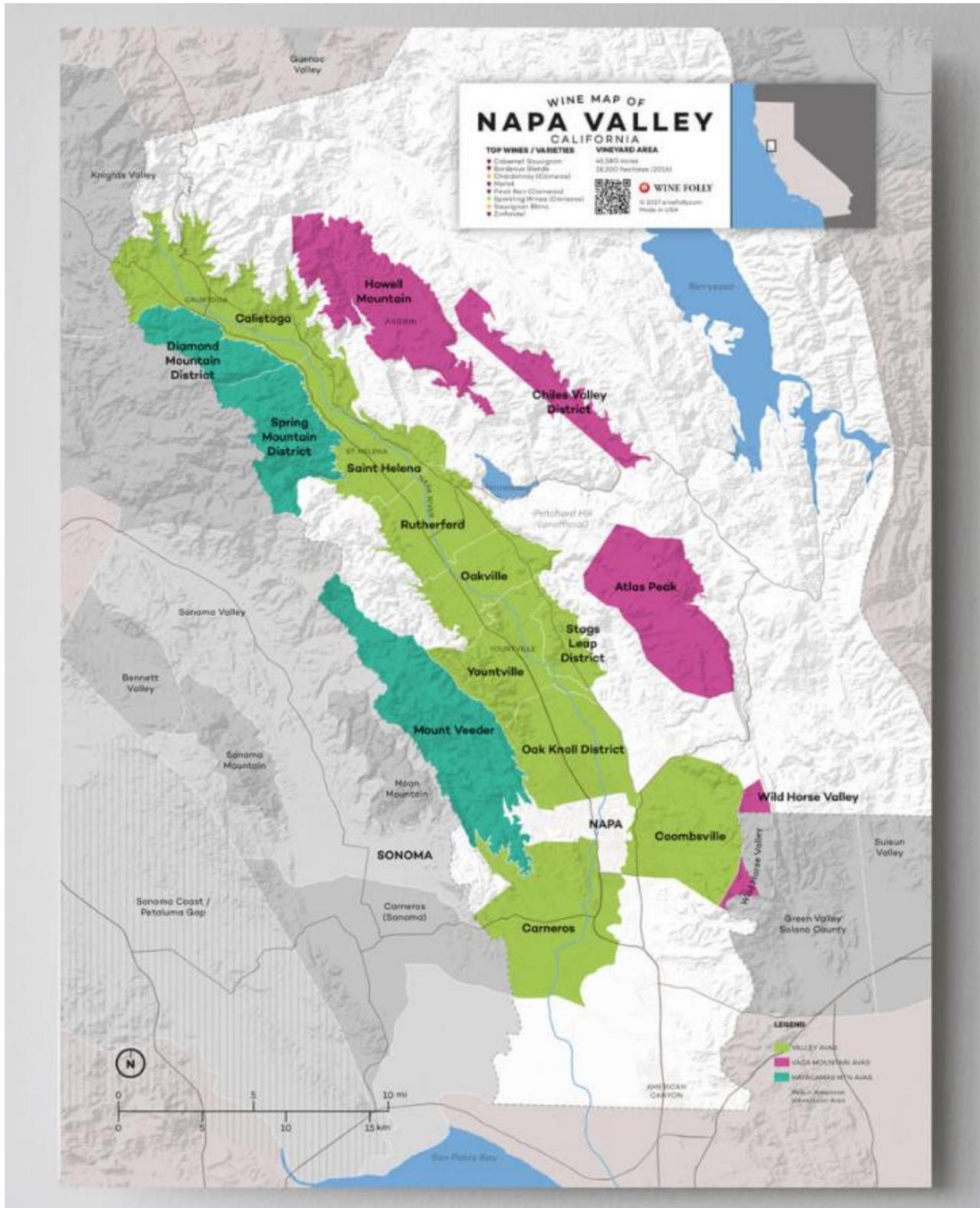
### Counties

Because U.S. county names automatically qualify as legal appellations of origin for wine,<sup>13</sup> the following appellations do not require registration with the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau:

- [Lake County](#)
- [Marin County](#)
- [Mendocino County](#)
- [Napa County](#)
- [Solano County](#)
- [Sonoma County](#)



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**Napa Valley AVA** is an [American Viticultural Area](#) located in [Napa County](#) in California's [Wine Country](#). Napa Valley is considered one of the premier wine regions in the world.<sup>[4]</sup> Records of commercial wine production in the region date back to the nineteenth century,<sup>[5]</sup> but premium wine production dates back only to the 1960s.<sup>[4]</sup>

The combination of [Mediterranean climate](#), [geography](#) and geology of the region are conducive to growing quality wine grapes. [John Patchett](#) established the Napa Valley's first commercial vineyard in 1858.<sup>[6]</sup> In 1861 [Charles Krug](#) established another of Napa Valley's first commercial wineries in [St. Helena](#).<sup>[6]</sup> Viticulture in Napa suffered several setbacks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including an outbreak of the vine disease [phylloxera](#), the institution of [Prohibition](#), and the [Great Depression](#). The wine industry in Napa Valley recovered, and helped by the results of the [Paris Wine Tasting of 1976](#), came to be seen as capable of producing the best quality wine – equal to that of Old World wine regions. Napa Valley is now a major [enotourism](#) destination.

## American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) of Napa Valley

Within the Napa Valley AVA, there are sixteen sub-AVAs:<sup>[1][2]</sup>

Area	↕	Date created	↕
<a href="#">Los Carneros AVA</a>		1983-08-18	
<a href="#">Howell Mountain AVA</a>		1983-12-30	
<a href="#">Wild Horse Valley AVA</a>		1988-11-30	
<a href="#">Stags Leap District AVA</a>		1989-01-27	
<a href="#">Mt. Veeder AVA</a>		1990-02-20	
<a href="#">Atlas Peak AVA</a>		1992-01-22	
<a href="#">Spring Mountain District AVA</a>		1993-05-13	
<a href="#">Oakville AVA</a>		1993-07-02	
<a href="#">Rutherford AVA</a>		1993-07-02	
<a href="#">St. Helena AVA</a>		1995-09-11	
<a href="#">Chiles Valley AVA</a>		1999-02-17	
<a href="#">Yountville AVA</a>		1999-03-19	
<a href="#">Diamond Mountain District AVA</a>		2001-06-01	
<a href="#">Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley AVA</a>		2004-02-25	
<a href="#">Calistoga AVA</a>		2009-12-08	
<a href="#">Coombsville AVA</a>		2011-12-14	

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## Central Coast AVA





The **Central Coast AVA** is a large **American Viticultural Area** in the U.S. state of California that spans from **Santa Barbara County** in the south to the **San Francisco Bay Area** in the north. The boundaries of the Central Coast include portions of six **counties**. With around 100,000 acres (400 km<sup>2</sup>) planted to wine grapes, **Chardonnay** accounts for more than half of the total. Within this larger AVA are several smaller **appellations** that share the same cooling influence from the **Pacific Ocean**.

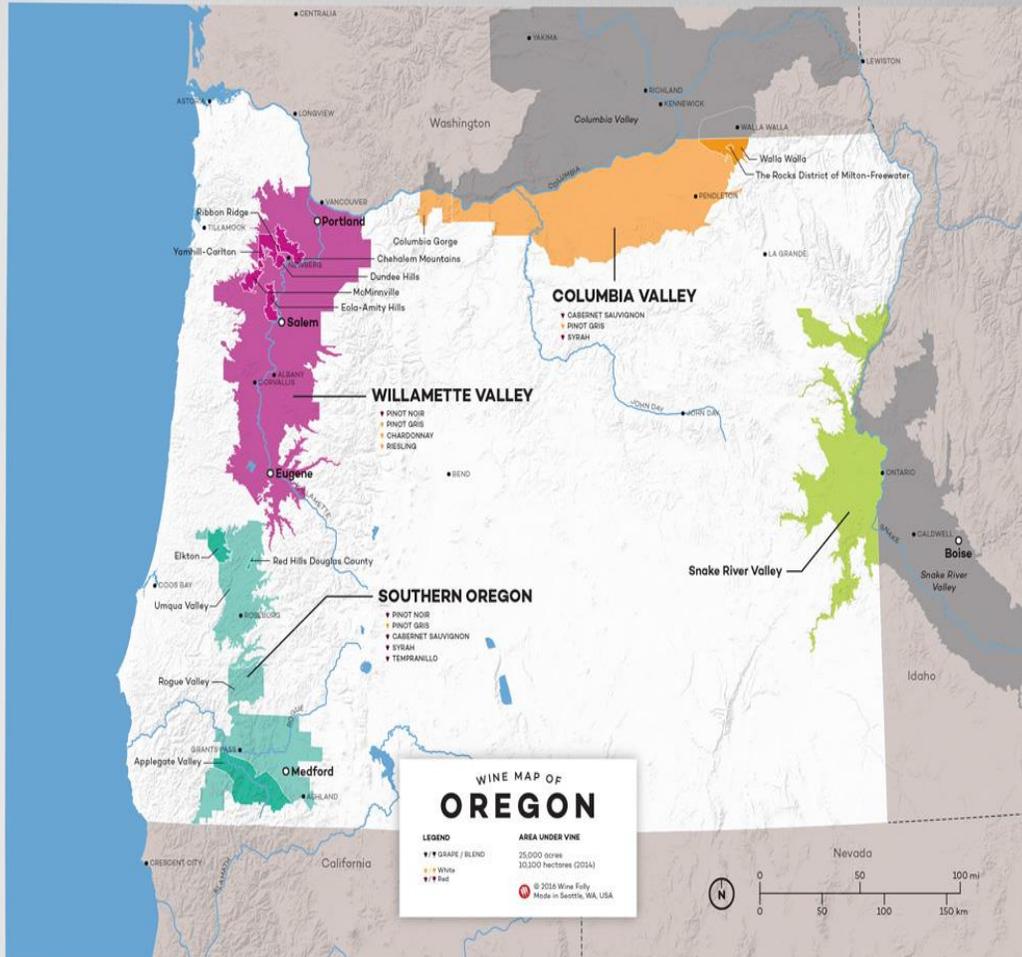


**Santa Ynez Valley** - This is by far the largest AVA in the region, clocking in with 77,000 acres planted to over 60 different varieties and spanning over 30 miles east to west. Moving from west to east the climate goes from chilly and foggy (home to Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Syrah) to warm and dry (good for **Rhône blends**, Zinfandels, and Bordeaux blends). Soils vary as well from well drained sandy soils on the valley floor to silty, clay, shale loam blends in the foothills. The region also has some rapport for Sauvignon Blanc from the historic Brander vineyard—it's crisp and refreshing.

The valley formed by the Purisima Hills and San Rafael Mountain on the north and the Santa Ynez Mountains to the south, offers growers a wide range of temperatures to grow many types of grapes.



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## Willamette Valley AVA



The AVA is the wine growing region which encompasses the [drainage basin](#) of the [Willamette River](#). It stretches from the [Columbia River](#) in the north to just south of [Eugene](#) in the south, where the [Willamette Valley](#) ends; and from the [Oregon Coast Range](#) in the west to the [Cascade Mountains](#) in the east. At 5,360 square miles (13,900 km<sup>2</sup>), it is the largest AVA in the state, and contains most of the state's wineries; approximately 200 as of 2006.

The boundaries of the Willamette Valley AVA were established in 1984, and since then seven new, smaller AVAs have been created within the northern portion of Willamette Valley AVA. The Willamette Valley has a cool, moist climate, and is recognized worldwide for its [Pinot noir](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

Although this distinction is not officially recognized, many wine connoisseurs further divide the Willamette Valley into northern and southern regions, the dividing line being the approximate latitude of [Salem](#) (approximately 45° north latitude).<sup>[4]</sup>

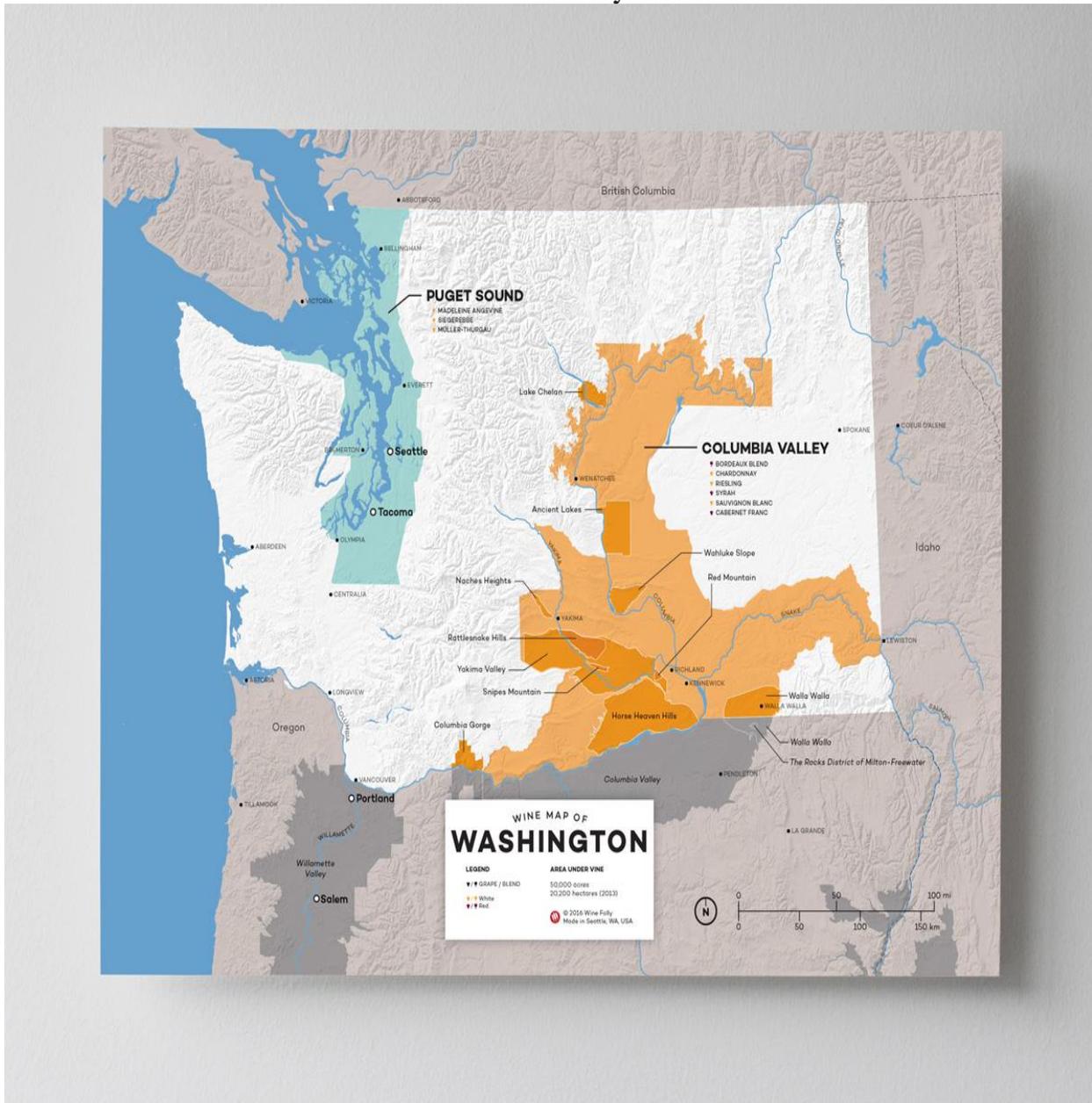
**The climate** of Willamette Valley is mild year-round. Winters are typically cool and wet, summers are dry and warm; heat above 90 °F (32 °C) only occurs 5 to 15 days per year, and the temperature drops below 0 °F (−18 °C) once every 25 years. Most rainfall occurs in the late autumn, winter, and early spring, when temperatures are the coldest. The valley gets relatively little snow (5 inches (13 cm) to 10 inches (25 cm)) per year.<sup>[5]</sup> The [hardiness zone](#) is mostly 8b.<sup>[6]</sup>

Not all portions of the Willamette Valley are suitable for vineyards, however, and the largest concentration of wineries is found west of the [Willamette River](#), on the leeward slopes of the Coast Range, or among the



numerous river and stream valleys created by Willamette River tributaries. By far, the largest concentration of wineries is in [Yamhill County](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

## Columbia Valley AVA



The **Columbia Valley AVA** is an **American Viticultural Area** which lies in the **Columbia River Plateau**, through much of central and southern **Washington State**, with a small section crossing into the neighboring state of **Oregon**. The AVA includes the drainage basin of the **Columbia River** and its tributaries through much of Washington. Allen Shoup, president of Washington State's largest winery Chateau Ste. Michelle, understood the importance of obtaining appellation status for Washington State to grow the reputation of the



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vineyards.<sup>[3]</sup> He hired Drs. Wade Wolfe and Walter Clore to petition the federal government for appellation status, a request that was granted in 1984.<sup>[4]</sup> The Columbia Valley AVA is the largest [wine region](#) in the state of Washington, including over 11,000,000 acres (4,500,000 ha), of which over 50,000 acres (20,000 ha) are planted in [vineyards](#). The Columbia Valley AVA includes 99% of the total vineyard area planted in the state of Washington.<sup>[2][5]</sup> Grapes grown here include [Cabernet Sauvignon](#), [Merlot](#), [Chardonnay](#), [Riesling](#), [Syrah](#), [Pinot Gris](#), and [Sauvignon blanc](#). [Concord grapes](#) and other *Vitis labrusca* grapes are grown in the region as well. The unique climates of the area allow the Columbia Valley to produce wines that are very fruit-forward, like [California wine](#), but which also retain some of the balance and structure of [European wine](#).<sup>1</sup>

**The Climate:** The vast size of the [appellation](#) allows for an array of diverse [microclimates](#) among the various sub-appellations, but the whole region shares the common climate traits of cold winters and long dry growing seasons with low [humidity](#).<sup>[5]</sup> The warm days and cool nights of the area help retain the balance of acid and sugar levels in the grape which give [Washington wines](#) their characteristic balance in flavors. The peak ripening of the grapes occurs during the last four to six weeks of the growing season, with the grapes hanging on the vines a little longer than in California.<sup>[5]</sup> This allows the grape more time to develop maturity in [tannins](#) as well as other aroma and profile characteristics that will be brought out in the resulting wines. The longer growing season also allows the grapes to be harvested at a cooler temperature than in other more southerly wine regions.<sup>[5]</sup>

Deep winter freezes are the main climate threat to the grape growing industry of the Columbia Valley. Temperatures can drop from 40 °F (4 °C) to less than 0 °F (-18 °C) in a matter of hours. Many vineyards incorporate [wind turbines](#) to keep air circulating around the grapes and stay warm enough to prevent [frost](#). In most years, the vines enter into a long winter [dormancy](#) rather than freeze, which helps the vines come out of the winter and into the growing season healthier.