



DHALL & NASH



## DHALL & NASH WINERIES IN CALIFORNIA



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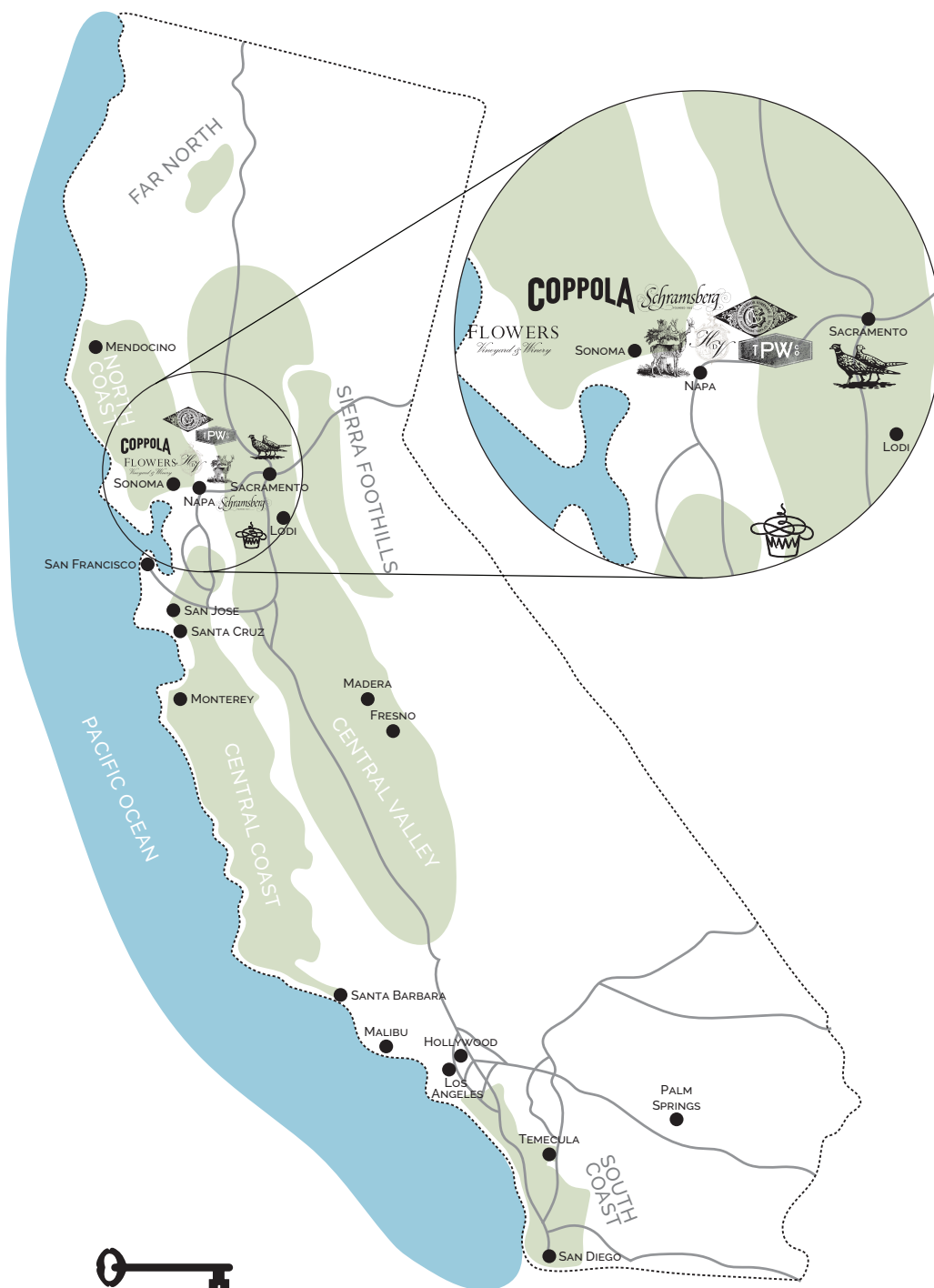


STAG'S LEAP

REGIONAL INFORMATION // U. S. A.

# California

California has been producing wine for over 200 years. Largely driven by Zinfandel, Cabernet and Chardonnay this state is also home to a diverse array of varieties and terroirs spread over more than 100 unique AVA's (American Viticultural Areas).



- SIGNIFICANT TOWNS
- SMALL TOWNS
- RIVERS AND WATER BODIES
- MAIN ROUTES
- SIDE ROUTES
- REGIONS

# HISTORY & CULTURE

If California was a country, it would be the 4th largest producer of wine in the world. The history of wine in this state goes back over 200 years, though it is still young in comparison to Europe for the new world. Grapes originally came to California via Mexico by the way of the Franciscan Padres as they built a series of missions along El Camino Real (US 101). This then increased with the gold rush in 1849. The influx of European settlers scouring the land for gold eventually looked to the Mediterranean climate to bring in more consistent incomes. This, tied in with the veritable cornucopia of climatic sub-regions, has allowed for grapes of many different varieties to flourish.

The major sub-regions are; Sonoma, Napa, Lake & Mendocino, Bay Area, Monterey & Benito, San Luis, Santa Barbara, Southern California, Central Valley and Sierra Foothills.

The majority of early plantings took place in Sonoma and Napa, both now boasting over 150 years of wine history. They are littered with stone cellars and commendable architecture dating back to the original mission period. Some of the earliest commercial wineries on record include Buena Vista Winery (1857,) and Charles Krug's St Helena (1860's). The latter trained many of the winemaking pioneers in this region. This winemaking endeavour carried on until prohibition. In a variance to the rest of the country during this period, grape production in California actually increased. The majority of this was for personal consumption but doubled the overall production by the end of the 13 year dry-spell.

However post prohibition very little changed up until the boom of the 70's and 80's, spurred on by both domestic interest in "local" fine wine and increased demand for interesting new world alternatives. The modern vanguard includes a mix of some of the older vineyards such as Inglenook, Chateau Montelena, Beringer & Buena Vista through to "young guns" Stag's Leap, Robert Mondavi, Flowers and Coppola.

## TERROIR

### *GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE, GEOLOGY, SOIL & HUMAN ENDEAVOUR*

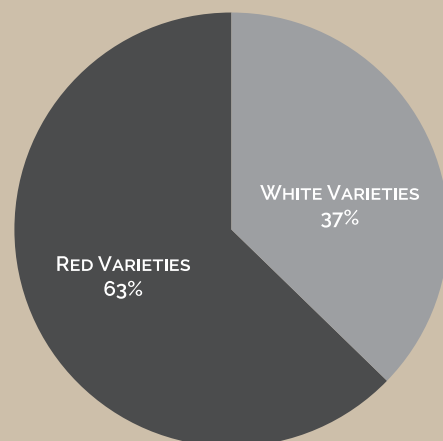
California climatically resembles the Mediterranean, meaning there is a large diurnal differentiation between day and night temperatures, and the majority of regions with vines are either exposed to a marine element or at least some form of evening cool. With this being taken into account, grapes with a higher acidity level (Pinot Noir, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc etc.) are found closer to the coast and the hardier varieties, (Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel etc) are found up in the hills.

There are exceptions to these generalizations, namely the valley floors are subject to morning fog which tends to mitigate the intense daytime heat. The other major climatic point is the presence of gaps in the coastal ranges as you move south down the coast. These gaps allow sea breezes and fogs to penetrate the valleys in a similar way to the river valleys further north in Napa. These climatic variations can lead to major variations between the AVAs - while one can have an amazing year, the neighbour might have an off year.

Due to the scale of California and the varied soil types there is no real 'standard'. The region as a whole has everything from gravel river beds and hillsides through to deep, dense mud and silt. So Californian winemakers generally tend to focus on what grows best in their soil and climate, contributing to the large variety of wines available from this state. The majority of the AVAs inside the larger growing region tend to be defined along climatic and soil lines.



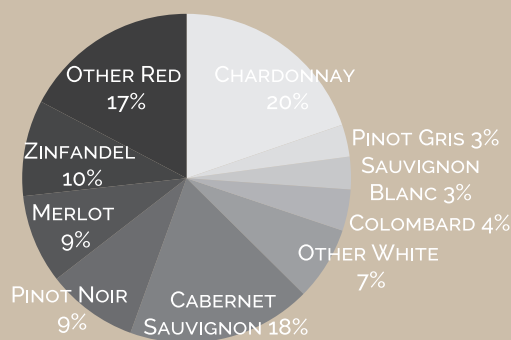
FOG SETTLING OVER THE HILLSIDES OF THE SONOMA COAST - FLOWERS WINERY



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## WINE STYLES & VARIETIES

**Cabernet Sauvignon:** This red bordeaux grape has found great renown in California, favouring the coastal regions and the aforementioned gaps in the coastal ranges. This rich, thought-provoking wine helped to put American wine on the world stage.

**Zinfandel:** This versatile grape is found throughout the region and rarely is seen out of state other than in its homeland of Italy (Primitivo). It can make everything from rich, succulent, spicy reds through to nuanced, ripe, strawberry rosé to sweet wines and slight racey whites.

**Pinot Noir:** This aromatic red tends to grow well in the cooler climatic areas of the state. Sonoma is famous for it Pinot Noir, particularly around the Russian River Valley AVA and the Sonoma Coast AVA.

**Rhone Blends:** Commonly found in the central valleys with a large chunk used for table wines. There is growth in production of top quality wines utilising this old world style.

**Chardonnay:** Burgundy's great white grape has become a staple in the region. Ranging from flinty and sharp through to rich and expansive oak driven white wines.

**Chenin Blanc:** This easy drinking wine has become a staple on tables throughout the world. This Loire native makes everything from sweet to dry and is very versatile.

**Sauvignon Blanc:** This highly acidic variety flourishes here. Typically they vary from clean 100% stainless steel to the heavily oaked style commonly known as Fumé Blanc.

**Riesling:** This German heavy weight has been propagated around the state for a long time, featuring along the full spectrum from dry to sweet. Capturing amazing mineral notes in the coastal areas and more fruit driven from the central valleys.

**Champagne Blends:** Particularly focused in the northern regions of Napa and Sonoma there is a growth in this style.

