



BELL

WINE CELLARS

6200 WASHINGTON STREET

YOUNTVILLE, CA 94599

WINERY 707-944-1673

FAX 707-944-1674

E-MAIL: INFO@BELLWINE.COM

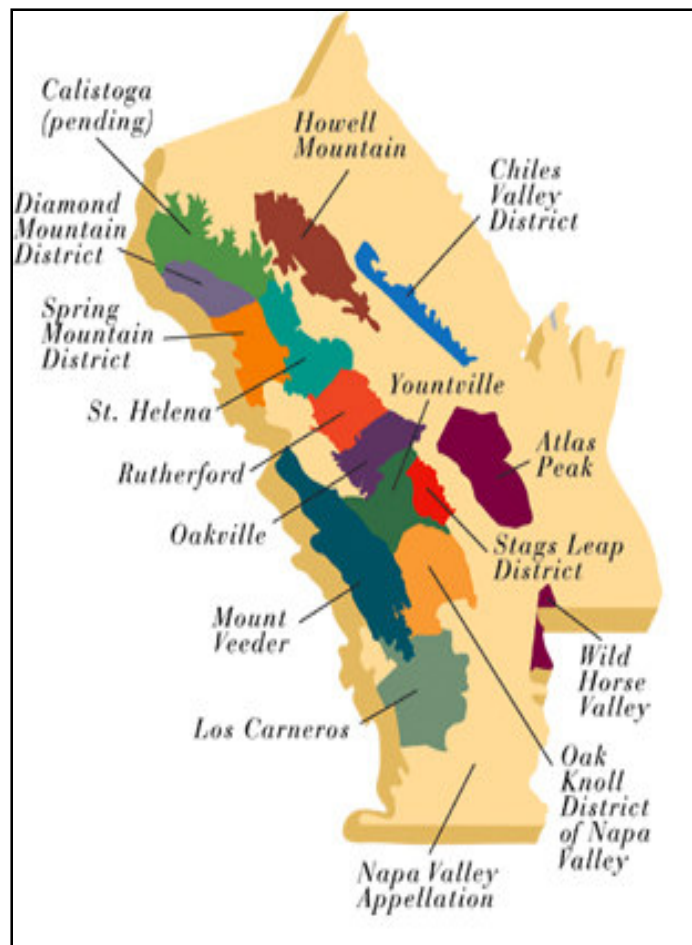
WWW.BELLWINE.COM

Appellations

The entire county of Napa Valley is now recognized as an American Viticultural Area, or AVA, roughly the same as the French term “appellation”. Those of you who have visited would have recognized immediately the great diversity of micro-climates we have within our long, narrow valley – cool conditions in Los Carneros and Yountville (suited to Chardonnay, Merlot and Pinot noir) moderate conditions in Rutherford (suited to Sauvignon blanc and Cabernet sauvignon) warm conditions in Calistoga (suited to Zinfandel and Petite sirah).

As the wine industry spread out through the valley and matured, regions emerged that imprinted recognizable characteristics on the grapes grown within them. It didn't take long for the valley's growers and winemakers alike to recognize those unique combinations of topography, soil and microclimate, and delineate them as sub-appellations, AVA's within Napa Valley. In the map (above) produced by the Napa Valley Vintners, you can see how these small AVA's form a matrix encompassing most of the valley.

In the 25-plus years I have been making wine here, I have been fortunate to participate in the development and establishment of several of AVA's, beginning with my writing the definition of Los Carneros in 1980. Subsequent work on Rutherford, Oakville and Yountville AVA's have only reinforced my belief that wine truly is a product of the place from which it is grown.



Over fifty years ago, during the early decades of winemaking in the Napa Valley, growers interested in meeting the changing demands of a fickle market often planted a half dozen different grape varieties in a patchwork pattern vineyard. Since then, viticultural experience has shown the wisdom of matching specific grape varieties with locations whose microclimates and soils are best suited to them. Indeed, if one was to examine the vineyard planting maps at Beaulieu over the past 8 decades, one would find ample evidence of the gradual migration of grape varieties. Years ago, BV#1 in Rutherford, contained numerous varieties, including Chardonnay, Sylvaner, Merlot, Melon de Bourgogne, Muscat de Frontignan, Mondeuse de Savoy, Early Burgundy, Pinot noir, Mondeuse, Cabernet sauvignon; today, it contains exclusively Cabernet sauvignon. In a cooler area, BV#5 in Carneros contains both Chardonnay and Pinot noir, reflecting the wisdom of Andre Tchelistcheff, who, in the early 60's, lead the way in planting the appropriate variety in the best suited area.

Once an area is identified as possessing the ability to imprint unique and consistently recognizable qualities on the grapes grown there, data supporting a proposed American Viticultural Area, or AVA, is submitted to the federal government, which decides whether the proposed appellation designation will be granted. As of 2004, the government has approved 155 AVA's in the United States. Within the Napa Valley appellation there are now 14 sub-appellations, or AVA's: Atlas Peak, Chiles Valley District, Diamond Mountain District, Howell Mountain, Los Carneros, Mt. Veeder, Oakville, Rutherford, St. Helena, Spring Mountain District, Stags Leap District, Yountville, Wild Horse Valley and Oak Knoll District.

Establishment of American Viticultural Areas:

An AVA petition submitted to the government should include the following information:

(i) Evidence that the name of the viticultural area is locally and/or nationally known as the area referred to; (ii) historical or current evidence that the boundaries of the viticultural area are as specified in the application; (iii) evidence relating to the geographical features which distinguish the viticultural features of the proposed area from surrounding areas; (iv) the specific boundaries of the viticultural area, based on features which can be found on US Geological Survey maps; and (v) a copy of the USGS map with the boundaries prominently marked.