



DRY CREEK VALLEY TIMELINE

The history of grape growing and winemaking in Dry Creek Valley is among the longest in California, with its roots beginning more than 130 years ago.

- 1849** Dry Creek Valley's beautiful and fertile landscape began attracting pioneers soon after the California gold rush of 1849. Early farming consisted primarily of wheat, hops and sheep. By 1855, ten American families were settled in the valley.
- 1870** French immigrant Georges Bloch had established the first vineyard in Dry Creek Valley and soon co-founded the first winery. After rapid vineyard expansion, 15 years later the region had 54 separate vineyards totaling 883 acres, with well over half the acreage planted to Zinfandel.
- 1890s** Nine wineries sold virtually their entire production in bulk. There was little consumer recognition, but the wines, especially Zinfandel, were highly regarded by the California wine industry.
- 1900s** After a market slowdown, the early 1900s brought renewed vineyard and winery development, along with a strong Italian influence. As phylloxera spread and the threat of Prohibition loomed, several growers took the risk and replanted Zinfandel on resistant St. George rootstock. Many of those vineyards still exist, marking the region as refuge to the densest concentration of old Zinfandel vineyards in the world.
- 1919** In 1919, 1.5 million gallons of wine were being produced in the valley. Prohibition closed the wineries in 1920, but growers who didn't pull their vineyards eventually found a market among home winemakers.
- 1933** At the end of Prohibition, only four wineries remained in operation, and two are still in business today. Vineyards endured, but orchard crops such as prunes and pears became the valley's mainstays. By 1937, eight wineries had a total production of 500,000 gallons.
- 1940s** During the decade that brought the onslaught of World War II to America, production went down to three wineries and the valley entered a quiet time for the winegrowing industry. Grapes were not planted again until the late 1950s and early 1960s.
- 1970s** Revival began in the early 1970s. Growth in Sonoma County wine grape production from 1969 through 1978 more than doubled. Both newcomers and longtime residents began planting new vineyards, not only on the bench lands that had been the site of earlier vineyards, but also on the valley floor. The new vineyards brought new wineries.
- 1983** Dry Creek Valley received formal recognition as an American Viticultural Area.
- 2012** Over 9,000 acres of vineyards carpet the valley, providing exceptional fruit to more than 70 wineries located in the Dry Creek Valley and others throughout California.