

# WELCOME TO DRY CREEK VALLEY

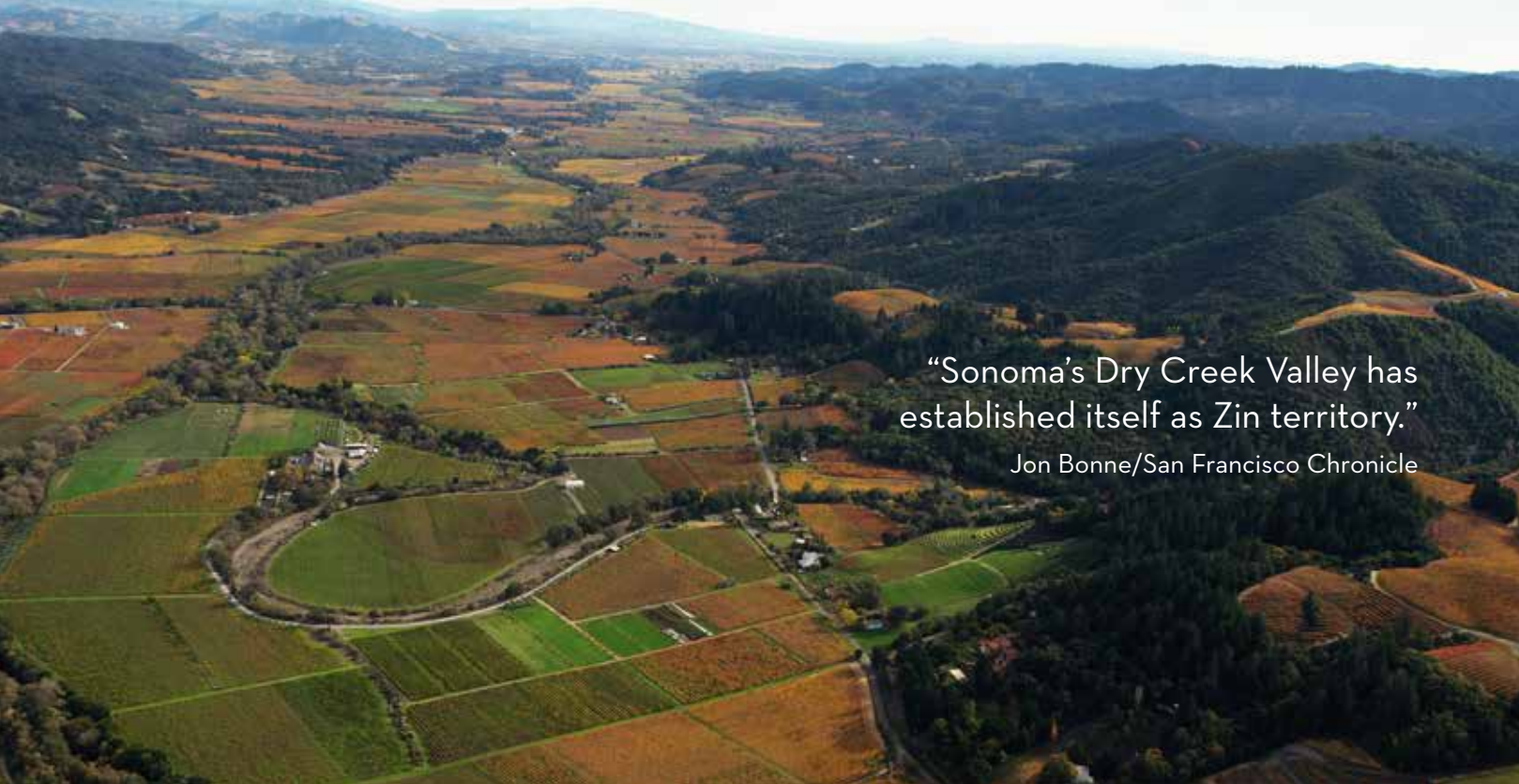
...a premium wine region in Sonoma County, California. Here, you'll find miles of vineyards, not miles of concrete. You'll see winemaking traditions from the past alive in the vineyards and cellars of today.

You'll discover a range and diversity of world-class wines you never expected from such a small valley. And you'll be surprised by the intimate greeting you receive at each and every winery - usually a winemaker, owner or family-member excited to share the valley, wines and story with you ...



WINEGROWERS OF DRY CREEK VALLEY®  
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“Sonoma’s Dry Creek Valley has established itself as Zin territory.”

Jon Bonne/San Francisco Chronicle

## ABOUT DRY CREEK VALLEY

Dry Creek Valley is one of more than a dozen unique growing regions located in Sonoma County, California.

### ABOUT DRY CREEK VALLEY

- Dry Creek Valley is located in Northern Sonoma County and anchored by the town of Healdsburg
- Measures 16 miles long by 2 miles wide with 9,000 acres planted to grapes
- Is the third largest designated American Viticultural Area in Sonoma County
- Comprised of 70 wineries and 150 growers
- Median annual case production is 4750
- Produces 3.2M cases of wine annually, with a retail value of \$1 Billion
- Most planted varieties are Cabernet, Zinfandel and Merlot

### ABOUT SONOMA COUNTY

- Sonoma County specializes in producing site-specific wines by family farmers and artisan winemakers
- Encompasses 1 million acres, 6% is planted to grapes, 49% is in a natural state of woodlands
- Contains 16 designated American Viticultural Areas (AVA), each with a unique microclimate
- Produces 6% of California’s wine with a retail value of \$7.6 Billion
- 550 wineries, of which 80% are less than 100 acres

### ABOUT ROCKPILE

- Rockpile is a sub-appellation of Dry Creek Valley, characterized by a high elevation, extreme terrain and increased sun exposure
- Encompasses 15,000 acres, with 220 acres planted to grapes
- Approximately 2500 acres overlap with the Dry Creek Valley AVA
- Most planted varieties are Zinfandel, Petite Sirah and Syrah





# A HISTORY IN VINES

The history of grape growing and winemaking in Dry Creek Valley is among the longest in California, beginning more than 140 years ago. The region has seen three movements during this time, each adding a unique layer to the history of the region.

“The wine produced by Bloch and Colson has finer flavor than from almost any other winery in the country.”

Healdsburg Enterprise, 1878

## DISCOVERY

1849: The fertile landscape of Dry Creek Valley attracts settlers soon after the California Gold Rush.

1869: French immigrant Georges Bloch established the first vineyard and soon co-founds the first winery.

1889: Dry Creek Valley rapidly expands to nine wineries and 54 separate vineyards totaling 883 acres, with over half the acreage planted devoted to Zinfandel. Wineries sell the entire production in bulk and the Zinfandel becomes highly regarded by the California wine industry.

Early 1900s: Italian immigrants bring renewed vineyard and winery development. As phylloxera spreads and the threat of Prohibition looms, several growers take the risk and replant Zinfandel on resistant St. George rootstock. Many of these vineyards still exist, marking the region as the densest concentration of old Zinfandel vines in the world.

1919: 1.5 million gallons of wine are being produced in Dry Creek Valley.

1920: Prohibition closes the wineries. Growers who keep their vineyards soon find a market among home winemakers.

## REVIVAL

1933: Prohibition is repealed and four wineries remain, one of which, Pedroncelli, is still in business today. Vineyards endure, but orchard crops such as prunes and pears become the valley's mainstay.

1937: Eight wineries produce a total of 500,000 gallons of wine.

1940s: Production goes down to three wineries and the valley enters a quiet time.

1950s and 1960's: Grapes are planted and harvested, mostly for local and private use.

1970s: Both newcomers and longtime residents start to plant grapes on the bench lands that had been the site of earlier vineyards. A renewed interest for commercial wineries takes hold.

1983: Warm Springs Dam at Lake Sonoma is completed, enabling widespread planting of grapes on the valley floor. Dry Creek Valley receives formal recognition as an American Viticultural Area.

## TODAY

Steady growth has continued in Dry Creek Valley, and there are now over 9,000 acres of vineyards that carpet the valley. They provide exceptional fruit to over 70 wineries in Dry Creek Valley and others throughout California.



# THE DRY CREEK VALLEY EXPERIENCE

The Valley's older families preserve the history and tradition; the new families bring modern techniques, styles and technology. Dry Creek Valley reflects the pride and diversity of the people who live and work within its narrow, gentle geography.



“Pioneers, Italian renaissance, transplanted professionals and Mexican families. Men and Women. We work and dream together to project and protect Dry Creek Valley Winegrowing.”

Lou Preston/Preston Vineyards

Our values are an integral part of our winemaking and are reflected in the character of the wines we produce.

## HERITAGE

Like the land that has been passed down through the generations, the oral histories, techniques and traditions have also been kept alive. Each bottle of wine is more than 100 years in the making, as the craft of producing wine from Dry Creek Valley has been honed over the centuries.

## PASSION

Dry Creek Valley is comprised of successive generations of families who are drawn to the beauty and bounty of the land. This has created a community centered on a passion for growing and producing wine. Widely regarded as the premier American Viticultural Area for Zinfandel, our wines reap the benefits of the dedication of our growers and vintners.

## COMMUNITY

Formed in 1989, the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley® represents a multi-generational family community of vintners and growers committed to growing high-quality fruit and producing world-class wines. All are committed to being good land stewards of this pristine valley for present and future generations.

Our mission is to advance the recognition, preservation and enhancement of Dry Creek Valley as a premium winegrowing region through promotion, protection and educational activities.

*Appendix A: Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley Membership*





# EXPLORE THE TERRIOR

Dry Creek Valley's unique characteristics are celebrated by winegrowers and closely detailed in the vineyard development process. Each plot of land is planted to ensure the traits of the land will impart a unique imprint onto the grapes grown within.

Located 70 miles north of San Francisco and 20 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, Dry Creek Valley is ideally situated for cultivating wine grapes. Bordered by Lake Sonoma in the North and the confluence of Dry Creek and the Russian River to the south, Dry Creek Valley's shape is long and narrow, oriented in a north-south direction, and has varying elevations and orientations.

Dry Creek Valley can be divided broadly into the hillsides, bench land, and valley floor. Due to its narrow configuration and gentle geography, Dry Creek Valley has one of the largest concentrations of bench lands and bench land vineyards in Sonoma County.

*Appendix B: Topography map*

"Mother Nature is the ultimate winemaker."

Ray Teldeschi/Del Carlo Winery







# CLIMATE

Dry Creek Valley is bisected by Lambert Bridge Road into two climate zones: Region I to the south, and Region II to the north. Long, warm days of abundant sunshine are tempered by cool breezes and fog provided by the nearby Pacific Ocean.

## DIURNAL TEMPERATURE SHIFT

Dry Creek Valley experiences both coastal and inland influences, with the nearby coastal mountain range keeping cool marine temperatures at bay, allowing for daily temperatures in the mid-80s, July through September. These mountains also provide a conduit for the coastal cold air and fog to come in at night, dramatically dropping temperatures. In short, long, warm days allow the fruit to fully ripen, while coastal cooling in the evening enables the grapes to mature slowly and retain their acidity and balance. These are the perfect growing conditions for Zinfandel and Sauvignon Blanc, the region's signature grape varieties, as well as Bordeaux and Rhône varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah.

## FOG

In northern Sonoma County, fog gathers at the mouth of the Russian River and on the Santa Rosa plain, which stretches toward San Francisco Bay. When weather conditions are right, which is frequently during the summer in Dry Creek Valley, an afternoon breeze out of the south ushers in the fog. The gradient of Dry Creek is sufficiently steep that at 7 a.m. in the morning, mid-Dry Creek Valley may be shrouded in gray, but the upper Valley will be in bright sunshine. Additionally, any fog in the valley typically burns off throughout the Valley by 9:30 a.m. or 10 a.m., so Dry Creek Valley warms up earlier in the day and reaches higher average temperatures than almost all the other growing areas in Sonoma County. The average nighttime temperatures during growing season is also lower than in neighboring Russian River and Alexander Valleys.

## RAIN

The average rainfall in Dry Creek Valley is about 40 inches annually, with the growing season averaging roughly six inches. December through February sees the most rain, while the summer months see little to none. This rainfall pattern minimizes the need for irrigation, and the drier growing season staves off mildew that can be an issue in regions with higher precipitation levels.

## MICROCLIMATES

Variations in elevation combined with a north-south orientation create multiple microclimates within the AVA. Due to the strong marine influence to the south, the north end of the valley is typically warmer and receives more sunlight as the fog burns off earlier. Similarly, the eastern hills and the western bench lands express grape varieties differently due to exposure from the morning sunlight versus the afternoon sunlight. These variations also make Dry Creek Valley a suitable home for many different wine grapes, particularly those that thrive in moderate to higher daytime temperatures.

“When I started my search for a vineyard and winery 42 years ago, I chose Dry Creek Valley because it has over 100 years of viticultural history and the right soil, climate and water for producing premium grapes. After four decades and extensive travel to the world's great wine regions, I am still convinced there is no better place to grow grapes than Dry Creek Valley.”

David Stare/Dry Creek Vineyard



# SOILS OF DRY CREEK VALLEY

Dry Creek Valley's topography supports a wide range of soils, from hard red clay in the western bench lands to mineral-rich sandy loams studded with the occasional fossil along the valley floor. Below are the most common soil types found in Dry Creek Valley.

**1. METAMORPHIC SOILS** are derived from metavolcanics, which are rocks first formed by volcanoes, then recrystallized after being subjected to high pressure and temperatures brought by rocks forming on top. These soils are generally found along the western benchlands of the valley, are red and rocky with a high iron content and coarser tannins that show brighter fruit with tones of cherry and red raspberry, along with dried floral characters.

**2. IGNEOUS SOILS** are formed from rocks that originate from the Earth's mantle or crust. These rocks come to the surface during volcanic activity and are characterized as lighter brown and more gravelly. These soils are generally found along the eastern hills and combined with the warmer, gentler slopes and afternoon sun, make a great home for Bordeaux varieties as well as Zinfandel.

**3. SEDIMENTARY SOILS** are produced from rocks that are formed from the decomposition of material at the Earth's surface and within bodies of water. It naturally follows that most Sedimentary soils in Dry Creek Valley are found along the valley floor, where flooding was common. These soils are rich in minerals and contain the occasional fossil. Dusty, brown and well drained, these soils are ideal for Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay and impart a minerality to the wine.







“I do have a favorite Zinfandel, it comes from...Dry Creek Valley.”

Eric Asimov/New York Times

# SIGNATURE VARIETALS

## ZINFANDEL

With well over a century of continuous cultivation, Zinfandel is Dry Creek Valley’s cultural heritage, its signature winegrape.

Dry Creek Valley has set the bar worldwide for Zinfandel, helping establish the variety as a premium wine grape capable of producing wines that are food friendly, cellar worthy and appealing to consumers and sommeliers. Today, Dry Creek Valley growers farm nearly 2,400 acres of Zinfandel, making it the most widely planted grape in the AVA.

Many of the valley’s original winegrowing families continue to farm these vineyards, melding their fathers’ and grandfathers’ traditions with modern techniques to produce world-class Zinfandel grapes and wines. Visitors can taste the fruits of this labor at both larger, renowned wineries and boutique establishments across the valley, each producing a unique style of Zinfandel that reflects a sense of place and the vintners’ own style.

## CABERNET SAUVIGNON

With a climate similar to Bordeaux, it’s no wonder that Dry Creek Valley is ideal for growing Cabernet Sauvignon.

Nearly as widely planted as Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon thrives in the bench lands, which are composed primarily of gravelly clay loam that drains very well and stresses the vines late in the growing season to produce a concentrated character.

## SAUVIGNON BLANC

Dry Creek Valley’s terroir is uniquely suited for the cultivation of Sauvignon Blanc.

Originally brought to Dry Creek Valley in the early 1970’s, Sauvignon Blanc thrives along the valley floor where eons of flooding produced deep, well-drained, mineral-rich soils.





# WINES OF DRY CREEK VALLEY

The diversity of Dry Creek Valley can be shown through the wide range of wines produced from grapes in the valley.

In addition to our signature varietal, Zinfandel, Dry Creek Valley produces many wines that are a reflection of the terroir and the cultural heritages in the valley. Zinfandel features in various red blends, field blends and late harvest dessert wines. Likewise, wines from the Bordeaux region play an important part in Dry Creek Valley. Sauvignon Blanc is the AVA's signature white grape variety; Cabernet Sauvignon is also abundant, as well as blends thereof. Red and white Rhône varieties are widely planted in the valley and are bottled as a single varietal or skillfully blended. During the early 1900s, Italian immigrants planted grapes such as Barbera and Sangiovese that represent their heritage and are still skillfully cultivated throughout the valley today. More than a century of continued grape cultivation has resulted in a diverse selection of wines that reflect the true culture of Dry Creek Valley.







“Our county’s grape growers and winemakers have long been at the forefront of creating and utilizing sustainable practices in the vineyard, in the winery and in running their businesses, so this is the next natural step in their continued evolution.”.

Karissa Kruse/Sonoma County Winegrape Commission

## SUSTAINABILITY

Dry Creek Valley is proud to be part of two major initiatives that will ensure the continued viability of our region and preserve it for the generations to come.

100% Sustainable by 2019 – Dry Creek Valley is proud to be part of Sonoma County’s initiative to become a 100% sustainable wine region by 2019. Sustainability is defined by the triple bottom line: a comprehensive set of practices that are environmentally sound, socially equitable and economically viable. Sustainable practices are defined by the Code of Sustainable Winegrowing, as defined by the Wine Institute’s California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance Program.

### FISH HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT

A six-mile habitat enhancement project is being conducted by the Sonoma County Water Agency in cooperation with wineries, private landowners and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in order to provide habitat for endangered Coho salmon and threatened Steelhead and Chinook. The project will use boulders, root wads and logs to create backwaters, side channels and shady habitats for the young fish that live in Dry Creek during the summer. The project is intended to restore Dry Creek to its original flow and restore the original ecosystem so that wildlife can thrive.



**SONOMA**  
COUNTY





## PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY®

Passport to Dry Creek Valley is a celebration of the region's viticultural and epicurean bounty and the farmers, vintners and families that are at the heart of our region.

Since 1990, Passport to Dry Creek Valley has been the signature, annual event of the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley and is one of the longest-running wine events of its kind in California. This weekend celebration takes place each April and is regularly attended by more than 6000 people from all over the country.

With 50+ participating wineries, Passport to Dry Creek Valley is an immersive experience for wine lovers. Each winery adopts a unique theme - Tuscany, Casino Night, Provencal Market are among those used in recent years - and the food and live entertainment offerings transport guests to these and many other exotic locales, while the wine is a direct reflection of the valley itself.

With many wineries offering vineyard tours; barrel tastings; sips of limited production, library wines and new vintages; and a chance to interact with the winemakers themselves, Passport to Dry Creek Valley truly exemplifies the winegrowing heritage of this celebrated wine region.



"A modern tradition with century old roots."

Ann Petersen/Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley



# VISIT DRY CREEK VALLEY

Come meet the diverse personalities that produce exceptional wines from Dry Creek Valley. Meet a winemaker, grower or owner who can share with you their passion for their craft. Visit our many unique wineries in person and experience why successive generations return to continue the traditions of their families.

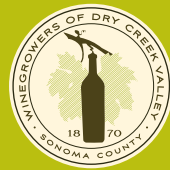
**How to get here:** Dry Creek Valley is convenient to both San Francisco and Sacramento, and is only a short drive away from the Sonoma County airport. Take 101 North to the Dry Creek Valley exit. Dry Creek Valley is anchored by the town of Healdsburg and close to Santa Rosa, Cloverdale and Geyserville.

**Where to stay:** The region offers a wide array of lodgings that provide a complementary mix of wine country history and modern luxury. A broad range of accommodations are available including rustic inns, B&B's, luxury hotels and vineyard vacation rentals.

**Dining:** Dry Creek Valley is anchored by the town of Healdsburg, featuring a wide range of dining options, including Michelin-starred renowned restaurants and acclaimed local bistros. Seasonal farmers markets and local specialty stores provide locally made cheese, breads and pastries- for the perfect picnic in the vineyard.

**What to do:** In addition to discovering a favorite new winery and wine in Dry Creek Valley, biking, hiking and boating are popular activities in and around Dry Creek Valley and Lake Sonoma. In the town of Healdsburg, enjoy over 20 art galleries or visit one of the most comprehensive wine libraries in North America. The Sonoma County Wine Library contains over 5,000 books on wine and wine-related topics, oral histories and over 1,000 rare books about wine dating back to 1512.

Visit **wdcv.com**  
to start planning your trip today.



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