

About the 45th Annual Tasting of the Napa Valley Wine Library “A Selection of Cabernet Varieties from Napa Valley Appellations”

A Brief Explanation of Appellations

In the 1970's the then Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms began to pursue the concept of grape-growing appellations in America. An appellation or American Viticultural Area (AVA) is a specific geographic area within which the grapes making a certain percentage of wine are grown. 75% of the grapes in a wine from a designated state or county must come from that state or county; 85% of the grapes in a designated AVA must come from that appellation. Today, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau has recognized just over 150 appellations, 100 of which are in California. Their very first appellation was in Missouri, the second, in California—Napa Valley

All of Napa County is in the AVA Napa Valley, which was established in 1981. Since then, 13 more appellations in Napa County have met federal criteria of geographic and historic distinction with respect to the growing of wine grapes. Los Carneros was the first appellation within Napa Valley (and part in Sonoma County), quickly followed by Howell Mountain. Five years later, Wild Horse Valley (shared with Solano County), then Stags Leap and Mount Veeder followed. Atlas Peak, Oakville, Rutherford and Spring Mountain District were next accepted. In 1995 St. Helena was admitted, and then Chiles Valley and Yountville. Oak Knoll was established in 2004. Calistoga to the north and Tulocay to the south

are the most recent pending appellations.

Material relating to several of Napa County AVAs is in the Heinz Collection at the Napa Valley Wine Library in the St. Helena Public Library. The wine historian William Heintz researched and wrote several of the histories of a wine growing region required by the federal government as part of the application for designation as an appellation. Heintz's research was instrumental in the granting of the Napa Valley AVA. He also provided histories for the Stags Leap and Mount Veeder AVAs, as well as histories commissioned by individual wineries.

Tasting Guidelines for Wineries

- Because space at the venue for the Tasting is limited, because there are so many producers of Cabernet variety wines in Napa Valley, and because the State is taking an active role in governing which wineries may pour, a group of criteria in order to make it as fair as possible for wineries to participate in the Tasting:

- Wineries invited to pour must be either a Bonded wine facility or Alternating Premises Bonded winery (ABC Type 02 License) to participate. This means that so-called Custom Crush wines may not be donated and poured.
- Preference is given wineries with facilities within the appellation of the wine poured; con-

sideration, of course, has been given wineries that have poured at NVWL tastings in past years.

- Only Cabernet varieties made from grapes within the appellation will be poured. Blends are fine, but they must be made from 100% Cabernet varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Carminere, Malbec, Merlot and Petit Verdot.

- Each winery may pour only one wine; the 2004 Vintage is preferred.

- Tasting restrictions are the same for wineries in the Napa Valley appellation as for any of the other thirteen winegrowing districts.

- Tables for wineries in the Oak Grove at Silverado are to be grouped by appellation. Space for each appellation will be based on the number of wineries within that district that are pouring. Small appellations may be grouped together as may be wineries geographically near one another within the Napa Valley or pending appellations such as Calistoga, Pritchard Hill, Conn Valley.

A guide to participating wineries will be available for members at the door the day of the Tasting.