



Monterey County's potential as a top winegrowing region was first documented in a landmark University of California, Davis study in the early 1960s. The County's perfect synthesis of warm daytime temperatures and cooling ocean influence makes for an exceptionally long growing season. On average, vinifera grapes here enjoy an extra 45 to 60 days on the vine, compared to other northern viticultural areas. The area's various microclimates allow for over 50 different grape varieties to find their niche here. Monterey County's early promise has been realized, with over 45,000 acres of winegrapes now under cultivation. Today, it is one of the largest grape growing regions in North America, with a world-class reputation for quality.

Appellation is a term that refers to the winegrapes' place of origin. A vineyard's location is made up of a combination of geography, climate, soil types and viticultural practices. These elements combine to provide characteristics that make the grapes and the wine from that locale unique. Within the world-class designation of Monterey County, the region boasts nine American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) that have been identified as truly one-of-a-kind winegrowing districts: Monterey, Arroyo Seco, Carmel Valley, Chalone, Hames Valley, San Antonio Valley, San Bernabe, San Lucas and the Santa Lucia Highlands. When appearing on a label, these appellations provide the consumer an additional sense of place - a reflection of that area's special character and quality.

*“Climate is an important contributing factor when discussing what makes each of Monterey County’s nine American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) unique. The climate of Monterey County may, in fact, be the most diverse of all the growing regions in the state of California.”*

*– Dr. Mark Greenspan, Advanced Viticulture, LLC.*

**Monterey** – The Monterey AVA is the largest appellation in Monterey County. It encompasses a wide range of viticultural microclimates. Conditions depend on the particular location's proximity to the climatic influence of Monterey Bay, however, typically rainfall averages at 12-13 inches annually. Reliable afternoon breezes alleviate disease pressure on the vines and coastal fog occurs within a narrow temperature range preventing temperatures to fall too low. Taken as a whole, the Monterey appellation offers the winegrower one of California's longest, gentlest ripening seasons. Over 50% of the overall appellation is planted to Chardonnay.

**Arroyo Seco** – First planted in 1962, this AVA extends from a steep canyon at its westernmost border, opening to encompass the benches around the Salinas River near the towns of Soledad and Greenfield. Bordeaux grape varieties prosper in the mouth of the canyon, which is protected from wind and warmed by reflective heat generated the surrounding cliffs. The valley floor is much cooler, providing ideal climactic conditions for the Burgundian varietals. Integral to this area's soils are the "Greenfield Potatoes" – small cobblestones which store and release heat and provide excellent drainage.

*Carmel Valley* – Father Junipero Serra's padres first established vineyards here in the 1800s. Commercial grape growing began in 1968 with 40 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon in the Cachagua region of Carmel Valley. In 1983, the Valley's 19,200 mountainous acres were granted unique AVA status. The well-drained, gravelly terraces of the district, coupled with warm days and cool nights, are especially suited to the red varieties of France's Bordeaux region. Over 70% of the area's 300 cultivated acres are planted to Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc.

*Chalone* – Planted in 1919, this AVA is home to the oldest producing vines in Monterey County. Chalone sits at a 1,800 foot elevation in the Gavilan Mountain Range, near the Pinnacles National Monument. This dramatic locale can see daily temperature swings from the high 90s to the low 50s. Chalone's unique soils consist of decomposed granite with smaller amounts of clay and limestone. This AVA is planted to 300 acres of primarily Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc.

*Hames Valley* – One of the newest AVA's in Monterey County, Hames Valley was approved in 1994. The grape growing section of the district is sheltered from the strong winds of the Salinas Valley. On average, Hames Valley is much warmer than the majority of the County's northern winegrowing regions. Yet Monterey Bay's moderating influx of cool air still makes its presence felt. The soil composition is primarily shaly loam.

*San Antonio Valley* – As one of Monterey County's warmer AVA's, San Antonio Valley experiences a large daily degree differential. Warmer weather allows fruit to fully mature while colder night temperatures preserve balanced acids and sugar ratios. This climate lends itself well to many Bordeaux and Rhone Varietals as well as Zinfandel.

*San Bernabe* – In the middle of the winegrowing region, San Bernabe experiences a range of climactic conditions suitable to several varietals. With an average of about 30 degrees variation of temperature per day and strong afternoon winds, San Bernabe grapes generally stay on the vine several weeks longer than in comparable temperatures outside of the Salinas Valley.

*San Lucas* – For over 150 years, this section of Monterey County was cattle grazing range. Vineyards were first planted here in 1970. Typified by very warm days and cool nights, daily summer temperatures here can swing by nearly 60 degrees. The appellation is made up of alluvial fans and terraces with elevations ranging from 500 to 1,200 feet. The soil is a combination of diatomaceous shale and varying types of sandstone.

*Santa Lucia Highlands* – Approved in 1991 as an AVA. These vineyards are planted on the southeast-facing terraces of the Santa Lucia Mountains, overlooking the Salinas River Valley. Ancient, glacial soils pair with ocean fog and breezes to create a Region I climate. Cool climate varietals such as Chardonnay, Riesling, and Pinot Noir flourish here; the Bordeaux and Rhone grape types thrive in the region's warmer, protected canyons