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Monterey Wine Conjunctive Labeling Goes into Effect January 1, 2019

December 27, 2018 (Monterey, CA) – Starting January 1, 2019, all wines labeled with an American Viticultural Area (AVA) located entirely within Monterey County, must also include the term “Monterey County” on the label. An AVA is a federally designated wine grape growing region distinguishable by unique geographic features.

This practice, known as conjunctive labeling in the wine industry, involves legislated requirements to include the region of origin on a wine’s label. According to a study completed in 2016 by the [Sonoma State University Wine Business Institute](#), conjunctive wine labeling results in greater levels of awareness of a wine region. Internationally, the wine industry has a historic tradition of relying on “place” to convey a product’s unique characteristics and serve as a reference for quality.

“Bottles throughout the world will now have “Monterey County” on the label, bringing value not only to the local wine industry, but also extra value to tourism, agriculture, and other industries aligned with brand Monterey,” shared Kim Stemler, Executive Director of the Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association (MCVGA).

The original bill was authored by Assemblymember Mark Stone (D-Monterey Bay), requiring Monterey County wines be labeled to identify the region where the grapes were grown. The state law was passed by the California Legislature in 2015 and officially enacted in 2016. Enforcement of the law was delayed for three years until January 1, 2019, to provide wineries with several years to change their labels.

Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association (MCVGA) Board President Scott Caraccioli shared, “Monterey County is one of the premier wine regions in the world. This is very exciting and provides a tremendous platform on which to build and leverage further brand equity and loyalty of our grapes and wines.”

Monterey County grows 7% of the wine grapes in California, cultivating approximately 46,000 acres of wine grapes. (For reference, similar in size to Napa Valley's cultivated acreage.) Monterey Wine Country has nine AVA's including Arroyo Seco, Carmel Valley, Chalone, Hames Valley, Monterey, San Antonio Valley, San Bernabe, Santa Lucia Highlands, and San Lucas.

The Chalone AVA, although mostly in Monterey County, is also slightly in San Benito County and therefore is exempt from this law. Another exemption includes any wine with the "Monterey" AVA already on the label. This was specifically designed to prevent brand confusion that could result by having two "Monterey's" on the label. Wineries have creative flexibility on the font, size, and location of "Monterey County" within their label design.

Stemler added further, "This is yet another example of the cohesiveness of the Monterey wine industry. Over the course of a year in 2014, the local wine industry met together to cooperatively construct the conjunctive labeling parameters that worked for both growers and winemakers. We also deeply appreciate the tremendous support of our local wine industry by our state representatives, especially Assemblymember Stone, who transformed our industry constructed concepts into state law."

More information about conjunctive labeling of wines from the Monterey region, go to MontereyWines.org/Labeling. For a helpful flowchart to determine how this impacts wines made from grapes grown in Monterey County, [click here](#).

About the Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association (MCVGA)

The Monterey County Vintners & Growers Association is a unique non-profit organization with a mission to promote Monterey County wines and grapes, support cooperation and collaboration among vintners and growers, and develop awareness of the industry. For more information on the MCVGA, please call 831.375.9400 or visit montereywines.org.

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