



Mendocino WineGrowers, Inc.

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MENDOCINO COUNTY

Mendocino County – Size Does Matter

Mendocino County is home to over 550 vineyards in 2015, according to figures released today by Mendocino WineGrowers Inc. (MWI). A complete 2015 census of all vineyards in the region reveals a fascinating picture of the typical vineyard in Mendocino.

Mendocino County is a large, rugged winegrowing region encompassing total acreage of 2.4 million acres, with less than 1% planted to wine grapes. With a long history in winemaking, Mendocino County is made up of mostly small, family owned vineyards. The typical size of vineyard properties is only 14 acres, often farming just one varietal.

The census counted 404 separate owners for the 570 vineyard properties. Ownership is often a “mom/pop” scenario but there are also plenty of examples of “out of town” owners from France, South America, other US states, and even the foreign land of Napa. “Everyone wants piece of Mendocino,” notes 3rd generation farmer Zac Robinson from Husch Vineyards. 30% of vineyard owners own more than one property.

Zinfandel is recognized as Mendocino County’s heritage varietal, and for the smaller vineyards is the predominant grape planted. Twelve years ago a group of Mendocino County winemakers joined together to create an ultra-premium wine blend that would celebrate Mendocino County Zinfandel, and *Coro Mendocino* was born. The Redwood Valley AVA and the Talmage Bench region are rich with old vine Zinfandel with such notable vineyards such as Cononiah, Kazmet Ranch and Chapman Ranch. Ed Berry of Cononiah Vineyards reports “Zin grown in Mendocino has character, much like the people here - gregarious, outgoing, and full of personality”.

While Mendocino County is made up of mainly small vineyards, inland Mendocino County is dominated by Chardonnay plantings, most of which are large farming operations such as Brutocao Vineyards. Hopland now hosts the largest acreage of grapevines in the Mendocino County, while the Cole Ranch AVA retains its title as the smallest appellation in the United States.

Cool-climate valleys are another defining aspect of the region. It has been long known that Pinot noir and Alsatian varietals thrive in Anderson Valley totaling a whopping 70% of acreage, but further inland Potter Valley is making headway with these same varietals. Thriving with the cool nights, Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, and Riesling comprise 35% of Potter Valley acreage. Since the climate is a sweet spot for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, sparkling wine produced from Potter Valley is garnering lots of acclaim like McFadden Vineyard's Brut which won Best of Show at the 2015 Mendocino County Wine Competition.

Mendocino has been "green" long before it was a cool marketing tagline. Still, Mendocino remains on the forefront of sustainable farming with the most certified Biodynamic vineyards in the state at 4%, a rate over ten times larger than any other California region. Over 20% of our vineyards are CCOF certified, and almost 50% of our vineyards are also certified by Fish Friendly Farming. "Mendocino's wine growers are a dedicated group who truly care about environmentally friendly farming. Our growers have a long term vision so that their land is sustainable for generations to come" says Mendocino County Ag Advisor Glenn McGourty.

The recent vineyard census shows us that Mendocino County is a diverse growing region, with 12 AVAs dedicated to farming the grape best suited to the terroir, and focusing on that varietal. Family owned vineyards have helped ensure that Mendocino has a wealth of old vine vineyards in areas such as Redwood Valley, Mendocino Ridge and Talmage. Responsible farming and attention to the environment are trademarks of Mendocino winegrowing.

For more information on the census contact Mendocino WineGrowers, Inc. at 707-901-7629. Hard copy vineyard directories are available upon request.

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