

# CALAVERAS WINE REGION FACTS & FIGURES



Prepared by: Sandra Hess, Executive Director

Released 3/5/20 by the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance

[sandra@calaveraswines.org](mailto:sandra@calaveraswines.org)



# Table of Contents

CALAVERAS WINE REGION FACTS & FIGURES	1
Table of Contents	2
Calaveras Wine Region History	3
Calaveras Wine Region Today	8
Calaveras Wine Region by the Numbers	8
Calaveras Wine Region Varietals Produced	11
Calaveras Wine Region Vineyard Map	11
About the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance	12

# Calaveras Wine Region History

Winemaking in Calaveras County began in the early years of the Gold Rush, with the first 1,000 vines set out on the lower Calaveras River in 1851 (Sacramento Transcript, March 14, 1851). Winemaking is an integral part of the history of Calaveras County. Among the miners who came from around the world in the 1850s were those who came from Italy, Spain and France, and who recognized a similar landscape to their homelands. More importantly for some of them, they saw the possibility of growing vineyards that would yield grapes that could be turned into delicious wines. It was inevitable that some of those intrepid miners would dislike slogging for bits of gold next to cold, wet stream beds and turn to a more steady way to make a living. That living ended up being something they knew well, having seen the winemaking business back in their homeland. So, they found land, began growing grapes and made wine. In the process, they made Calaveras the fourth highest wine producing region in California by the late 1800s. In fact, by 1870 a reporter for the San Francisco based Daily Alta reported that the mountain belt of vineyards that included Calaveras had over 6 million producing vines. You can still see traces of those old vineyards all over the area, including along Parrotts Ferry Road across from the Gold Strike Estate subdivision where there's a terraced hillside that is a testament to one winemaker, Prentiss M. Trask, who is credited with bringing the art of dry farming techniques to the area. Trask planted 25,000 vines during the height of the Gold Rush. Even with the soil and growing conditions lending themselves to growing great wine grapes, the area had an economic downturn as well as a dwindling population, and that coupled with Prohibition, caused the wine business to lay fallow for a great many years. That was until the Wine Renaissance of the 1970s when Barden Stevenot, the father of the local Wine Renaissance, planted his historic ranch property near Murphys with vineyards that produced wines that bore his name for many years to come. Other winemakers followed Barden's lead, like Steve Millier who was the winemaker at Stevenot for many years, and eventually opened his own Milliere Winery as well as Black Sheep Winery, both of which can still be found in Murphys, as well as Chuck Hovey who was once Barden's winemaker and had his own wine tasting room in Murphys. These winemakers and others like Scott Klann, Kate Boule MacDonald, and Chuck Hovey who were taught by Barden, or others who were indirectly influenced by him. Most are still making wines with a Calaveras County flair today. Source: <http://www.calaverashistory.org/overview/calaveras-county-wine>

### **From Calaveras Enterprise, September 2014:**

By 1857 there were 6,465 vines, and that number quadrupled to 24,187 a year later. The first boom peaked in 1866 when there were 515,049 vines in the county.

A depression hit the industry in 1874 and it didn't begin to make a comeback until 1976 when Robert Bliss opened Chispa Cellars in Murphys, the first new facility in about 40 years. The industry's recent surge in 2014 was jump-started by Barden Stevenot who planted his first grapes in 1974 on the historic Shaw Ranch, releasing 2,200 cases of his first vintages in 1978. At first envisioned as a "gentleman farmer" type of operation, Stevenot Winery eventually expanded its vineyards and operations to the point Barden and his wife Annie had to evict themselves from their home on San Domingo Road so it could be used as a tasting room.

Today (2014), Stevenot Winery produces about 25,000 cases a year, focusing on ultra-premium wines including Tempranillo, Merlot, Syrah and experimental plantings of Barbera, Graciano and Albariño. Nestled in a beautiful setting of rolling, wooded hills, the winery offers a picnic area, and the tasting room gift selection includes boutique grocery goods such as condiments and sauces and quality wine-related items. The performing arts also play a big role at Stevenot winery. While not an annual event, the winery frequently holds a Cajun Fest in the summer, featuring the music and food of Louisiana.

Gay Callan planted grapes in Esmeralda Valley in 1981 for her Chatom Vineyards label. Steve and Liz Millier opened Milliaire Winery in 1983. And Black Sheep Winery's Dave and Jan Olson saw their first crush in 1986. What has become the county's largest complex of vineyards, winery, tasting room, banquet facility and gardens had its humble beginnings in a 1989 groundbreaking at the Hay Station Ranch on Six Mile Road near Murphys.

History plays an important role in Kautz Ironstone Vineyards, Ironstone President Stephen Kautz said. "This ranch has actually been in the family since 1940 on my mother's side," Kautz said. And Gold Rush history is used to draw tourists to the facility, where visitors can pan for gold and check out the operations of a water wheel, stamp mill, and rocker box. Ironstone's Heritage Museum and jewelry store contains the largest specimen of gold leaf ever found, a 44-pound nugget discovered on Christmas Day at the Sonora Mine near Jamestown. Ironstone is best noted for its Cabernet franc and Symphony wines. It produced 6,000 cases under the Ironstone label in 1992, and now delivers 260,000 cases.

If words such as "grand" and "spacious" describe the Ironstone experience, Zucca Mountain falls at the other end of the county's wine-tasting adventure, more in the categories of "cozy" and "intimate." Located in an old, stone-lined basement on Algiers



Street in Murphys, Zucca Mountain arguably has the smallest tasting room in the county, and co-owner Carol Zucca likes it that way.

"We were looking for a really quaint place to have our tasting room and this was perfect," Zucca said, adding this was the home of the Chispa Cellars. The tasting room opened about four years ago. Gift items include wine and port glasses bearing the Zucca label, and their wine specialties include Syrah, Syrah port, Barbera and Sangiovese. This is but a brief sampling of the 16 wineries in the Calaveras Wine Association, each with its own distinct flavor and atmosphere, from the large to the small and everything in between.

But besides offering individual experiences, they also combine their efforts to promote the wine industry on a county-wide basis. Steve Millier, co-owner of Milliaire Winery and president of the Calaveras Wine Association, is pleasantly surprised at how the wine industry has grown since he and his wife, Liz, began their operation in 1983. "That's something we worked for but never really imagined," Steve Millier said.

To support the industry as a whole, the association sponsors a number of events throughout the year. Perhaps the most popular is the Grape Stomp, held in Murphys Community Park the first Saturday of October. "That and Passport Weekend are probably our two biggest events we put on," Millier said. The Passport event, held Father's Day weekend, presents participants with a passport to be "stamped" at each winery where visitors will find plenty of specials on wine and gift items. Then there's the Holiday Open House the first weekend in December and Presidents Wine Weekend in February. All in all, the wine industry is providing plenty of getaways that can be enjoyed by visitors and local residents alike.

Source: [http://www.calaverasenterprise.com/news/article\\_b46234bd-01d5-5862-8587-5939bb9204a1.html](http://www.calaverasenterprise.com/news/article_b46234bd-01d5-5862-8587-5939bb9204a1.html)

### **Boyle MacDonald - Winemaker Kate MacDonald Timeline:**

- 1999 Kate begins apprenticeship with Chuck Hovey at Stevenot Winery and promoted to Assistant Winemaker.
- 2004 Kate is still Assistant Winemaker to Chuck, Boyle MacDonald plants 4000 vines of Cabernet and Cabernet Franc in Southeast Napa County. Steve Collum serves as vineyard consultant.
- 2006 After the sale of Stevenot to the Manari Family, Kate returns as the Head Winemaker after one year off to have our first child. Chuck moves on to focus on his own brand.
- 2006/2007 Steve Collum introduces Kate to Bob and Linda at Ayrael Vieux. Kate becomes their consulting winemaker. Success with Ayrael Vieux leads to Kate officially

being their winemaker and Boyle MacDonald receives an invited to share the Ayrael Vieux production facility, which Kate and Craig gladly accept.

- 2007 The first vintage from the Napa Vineyard is produced.
- 2010 Boyle MacDonald releases the 2007 Napa Valley Cabernet.
- 2013 Boyle MacDonald release the first vintage of Cock Au Vin Red Blend, 2010.
- 2017 Production increases to approximately 1000 cases annually and final decision is made to open a tasting room in Murphys, CA.
- February 2019 Boyle MacDonald opens Murphys, CA tasting room with wholesale accounts reduced to the Hwy 4 Corridor only.

Source: Craig and Kate MacDonald, owners of Boyle MacDonald wines.

### **Milliare Winery and Black Sheep Winery Timelines:**

- 1982 Barden Stevenot hires Steve Millier as winemaker. Dave Olson is working in the cellar. While at Stevenot, Steve makes the first wines for Chatom and Indian Rock under a custom crush arrangement.
- 1983 Milliare Winery crushes its first grapes.
- 1984 Jan and Dave Olson purchase Chispa Cellars from Bob Bliss. Black Sheep is born. Steve Millier assists in their first crush. Black Sheep Winery keeps the Chispa Bonded Winery number, this BW number is the oldest in Calaveras County.
- 1989 Steve becomes winemaker for the Kautz family at Ironstone Vineyards.
- 1989 Milliare Winery moves to Main Street Murphys and still has a bonded winery at the Main Street location.
- 2002 Milliare moves to our current location on the Murphys Grade Road, while still maintaining the bonded winery status at our Main Street location.
- 2006 Steve and Liz Milliare purchase Black Sheep from Jan and Dave retaining the original bond winery number. The Black Sheep winery is moved to Grade Road location, and the tasting room is moved to its current location on Main Street.
- 2020 Black Sheep Winery is still the longest continuously operated winery in the county.

### **Tanner Family - A Rich Winemaking History:**

In 1870, Calaveras County was the fourth largest wine-producing county in California (behind Los Angeles, Sonoma and El Dorado counties). The Tanner family's great-grandfather, Angelo Sciaccaluga, was one of only a dozen Calaveras County winemakers at the time. Angelo had come over from Italy in the gold rush era and planted a 1/4 acre vineyard in Vallecito. By the late 1880s, his vineyard had grown to 38 acres and was producing 60 tons of wine grapes per year. According to family records, Angelo's wine and brandy were known as the "smoothest in Calaveras County."

Angelo's old wine cellar is a stone building still visible from Highway 4 in Vallecito, adjacent to Tanner Vineyards today.

The current generations of Tanners who own and operate Tanner Vineyards & Winery are brothers Dick and Ron Tanner, their wives Nanette and Annie, their children Kaylee, Kelsey, Scott, Mary & Laura, and their grandchildren.

In the modern era, Tanner Vineyards was planted in 1998 to Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Dick and Ron Tanner traveled throughout wine country and consulted with many experts to devise a trellis system that would take advantage of the site's 1,900 foot elevation, warm days, cool nights, and Delta breezes. The Tanners sought advice from local grower Stuart Mast of Brice Station and viticulturists Stephen Collum and Mark Skenfield.

For the first 5 years, Tanner Vineyards sold its production to Kendall-Jackson. It wasn't long, however, before the Tanner family fell in love with winemaking: they launched their own brand in 2004 with their first winemaker, Scott Klann.

Today, the Tanners expanded beyond Cab Sauvignon and Syrah to also grow and make Barbera, Carignane, Malbec, Merlot, Mourvedre, Petite Sirah, Petit Verdot, Sauvignon Blanc, Vermentino and Viognier. Tanner Vineyards is approximately 30 planted acres, with a tasting room located in downtown Murphys.

Tanner Vineyards & Winery is a proudly multi-generational family business. Tanner wines are limited production, estate grown wines available only through the Tanner tasting room, wine club and website.

Sources: 1891 Directory of the Grape Growers, Wine Makers and Distillers of California, published by the Board of State Viticultural Commissioners of California. Judith Marvin, CalaverasHistory.org. Tanner family interviews and records.

# Calaveras Wine Region Today

Calaveras County is now home to almost 40 family-run wineries producing some of the most exciting wines in California. Family winery teams produce award-winning, handcrafted wines and offer unique tasting experiences as well as events throughout the year. Nestled in a beautiful landscape, at the base of the Sierra Foothills and just 90 minutes from the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento regions, Calaveras Wine Country is the perfect one-stop wine and adventure wonderland. Our region offers year-round recreational opportunities including skiing and snow play, concerts, cavern exploration, daffodil and wildflower viewing, boating/floating in beautiful lakes and rivers, rock climbing, hiking and picnicking.

## Calaveras Wine Region by the Numbers

1. Calaveras Vineyard Map below (created April 2019). There are 600 acres of vineyards planted in Calaveras County. There are 6 estate vineyards. Additional resources: <https://ema.calaverasgov.us/Agriculture> and [https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics\\_by\\_State/California/Publications/Specialty\\_and\\_Other\\_Releases/Grapes/Acreage/2019/201904gabtb00.pdf](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/California/Publications/Specialty_and_Other_Releases/Grapes/Acreage/2019/201904gabtb00.pdf)

2. As of February , 2020 there are 37 wineries operating in Calaveras County with 39 tasting rooms (Twisted Oak Winery and Stevenot Winery have two tasting rooms).

### **CWA Members:**

1. Allegorie Wine
2. Aloria Vineyards
3. Black Sheep Winery
4. Bodega Del Sur
5. Boyle MacDonald
6. Brice Station
7. Broll Mountain Vineyards
8. Chatom / School Street Winery
9. Coppermine Winery
10. Four Winds Cellars
11. Frog's Tooth Winery
12. Gossamer Cellars
13. Hatcher Winery
14. Hovey Winery

15. Indian Rock Vineyards
16. Ironstone Vineyards
17. Jazz Cellars
18. Lavender Ridge
19. La Folia
20. Locke Vineyards
21. Milliare Winery
22. Mineral Wine
23. Newsome Harlow
24. Prospect 772
25. Stevenot Winery
26. Tanner Vineyards
27. Twisted Oak Winery
28. Val Du Vino
29. Villa Vallecito
30. Vina Moda

Current list can be found at: <https://www.calaveraswines.org/wineries>

### **Non CWA Wineries:**

1. Irish Vineyards (Stevenot purchased - crafting out of coop in Clements)
2. Renegade Winery was French Hill
3. Vino Metate (Michael Strange)
4. Domaine Becquet (Napa producer)
5. Bunting Winery (Marty and Phouguen Bunting)
6. Zucca Winery (Gary and Carol Zucca)
7. Klassen Wines (label only - no physical/tasting room presence in the county)

### **Calaveras County Wine Producers:**

1. Aloria Vineyards
2. Ayrael Vieux/Boyle MacDonald Wines
3. Brice Station Vineyards
4. Chatom Winery
5. Frog's Tooth
6. Gossamer Winery
7. Ironstone Vineyards
8. Lavender Ridge produces Broll, Bunting, Inner Sanctum and Prospect 772.
9. Newsome Harlow
10. Milliare Winery
11. Mineral Wines
12. Prospect 772



13. Renegade Winery
14. Stevenot Winery
15. Tanner Vineyards & Winery
16. Twisted Oak Winery
17. Val Du Vino Winery
18. Villa Vallecito
19. Zucca Mountain Winery

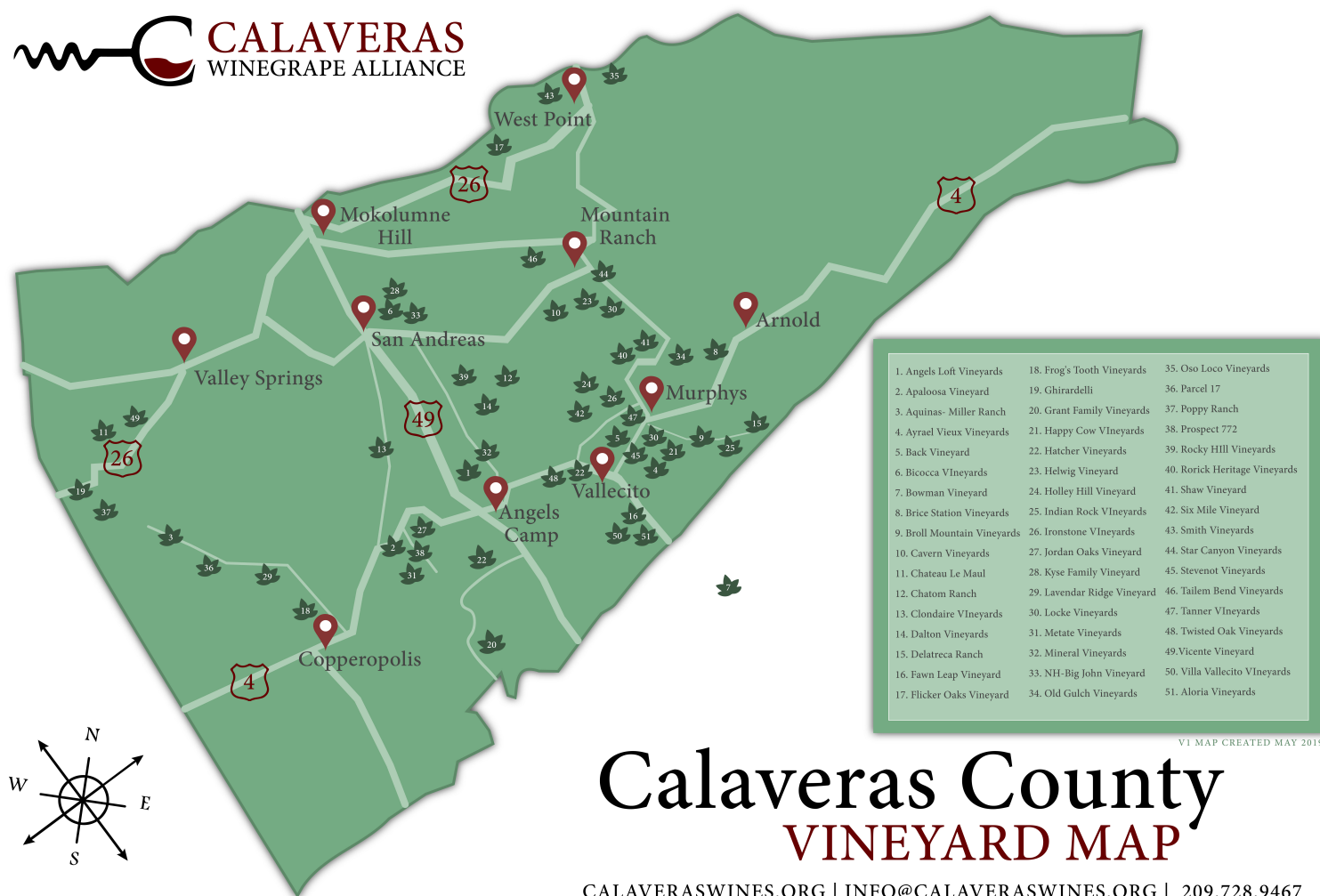
Varietal	2018 Total	
Albarino	10	5.3%
Chardonnay	69	36.3%
Chenin Blanc	6	3.2%
Malvasia Bianca	1	0.5%
Marsanne	1	0.5%
Muscat Blanc	9	4.7%
Picpoul Blanc	1	0.5%
Pinot Gris	8	4.2%
Roussanne	2	1.1%
Sauvignon Blanc	51	26.8%
Semillon	2	1.1%
Symphony	3	1.6%
Verdelho	2	1.1%
Vermentino	1	0.5%
Viognier	21	11.1%
Other White	3	1.6%
	190	

Alicante Bouschet	1	0.2%
Barbera	14	2.8%
Cabernet Franc	25	4.9%
Cabernet Sauvignon	101	19.9%
Carignane	2	0.4%
Cinsaut	1	0.2%
Graciano	1	0.2%
Grenache	9	1.8%
Malbec	7	1.4%
Merlot	63	12.4%
Mission	2	0.4%
Mourvedre	11	2.2%
Petit Verdot	3	0.6%
Petite Sirah	46	9.1%
Pinot Noir	8	1.6%
Primitivo	1	0.2%
Sangiovese	12	2.4%
Souzao	1	0.2%
Syrah	82	16.2%
Tannat	2	0.4%
Tempranillo	22	4.3%
Teroldego	1	0.2%
Touriga Nacional	6	1.2%
Zinfandel	78	15.4%
Other Red	8	1.6%
	507	

# Calaveras Wine Region Varietals Produced

Calaveras is a perfect growing region for hearty Spanish and Italian varietals like Barbera, Tempranillo, Mourvedre, Nebbiolo, Grenache, Graciano, Toringa, Albarino, Marsanne, Verdelho and Symphony as well as old vine Zinfandels, hearty and robust Cabernet and Petite Sirah. A list of varietals produced by winery can be found at: <https://www.calaveraswines.org/varietalsproduced>. A current list of CWA grower members can be found at: <https://www.calaveraswines.org/growerscorner>. An annual report of grape production by varietal can be found at: <https://ema.calaverasgov.us/Agriculture>

## Calaveras Wine Region Vineyard Map



## Calaveras County VINEYARD MAP

CALAVERASWINES.ORG | INFO@CALAVERASWINES.ORG | 209.728.9467

# About the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance



Established 1989, in the heart of the Sierra Foothills wine region of Northern California, the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance (CWA) is a community of family run wineries, growers and businesses. Pre Gold Rush era, the families of the Sierra Foothills staked the first vineyards planted in California. Barden Stevenot successfully obtained the Sierra Foothills viticultural appellation in 1983 and was working to organize a Sierra Foothills Winery Association. That effort stalled out and died after El Dorado and Amador winery owners chose to form their own county associations.

In 1986, the California Wine Institute offered regional winery associations promotional grants. Liz Milliare went before their board and received funding for a Calaveras Wine Association. In 1987, the first meeting was held at the Steve and Liz Millier's home and Liz became the first president. In an earlier life Liz worked at a corporate law office and made the application for the Calaveras Winegrape Alliance to become incorporated. At the time of incorporations, there were 6 winery members: Black Sheep, Chatom, Indian Rock, Milliare and Malvadino/Stevenot.

Today, visitors to Calaveras Wine Country can explore a historical downtown, visit vineyard properties and discover hand-crafted wines made from Spanish, Italian, Bordeaux and Rhone varietals in this adventure wonderland. The CWA supports about 80 winery, grower and industry members along with 58 associate (individual) members and is the marketing organization of the Calaveras Wine Region. The CWA also produces four large scale events annually as follows:

- Presidents' Wine Weekend - third weekend in February
- Sierra Foothills Wine Competition & Judges Dinner - second week in April
- Calaveras County Fair Wine Pavilion Tastings - Second Weekend in May
- CWA Vineyard Tour - first Friday in June
- Calaveras Grape Stomp & Auction - first Saturday in October

The Calaveras Winegrape Alliance is also home of the Calaveras Wine Information Center located at 202 Main Street, Murphys, CA and is open Thursday through Sunday 11:00-5:00. For more information, contact [info@calaveraswines.org](mailto:info@calaveraswines.org) or call (209) 728-9467.