



## Mount Veeder Appellation Council

### *Fact Sheet*

**Location:** Napa Valley, west of Napa and Yountville, within the Mayacamas Range. The only one of the five Napa Valley mountain appellations that adjoins the cool Carneros District.

**Total Area:** 16,000 square acres (64.7 km<sup>2</sup>)

**Acres under Vine:** about 1,000 (400 hectares), 64% Cabernet Sauvignon

**Cases Produced:** approximately 40,000 per vintage, about 1.3% of total Napa Valley production

**Highest Vineyard:** 2,550 feet (Lampyridae Vineyards)

**Highest Winery:** 2,400 feet (Mayacamas Vineyards)

**First wine recorded:** 1864, by Captain Stelham Wing, from today's Wing Canyon Vineyard

**AVA established:** 1990

**Wineries:** 35 member vintners producing wines from the Mount Veeder AVA

**Growers:** 7 member growers

**Soils:** primarily sandstone and shale derived from old sea floor, with some volcanic soil at the highest elevations

**Top soil depth:** typically 12 to 24 inches

**Vineyard slope:** varies, typically 10° to 30°

**Varieties:** 25 varieties grown by the Mount Veeder Appellation Council members

<u>Variety</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Cabernet Sauvignon	513	Grenache (red)	1
Chardonnay	76	Sangiovese	1
Malbec	72	Carignane	<1
Merlot	39	Carmenere	<1
Syrah	34	Counoise	<1
Cabernet Franc	23	Marsanne	<1
Viognier	15	Mataro	<1
Zinfandel	10	Mondeuse	<1
Petit Verdot	8	Mourvedre	<1
Gewürztraminer	2	Roussanne	<1
Riesling	2	Sauvignon Blanc	<1
Gruner Veltliner	2	St. Macaire	<1
Albariño	2		



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**Of Note:** First California appellation to grow Petit Verdot. Cuttings from these vines were shared with many Napa Valley growers in the 1970's and early 1980's, so that most of the Petit Verdot in Napa Valley today originated from Mount Veeder AVA.

First California appellation with all five red Bordeaux grapes planted in one vineyard.

First California appellation to produce one wine with all five red Bordeaux varieties.

#### **Descriptors:**

Red wines: Blackberry, black cherry, bay, briary, brambly, tobacco flavors. Black fruit, herbal, floral aromatics. Tannins moderate to bold, with assertive, fine texture. Reserve wines may often be cellared for ten-plus years with improving quality.

White wines: Minerally, luscious stone fruit, hints of citrus and herb aromas and flavors. Texture, richness, and age-worthiness vary according to winemaking techniques.

#### **Mission Statement:**

To create demand for, and promote the value of, grapes and wines produced from Mount Veeder vintners and growers by working together as a cohesive group to increase awareness and interest in the Mount Veeder Appellation – its premium grapes and wines, its colorful history, its environmentally-conscious farming practices, unique terrain and climate.

#### **Contacts:**

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## **The History of Mount Veeder**

Mount Veeder was named for the Dutch Presbyterian pastor, Peter Veeder, who lived in Napa during the Civil War Era and enjoyed hiking on the mountain, where the Douglas Firs and Knobcone Pines reminded him of the forests of home.

It was during those Wild West days that winemaking on Mount Veeder was first recorded; in 1864 Captain Stelham Wing presented the first Mount Veeder bottling in the Napa County Fair, a wine hailing from today's Wing Canyon Vineyard.

The Germanic thread continued with the founding in the 1880's of the Streich Winery--today's Yates Family Vineyard--by Ernest Streich, and the Fisher Winery--today's Mayacamas Vineyards--by John Henry Fisher, of Stuttgart. Commercial scale production arrived on Mount Veeder in 1900 when Theodore Geir, a colorful and flamboyant German-born Oakland liquor dealer, bought the property that would later become the Christian Brothers' Mont La Salle Winery--today's Hess Collection Winery. By the late 1890's, there were some 20 vineyards and 6 wineries on the slopes of Mount Veeder. Prohibition diminished the vineyards, which revitalized beginning with Mayacamas Vineyards in 1951 and Bernstein Vineyards in 1964.

During the 1960's Mount Veeder became a haven for people seeking a lifestyle closer to nature. Among them were Arlene and Michael Bernstein, whose 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon was the first wine to bear the Mount Veeder designation on the label.

Petit Verdot first came to California in 1975 via Mount Veeder, at the Bernstein's vineyards. Cuttings from that site are the origin of most Petit Verdot in Napa Valley today.

With the first California vineyard planted to all five of the classic red Bordeaux varieties, the Bernsteins were also the first in the state to produce a Meritage style wine using all five grapes, like the great chateaux of Bordeaux.

Based on Mount Veeder's incomparable mix of steep slopes, predominance of seabed soil, and proximity to San Pablo Bay - AVA status was granted in 1990.

From the deep roots of the pioneering German farmers, Mount Veeder wines continue to reflect the impassioned spirit of the vintners who grow them through this day.



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why are Mount Veeder AVA wines so rare?**

Mount Veeder is the largest AVA within Napa Valley, but nature has limited production to just 1.3% of Napa Valley grapes. Due to the scarcity of plantable sites only about 1,000 acres out of 25 square miles are planted to grapes. Yields on the mountain vineyards are exceptionally low (usually 2 to 2.5 tons per acre for Cabernet Sauvignon) – about half the Napa Valley average.

### **What is unique about Mount Veeder AVA's "terroir"?**

Mount Veeder may have the most distinctive growing conditions in California.

- ◆ It is one of only five mountain appellations in Napa Valley
- ◆ The soils are sandstone and shale, derived from ancient uplifted sea floor, while the other Napa Valley mountain appellations are primarily volcanic and the soils on the Napa Valley floor are alluvial
- ◆ The "coolest mountain" in Napa Valley,
- ◆ The only mountain AVA that adjoins Carneros
- ◆ A very wide range of mesoclimates, due to the varied slope and aspect

The exceptional drainage of the mountain slopes (10°-30°) and shallow topsoil (12-24 inches), combine with the cool climate and distinctive soil described above, form an environment for wine grapes like nowhere else in California.

The bay breezes cool the mountain, resulting in a Bordeaux-like climate; with minimal temperature change (diurnal swing) each day. August temperatures on Mount Veeder are often 10-15 °F cooler than the valley floor, lengthening the growing season by up to three weeks most years. Harvest is usually the last in Napa Valley, sometimes stretching into November. High risk conditions demand limited use of machinery: nearly all vineyard work must be done by hand.

### **What effect do these conditions have on the grapes and wines?**

The drainage and shallow topsoil limit nutrients to the vines, creating very small berries, resulting in a higher skin-to-flesh ratio and very rich flavors. The bay breezes and cooler climate slow the ripening of the grapes and intensify their flavors. The minimal "diurnal swing" in temperature may be why Mount Veeder grapes have uniquely firm yet very supple tannins.

### **What flavors distinguish Mount Veeder AVA wines?**

Abundant, fine tannins that are a Mount Veeder hallmark, along with exceptional weight and concentration. Red wines often exhibit dark fruit flavors of blackberry/raspberry ("bramble fruit"), sweet herbal notes and deep stony minerality, with forest flora aromatics. Reserve wines are often cellared for 10-plus years, with increasingly distinctive character and



## Frequently Asked Questions

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complexity. White wines display minerally, luscious stone fruit, hints of citrus and herb aromas and flavors. Texture, richness, and age-worthiness vary according to winemaking techniques.

### **Why are so many grape varieties grown on Mount Veeder?**

Apart from Cabernet Sauvignon (64% of production), at least 24 other varieties are grown on the mountain. The contours of the mountain, the north-south reach, and varying elevations create many “nooks and crannies” where small pockets of vines can be planted. Variations in sun and wind exposure mean that mist-loving redwoods grow within a few feet of parched madrones. Similarly, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon grows almost side-by-side, yet in entirely different conditions. Syrah loves the windier, more exposed tops. Growers have discovered other small parcels that are well suited to personal favorites like Petit Verdot, Grüner Veltliner, and Albariño.

### **What contributions to winemaking have come from Mount Veeder?**

One of the secrets of Mount Veeder is the significant contribution its winemakers have made to the art and science of winemaking, as documented in the support for the AVA application. Many of these innovations were a response to the rugged conditions on the mountain. Rudolph Jordon introduced cool fermentation and inoculated controlled yeast strains in the late 1800’s at Castle Rock winery (now Yates Family Vineyards). The first vineyard planting of Petit Verdot in California was on Mount Veeder, grown by Arlene and Michael Bernstein in 1973. Cuttings from these vines were shared with many Napa Valley growers in the 1970’s and early 1980’s, so that most of the Petit Verdot in Napa Valley today originated from Mount Veeder. The Bernstein’s 1977 Cabernet Sauvignon – although it wasn’t noted on the label - was California’s first wine made with all five red Bordeaux varieties.

### **Are Mount Veeder wineries open to the public?**

Mount Veeder is also a beautiful place to visit with several tasting rooms open to the public and others open by appointment only. Mount Veeder is a favorite of the bicycle crowd with its challenging, winding climbs through the redwoods and breathtaking views of the valley below. Mount Veeder AVA is accessible from Napa via Redwood Road and from Oakville via Oakville Grade to Dry Creek Road or Mount Veeder Road.



## **Mount Veeder Appellation Council**

### **Member Vintners & Growers**

**Alpha Omega**

**Angelo Cellars**

**Anthem Winery & Vineyards**

**Black Stallion Estate Winery**

**Boich Family Cellar**

**Brandlin**

**Brioso Vineyard**

**VGS Chateau Potelle**

**Darioush**

**Fohr Vineyards**

**Fontanella Family Winery**

**Gamble Family Vineyards**

**Godspeed Vineyards**

**The Hess Collection Winery**

**Hillwalker Vineyards**

**Kukeri Wines**

**Lagier Meredith**

**Lampyridae Vineyards**

**Marketta Winery**

**Mayacamas Vineyards**

**Mithra Winery**

**Mount Veeder Magic Vineyards**

**Mount Veeder Ranch "Lynne's Vineyard"**

**Mount Veeder Winery**

**Mt. Brave**

**Newton Vineyard**

**Nosotros Vineyards**

**One Lane Bridge Vineyard**

**O'Shaughnessy Estate Winery**

**Paras Vineyards**

**Paratus Vineyards**

**Pilcrow**

**Progeny**

**Pulido~Walker Cellars & Vineyard**

**Random Ridge**

**Robert Craig Winery**

**Robert Foley Vineyards**

**Rubissow Wines**

**Rudd Winery**

**Segassia Vineyards**

**Sky Vineyards**

**Tambor Vineyards**

**Trincherio Napa Valley**

**Vinoce Vineyards**

**Wing Canyon Vineyard**

**Yates Family Vineyard**