



## FACTS:

**ESTABLISHED:** The Howell Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA) was established in 1983 (the first established AVA within the greater Napa Valley AVA).

**LOCATION:** Napa Valley, due east of St. Helena (St. Helena is midway between Napa and Calistoga). Howell Mountain is located in the Vaca Mountain Range, and the AVA itself is defined as anything above the 1,400 ft. elevation point on the mountain, so the Howell Mountain appellation is literally a mountain top on the eastern side of Napa Valley.

**TOTAL AREA:** 14,000 acres

**ACRES UNDER VINE:** 1,500 acres

**HIGHEST VINEYARD:** 2500 feet (Cakebread Cellars)

**HIGHEST WINERY:** 2300 feet (Robert Craig Winery)

**WINERIES:** 47

**GROWERS:** 38

### SOILS:

There are two main soil types on Howell Mountain: decomposed volcanic ash (called "tufa") and red clay.

**AVERAGE TOP SOIL DEPTH:** 12 to 24 inches

**AVERAGE VINEYARD SLOPE:** varies 10° to 30°

### VARIETIES:

#### Variety

Cabernet Sauvignon  
Cabernet Franc  
Merlot  
Petite Verdot  
Malbec

#### Variety

Zinfandel  
Petite Sirah  
Syrah  
St. Macaire  
Sauvignon Blanc

**HOWELL MOUNTAIN VINTNERS & GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

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# HISTORY:

## **History in the making...**

Chief among those moving early onto the mountain to establish vineyards were Jean Adolph Brun and Jean V. Chaix—two experienced vintners who planted hundreds of acres of vineyards and made a success selling the wine they produced. Because they also owned an Oakville operation (today the location of The Napa Wine Co.), they were among the most successful local wine businesses during the boom of the 1880s.

Eventually the operation sold out to others and was closed during Prohibition. Since then, however, it has been completely renovated, and is now home to Ladera Vineyards.

Other famous winegrowers who moved to the area were Charles Krug, W.A.C. Smith, Frederick Hess, and W.S. Keyes who started Liparita Vineyards and then built another stone winery, known as La Jota today. By the end of the decade, there were more than 600 acres of wine grapes planted, and the vineyards on Howell Mountain had developed an excellent reputation for their wines.

## **On the map...**

In 1889, the Howell Mountain region made history when Brun & Chaix won a Bronze medal at the Paris World Competition. Ten years later, Keyes took gold and bronze, while Hess walked away with bronze for his La Jota Vineyard Co. Blanco table wine. Later, in 1904 at the St. Louis Exposition, Keyes repeated his Paris triumph by winning the grand prize for his renowned red wine. Collectively, these medals proved the longstanding reputation of Howell Mountain wines.

## **Associated with Greatness...**

Where rivers, creeks and property lines usually define an American Viticultural Area (AVA), the boundaries of the Howell Mountain AVA are defined by a 1,400 foot elevation contour line, which at that elevation, puts the Howell Mountain AVA “above the fog”. Upon review of requests and evidence of the boundaries and elevation of the region, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) ruled that Howell Mountain was, indeed, worthy of one of the few AVAs granted in the early 1980's. And so, in 1983, the Howell Mountain Appellation was officially designated as an AVA—making it the first AVA within the greater Napa Valley AVA. And the rest, as they say, is history.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

## WHY IS IT CALLED HOWELL MOUNTAIN?

Howell Mountain and the entire mountain range took its name from the Isaac Howell family who moved to the mountain range in 1846.

## WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT THE HOWELL MOUNTAIN AVA “TERROIR” AND WHAT EFFECTS DO THESE CONDITIONS HAVE ON THE GRAPES AND WINES?

- Howell Mountain is one of only five mountain appellations in Napa Valley
- Howell Mountain is “Above the Fog”. When the marine layer fog rolls into Napa Valley from the coast, covering the valley floor often late into the morning, the weather on Howell Mountain remains generally sunny and cool because Howell Mountain is literally “above the fog”. The appellation owes its distinctive climate to the fact that it is positioned well above the valley floor, beginning at 1,400 feet in elevation and rising to 2,300 feet. Because of its altitude, evening temperatures on Howell Mountain are generally warmer and daytime temperatures are much cooler—leveling out spikes in heat that tend to be more exaggerated at lower elevations, causing a gradual growth process, producing small, concentrated grapes and ultimately more robust, complex but well-balanced wines.
- Although it gets nearly twice as much rainfall as the valley below, the soil tends to be dry, because rocky, porous volcanic soil conditions allow for adequate drainage and less accumulation. Seasonally cooler spring temperatures cause buds to break later than average, and warm summer nights produce fruit that demonstrates a great balance between acidity and sugar. All of which, translates into a rich diversity of complexity and flavor in your glass.
- From the ground up, soil can have as much of an effect on the variety and intensity of grapes as the weather. This is clearly evident on Howell Mountain, where there are two main soil types. The first consists of decomposed volcanic ash, called “tufa”, and the second is red clay that is high in iron content. Because both soil types are nutrient poor, they stress the vines, producing intense wines from small clusters and smaller grapes.
- Accumulatively, the altitude and thin, rocky, dry soil conditions create wines with firm structure, incredible varietal intensity, and excellent aging properties.

## WHAT AROMAS & FLAVORS DISTINGUISH HOWELL MOUNTAIN AVA WINES?

Howell Mountain wines produce aromas of ripe mountain berries, deep dark currants and elegant floral notes, expressing themselves in a dusty, earthy, minerality in the nose. The fruit components are very dark in flavor and color with a lot of black cherry, blackberry, plum, chocolate and mocha. Along with those very charming characteristics, Howell Mountain wines also contain hints of spice, tobacco and mineral, which make for a substantially complex wine, one that is fantastic with light foods or fits nicely into a five course meal. Mountain fruit you would expect to be very tannic, but Howell Mountain fruit has a beautiful, silky elegance to it, producing wines with a long, lingering after-taste to round out the full experience you come expect from these

extraordinary mountain grapes.

### **HOW HIGH ARE THE VINEYARDS ON HOWELL MOUNTAIN?**

Vines begin at 1,400 feet and extend to 2,500 feet, the highest vineyard is Cakebread Cellars and the highest winery is Robert Craig Winery.

### **ARE HOWELL MOUNTAIN WINERIES OPEN TO THE PUBLIC?**

A handful of wineries are open to the public, but most are open by appointment only. Howell Mountain is a beautiful place to visit with breathtaking views from its mountain-top wineries...a wonderful compliment to their fine wines.

### **GENERAL DIRECTIONS:**

There are two main roads (running north/south) that span the entire length of the valley—Highway 29 (on the west) and the Silverado Trail (on the east). Generally, if you get onto the Silverado Trail before St. Helena heading north, you will come to a flashing red stoplight at Deer Park Road. Turn right onto Deer Park Road and go east just over 3 miles to White Cottage Road. The intersection of Deer Park and White Cottage Road is approximately where the elevation reaches 1,400 feet and the official appellation begins.

### **2016 MEMBER VINTNERS & GROWERS:**

ADAMVS

Aloft Wine

Arkenstone

Black Sears

Black Stallion Estate Winery

Blue Hall Vineyard

Bravante Vineyards

Bremer Family Winery

CADE Estate Winery

Cakebread Cellars

Charles Krug Winery

Cimarossa

Clif Family Winery

Cresta Velia

Davis Estates

Duckhorn Vineyards

Dunn Vineyards

Elsberg Family Vineyards

Haber Family Vineyards

HALL Wines

Heiser Vineyards

Hindsight Wines

Howell at the Moon Winery

Howell Mountain Vineyards

Kind Cellars

KrisTodd Vineyards  
La Jota Vineyard Co.  
Lamborn Family Vineyards  
Mattera | Cunat Family Vineyards  
Moone-Tsai Wines  
Notre Vin  
O'Shaughnessy Estate Winery  
Outpost Estate Winery  
Paravel Wines  
Pestoni Family | Rutherford Grove Vineyards & Winery  
Piña Napa Valley  
Press Cellars  
Prim Family Vineyard  
Red Cap Vineyards  
Red Thread Wines  
Retro Cellars  
Robert Craig Winery  
Robert Foley Vineyards  
Roberts + Rogers  
Rocky Ridge Vineyards  
Round Two Wines  
Rudius Wines  
Saunter Wines  
Sbragia Family Vineyards  
Seek Wines  
Sentinel Ridge Vineyard  
SPENCE  
Summit Lake Vineyards & Winery  
Tenute Ciminelli  
W.H. Smith Wines  
William Cole Vineyards

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