**California Wineries**

The history of wine in California goes back to the 1600s, when Jesuit monks tried to plant the first vineyards at their missions. In 1779, Junipero Serra, "The Father of California wine," planted the first sustainable wine yard in the Mission of San Diego de Alcala. The vine was called "Mission Grape" and dominating vine production until 1880. The first documented imported wine vines were brought in 1833 from Europe and until 1980 the wine industry was dominated by the Bordeaux varietals and Chardonnay. Later, a wave of Italian winemakers dubbed “Cal-Ital” reinvigorated the industry with new varieties like Syrah, Viognier, Sangiovese, and Pinot Grigio. The advantage California has had over other countries is the warm weather and humidity, which allows many wineries to use very ripe fruit and creates the conditions for higher alcohol levels, with many wines having over 13.5% of alcohol.

There are several types of wine produced in California. Cabernet Sauvignon put California on the world’s wine map. Merlot is the highest selling of all varietals. Pinot Noir here is more intense and fruity. Red Zinfandel is more acid and the white is sweeter. While the grape does have European origins, Californian Zinfandel is considered a unique style grape. The optimal climate conditions allow the production of vintage-dated sparkling wine every year while in Champagne it would only happen in exceptional years. And thus hard-earned secrets of soil, climate, and vine which have been passed from generation to generation provided California wine with its unique legacy and spectacular range. Today, California is America’s top wine producer and a billion dollar industry. The state makes 90% of all U.S. wine and is the world’s 4th leading wine producer after France, Italy and Spain. Wine is also a lure for tourists, who stay at luxurious hotels and eat at gourmet restaurants in Napa Valley, Sonoma and Mendocino, strengthening the state’s hospitality industry. The California wine industry continuous to grow and be an important part of the California economy.

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