**California Wineries**

The history of wine in California goes back to the 1600’s. The first recorded planting wineyard was by the Jesuit Missionary Monk, Eusebio Francisco Kino. In San Bruno in 1683, which is in Baja California, Mexico. This Mission was abandoned a year and a half later, so there was no harvest or wine produced. In 1779, the Franciscan Missionary Junipero Serra, "The Father of California wine," planted the first sustainable wineyard in the Mission of San Diego de Alcala. The vine was called "Mission Grape," which was the dominating vine production until 1880. By the 1830’s viticulture was based mostly in the south. The first documented imported wine vines were brought from Europe by Jean Louis Vignes in 1833. William Wolfskill was another successful winemaker. He bought his first vineyard in 1838 in where is now Los Angeles area, and by 1858, he owned 55,000. Vines across 145 acres.

The success of these two winemakers attract others to Southern California. Until 1980, the wine industry was dominated by the Bordeaux varietals and Chardonnay, but a new wave of Italian winemaker’s dubbed “Cal-Ital” reinvigorated the industry with new ones like Syrah, Viognier, Sangiovese and Pinot Grigio. The advantage for California is the warm weather, which allows many wineries to use very ripe fruit and creates, also, the opportunity for higher alcohol levels (many wines having over 13,5%).

Let’s talk a little about the types of wine and why they are special: Cabernet Sauvignon put California on the world’s wine map; Merlot is the highest seeling of all varietal; Pinot Noir which is more intense and fruit style; Zinfandel which the red is more acid and the white sweeter. While the grape does have European origins, Californian Zinfandel is considered a unique style grape. The optimal climate conditions allows to make a vintage dated Sparkling Wine every year while in Champagne this would only happen in exceptional years. That we can see, hard-earned secrets of soil, climate and wine have been passed from generation to generation, providing California wine with its unique legacy and spectacular range.

Today, California is America’s top wine producer and a billion dollar industry. California makes 90% of all U.S. wine and is the world’s 4th leading wine producer after France, Italy and Spain. Wine grapes are grown in 49 of the 58 counties in California and processed in more than 4,000 bonded wineries, family owned businesses or commercial enterprises that produce, store, and sell wine under a bond that guarantees payment of the federal excise tax. Nowadays, Californian wine industry creates more than 300,000 jobs in the state which represents $12.3 billion in term of wages and exports nearly 50 million cases to 125 countries, which represents 90% of U.S. wine export. In the U.S. three of every five bottles sold are California wine. In addition, the industry brings 20 million tourists who spend here 2 billion dollars annually.