

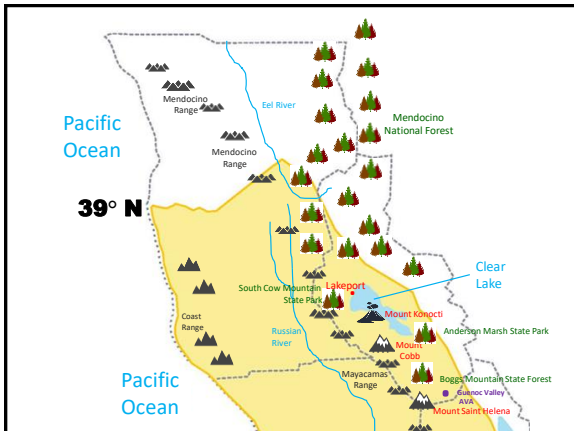
Total population of about 64,000 people

Quite rural—known for farming and lake-centric tourism

County seat: Lakeport (population 4,700)

Very mountainous with just a few “flat” valleys (mostly near the lake)

Famous for good air quality!



Viticulture dates back to the 1870s, although most vines were replaced with other crops during prohibition

Viticulture re-emerged in the 1960s

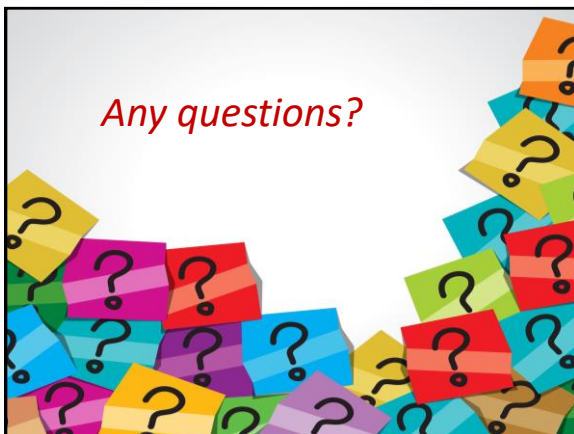
Currently has about 8,400 acres of vines

Most vineyards planted at 1,500 feet (457 m) or higher (the lake itself is at 1,300 feet [396 m])

Cabernet Sauvignon is the leading variety, followed by Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, and more

More than 130 growers and over 30 wineries

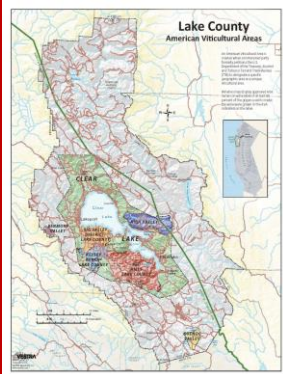
Vigilance Vineyards – photo via winetrailtraveler.com



Lake County "Insider AVAs"

- Temperature swings [95-50F] and low humidity keep disease pressure low: Lake County growers use fewer pesticides than anyone else in CA.
- Vines bud later and ripen earlier than Napa or Sonoma: challenge to ripen tannins and lower acids.
- Grapes develop thick skins to protect against higher levels of UV light: firm, well structured reds.

<https://www.lakecountywinegrape.org/>



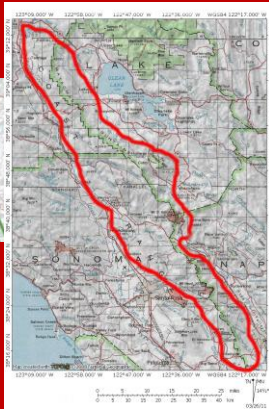
Red Hills AVA



Red Hills AVA



Established in 2004 with 3,250 acres planted along the northern extension of the Mayacamas range.



Red Hills AVA

- majority of vineyards planted at/above 2,000 ft.
- iron-rich weathered basalts (Aiken soils) as well as obsidian (Arrowhead soils)



- soil is free-draining, forcing roots to go deep
- average rainfall of 30 inches a year

Red Hills AVA

- dry mountain climate with significant UV levels
 - > thicker grape skins, increased phenolics and tannins
 - > low prevalence of pests and mildew
- significant diurnal swings cool grapes at night, prolonging ripening
- lake breezes have cooling effect
- main grape varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Zinfandel, Cabernet Franc, Petite Sirah; Sauvignon Blanc



Obsidian Ridge



Arpad and Peter Molnar, owners and winemaker Alex Beloz



Gregory Graham Winery

Greg is known for his Zinfandel, Syrah, Grenache and Cabernet





Shannon Ridge Vigilance

79% Syrah, 8% Grenache, 7% Mourvedre, 6% Petite Verdot





Clay Shannon, owner




High Valley AVA

The coolest Lake County AVA, created in 2005; 977 acres planted



- stretches along the eastern shore of Clear Lake
- valley floor at 1,700 ft. with vineyards up to 2,400 ft.
- created after eruption of Round Mountain Volcano, which filled valley with 425 ft of debris.
- runs from east to west, funneling winds from the lake


High Valley AVA

- dry mountain climate with significant UV levels
 - > thicker grape skins, increased phenolics and tannins
 - > low prevalence of pests and mildew
- diurnal swings of 50 degrees not uncommon in summer months, preserving grape acidity
- continuous lake breezes have significant cooling effect
- main grape varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec, Syrah, Grenache, Tempranillo, Petite Sirah, Petite Verdot, Mourvedre, Barbera, Pinot Noir



Shannon Ridge Family Winery




Brassfield Estate Winery



- located near Serenity Lake at Serenity Ranch
- vineyard elevation between 1,800 and 3,000 ft.
- produces 17 varietal wines, 2 blends
- David Ramey, winemaker

Kelsey Bench AVA



- created in 2013
- west of Mt. Konociti and east of Mayacamas foothills
- about 900 acres of vines planted
- geological transition area between volcanic mountains soil and alluvial flood plain: red soils and clay/loam soils

Kelsey Bench AVA

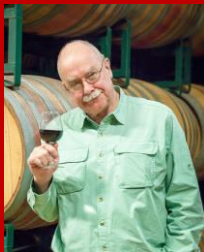
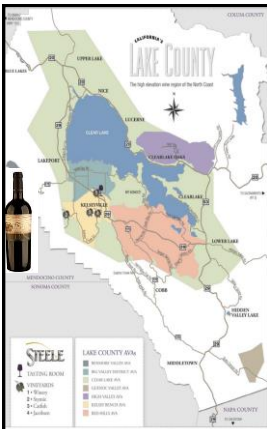
- vineyard elevation 1,300-1,600 ft.
- largely northeastern exposure
- strong winds stress vines-> ripen slowly, good acid-aroma balance
- warmer than Big Valley but cooler than Red Hills
- main grape varietals: Zinfandel, Merlot, Cab Franc, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay



Don't forget to visit the Pear Festival in Kelseyville!



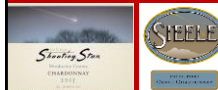
Steele Wines



Jed Steele started Steele Wines and Shooting Star labels in 1992; today he crushes 22 varietals, making 40 different wines.

Steele Wines

Steele Wines and Shooting Star (1992)



Stymie Wines: Merlot and Syrah

Writer's Block (2002)



Many of Steele Wines are sourced from across California; whereas most Lake County Wineries sell their grapes to other California producers.

Big Valley AVA



- also created in 2013, next to Clear Lake
- area approved for 1,800 acres
- gravel, clay, and loam soils
- 1,300-1,400 ft elevation; with cooling lake breezes
- main grape varietal: Sauvignon Blanc

BIG VALLEY AVA VINEYARDS KELSEYVILLE, CA



NorCal Vineyards has this 60 acre plot with 50 acres planted to Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot on sale for ~\$500,000!! Be the first to open a Big Valley Winery!!

