



SPRING MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

American Viticultural Area

- Spring Mountain was officially established as an American Viticulture Area (AVA) in 1993.
- The appellation lies above the town of St. Helena on the eastern slopes of the Mayacamas Mountains that separate Napa Valley from Sonoma Valley and the Santa Rosa Plain.
- The appellation boundaries extend from the top of the ridgeline on the western edge, which traces the Sonoma/Napa County border, down to the 400-foot contour line at the eastern base of the hillside.
- The southern boundary is Sulphur Creek and one of its tributaries, while the northern boundary is Ritchie Creek and Bothe State Park.
- Elevations in the district range from 400 to 2,100 feet, with a predominantly eastern exposure.
- The district encompasses 8,600 acres, of which about 1,000 are planted to vineyards.
- Currently the region has just over 30 vineyards / wineries

Soils

- The parent materials for the soils of the Spring Mountain Appellation were derived primarily from weathered volcanic materials and sedimentary rock.
- Soil depth ranges from six inches to 40 inches, averaging about 20 inches over the district
- The soils of Spring Mountain are predominantly well drained and vineyards often require supplemental irrigations during the summer and preharvest seasons.
- There are many natural springs scattered throughout the appellation that can contribute significant amounts of water to specific vineyards.
- The shallow, weathered soils limit crops on the hillside vineyards to a fraction of those vineyards on the valley floor.

Climate

- The climate on Spring Mountain is characterized by high winter rainfall (25 to 95 inches) and low summer rainfall (< 1.0 inch).
- Springtime temperatures are generally cooler at the higher elevations and warmer at the lower elevations.
- Summertime temperatures are characterized by warm sunny mornings above the fog line, moderate day temperatures, cool evenings progressively becoming warmer as cool air settling to the valley floor causes warmer air to rise and bathe the region.
- The mean maximum summertime temperatures rang from 75 to 100 degrees during the growing seasons, a range somewhat lower than the mean maximum temperatures recorded on the valley floor.
- In many years, the Spring Mountain District is the coolest and wettest region of the Napa Valley.



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Winegrowing

- The combination of low vigor potential soils with high winter rainfalls, cool springtime temperatures, and warm nighttime harvest temperatures produces a highly variable yet unique environment for premium wine grape growing.
- Spring Mountain vineyards are known for their moderate production and wines with intense varietal fruit character and complex soft tannins that differentiate them from the wines of other appellations.
- Red varietals comprise about 90% of the planted acreage with Cabernet Sauvignon about 56% and Merlot about 18% of the planted acreage.
- Chardonnay is the largest planting of white grape varieties, followed by Sauvignon blanc and Riesling.

History

- The appellation was among the first locations in Napa Valley to receive recognition as a grape growing region.
- Grapes may have been grown in the area as early as the Civil War, but the first documented planting is that of Charles Lemme, who cultivated the 25-acre La Perla Vineyard just south of York Creek in 1873.
- In the 1880s, Jacob and Frederick Beringer, who had already opened their historic winery near St. Helena, planted a vineyard on Spring Mountain.
- Later in the decade, Fortune Chevalier, a Frenchman who had come to San Francisco during the Gold Rush, planted 25 acres and built a stone winery.
- Most notable among the early growers was wealthy San Francisco banker and financier Tiburcio Parrott, who established a vineyard that he named Miravalle and built a Victorian-style home that still stands on the property.
- Grape growing and winemaking declined in Spring Mountain from 1910 to 1940 due to the onset of phylloxera and Prohibition.
- The reawakening of viticulture came in 1946, when Fred and Eleanor McCrea planted a small vineyard north of Mill Creek, and then in 1953 founded the legendary winery, Stony Hill.
- The resurgence began in earnest in the late 1960s and 1970s—with the founding of several wineries, including Ritchie Creek, Yverdon, Spring Mountain Winery, Smith-Madrone and Robert Keenan.
- Today, in keeping with the history of the region, all but one of the vineyards and wineries in the district are family owned and operated.