

UPPER LAKE

On the elevated ridges and flanks of the Mayacamas Mountains to the west and the Vaca Range to the east, Lake County's 8,380 acres of vineyards ring one of the oldest geological lakes in North America. Under cobalt blue skies that boast the purest air in California, one hundred and forty growers cultivate vines in an astounding array of soils, from rocky volcanic highlands to mountain valleys lined with gravelly river courses.

Lake County's intensity of place — climate, soils, and sunlight — produces grapes and wine of compelling quality and character.



OVERVIEW

Ancient river course soils set among the valleys of the Northern Mayacamas producing balanced Sauvignon Blancs and other red and white varieties.

TOPOGRAPHY

The Upper Lake growing region lies within the Clear Lake AVA along the northwest shore of the largest natural freshwater lake in California. Upper Lake, as its name implies, is the region immediately north of the lake where its major tributaries flow into the lake from the Mendocino National Forest and the Mayacamas Range. Lake, along with Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties, lies along the spine of the Mayacamas Mountains, the most distinctive geographical feature of the six county North Coast winegrowing regions.

ELEVATION

Vineyard elevations range from 1,300 to 1,500 feet. Higher elevations and Lake County's pure air allow for greater levels of UV light, as much as 10% more than neighboring sea level valleys. This UV intensity triggers thicker skins, greater tannins and intense wines with high phenolic content.

SOILS

Valleys in the Upper Lake area are dominated by two deep and well-drained alluvial soils, Lupoyoma silt loam and Still loam mixed with coarse underlying layers of sand and gravel — the legacy of ancient river bars. These layers were deposited by the gradual shifting of stream courses in the gently sloping valleys and are well suited to white wine varieties. Found on terraces overlooking the valleys, Manzanita loam is a very old, gravelly, red soil. Over geologic time, surrounding stream courses cut downward, leaving the terraces we see today. Manzanita loam is very well drained, which helps to produce the moderate water stress that leads to full flavored red wines.

CLIMATE

At three to four thousand feet in elevation, the surrounding Mayacamas range and the mountains of the Mendocino National Forest impart a strong influence on the local climate. Summer's heat loses its grip in September when temperatures swing dramatically from morning chill to afternoon warmth. The cool nights preserve the acidity of the grapes and slow the ripening process, enhancing the flavor and complexity of the wine.

Cold winters and dry summer conditions are an important factor in Lake County's reduced pesticide and other application rates, one of the lowest in California.

ACREAGE

528 acres

VARIETALS

Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Muscat, Sauvignon Blanc, and Zinfandel.