



FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW

Winegrowers on the Sonoma Coast

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fort Ross-Seaview Winegrowers Association Finally Formed After 200 Years.

April 19, 2013, Fort Ross, CA — Nearly 200 hundred years after the first grapevines in Sonoma County were planted at FORT ROSS in 1817, a group of the local winegrowers finally got together to form the FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW WINEGROWERS ASSOCIATION.

The purposes of the new Winegrowers Association is to foster the grapes and wine from the new Fort Ross-Seaview American Viticultural Area [AVA]; increase awareness of the high quality wines being produced from grapes grown in this geographically limited AVA; and promote the AVA to the media, trade and public.

When the Federal Tariffs and Trade Bureau approved the Fort Ross Seaview AVA as a separate and distinct wine growing area, the Bureau described the region as “Coastal Cool”. The motto of the Association will be “Coastal Cool, Steep Mountain Vineyards, Above the Pacific Fog”.

Daniel Schoenfeld of Wild Hog Vineyard, Chairman of the new association and one of the original winegrowers involved in the creation of the new AVA explained: “We had to work hard to get our new AVA. It took 14 years for the local growers to get our cool climate area fully recognized as a distinctive and separate viticultural area within the larger and more extensive Sonoma Coast AVA. Our goal is for people to understand what makes our cool, maritime growing area a truly distinctive AVA.”

Work on the AVA petition began in 1999 by a group of coastal vineyard owners and was first submitted to the TTB in 2003. The petition called for the inclusion of 27,500 total acres, of which only 506 were planted to vineyards. It was finally approved on December 14, 2011. Today there are 555 acres of grapes growing in this mountainous area that has limited land suitable for vineyards.

Winegrowers who farm these ridges above the Pacific Ocean have always known that Fort Ross-Seaview is a unique grape growing region with its cool maritime climate, rugged topography and marine soils. Wines from the AVA reflect their terroir with a character, structure and flavor that distinguishes them from wines produced in other regions.

Most vineyards in the Fort Ross-Seaview AVA are located along the Pacific coastline and are at elevations between 920 to 1,800 feet. This puts them above the natural fog line, creating a climate with more sunshine and warmer temperatures than the surrounding, lower-lying areas. The amount of wine produced in the region will always be limited as yields are low and most of the terrain is too steep to farm. To qualify to use the AVA on the label, each bottle of wine must contain at least 85% made from grapes grown within the AVA.

The new Winegrowers Association has already taken steps to promote the local vineyards and wine by arranging for the Fort Ross- Seaview AVA to have its own representation at Sonoma in the City that took place on April 16, 2013, at the Presidio in San Francisco, an event for the trade and media, organized by the Sonoma County Vintners.

The new Winegrowers Association plans to hold the first Annual Fort Ross-Seaview Wine Festival at the historic Fort Ross State Park in the late summer. Grape growers and vintners who produce wine with grapes grown within the new AVA will be able to present their wine to members of the trade, the media and the public. It is a fitting venue as Fort Ross is also the site of the first grape plantings in Sonoma County in 1817.

The Association will continue to foster the special relationship that it has with local and county resources and in particular work with the Sonoma County Vintners and Sonoma County Winegrowers Association that have been very supportive of the new AVA.

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