

CALIFORNIA TO THE PRESENT DAY

THE STATISTICS OF RECENT HISTORY

Since the revolution occurred in American wine, the wine industry's road in California has often been bumpy and difficult, but never enough to turn back a steady movement of growth. A comparison of the figures from 1970, when the revolution had clearly begun, with those from the end of the century in 2000 shows the direction quite clearly.¹

To start in the vineyards: In 1970 the acreage devoted to grapes of all kinds in California was 479,000; in 2000 it was 852,000. For wine grapes, the numbers were 157,000 in 1970 and 480,000 in 2000, so that there are now more than three times as many wine grapes in the state as there were thirty years earlier.

As the scale of plantings was transformed, so too was the composition of the vineyards. The leading red variety in 1970 was Carignane, with 27,000 acres; French Colombard led the whites at 18,000 acres. By 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon had become the leading red variety, with 69,000 acres (up from 7,000 acres in 1970); Chardonnay was not only the most planted white variety, it was far and away the most planted of all wine varieties: 103,000 acres, up from 3,000 acres in 1970.

The established regions of grape growing, except for those devastated by urban and suburban development, all showed powerful increases: Napa County went from 15,000 to 41,000 acres, Sonoma from 15,000 to 52,000, Mendocino from 6,500 to 16,000. But there were also large plantings in places formerly not much developed, especially in the three counties making up the Central Coast region: Monterey went from 6,600 acres to 41,000, San Luis Obispo from 800 to 20,500, and Santa Barbara from 258 to 16,000.