

Petaluma Gap AVA Petition Fact Sheet

What is an AVA?

An American Viticultural Area (AVA) is a defined grape-growing region having distinguishing features, a name, and a delineated boundary. The establishment of an AVA allows vintners to describe more accurately the origin of their wines to consumers, and, in turn, helps consumers to geographically identify wines that they may purchase.

How does an AVA get established?

Any individual or entity may file a petition to the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) to establish a new AVA or to modify an existing AVA. The basic components of an AVA petition are:

Name Evidence to support the basis for the proposed name "Petaluma Gap."

Boundary Evidence consistent with, and best supported by, the name, historical evidence, and distinguishing features.

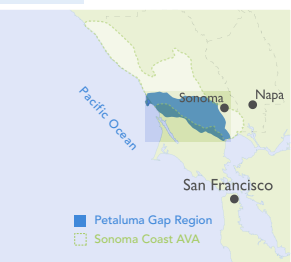
Distinguishing Features that differentiate the proposed AVA from what surrounds it in all directions. Such distinguishing features may include, but are not limited to, climate, geology, soils, and physical features.

Maps and Boundary Description including a written description using, for example, political entity lines, highways, elevation contour lines, rivers, elevation points, human-made features, etc.

How long does it take and how much does it cost?

The AVA petition process can take two years or longer, depending upon the complexity of the proposed AVA, the thoroughness of the petition, and whether there is organized opposition to it. While there is no fee for submitting an AVA petition, the cost of preparation, including technical consultants and legal support, can be as much as \$25,000.

Why do we need AVA status for the Petaluma Gap?



The TTB has recently begun to disallow the term "Petaluma Gap" anywhere on wine labels, because they consider the Petaluma Gap to be "viticulturally significant." Achieving AVA status will allow vintners to clearly label their wines as Petaluma Gap.

The new conjunctive labeling law requires the use of "Sonoma County" on the labels of all wines produced from grapes grown in Sonoma County. "Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County" is redundant, while "Petaluma Gap, Sonoma County" (or "Petaluma Gap, Marin County") is clear and informative to the consumer. (Vintners who wish to continue to use "Sonoma Coast, Sonoma County", or simply "Marin County" will be able to do so.)

Growers and vintners in the northwest portion of the Sonoma Coast AVA are working on defining the West Sonoma Coast region. We don't want to be known as the leftover "Rest Of Sonoma Coast".

What are the benefits to growers, vintners, consumers, and the Petaluma community?

For years, the PGWA has been diligently promoting Petaluma Gap wines to media and consumers, and has helped to establish a strong reputation for wines crafted from Petaluma Gap grapes. With "Petaluma Gap" on a wine label, consumers will be able to find Gap wines more easily thereby driving up demand and increasing the value of Gap grapes and the wines crafted from them. The community will benefit from increased tourism as Petaluma becomes known as a wine country destination rather than a place to pass through on your way to wine country.

