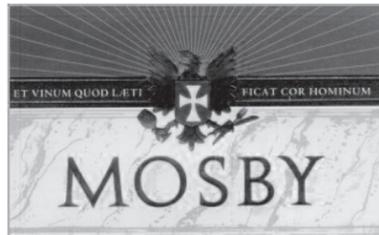




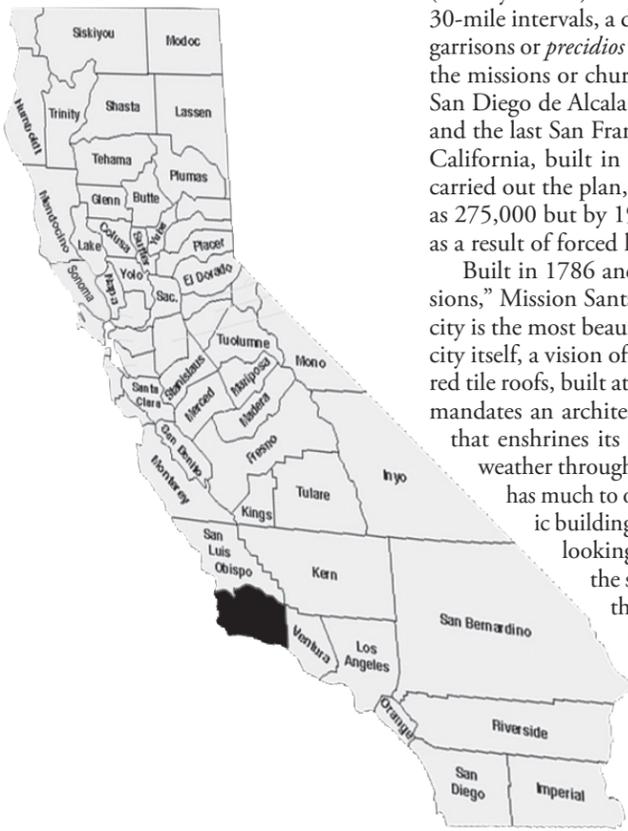
YOUR ACCESS TO OUTSTANDING WINES FROM CALIFORNIA AND ITALY



SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

After Hernan Cortes conquered the Aztecs for Spain in 1522, various Spanish explorers wandered up the California coast from Mexico. But Spain did not colonize the territory until the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when it sent Franciscan friars, led by Father Junipero Serra, to establish a series of 21 missions along the El Camino Real (the Royal Road) that would stretch up the coast at 30-mile intervals, a day's ride on horseback. Four garrisons or *precidios* preceded the construction of the missions or churches, the first mission being San Diego de Alcalá in the south, built in 1769, and the last San Francisco di Solano in northern California, built in 1823. Native peoples, who carried out the plan, numbered perhaps as many as 275,000 but by 1900 were reduced to 16,000 as a result of forced labor and disease.

Built in 1786 and called the "Queen of Missions," Mission Santa Barbara in the heart of the city is the most beautiful and best preserved. The city itself, a vision of white stucco buildings with red tile roofs, built at the edge of the Pacific coast, mandates an architectural code, "mission-style," that enshrines its history. Blessed with balmy weather throughout most of the year, the city has much to offer visitors, including historic buildings, museums, the harbor overlooking the four Channel Islands to the south, and 1.5 miles north of the city, the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden with 78-acres of native plants. A relaxed pace, enticing shops, outdoor cafes and restaurants contribute to the charm of this beautiful city. Smaller towns in the county are also worth a visit. Lompoc produces flower seeds and is surrounded by fields of color in the spring and summer with La Purisima Concepcion Mission



nearby. Quaint Solvang was established by a group of Danes, who reproduced their traditional architecture, and Mission Santa Ines is nearby, established in 1804.

Grape culture and winemaking are as old as the first missions, whose agriculture included vineyards, planted from cuttings that Father Junipero Serra brought from Mexico. Today, Santa Barbara County has about 100 wineries. The valleys in the county are distinctive because they run east-west rather than the more common north-south, and the Santa Ynez Mountain range and the more interior San Rafael range run east-west too. Because of this configuration, the ocean breezes blow eastward, channeled by the hills and mountains, so the eastern foothills are warm during the day and cool at night, whereas the western vineyards toward the coast have a mild climate. Generally, most of Santa Barbara County is cooler than northern California and favors Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Riesling along with Pinot Noir, which thrives in a cooler climate as well. In the warmer areas, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah make world class wines.

Within Santa Barbara County, there are currently three federally designated American Viticultural Areas (AVAs). Santa Maria Valley is foggy and windy, and its flagship wines are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Santa Ynez Valley is a long east-west corridor with cool temperatures on the coast becoming warmer inland, so Pinot Noir thrives in the west, and Cabernet and Merlot in the east, along with Rhone and Italian varietals. Santa Rita Hills is within the Santa Ynez Valley appellation in the cooler western part subject to marine fog and winds. Like the Santa Maria Valley, the Santa Rita Hills appellation favors Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The Los Alamos region, the Santa Maria Bench, and Happy Canyon are showing distinct characteristics that may eventually acquire AVA designations.

California  
*Winery of the Month*



**"Life is like riding a bike"**  
*Mosby Winery*



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According to Albert Einstein, "Life is like riding a bike. To keep your balance, you must keep moving." The concept caught winemaker Bill Mosby's attention recently while he was reading an Einstein biography, because the idea was intimately familiar. When Bill's tires deflate with boredom, he pumps them up with a new project and rides off in a different direction.

The main thrust of his life has been two-pronged. For forty years, Bill Mosby maintained a dental practice in Santa Barbara County, but for most of that time and now even longer, he was developing a winery in Buellton where he had originally purchased 23 acres in the early 1970s and then another 22 acres later. Having his head in someone's mouth for eight hours a day wasn't compelling enough, he laughs. He needed the additional challenge of viticulture and winemaking, which had engaged his interest as early as college, when he fermented apples in his dorm room. Eventually, he found that his land was best suited to Italian winegrape varieties and planted the reds Dolcetto, Nebbiolo, Sangiovese, Lagrein, and

Teraldigo and the whites Pinot Grigio, Cortese, and Traminer, all of which were never an easy sell. In the global market place, people buy wines from Italy when they want Italian wines, not Californian wines made from Italian winegrape varieties. Right? Well, no. "After just hanging in there, pounding my head against the wall, and keeping at it, people began to appreciate that what we're doing here is very good. And there are always those people who are willing to hunt down something that's a little different."

Yet strangely enough, what brought Mosby Winery the most attention was the 2004 release of the movie "Sideways," which was filmed in Santa Barbara wine country. "Sideways" dished Merlot and celebrated Pinot Noir, directing the U.S. wine market away from Merlot and toward Pinot. But in addition, "Sideways" sent droves of wine drinkers to Santa Barbara County, especially people from nearby Los Angeles, and they weren't looking just for Pinot Noir. They were looking for the pseudo religious wine experience that "Sideways," pre-

See **WINERY** next page

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