

# Que Syrah Sirah...Shiraz!?



# Que Syrah Sirah...Shiraz!?

DNA research shows that it is an offspring of  
Dureza (native to the Ardèche)  
Mondeuse Blanche (native to the Savoie)  
in Southwest France.

Grape was growing in Rhone before Romans arrived in 1AD

We know that it comes from France near the  
Rhone Region, probably from the nearby forests

But we don't know how long ago.  
Evidence says 77AD, with writings from  
Pliny the Elder, but not 100% it was  
Syrah he wrote about.

Petit Sirah is not Syrah, but Durif a cross  
between Syrah with Peloursin

# The Name:

It is known as Syrah in Europe, US & South America

It is known as Shiraz in Australia, New Zealand &  
South Africa

Different Myths of its origins based on the city Shiraz that  
produced a white wine Shirazi.

1) It was brought by the Phocaeans to Marsielles in 600 bc  
from Shiraz Persia and later to The Rhone.

Marsielles doesn't have trace of Syrah, how did it get North?

2) Brought by crusader Gaspard de Stérimberg, to Rhone  
from the city Shiraz in Persia. Settled as a hermit a top a  
Mountain and brought Syrah to Hermitage.

Shirazi was a white wine; No ampelographic Investigation on grapes  
from Shiraz

3) Brought from Syracuse, Sicily by the Emporer Probus

Lacks documented evidence and ampelographic findings

Others believe that the French name was once Scyras, and  
the English name is Shiraz,  
since there is British mention of Shiraz.

# What is it like?

Thick Skinned Grape

Does well in hot Climate

Easy to grow

The color is super dark,  
Purple color

Tannins are high and allow wine to  
age very well

Syrah usually is full bodied

Serving Temperature 65°

Aromas: Violet, blue fruits & black  
pepper.

Bottle aging: leather and truffles

Pairs with steak, pork, lamb, duck,  
wild game, stews, cheese,  
heavy vegetarian dishes, and  
barbecued or grilled meats



# The Northern Rhone

The Northern Rhone Is home to Syrah.

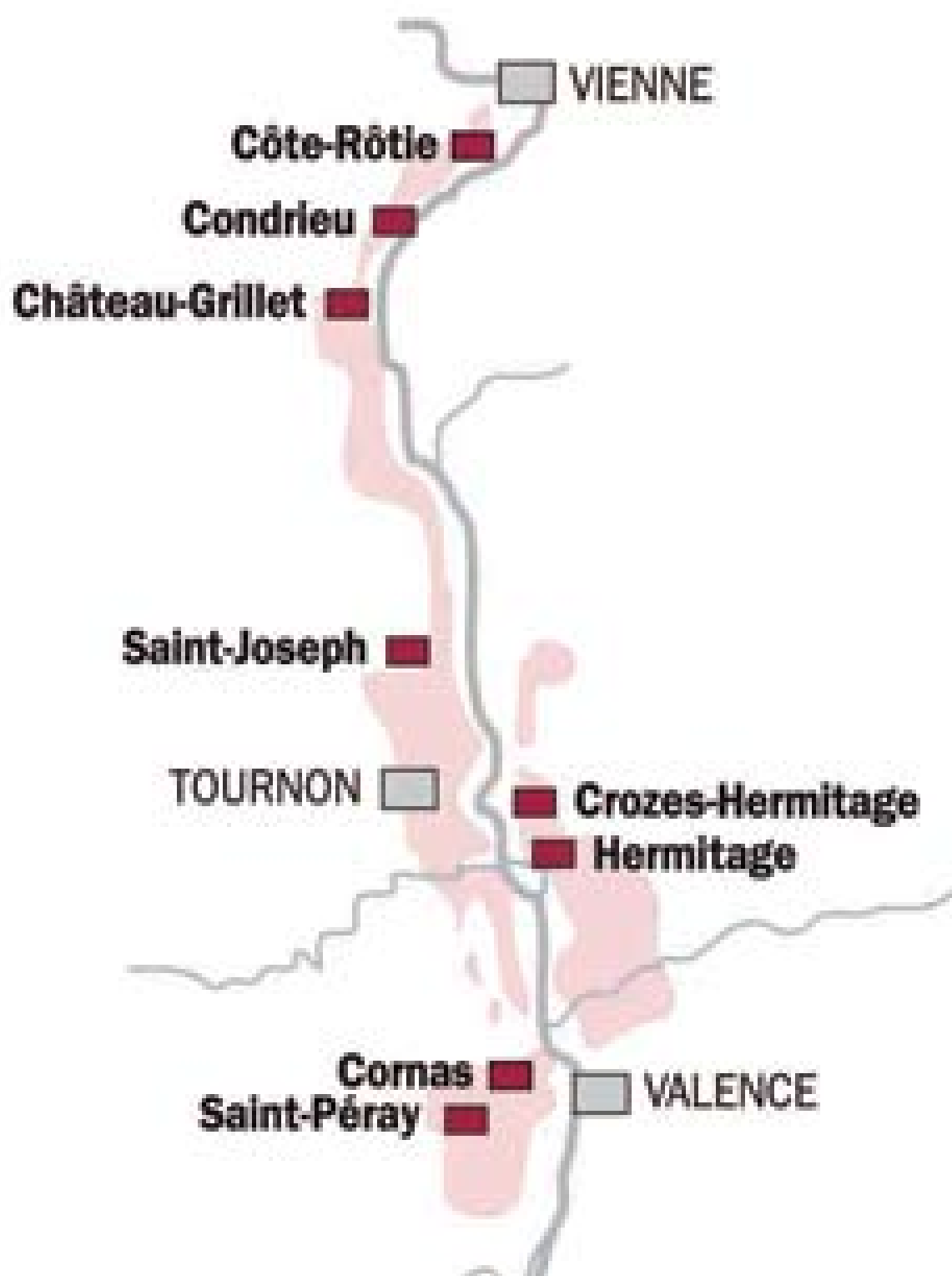
Red wines from the Northern Rhone are 100% Syrah.  
You will never see Syrah on the Label.  
Always the name of the AOC

Phyloxera had a huge impact on Rhone wines.  
Desimated many areas.

In the 60's there were about 6,700 acres of Syrah in France

As popularity increased because of wine writers and the exportation of Australian Shiraz, and affordablity of the wines, plantings of Syrah grew to over 125,000 acres in the '90's

France has more Syrah planted than any other nation



# Côte-Rotie

(the Roasted Slope)

Wines are blended with Viognier and are fruitier and aromatic

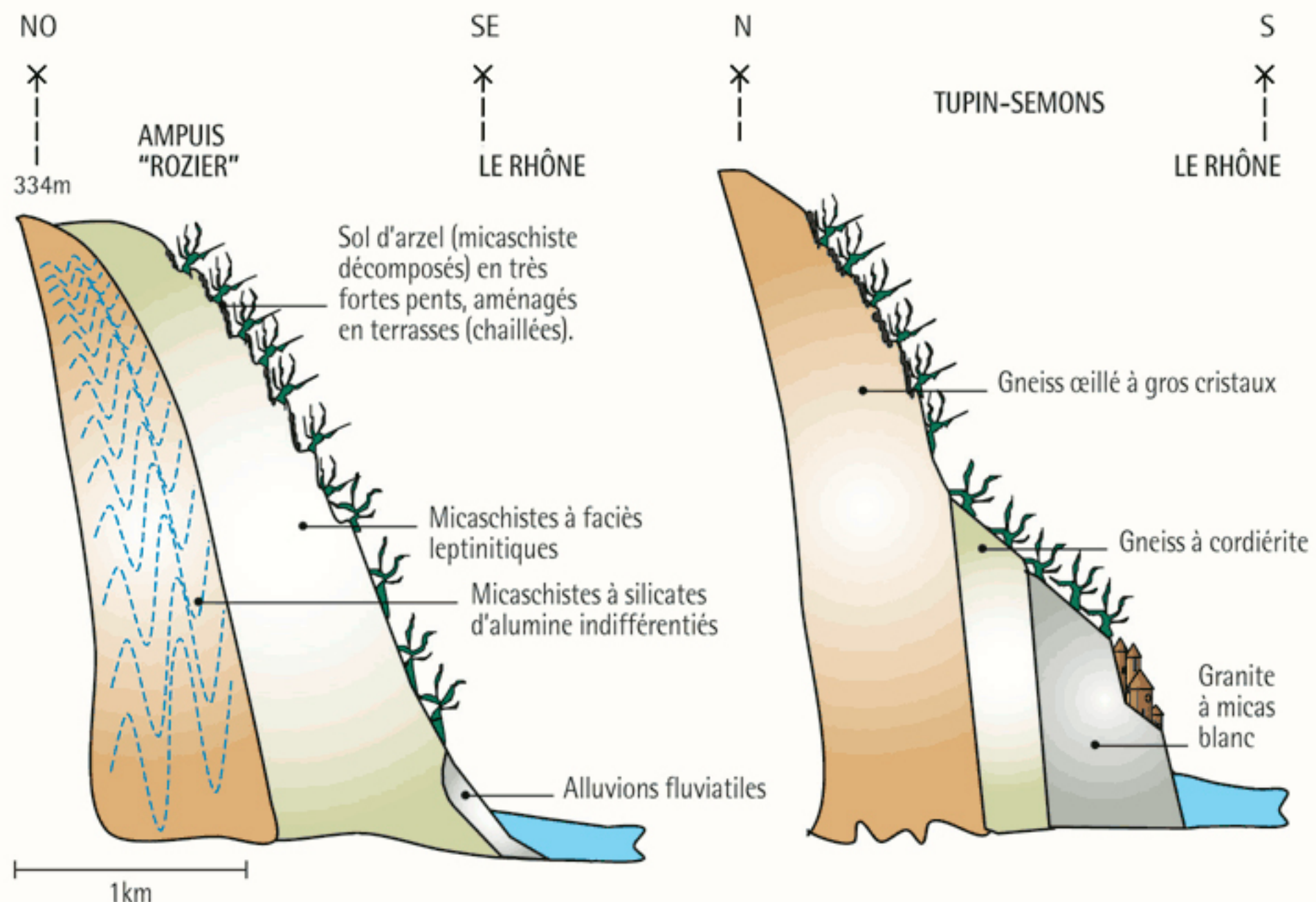
Steep landscape, excellent drainage

Hot days, cool nights, Mistral winds cool create balance wines.

Schist soils maintain heat at night.

Syrahs here do not get too alcoholic nor flabby

## Côte-Rotie



Most influential house is **E Guigal**, who released many single vineyards and uses a generous amount of oak.  
Responsible for high valued wines.

There are two main hills in Cote Rotie:  
Brune (north) and Blonde (south) named after two daughters

Brune = darker wines,  
More tannic Soils have  
higher percentage of  
clay & iron (schiste)

Blonde = are softer Soils  
are of sand & limestone  
Profile: Meaty, Blue and  
black fruits, leather,  
black pepper.



# St. Joseph

(Named after the Saint Joseph, the protector of scorned husbands)

It is the largest AOC in the Northern Rhone

Main towns are Mauves and Tournon

The wines are made with Syrah and can be blended up to  
10% with Marsanne or Rousanne

Has a long history, being mentioned by Dumas, Louis XV,  
Charlamagne & Victor Hugo.

Hot climate with some of the Mistral winds

Steep vineyards, made of granite.

Saint Joseph expanded in 1971 to 3000 hectares

Guigal is responsible for bringing St. Joseph  
into the lime light in modern times.

Wines here are step up from Cote du Rhone

The best wines are found on the slopes of the hills.

Looking to scale back AOC to focus on quality areas

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# Cornas

(burnt earth)

Located in the Southern portion of the Northern Rhone

Small AOC of 94 hectares

It is Continental and Mediterreanan Climate.

Hot, but shielded from the Mistral winds.

Soils are chalky and sandy rocks.

No White grapes are permitted

Big power wines, Rich, chunky and Tannic

Can age 10-15 years.

# Hermitage

Used to be the most expensive wines in France in the 17th-18th centuries

Lies on the right bank of the Rhone River 3 communes of the Drome:  
Tain-l'Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage and Larnage

Soils are Granite and alluvial

Steep slopes facing south and sheltered from le Mistral in the North

Wines are more mineral and austere.

The wines are sometimes blended with up to 15% Roussanne or Marsanne

Aromas of red fruits, wild flowers, dark pitted fruits, and leather  
Can be tight when young. They are full-bodied rich and long lasting  
Wines need at least 5 years and can age 20 years +

Good Vintages 1978, 1983, 1986.

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## Crozes-Hermitage

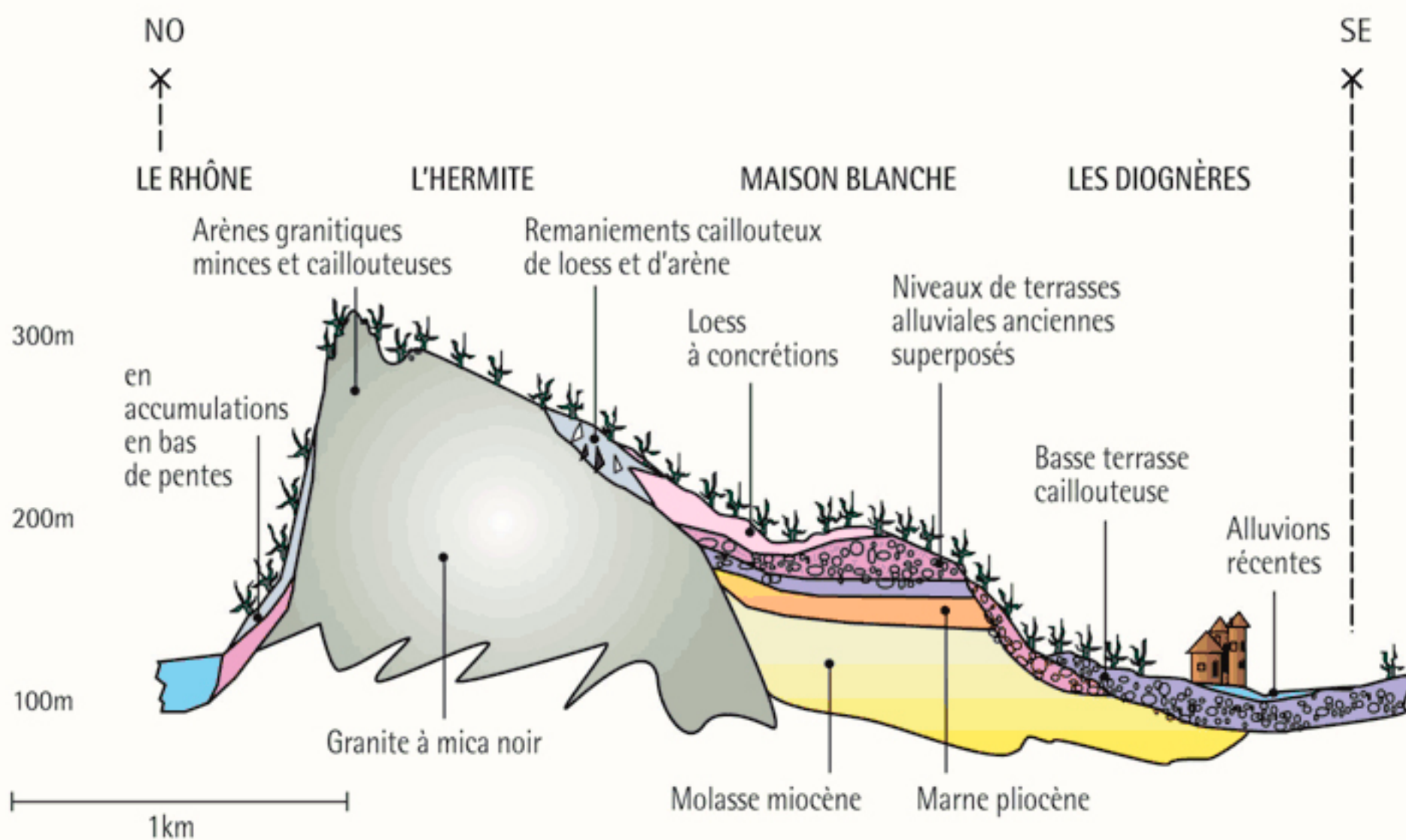
Crozes-Hermitage is a larger area located on the valley floors and  
lower hillsides along right bank of the Rhone

It has the granite soils of Hermitage and alluvial soils with a clay base.  
All south facing vineyards and are influenced by the Mistral Winds

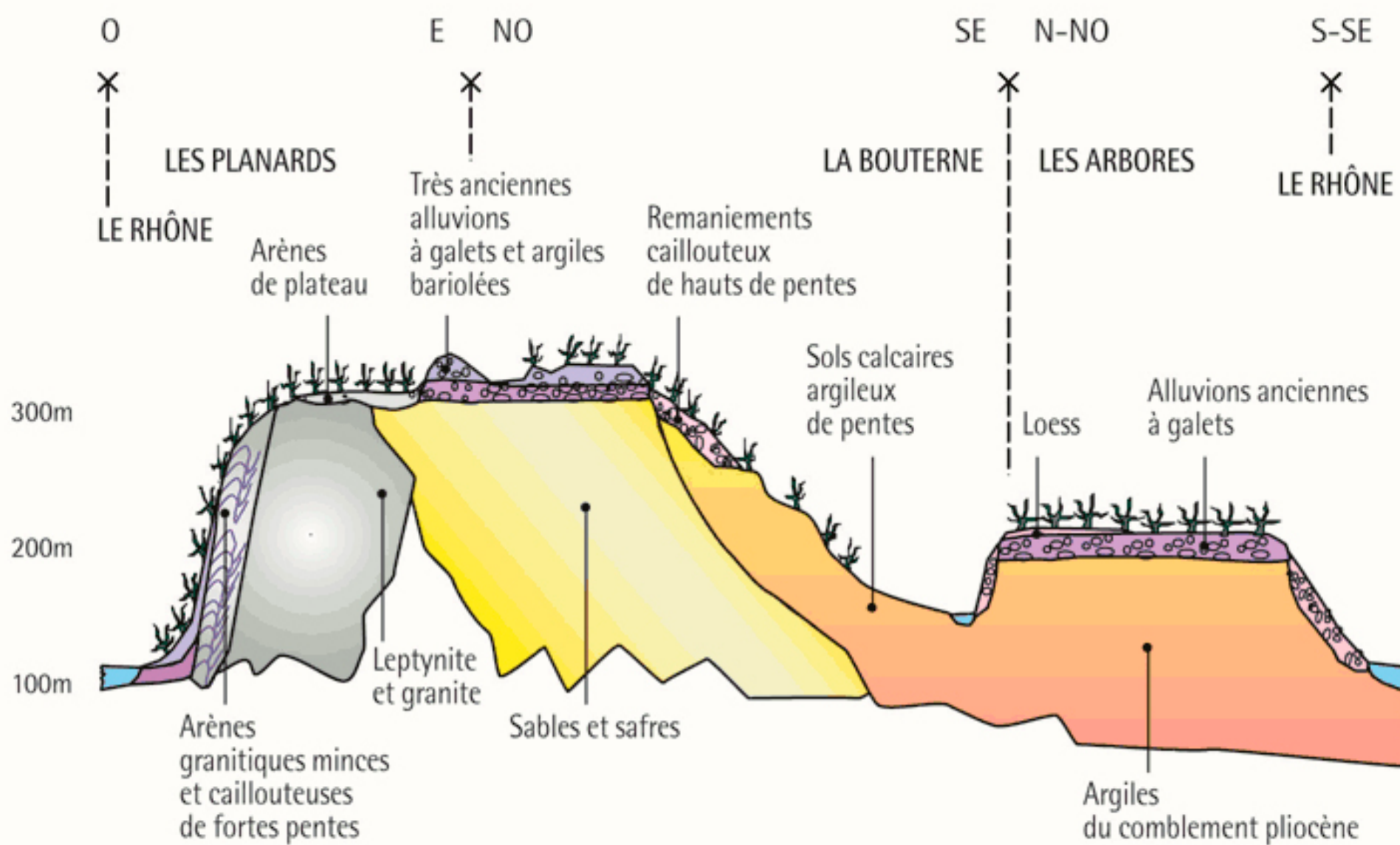
Not as old as Hermitage, used to plant fruit; more recently planted for grape

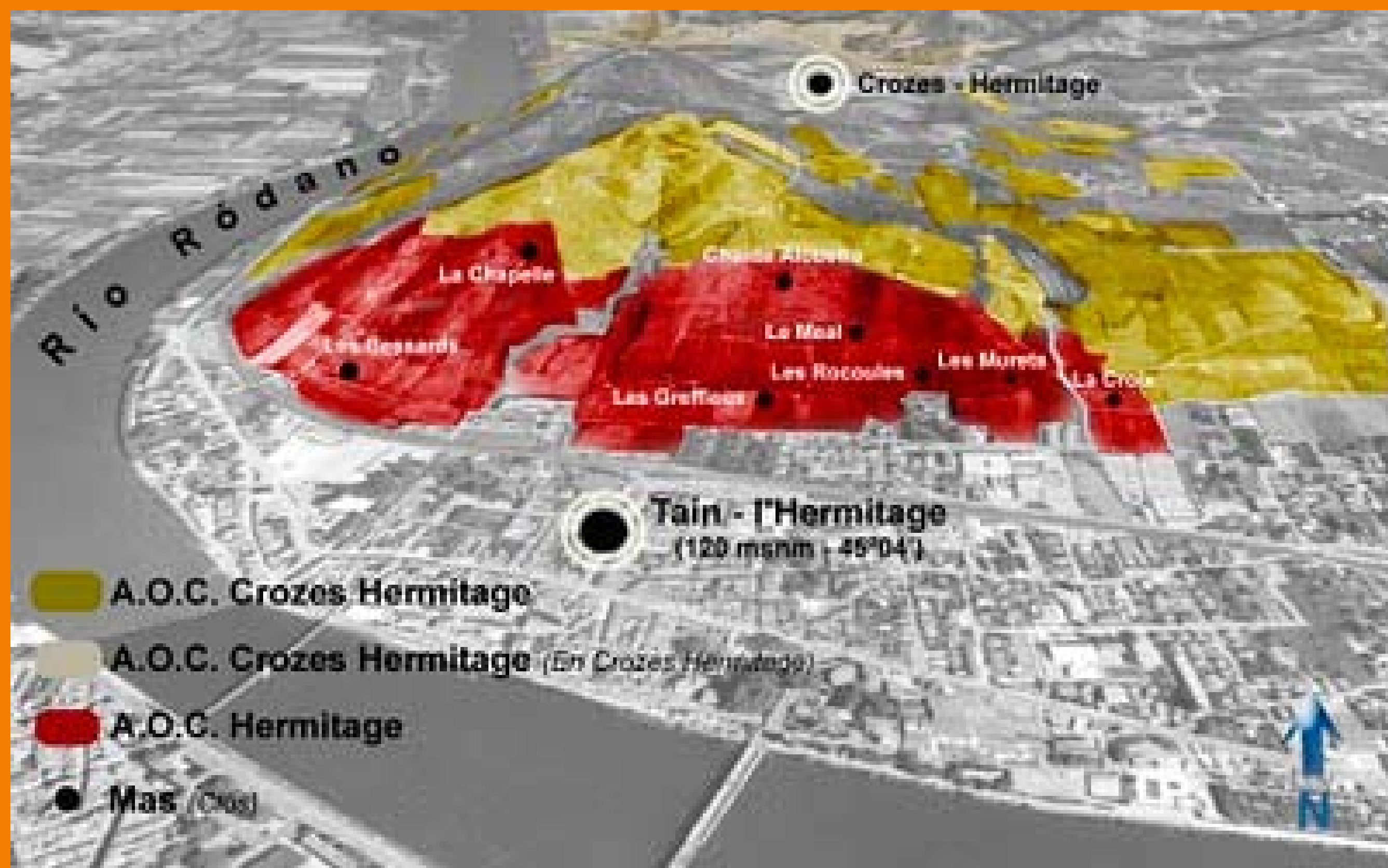
Can be blended with up to 15% Marsanne & Roussanne  
Aromas of bluefruit, red fruit, spice and leather, smooth tannins,  
well-structured and long finish  
Wines will age for a few years, not like Hermitage

## Hermitage



## Crozes-Hermitage





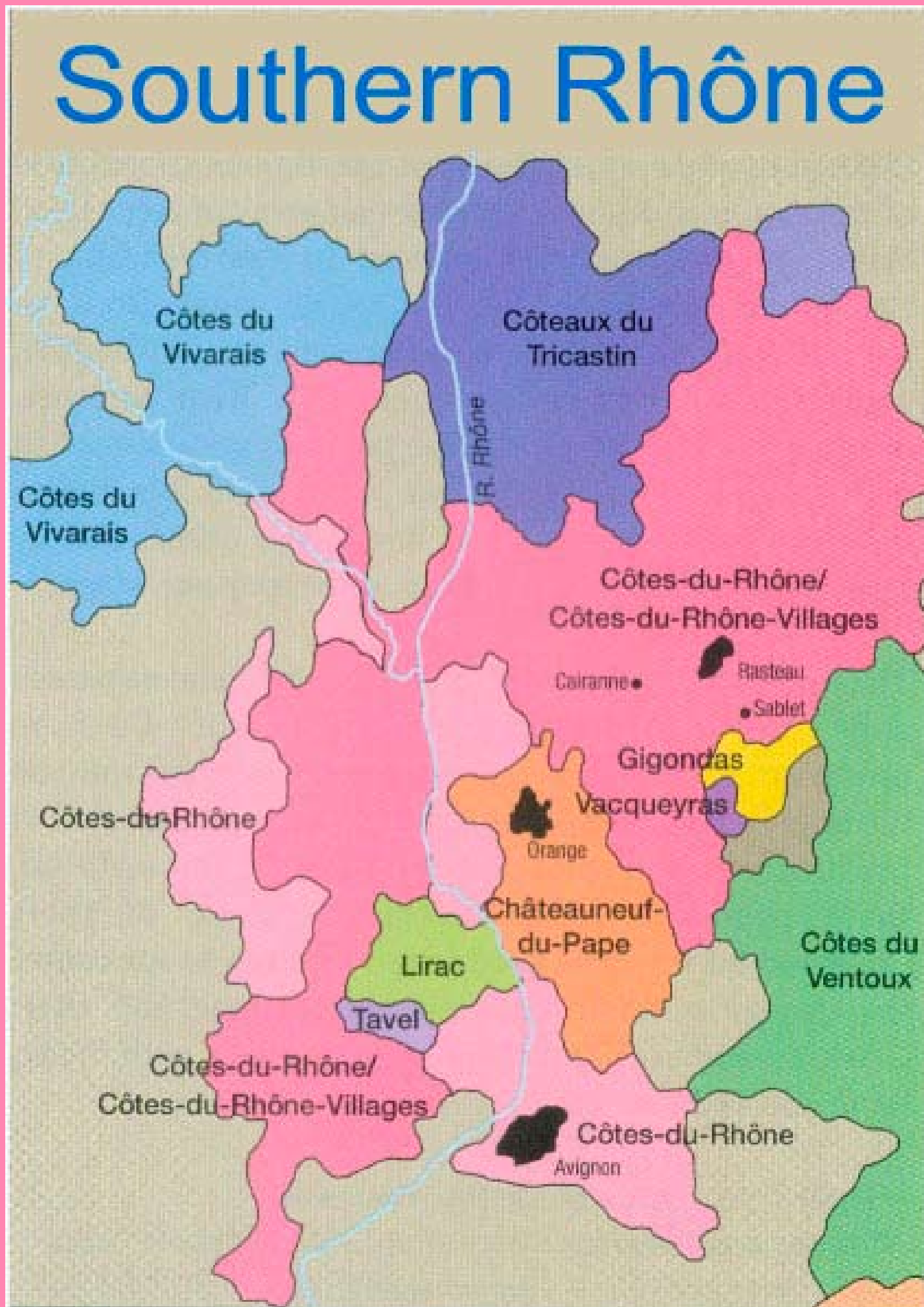


Hermitage



Crozes-Hermitage

# The Southern Rhone



Syrah in the Southern Rhone is used as one element of the great blends

Most wines of the Southern Rhone use Grenache, Mourvedre and Syrah is used for color and weight in wines.

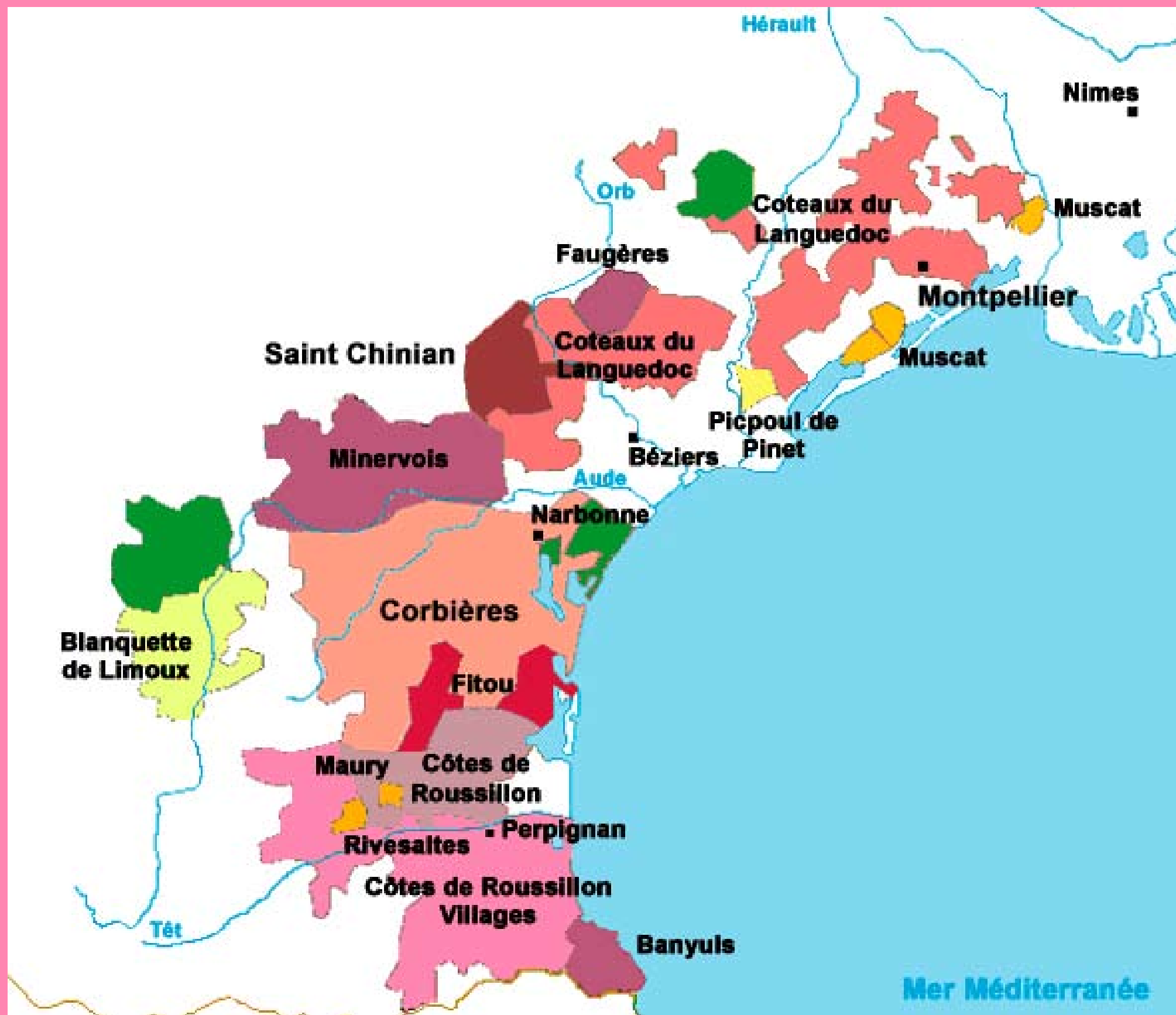
Regions of Note:

Chateauneuf-du-pape: uses Grenache, Mourvdere, Syrah and up to a total of 13 varieties including whites

Gigondas/Vacquerays/Rasteau are similiar to Chateauneuf-du-pape

Cote-du-rhone wines will also use Syrah in the blends

# Languedoc-Roussillon



Languedoc is along the mediterranean with its principal cities being Montepelier and Nimes.

Syrah one of the most important grape. It makes up the blend of most wines from the Languedoc-Rousillon

AOCs of Note:

**Corbieres, Minerviose, St. Chinian & Coteaux du Languedoc**

Some really amazing wines and experimentations are happening here!

# Washington

Washington State lies on the 46° parallel, same as Bordeaux & Burgundy

1st vines planted in 1825 by French, Italian and German immigrants

1st state to start Prohibition, put an end to winemaking until

Commercial winemaking started in 60's and increased in 70's

Washington state Professors started Columbia Winery and the NaWiCo and Pommerelle wineries became Cht. St. Michelle.

Merlot Craze along with emergence of award winning wineries brought everyones attention to Washington in the 80's-90's

Has increased 400% in the last decade



## **Major AVA's of Washington**

Columbia Valley, Yakima Valley, Red Mountain, Horse Heaven Hills, Rattle Snake Hills and Walla Walla.

One of the best Syrah vineyards is the Boushey Vineyard in the Yakima Valley

Known for Bordeaux Varietals and Rieslings.

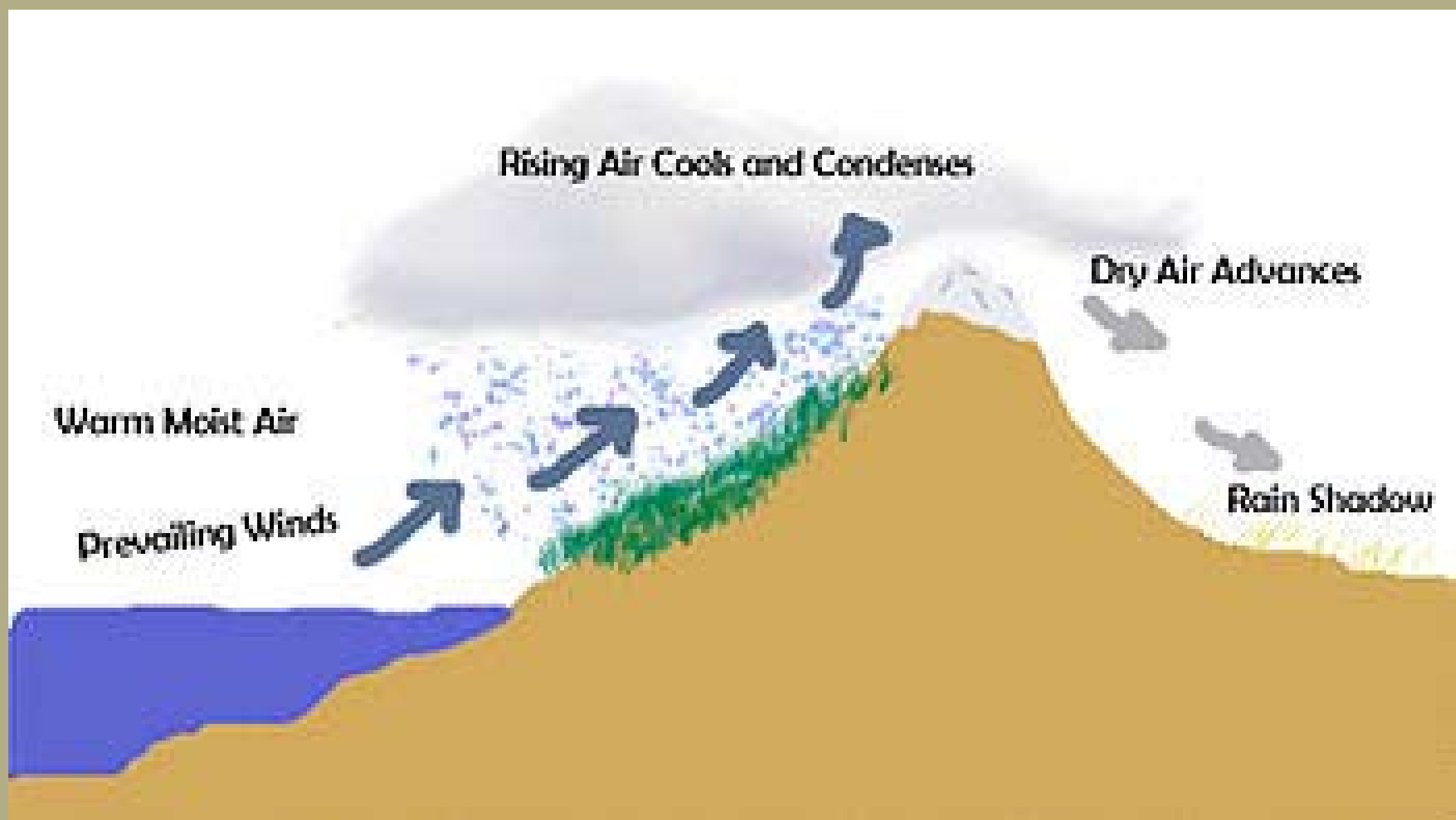
Syrah is up and coming grape of Washington.

1990 there were 40 acres planted, by 2001 3,000 acres

### **THE RAIN SHADOW**

Syrahs from Washington benefit from the intense heat and the cooling effect from the westward winds which bounce off the Cascades and cool the vineyards down.

Dry climate leaves the vineyards rid of fungus disease  
It can be compared to the same effect the Mistral winds have on Cote Rotie



# Geology

Washington has a granite base which is excellent for drainage  
The Valley was formed by the Missoula Floods following the last Ice age  
which brought many soil types from Montana.

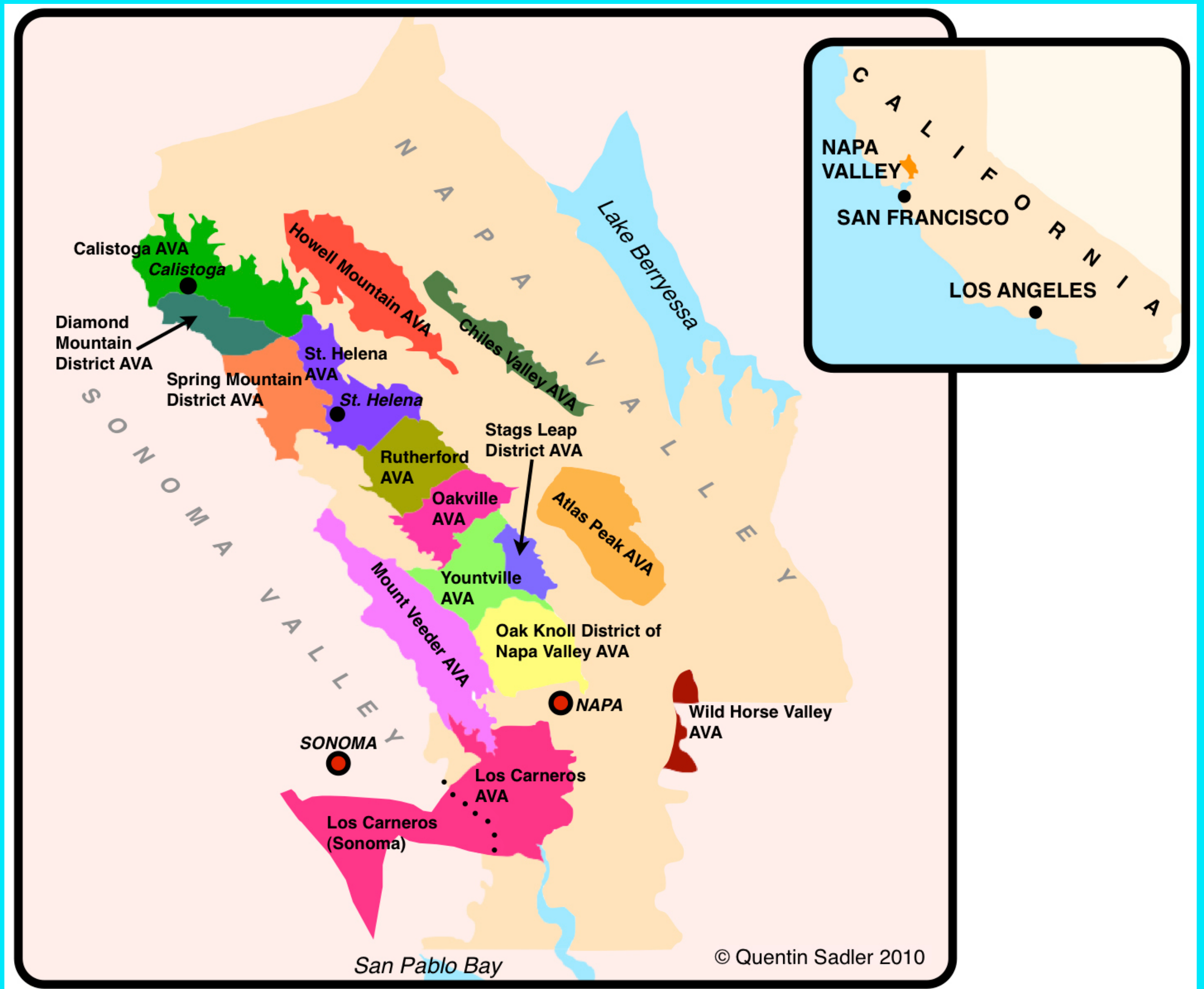
Top soil is sandy, perfect for deterring Phylloxera

Syrah does well because it is hot and the does well on gravel soils.

They are plush and fruity in contrast to the earthy Hermitage.  
Exhibit berry aromas, flora tones and a spicy character



# NAPA



## Major AVA's of NAPA

The Napa AVA's lie between two mountain ranges.

**Macayamas** to the west  
**Vacas** to the east

The Napa river flows down the Vacas southward into the San Pablo Bay

**Climate** Napa is hot and is highly dependent on the cool winds from the San Pablo Bay

Napa has many different micro-climates ranging from valleys, bench lands and mountains

**Geology** of Napa is very impressive in that it features one of the most diverse soil types in the world.

Ranging from excellent draining soils of gravel to moisture retaining soils of clay

## Valley AVA's

Los Carneros

Oak Knoll

Yountville

Wild horse Valley

Coombsville

Stag's Leap

Oakville

Rutherford

St. Helena

Calistoga

Chiles Valley

## Mountain AVA's

Atlas Peak

Mount Veeder

Spring Mountain

Diamond Mt

Howell Mt

**Valley Floor Syrah** = Blue fruit, Plump and juicy, Silky Texture  
Chocolate, Espresso and Mocha

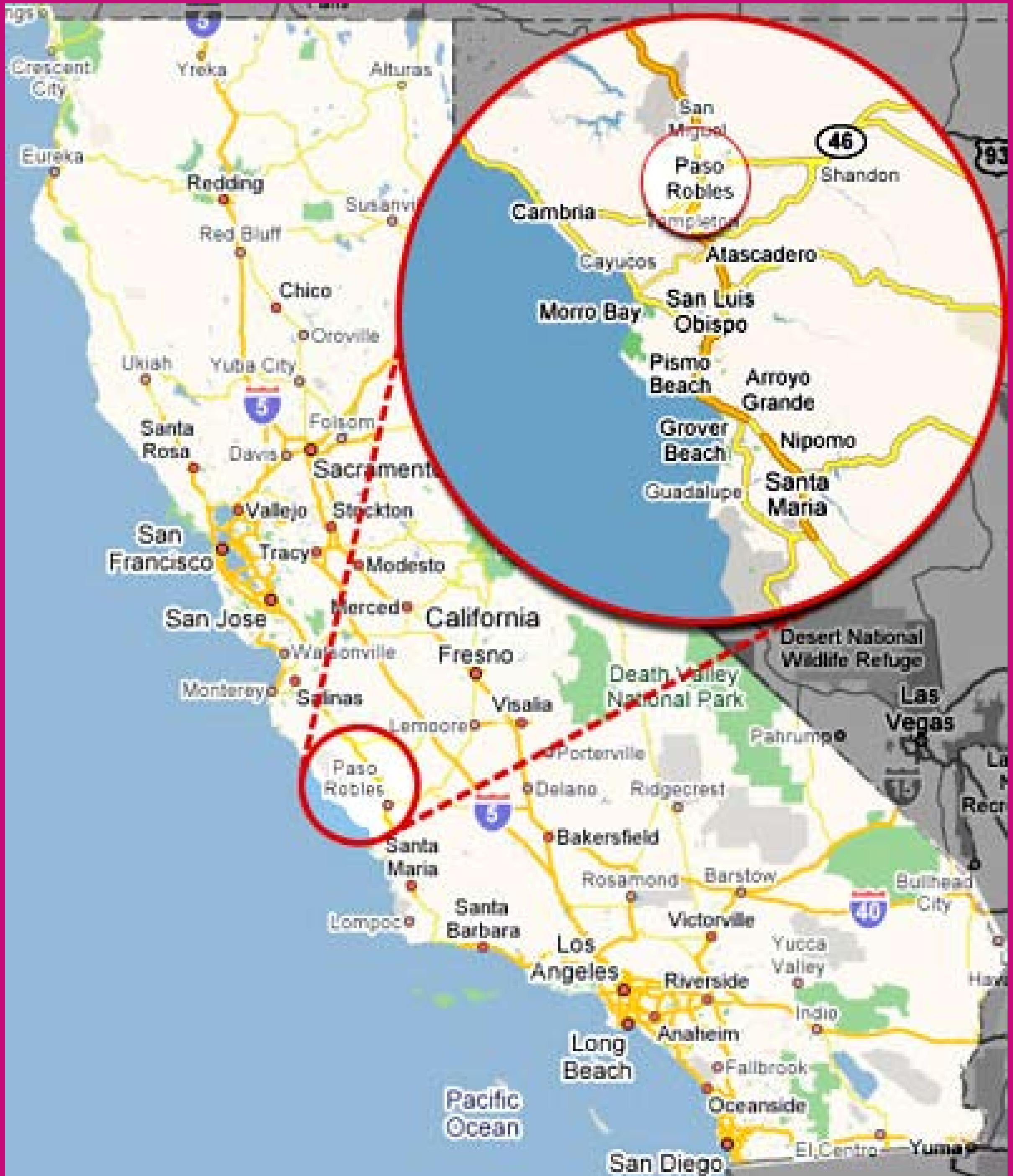
**Mountain Syrah** = Volcanic soils give a spicy note: White & Black Pepper, Cloves and Violets  
complex and have more acidity



# Central Coast



# Paso Robles



# Paso Robles

Winemaking goes back to the Franciscan Monks at the  
San Luis Obispo Mission in 1790  
made wine for sacramental use and exporting brandy

1880's York Mountain Winery was established and started producing Zinfandel  
1920-30's Zinfandel was the main grape

1960-70's Cabernet was planted and today makes 38% of the wines in Paso

1980's large scale wineries emerged such as Meridian and J.Lohr  
and started planting Petite Sirah and Syrah

1990's the Perrin Family from Chateau-neuf-du-pape built  
Tablas Creek focusing on Rhone varieties

Paso Robles was the first AVA in California to plant Syrah and  
now has become an important variety for the region.

Inland from Santa Lucia Mountains

Soils are fertile; very calcareous = high PH more alkaline

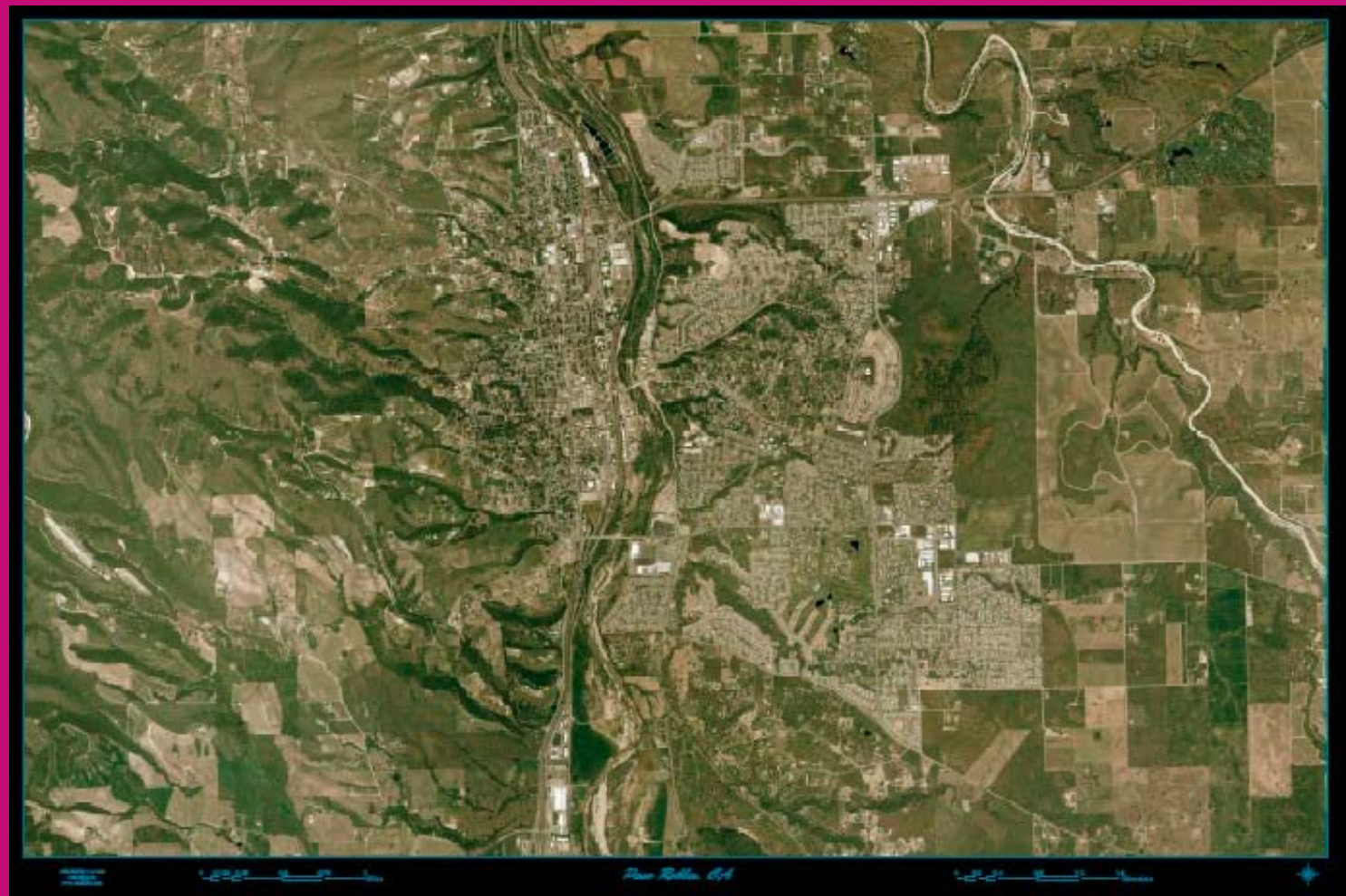
Climate is warm with cool nights, vary according to how close to the ocean.

Syrahs are plush, big and full bodied

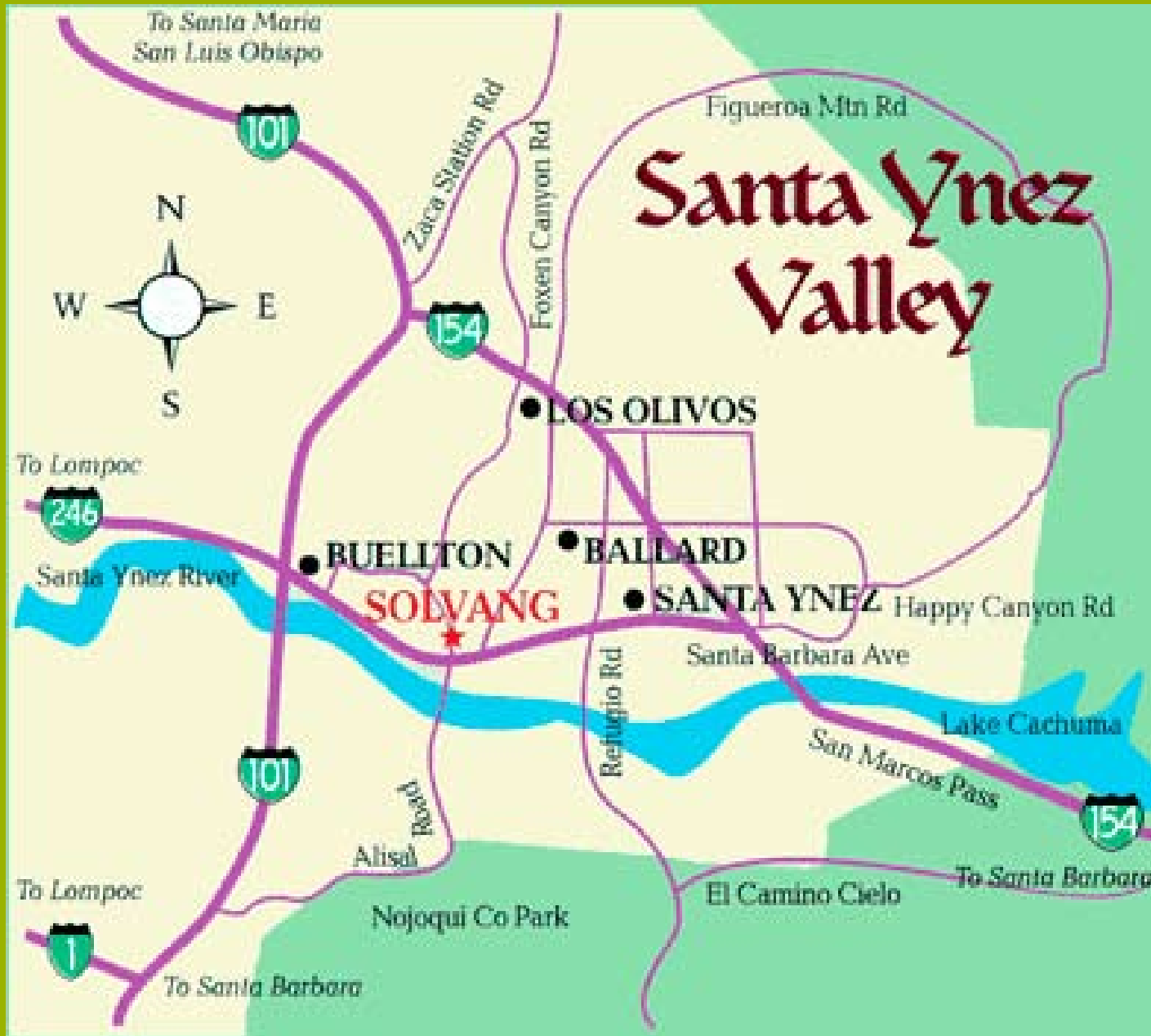
Ripe fruit, plums, blueberry and floral tones

## THE RHONE RANGERS

**John Alban (Alban Vineyards-1st to plant rhone grapes in central coast),  
Randall Graham (Boony Doon), Bob Liguist (Qupe)**



# Santa Ynez Valley



## **Santa Ynez Valley**

The Valley was settled by Spanish and Missions.  
Mostly used for livestock up until the turn of the century.

About 5,000 acres planted for grapes up until the '60's  
Valley was deemed too cold for high yielding grapes and jug wines.

Pierre Lafond started the modern day winemaking with his winery and  
general store in Santa Barbara

By the mid 60's- 70's Pinot & Chardonnay was planted along the coast  
Syrah & Cabernet was planted more inland  
1972 ZACA MESA was the first to realize the potential of Syrah

Santa Ynez became an AVA in 1983

Bob Linquist of Qupe, was pioneer in planting Rhone varieties in Santa Ynez

## **Climate**

Along the coast is cool. As one moves inland it gets 1° warmer every mile.  
Rolling hills block out fog and wind. Elevation is about 800ft above sea level

## **Geography**

Valley is formed by Purisma & San Rafael Mts to North  
and Santa Ynez Mts to south  
Soils along the coast are unfertile fossilized soils, low yields  
Gravelly, loam soils with clay.

Similar to Rhone

Syrahs are leaner than Paso Robles, bluefruit, floral, more mineral.



"Somewhere in Ynez Wine Country," via flickr by AnyaLogic

# Sierra Foothills



Map of California Counties showing the Sierra Foothills American Viticulture Area.

# Sierra Foothills

## History

This area was the birth of Californias Gold Rush. In 1848 Gold was found in the American River and led to a flood of young men.

The need for alcohol consumption led to the rise of vineyards

The first to be planted were in Shenandoah by Swiss immigrant Adam Uhlinger Zinfandel was common and mostly fortified

The search for gold led to much distruction of farmlands and valley.

Created an economic boom in San Francisco.

The Hydraulicking, destroyed moutains and created canyons.

Brought much silt to surface now making for great growing region

1884 Judge Sawyer put an end to Hydraulicking, many moved out of the valley. Prohibition ended wine making.

Winemaking became centralized in lodi for church wines.

1950's bug business in Lodi

1973 Greg Boeger bought the old Fossati-Lombardo Winery

Vines are old, was far from the rest of California vineyards adn did not get much phyloxera

## Geography

Vineyards are planted 2,000 ft above sea level

Granite soils with erosion from Mountains. As you go higher they are volcanic

## Climate

Hot and no irrigation in the summer. Stressed roots

Syrahs are deep in color, blue black. Concetrated wines with ripe fruits.

They are earthier than Paso Robles due to soils and altitude



Adrian Mendoza © 2008

Aerial Photo of El Dorado County Grape Vineyards

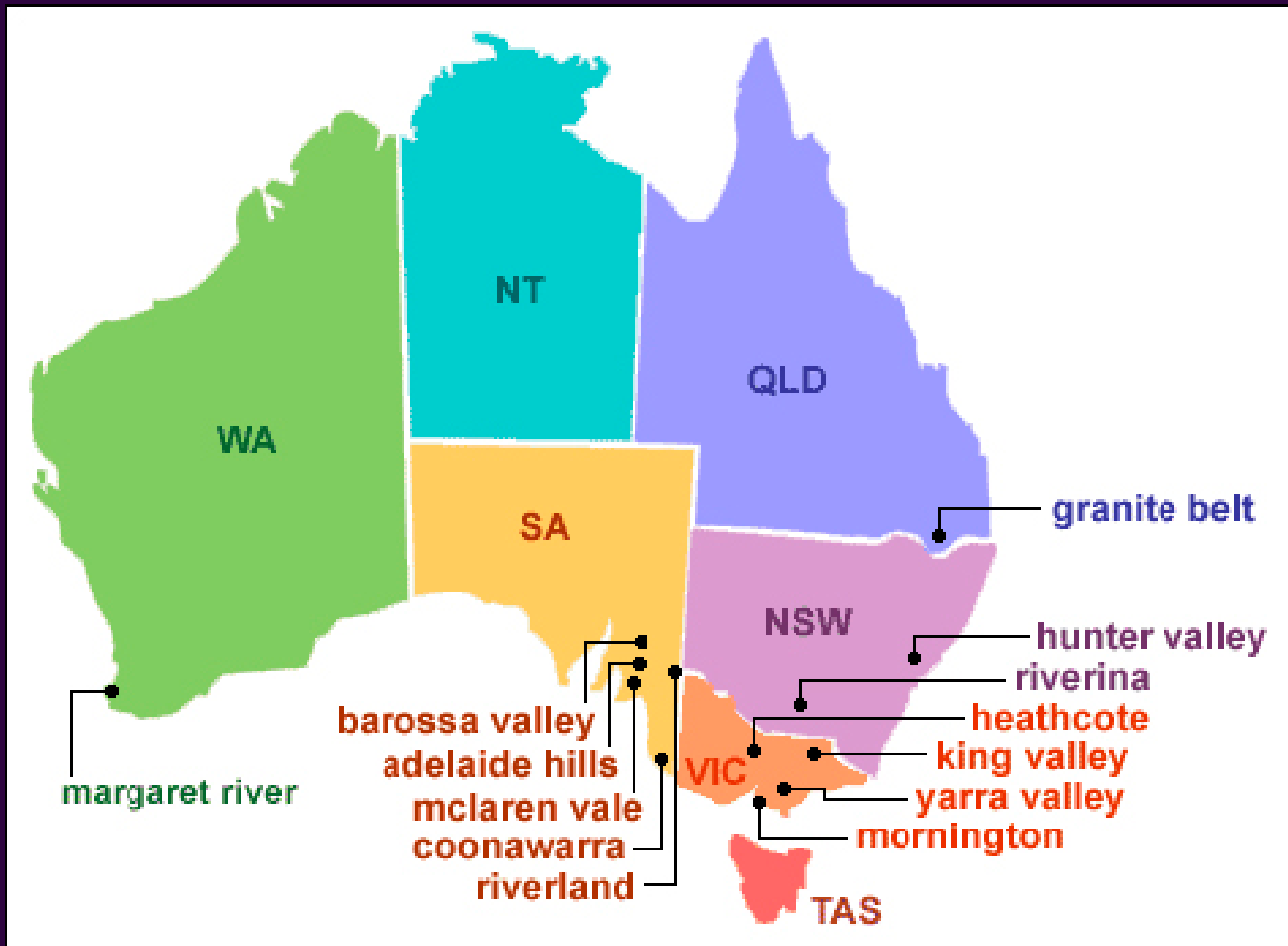
[www.amenfoto.com](http://www.amenfoto.com)



Adrian Mendoza © 2009

# Australia

## Shiraz



# History

1788 Captain Arthur Phillip brought cuttings from Brazil and Cape of Good Hope...Vines did not do so well because of heat

Early 1800's John Macarthur planted 1st commercial winery on his Camden Park property some 50km South West of Sydney

1831 Vines were brought to Australia from France & Spain by a Scotsman, James Busby (the Grandfather of Australian wine)

Syrah was known as "Scyras" and "Ciras" and planted in the Sydney Botanical gardens and Hunter Valley.

Syrah was planted in South Australia in 1839 and began its prosperity in 1860  
1859 the 1st exported wine to England

Started to be recognized as a serious wine producer when it won medals in Paris during the 1880's

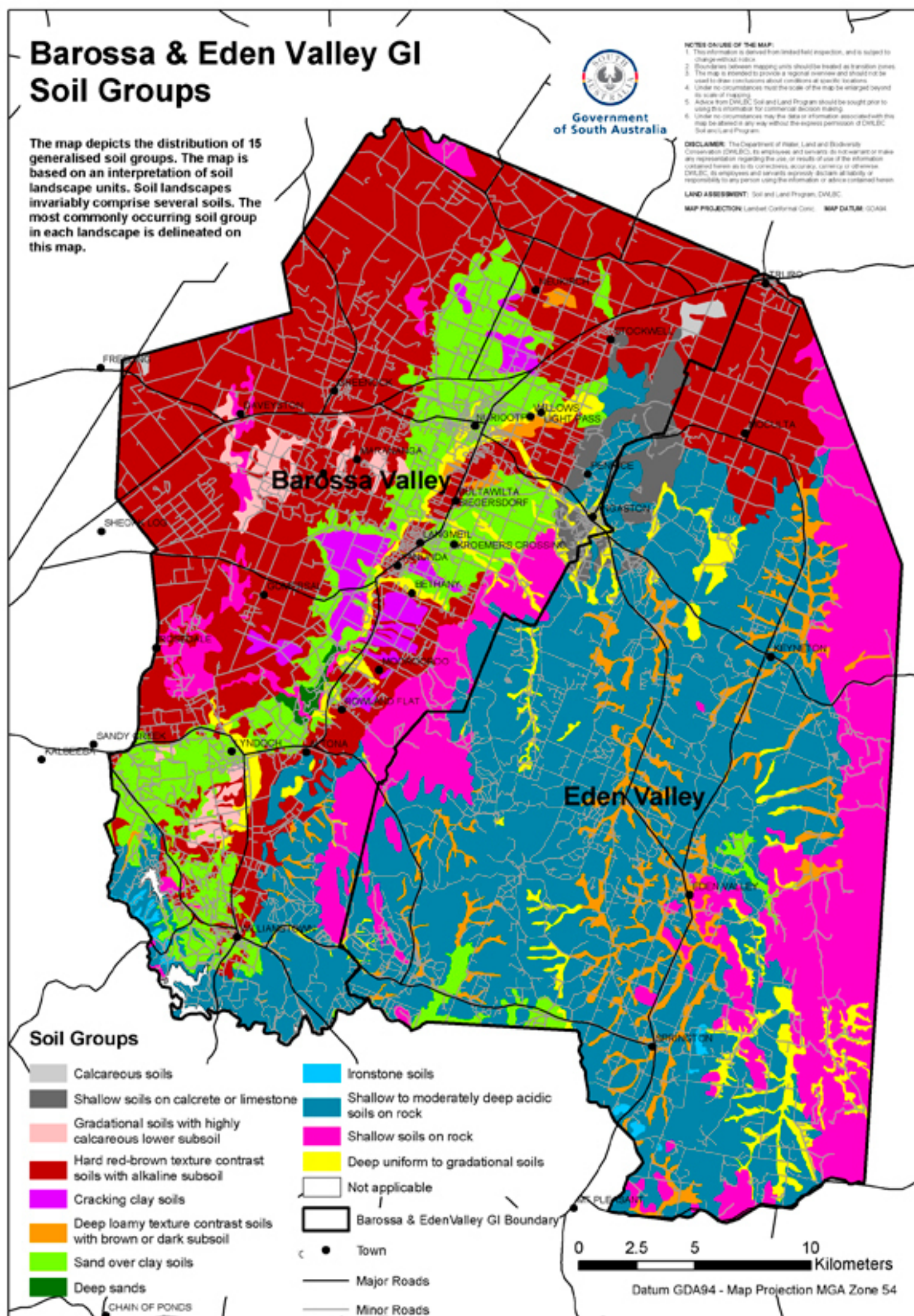
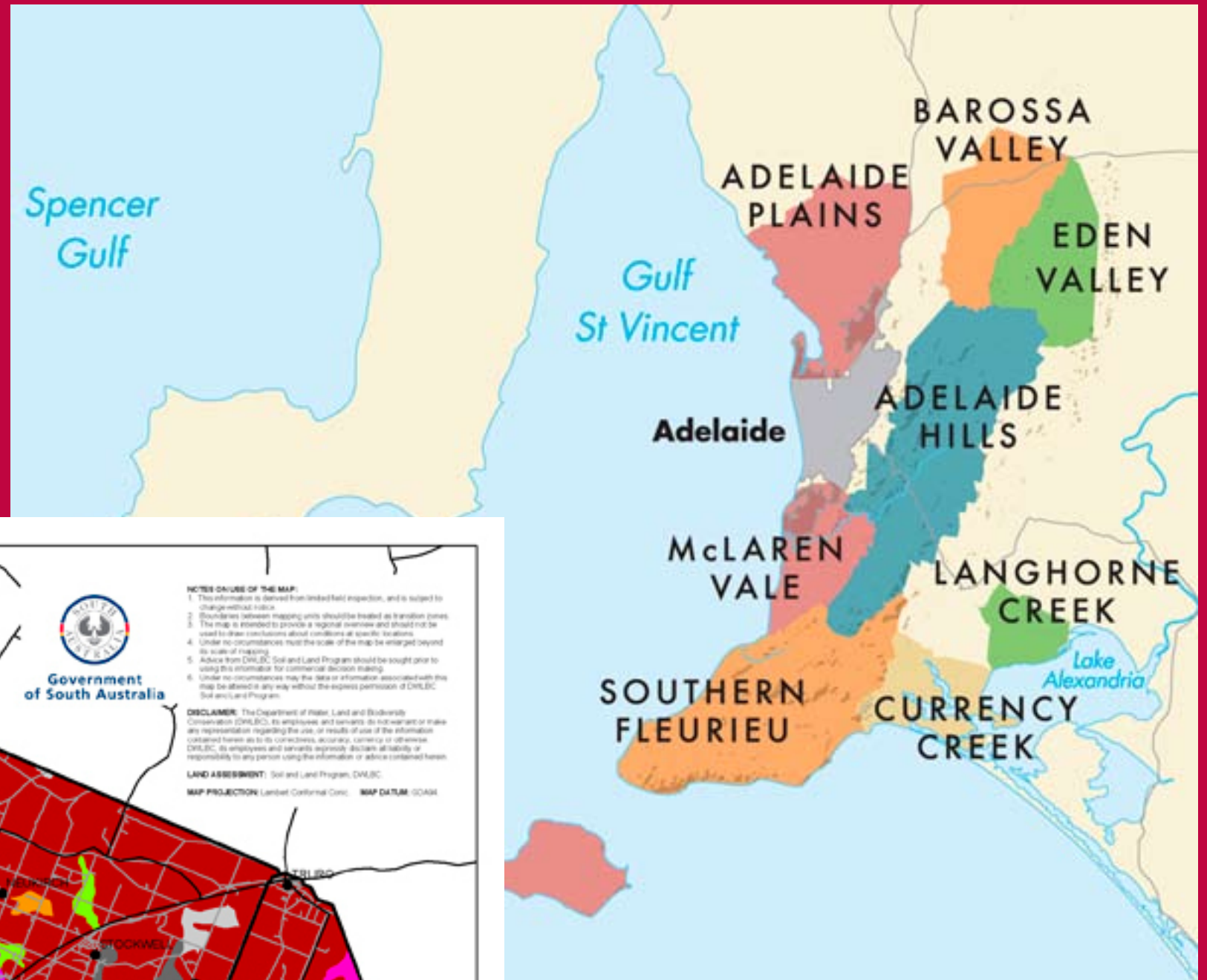
1875 Phyloxera hit Australia, strict laws prohibited the transportation of vines and kept South Australia Phyloxera free. Today has some very old vines.

Australia mostly made fortified wines up to the 1960's for the armies of the World Wars. An influx of immigrants gave rise to the demand for table wine.

Today it produces 4% of the world's wine production  
and is the 4th largest exporter

At one time known as "Hermitage" or "Marsanne Noir" in Australia.

# South Australia



# Barossa Valley

## History

The Barossa Valley was settled by Prussian community, mostly Germans because the land was known as the “the cream, and nothing but the cream”.

The climate was too hot for most crops, so settlers turned to viticulture.  
Mostly fortified wines.

Not until late in the 20th century did Barossa become known.  
Most were looking for Cabernets and Barossa Shiraz was just a simple wine.  
Small boutique wineries changed that image and started making world class Shiraz. So much so that today Australian wine is known for Barossa Shiraz.

## Climate

Continental Climate very hot. Need thick skin grape.  
It is made up of rolling hills which gives a bit of variation in temperatures as one goes from lower to higher elevation.

There is not much water in this region, many use dry farming  
creating more concentrated wines.

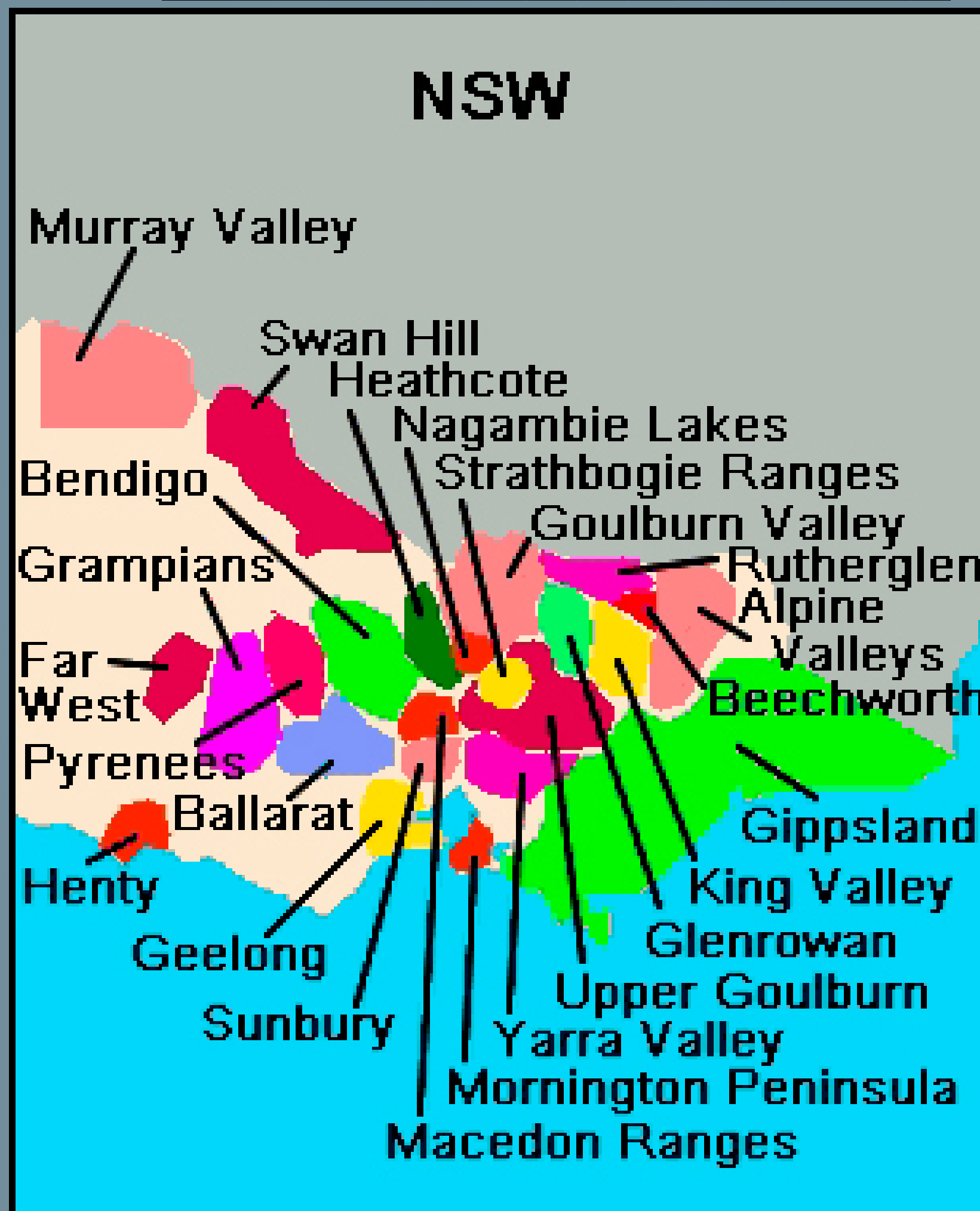
Wines tend to be more alcoholic and less acidic,  
acidification is sometimes needed.

Wines go through short maceration creating smooth tannins.

Wines are rich and powerful. Flavors of Bluefruits, Chocolate,  
pepper and sometimes Eucalyptus.



# Victoria



## **History**

The Victoria Valley was planted in the 1850's with the first vines in the Yarra Valley

Prior to Phyloxera it was the primary wine region of Australia  
Capital city is Melbourne

In the 1980's we saw a resurgence in production and mostly shifting to cooler climate varietals such as Pinot Noir and Chardonnay

## **Different Regions**

The most well-known region is 1 1/2 hour outside Melbourne The Yarra Valley

Great wines come from:

**Heathcote, Swan Hill, Mornington Peninsula, Pyrenees & Geelong**

Because we are talking about a large area,  
there is a vast variation in temperatures and soils

Victoria gets an influence from the Ocean and the Yarra River  
which keeps temperatures low.

Shiraz in this area tends to be leaner in style, dark fruits, violets,  
white pepper and more mineral.

