



## The History of Winegrapes in Lodi

### Early Lodi

Early explorers to the area discovered a region teeming with wildlife and lush vegetation. The valley's floor was covered with towering oaks, grasses, and wildflowers. Grapes were always part of the local landscape, growing wild dangling from the trees along the riverbanks. Early trappers called one stream "Wine Creek," due to the bounty of wild vines. That river was later renamed the Calaveras River, and flows through the southern part of the Lodi-Woodbridge region.

### Prohibition

The enactment of Prohibition in 1919 posed a real threat to Lodi winegrape growers. Although some wineries did close, and some farmers prematurely tore out their vines, it turned out that Prohibition became a very prosperous time for Lodi growers. The business simply changed from making wine to shipping fresh grapes. Since home winemaking was allowed under the Volstead Act, the demand for winegrapes actually increased during Prohibition. Thousands of railcars left Lodi each harvest full of Zinfandels, Tokays, Alicante's, and many other winegrapes.

The repeal of Prohibition in 1933 signaled the rebirth of the Lodi wine industry. Some new co-operatives were formed, many new wineries were built, and Lodi wines were once again finding their way across the country.

### The Varietal Wine Boom

Throughout the 40's and 50's Lodi prospered with their dessert wines and Zinfandels, but then in the 1960's consumer tastes began to change. They began to prefer table wines, and then later, quality varietal wines. Lodi growers began focusing on producing quality varietal winegrapes for the blossoming table wine market.

The transition, which began in the late 60's and climaxed in the mid 90's, saw thousands of acres of grapes converted into premium varietal winegrapes. Buoyed by the reported health benefits of moderate wine consumption and a strong US economy, wineries throughout the state turned to Lodi to supply the growing demand for quality wine grapes.

### The Lodi Appellation

The area's transition to premium wines got a credibility boost when the Lodi Appellation (American Viticulture Area) was approved in 1986. Wineries were now able to label their wines with Lodi listed as the grapes' origin. Lodi was no longer the wine industry's best-kept secret as awareness slowly began to build for the distinctive quality of Lodi wines. At first only a handful of small local vintners produced a "Lodi" designated wine, but as the quality and the reputation spread, wineries across the state proudly proclaimed "Lodi" on their wine label.

### Today & The Future

Today, Lodi is home to over 70 wineries, hundreds of "Lodi" labeled wines, and thousands of acres of premium winegrapes. Its growers and vintners combine the best of tradition with the most modern advances of science and technology. It leads the industry in sustainable viticultural practices, preserving the land for generations to come. It is a region where a new generation of growers is rediscovering its rich heritage, and setting out to produce world-class wines that rival the best that California has to offer.