

ALMADÉN VINEYARDS

1530 BLOSSOM HILL ROAD, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95118 (408) 269-1312

September 24, 1980

Mr. Richard Mascolo
Chief of Research and Regulations Branch
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Sir:

SUBJECT: Petition for Establishment of CIENEGA VALLEY as a
Viticultural Area

In conjunction with the provisions of 27 CFR §§4.25a(e)(2), Almadén Vineyards hereby petitions for the establishment of CIENEGA VALLEY as a viticultural area as detailed in the following paragraphs:

I. Evidence that the area is known

The area sought to be designated is located in unincorporated San Benito County, California. History in the county of San Benito dates back to the 1700's with the advent of the Spanish Padres and the dedication of the Missions. Cienega, in San Benito County, as per historical data, was planted with vines by Theophile Vache in the early 1850's. The vineyard was sold in 1883 and the new owner planted more acreage, and historical data indicates a winery was built in 1854 and later enlarged. The quality of the wines from this growing region won a reputation by winning prizes from as far away as France and Italy. In 1907 the varietal grape growing program was updated by Professor Biolette, head of the Viticulture Department of the University of California, and, at the same time, Dr. Ohrwal became supervisor of the vineyards. Historical evidence provides that in 1914 bulk wines were sold to the California Wine Association. Evidence also provides that during Prohibition the grape vines were not pulled and in 1935, when it became legal, wine was made by Mr. Valiant who had acquired the winery. History records that in 1943 this same winery and vineyards were taken over by the Taylor Company and later sold to Almadén Vineyards.

II. Boundries

The Cienega Valley area is located at the base of the Gabilan Mountain Range which rises to 3,274 feet and forms a boundry line between San Benito and Monterey Counties. The Pescadero Creek runs through the vineyards and the San Andreas earthquake fault line borders the northeast edge. Cienega is located about five miles south, overland, from the town of Hollister. On the east is the

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Paicines Vineyards. The required U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute series topographic maps (Exhibit 1) are attached with the proposed area traced in blue and Almadén's vineyards are colored in yellow. Specific boundaries are as follows:

Beginning at:-

The Gaging Station at the southeast edge of Township 14 South, Range 6 East, Section 21, the Southeast corner; thenceforth following the Pescadero Creek Bed southeast about 100 feet to the unimproved road and continuing South Southwest on the unimproved road 1/2 mile to where it intersects with the south border of Township 14 South, Range 6 East, Section 21; thence continuing along the south border of Township 14 South, Range 6 East, Section 20; thence along the West border of Township 14 South, Range 6 East, Section 20; thence along the west border of Township 14 South, Range 6 East, Section 17 to where it intersects with the 1200-foot elevation; thence following the 1200-foot elevation in a generally northwestern direction to where it intersects with the north boundary of Township 14 South, Range 5 East, Section 10; following this boundary line in a northwest direction to where this boundary intersects with the 1600-foot elevation; following the 1600-foot elevation in a generally northern direction to where it intersects with the unimproved road; thereby looping southward and continuing on in an easterly direction to the designated "Spring" and continuing on the unimproved road in a northeast direction parallel with the gulch to the Vineyard School on Cienega Road; continuing southeast on Cienega Road 4/10-mile to where the unimproved road intersects; thence traveling north and following the unimproved road northwest about 1/2 mile; then looping in an easterly direction 3/4 mile to the intersection of the unimproved road and branching in a southeast direction, crossing Township 13 South to Township 14 South and following the unimproved road to the intersection of the northwest corner of Township 14 South, Range 5 East, Section 7; thence continuing in a diagonal line to the southeast corner of Township 14 South, Range 6 East, Section 7; thence from the corner of Section 7 1/4-mile west to where it intersects with an unimproved road and thence following this unimproved road in a southeast direction to the Gaging Station-Point of Beginning.

III. Geographical Features

Vegetation is live oaks, white oaks, coyote brush, chaparral brush, and poison oak. The terrain is extremely hilly to mountainous and the elevation ranges from approximately 930 feet to well over 1,500 feet. Rainfall averages 15.29 inches as per 53 years of records. There is some dry farming around the winery, however, water coming down out of the Gabilan Mountains into the Pescadero Creek is used for irrigation of a portion of the vineyards. In the last four years the average temperature is 2861° days. The area is entirely fenced to prevent deer, wild hogs, and other wildlife species from damaging the vines.

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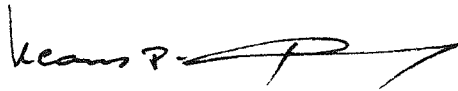
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The soil is loamy, generally well drained, and often underlain by weathered granite. The main soil associations of the flood plains and alluvial fans are Sorrento-Yolo-Mocho and Clear Lake-Pacheco-Williams. The soil associations on the uplands are the San Benito-Gazos-Linne association and the Sheridan-Cineba-Auberry association. In general there is good water holding capacity and the root depth ranges from medium to quite deep.

In 1893 a prediction was made that the vineyards of the future in California would be established in this area. This forecast has proven to be true as evidenced by the hundreds of acres of vineyards planted with numerous varieties of grapes located in the Cienega Valley. The adjacent mountain range and the cool ocean air that comes in to the Cienega Valley each day help create an ideal micro-climate for the producing of fine, distinguished quality grapes.

It is, therefore, requested that the Bureau institute proceedings to designate the area CIENEGA VALLEY in San Benito County as a viticultural area as proscribed within the meaning of 27 CFR §§4.25a(e)(2).

Respectfully submitted,



Klaus P. Mathes
Vice President-Winemaster

KPM:bjc

ALMADÉN VINEYARDS

1530 BLOSSOM HILL ROAD, SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95118 (408) 269-1312

KLAUS P. MATHES
VICE PRESIDENT — WINEMASTER

January 13, 1981

Mr. William T. Drake
Assistant Director (Regulatory Enforcement)
Department of the Treasury
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Washington, D.C. 20226

Dear Mr. Drake:

This memo is in response to your letter dated November 3, 1980 (R:R:RLW 5120) requesting more information regarding the petition by Almadén Vineyards for establishment of CIENEGA VALLEY and PAICINES viticultural areas.

Over the years, Almadén Vineyards kept the wines produced from the grapes harvested at Cienega Valley separate from wines we produced from the Paicines district because the quality of the produced wines from both locations is significantly different.

Geographical and vicitultural features of Cienega Valley versus the Paicines area are greatly different. Over the years Almadén Vineyards tried to discover the reason why the wines produced from the grapes harvested from each district are so distinctly different. Besides all statistical data, there are many obvious reasons that we believe have a definite influence on the quality and character of the wine.

- A. The Cienega Valley where the grapes are grown is located directly at the foot of the El Gavilan mountain range and northeast of the Salinas Valley. The Salinas Valley is known as a cooler area and is often blanketed with fog, and strongly influences the microclimate of the Cienega Valley by sending cooler air and fog into the Cienega grape growing region.
- B. The rainfall pattern at the El Gavilan mountain range differs greatly from the Paicines area. Due to the closeness of the Cienega Valley to the El Gavilan mountains, Cienega Valley often has rain whereas Paicines does not, thus creating different microclimatic conditions.

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- C. The elevation of Cienega Valley, in average, is higher than Paicines.
- D. The Cienega Valley has more trees adjacent to the vineyard areas whereas Paicines has very few trees.

Both Paicines and the Cienega Valley areas are in a wind tunnel of cool ocean air flowing to the San Joaquin Valley. Due to the location of its east/west canyons, Cienega is protected, however, Paicines area is open to the direct influence of these winds. At night Paicines is more protected from the evening fog, whereas Cienega does not have this protection due to its location at the foot of the El Gavilan mountains. The fog burns off at the Cienega Valley early in the morning, but the Paicines area, on a real foggy day, holds the fog longer than the Cienega Valley.

In Almadén Vineyards view, the aforementioned facts greatly distinguish an immense difference in geographical features as well as microclimatic conditions between Cienega Valley and Paicines grape growing regions.

We trust this will help to substantiate separating the two grape growing regions, and will substantiate granting Almadén Vineyards request to establish Cienega Valley and Paicines as viticultural areas.

Yours very truly,



Klaus P. Mathes
Vice President-Winemaster

KPM:bj0