

From: Doug Beckett [mailto:doug@peachycanyon.com]
Sent: Tuesday, April 17, 2007 10:50 PM
To: Rulemaking, TTB
Subject: 'TTB Notice No. 71'

Dear Mr. Foote,

First I would like to clarify a confusing issue being brought up by most of those opposed to the new Paso Robles Westside AVA, this is not about 11 additional AVA's or the expansion of the existing greater Paso Robles AVA as proposed by a members only AVA committee. Nor is it about better or worse. This is an application to recognize the uniqueness of the Westside of the greater Paso Robles AVA and nothing else. This is not about the Westside of the city of Paso Robles, Templeton or Atascadero. This is about the Westside of the greater Paso Robles AVA.

Size is certainly not the issue here though brought up frequently, if for some reason that would be grounds to disapprove the Paso Robles Westside AVA petition. The largest AVA is the Ohio River Valley. Next in size is the Texas Hill Country, which spans an area of 15,000 square miles, and is larger in size than New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Hawaii, New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland. The smallest area, Cole Ranch, covers a little less than a quarter square mile. The boundaries used to identify the Paso Robles Westside AVA are the three existing North, South and Western boundaries of the existing Paso Robles AVA which was approved in 1983. The fourth boundary, Eastern, is exactly what Dr. Rice wants to see, an ancient water shed, the Salinas River. The Salinas River is the natural boundary for the Paso Robles Westside AVA as it runs North, from boarder to boarder, year around either above or below ground. To try and identify the Paso Robles Westside AVA any other way would be confusing and not meet the standards set forth by the TTB.

There has been some criticism of the soils on the Westside yet many growers and producers came to the region looking for specific qualities. Take Las Tablas Creek for example. In an article in The Tribune, San Luis Obispo County, April 13, 2007, "A new milestone for Paso's Rhone ringer" the author writes, "The founder of Las Tablas Vineyard turns 80 next week; he and his partners were among the pioneers who chose the chalky hills of west Paso to make a home for Rhone". "After a long search, Haas discovered the area west of Paso Robles, where the rocky, calcareous soil was almost identical to that of the Rhone valley and where climatic conditions were ideal for Rhone varietals". "It took us almost five years to zero in here," Hass recalls. "we looked all over the state, and one day we noticed the chalky soil when we were driving up Peachy Canyon (Westside) and that was really what we were looking for". This speaks volumes

and is one of many reasons growers and producers, from San Miguel South chose the Westside of the greater Paso Robles AVA.

Comments stating flatly that the Westside has no branding and means nothing and is confusing are simply not true. I would suggest we look to the TTB comment section and listen to the distributors, retailers, restaurateurs and consumers that know the Westside and believe that all the years of branding deserve protection. Only wines made from grapes from the Westside should be allowed to say Paso Robles Westside. When the 1990 Peachy Canyon Westside Zinfandel was ranked in the top 100 wines in the world in the Wine Spectator, Paso Robles Westside was branded as a wine region. Without the Paso Robles Westside AVA, Paso Robles will open itself up to situations similar to the Napa Ridge fiasco or the ongoing struggle in Calistoga over their AVA. We cannot allow this to happen to Paso Robles.

The application for the proposed Paso Robles Westside AVA is a well thought out researched document that meets all the requirements set forth by the TTB for recognition as it's own AVA. Any time you propose a new AVA someone will get left out and not all will be happy. The TTB has been generous in allowing an extension to share comments. I doubt that a Paso Robles hearing in Paso Robles would have much value. It is obvious that most of the comments in support of the AVA are from around the country and that those individuals would probably not attend at their own expense. On the other hand, most of the opponents are local landowners, wineries or employees of those wineries. I would think that a public hearing would only review the comments already posted and would not be that productive.

For further support of the comparative difference, please go to the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance website, www.pasowine.com and go to the Climate and Geography pages. I think you will agree, there is a difference.

I urge the TTB to approve the Paso Robles Westside AVA application as it stands. It is complete, concise and has the scientific and historical information required and deserves the recognition afforded a new AVA.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,

Doug Beckett

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