

Mr. Frank Foote, Director
Regulations and Ruling Division
Alcohol, Tobacco, Tax and Trade Bureau
Attention: Notice #71
P.O. Box 14412
Washington, D.C. 20044-4412

April 6, 2007

Dear Mr. Foote:

I welcome the opportunity of writing you in connection with the **proposed new Paso Robles Westside AVA, WHICH I STRONGLY OPPOSE**. I purchased our property in 1969 in the Paso Robles Area and planted 500 acres of wine grapes in 1973, after conducting exhaustive research and studies of our area for approximately two years as to topography, thermographs, soil and water analysis and digging numerous back-hoe holes to check the depth of the various soil types.

At the time we planted our large vineyards, there were less than 200 acres of wine grapes growing in our San Luis Obispo County and three very old wineries. We were definitely pioneers. We hired experienced viticultural consultants to assist us in the design, engineering and planting of our vineyards.

The language of the long time farmers and ranchers and their families in the area was to refer to an area as Adelaide, Willow Creek, Estrella, Geneseo, Templeton, San Miguel, Shandon, Creston and the El Pomar area, not north, west, east and south. The cattlemen knew how many head they could graze on a seasonal or annual basis within each of those areas, they had a pretty good idea how many tons per acre of barley or wheat they could grow based upon the rainfall, the climatic conditions, the soil and mother nature. Each area is different.

Those of us who farmed the land knew virtually everyone in town and around the greater Paso Robles area which now designated the Paso Robles AVA, of which I was one of the core group who established the PASO ROBLES AVA in 1983. Good communication existed at that time. As our wine industry grew, I and a few of my amigos were instrumental in forming the first Paso Robles Vintners & Growers Association in the early eighties and I was president of that organization for three years.

I sold wine grapes to wineries from Mendocino County on the North to Santa Barbara County on the South, and in most cases the wineries printed PASO ROBLES on their labels to indicate the origin of the grapes. I also sold grapes to wineries throughout the greater Paso Robles Area, the Westside wineries included.

Those of us in the wine business who had developed a background and experience were well aware of the subtleties of the grapes from the entire Paso Robles area, whether it be growers or the wine makers. Then comes along one individual from southern California who thinks we are all a bunch of hicks and wants to cash in on his so-called "brilliant marketing expertise", and fought paying the going price for the grapes in our area and decided unilaterally that he would put the

screws to all the farmers and either offered below market prices for the grapes or purchased grapes from the San Joaquin Valley, an area that produces more quantity than quality.

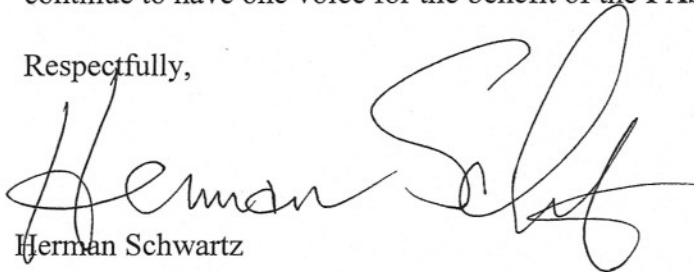
He has attempted to mislead all who will listen to him, has not changed his tune and he is now leading the charge to create his own appellation at the expense of almost everyone else in the Paso Robles AVA appellation by establishing arbitrary guidelines to support his proposal of **HIS NEW APPELLATION**. Arbitrary is hardly the term. Most experienced wine people in our area are keenly aware of the vast differences in the proposed new Westside appellation that runs the gamut from one of the hottest, flattest and driest areas in the entire North County of San Luis Obispo to one of the more moderate in temperature, slightly rolling hills and the highest rainfall in our county, let alone the varieties of soil types and the quantity and quality of the water. No one in his right mind would have attempted to submit this proposed appellation knowing the vast diversity of vineyards, topography, rain, temperature, soil types, water analysis and whatever else he has submitted.

Possibly, some newer wine folks in the area may be frustrated for a number of reasons, most of whom may be emotional: i.e. small acreage = quality grapes, dry-farmed grapes = quality, hill-farmed acreage (goat country) = quality, close spacing = quality. Possibly they might even convince themselves they are right, but factually, they are wrong.

The wine community in the Paso Robles AVA knows better. Miracles seldom occur, and hopefully, your Bureau will agree with the greater **Paso Robles area wine community**, that the vision and plan most of have will come to fruition based upon quality products, with price points carefully projected, not bullying or forcing people to back the proposed new Westside appellation.

The Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance (new name for the Association) has carried out an aggressive and popular marketing program for the past four years that has the buy-in and participation of virtually every winery that markets grapes within and outside of our area. We must continue to have one voice for the benefit of the **PASO ROBLES wine country**.

Respectfully,



Herman Schwartz