

# TERROIR: GRATON



## HISTORY

Graton sits in the middle of the lovely Green Valley area of the Russian River Valley. Early settlers looking for gold realized that they could make a better living off the land. With the Green Valley's fertile soil and temperate climate, the area's residents sought fortune in peaches, wine grapes, prunes, hops, and apples, in addition to logging and milling the local redwood forests. When the railroad came to Green Valley, the town of Graton was created. The town flourished, yet it always had a reputation as a rough-and-tumble kind of place. By mid-century, its population of 500 grew by thousands during every harvest. The boom ended in the 1970's when the area's prized apple orchards were eclipsed by higher yielding operations in Washington and California's Central Valley. The downtown apple processing plants stopped operating, the railroad tracks were torn out, and the town fell into a state of abandon. Graton fell on hard times. This changed in the 1990's. The downtown was revitalized by a local builder and the Green Valley area became recognized as one of the world's best growing areas for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes. Graton, once considered the "armpit of Sonoma County" has emerged as an eclectic, diverse, active community and a hub for the county's artists, painters, musicians and odd tinkerer.



## GRAY TOWN

Graah-ton? Grah-ton? Here in West County, the locals pronounce it "Gray-Ton." The town was going to be called Green Valley, but that name was already taken, so two local businessmen (both coincidentally named James), James Gray and James H. Brush, filed an application to create a township surrounding the new train depot in 1904. The area known "Gray's Town" officially became Graton in 1905, but the town is anything but Gray. It's a colorful and vibrant artistic community.

## OUR HOME SITE

Graton Distilling Co. is a separate distillery that was carved out of the buildings originally housing an apple canning and processing plant owned by the Hallberg family, one of the area's preeminent families during West County's agricultural heyday. The Hallbergs were known for producing superior hops and a wide variety of apple products, mainly under the Redwood Empire label. At its peak, the Hallbergs were one of the producers that made Graton a leading global purveyor of apple products. The distillery sits on a 9-acre parcel that houses parent company Purple Wine + Spirits' wine production and offices. Old equipment and relics from that past still remain on the property, reminding us of our ties to the rich agricultural history of the region.

