

### **Alternative Wine Country Excursions**

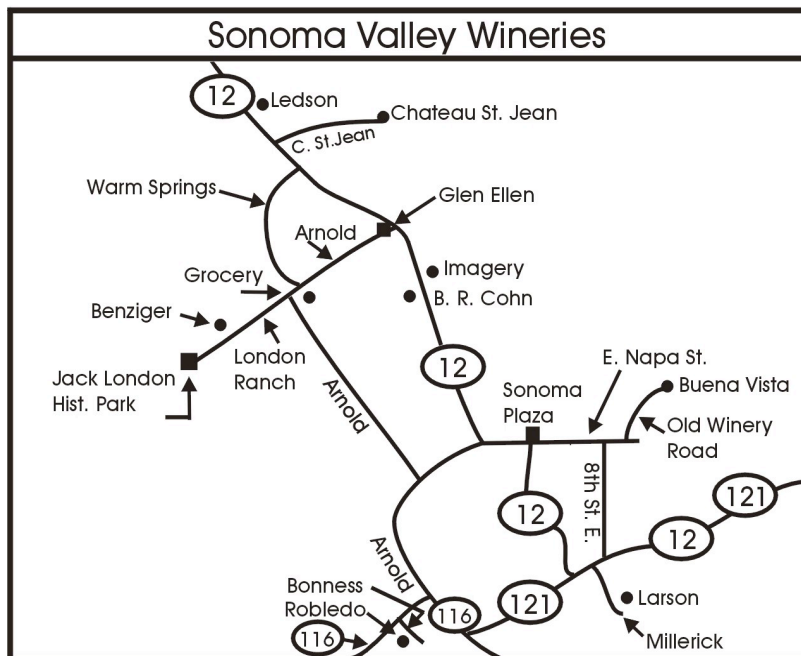
We've tried to approximate the Napa Valley "wine experience" in the two following excursions. What we mean by that is, we've selected wineries in each area that have "something extra," such as a vineyard tour, picnic area, gardens, distinctive architecture, interesting history, etc. Instead of simply hopping from one wine tasting to another, you'll have the opportunity and time to enjoy the eclectic aura of California's wine country.

We had the assistance of knowledgeable locals in selecting these wineries, and we've confirmed their excellence during personal visits.

If you are a novice or occasional wine drinker you may find the "Brief Wine Primer" earlier in this chapter to be of value before you begin touring and tasting.

Generally, there is a wine tasting fee in Sonoma Valley wineries, which is often waived with a purchase. In contrast, wine tasting is often complimentary in the Alexander/Dry Creek/Russian River Valley area.

*Please remember that wine tastings can lead to slowed reflexes; so eat something between tastings, be especially cautious as you drive, or appoint a designated driver.*



## **SONOMA VALLEY EXCURSION**

So that you have some choice, we provide information here on eight selected wineries in the Sonoma Valley. While it's possible to visit all eight in one day, we recommend that you limit yourself to only five; otherwise, you may find yourself rushing and not enjoying. So, our suggestion is: read through all the descriptions and settle on the ones that most appeal to you. They are arranged in sequence from south to north, so that no matter which ones you choose, your progression from one winery to the next should be fairly smooth. In our opinion, the Benziger vineyard tram tour and Chateau St. Jean's architecture and gardens should not be missed.

We also recommend that you buy sandwiches at the Glen Ellen Village Market and eat lunch at one of three picnic areas. And we suggest the Jack London State Historic Park as a nice change of pace.

Accommodations and restaurants in the Sonoma Valley are listed in the prior chapter. For more choices, contact the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau, 453 First Street East, Sonoma, CA 95476, 707-996-1090, [www.sonoma-valley.com](http://www.sonoma-valley.com). (Ask for the Sonoma Valley Visitors Guide.)

### **Buena Vista Historic Winery**

This is where European-style wine making began in California. Read the outside display boards, opposite the tasting room, to learn about grape growing in this cooler Carneros microclimate, and how Hungarian Agoston Haraszthy was the first (in 1857) to replace the pedestrian mission grape with grapes from France and Germany. Try the Pinot Noir, Merlot and Chardonnay. Open weekdays 10am to 5pm, Saturday and Sunday 10am-5:30pm; 18000 Old Winery Rd., Sonoma 95476; 707-265-1472; [www.buenavistawinery.com](http://www.buenavistawinery.com).

### **Robledo Family Winery**

This is the first winery established in America (1997) by a Mexican migrant vineyard worker. All nine Robledo children are involved in the operation. Their story is told in the August 2005 *People* magazine. The winery is in the Carneros Region, which is influenced by Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay weather. Try the Pinot Noir, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc. Open Monday through Saturday 10am to 5pm and Sunday 11am to 4pm; 21901 Bonness Rd., Sonoma 95476; 707-939-6903, [www.robledofamilywinery.com](http://www.robledofamilywinery.com).

### **Larson Family Winery/Sonoma Creek**

Also family-owned (since the 1860s) and located in the Carneros Region, this winery was the site of the Sonoma Rodeo from 1920 to the early 1950's, and exhibits plenty of rodeo memorabilia to prove it. Steamboats once called here from Oakland. See Dollie Llama and Lucky Lamb, play bocci ball. Try the Gewurztraminer. Open daily 10am-5pm; 23355 Millerick Rd., Sonoma 95476; 707-938-3031; [www.larsonfamilywinery.com](http://www.larsonfamilywinery.com).

### **Lunchtime in the Glen Ellen Area**

Buy your deli lunch at the Glen Ellen Village Market, 13751 Arnold Drive. This market features the best delicatessen that we've ever seen, and the ready-made sandwiches are super-delicious. Picnic at: Benziger (shaded, with the most seating), B.R. Cohn (a wonderful patio), or Imagery (sunny tables in both front and back of the winery).

### **B.R. Cohn**

Here, you'll find not only vineyards, but also a 130-year old olive grove. Not surprisingly, they sell wines, olive oils and vinegars. The winery's owner was the Dooby Brothers road manager. There are also a stage for large benefit concerts and a patio area for picnics. They specialize in Cabernet Sauvignon. Open daily 10am to 5pm; 15000 Sonoma Hwy., Glen Ellen, 95442; 707-938-4064; [www.brcohn.com](http://www.brcohn.com).

### **Imagery Estate Winery**

Owned by Benziger, Imagery commissions artists to create new labels each year and displays 170 original pieces of label art displayed around the tasting room and in the gallery, thus claiming the world's largest wine label art collection. Outside, on the "Appellation Trail," be sure to read the descriptions of a dozen varietals in the showcases. Although wines are distributed only to California restaurants and wine shops, they can be purchased in the tasting room and online. Try the Malbec and White Burgundy. Open daily 10am-4:30pm; 14335 Sonoma Hwy., Glen Ellen, 95442; 707-935-4500; [www.imagerywinery.com](http://www.imagerywinery.com).

**\*\*\* Sonoma area services, from the prior chapter, Day Six \*\*\***

**It's Dinnertime!**

- **Cafe La Haye**, American/bistro cuisine, 140 E. Napa St., Sonoma, 707-935-5994, [www.cafelahaye.com](http://www.cafelahaye.com), \$\$.
- **Della Santina's Trattoria**, Northern Italian cuisine, 133 E. Napa St., Sonoma, 707-935-0576, [www.dellasantinas.com](http://www.dellasantinas.com), \$\$.
- **Deuce**, American cuisine, 691 Broadway, Sonoma, 707-933-3823, [www.dine-at-deuce.com](http://www.dine-at-deuce.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **The General's Daughter**, California cuisine, 400 West Spain St., Sonoma, 707-938-4004, [www.thegeneralsdaughter.com](http://www.thegeneralsdaughter.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **The Girl & the Fig** (a favorite of ours), French bistro cuisine, 110 West Spain St., Sonoma, 707-938-3634, [www.thegirlandthe fig.com](http://www.thegirlandthe fig.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **Glen Ellyn Inn**, California fusion cuisine, 13670 Arnold De, Glen Ellyn, 707-996-6409, [www.glenelleninn.com](http://www.glenelleninn.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **LaSalette**, Portuguese cuisine, 452 First St. E., Suite H, Sonoma, 707-938-1297, [www.lasalette-restaurant.com](http://www.lasalette-restaurant.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **Maya Restaurant**, Latin/American cuisine, 101 E. Napa St., Sonoma, 707-935-3500, [www.mayarestaurant.com](http://www.mayarestaurant.com), \$\$.
- **Swiss Hotel and Restaurant**, Italian cuisine, 18 West Spain St., Sonoma, 707-938-2884, [www.swisshotelsonoma.com](http://www.swisshotelsonoma.com), \$.
- **Taste of the Himalayas**, Himalayan cuisine, 464 First St. E., Sonoma 95476, 707-996-1161, [www.himalayanexp.com](http://www.himalayanexp.com), \$.

**Ginnodo-recommended B&Bs/Inns**

- **Beltane Ranch**, 11775 Sonoma Hwy., 707-996-6501, [www.beltaneranch.com](http://www.beltaneranch.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **Brick House Bungalows Bed & Breakfast**, 313 First St. E., Sonoma 95476, 707-996-8091, fax 707-996-7301, [www.brickhousebungalows.com](http://www.brickhousebungalows.com), \$\$\$.
- **The Cottage Inn and Spa-Mission B&B**, 310 First St. E., Sonoma 95476, 800-944-1490, 707-996-0719, no fax, [www.cottageinnandspa.com](http://www.cottageinnandspa.com), \$\$-\$\$\$\$.
- **Gaige House Inn**, 13540 Arnold Dr., Glen Ellen 95442, 800-935-0237, 707-935-0237, 707-935-6411, [www.gaige.com](http://www.gaige.com), \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.
- **Hidden Oak Inn**, 214 E. Napa St., Sonoma 95476, 877-996-9863, 707-996-9863, no fax, [www.hiddenoakinn.com](http://www.hiddenoakinn.com), \$\$\$.

- **Inn at Sonoma**, 630 Broadway, Sonoma 95476, 888-568-9818, 707-939-1340, fax 707-939-8834, [www.innatsonoma.com](http://www.innatsonoma.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **Magliulo's Rose Garden Inn**, 681 Broadway, Sonoma 95476, 707-996-1031, no fax, [www.bedandbreakfast.com/california/magliulos-rose-garden-inn](http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/california/magliulos-rose-garden-inn), \$-\$\$.
- **Sonoma Chalet**, 18935 5th St. W., Sonoma 95476, 800-938-3129, 707-938-3129, fax 707-996-0190, [www.sonomachalet.com](http://www.sonomachalet.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **The Sonoma Hotel** (historic), 110 West Spain St., Sonoma 95476, 800-468-6016, 707-996-2996, fax 707-996-7014, [www.sonoma-hotel.com](http://www.sonoma-hotel.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **Thistle Dew**, 171 W. Spain St., Sonoma 95476, 800-382-7895, 707-938-2909, fax 707-938-2129, [www.thistledew.com](http://www.thistledew.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.
- **Trojan Horse Inn**, 19455 Sonoma Hwy., Sonoma 95476, 800-899-1925, 707-996-2430, fax 707-996-9185, [www.trojanhorse-inn.com](http://www.trojanhorse-inn.com), \$\$\$.
- **Victorian Garden Inn**, 316 E. Napa St., Sonoma 95476, 800-543-5339, 707-996-5339, fax 707-996-1689, [www.victoriangardeninn.com](http://www.victoriangardeninn.com), \$\$-\$\$\$.

#### **AAA- or Mobil-recommended Motels/Hotels**

- **Best Western Sonoma Valley**, 550 Second St. W, Sonoma, 800-334-5784, 707-938-9200, fax 707-938-0935, [www.sonoma-valleyinn.com](http://www.sonoma-valleyinn.com), \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.
- **El Pueblo Inn**, 896 W. Napa St., Sonoma 95476, 800-900-8844, 707-996-3651, fax 707-935-5988, [www.elpuebloinn.com](http://www.elpuebloinn.com), \$-\$\$\$.
- **Ledson Hotel**, 480 First St. E., Sonoma 95476, 707-996-9779, fax 707-996-9776, [www.ledsonhotel.com](http://www.ledsonhotel.com), \$\$\$.
- **MacArthur Place**, 29 E. MacArthur St., Sonoma 95476, 800-722-1866, 707-938-2929, [www.macarthurplace.com](http://www.macarthurplace.com), \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.
- **Sonoma Creek Inn**, 239 Boyes Blvd. South, Sonoma 95476, 888-712-1289, 707-939-9463, fax 707-938-3042, [www.sonomacreekinn.com](http://www.sonomacreekinn.com), \$-\$\$.

#### **Campgrounds**

- **Sugarloaf Ridge State Park**, in Kenwood off Hwy 12 at the end of Adobe Canyon Road, 800-444-7275 (reservations), 707-833-5712 (details), [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).
- **Bothe-Napa Valley State Park**, 4 mi. south of Calistoga and 5 mi. N. of St. Helena on Hwy 29, 800-444-7275 (reservations), 707-942-4575 (details), [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov).