

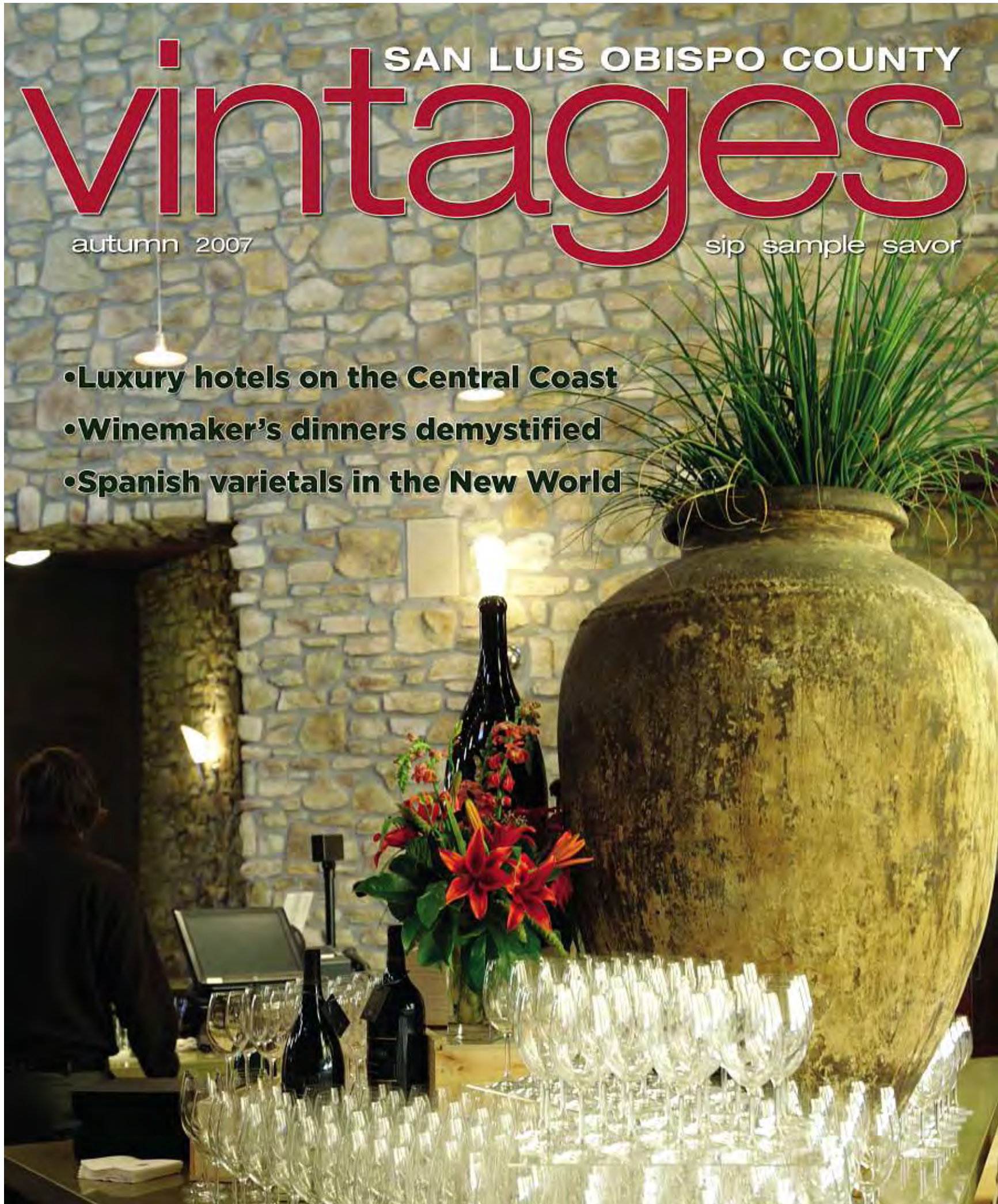
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

vintages

autumn 2007

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- Luxury hotels on the Central Coast
- Winemaker's dinners demystified
- Spanish varietals in the New World



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EVENTS

Druha Trava Bluegrass	Saturday, September 29
John Danley & Gove Scrivenor - Folk	Saturday, October 13
Harvest Festival	Friday - Sunday, October 20 - 22
Winemaker Dinner	Saturday, October 20
Mark Atkinson Trio - Jazz	Saturday, November 10
Kathrin Shorr Band - Folk Rock	Saturday, November 17

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Opolo Harvest Festival 2007

**October 19th & 20th -
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In Opolo Tradition, we will once again be throwing the best party in Paso Robles for Harvest Festival 2007. This is our most popular event for the year and will sell out! In between grape stomping, ethnic folk dancing, gypsy serenades, and of course, fabulous Opolo wine, we will be treating you to some of the finest food in the North County. The menu will include all your Opolo favorites including whole roasted lamb, chicken and pork tenderloin along with all the extras. At \$65 per wine club member and \$75 per non-member, this may be the best deal in town! Call (805) 238-9593 for reservations.

October 21st & 22nd Saturday and Sunday
Daytime BBQ - it's Time to Celebrate the Harvest...

...and here at Opolo "celebrate" is just another word for "feast." So, we're bringing together all our troops, firing up the barbeque and preparing to blow your socks off. We'll be preparing our authentic, south-of-the-border, carne asada tacos and whole roasted lamb along with salsa, beans and salad. Is this heaven? No.

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Luxury hotels on the Central Coast

A new breed of luxury hotels in San Luis Obispo County specialize in pampering, catering to and perhaps even spoiling their guests.

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Winemaker's dinners demystified

We answer all the questions you may have been afraid to ask about these esteemed celebrations of wine and food.

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BY DAWN WHITE



Spanish varietals in the New World

These days, you don't need to leave the Central Coast for an authentic Spanish wine experience, as tempranillo is making its way onto the local wine scene.

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ON THE COVER:
The beautiful new hospitality center at Vina Robles gets ready for a winemaker's dinner.

COVER PHOTO BY JOE JOHNSTON

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A romp through Paso Robles' east-side reveals as much discovery in the architecture and personality of the tasting rooms as the wines.

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An elegant yet simple salad that pairs well with almost any white wine.

BY SALLY BUFFALO

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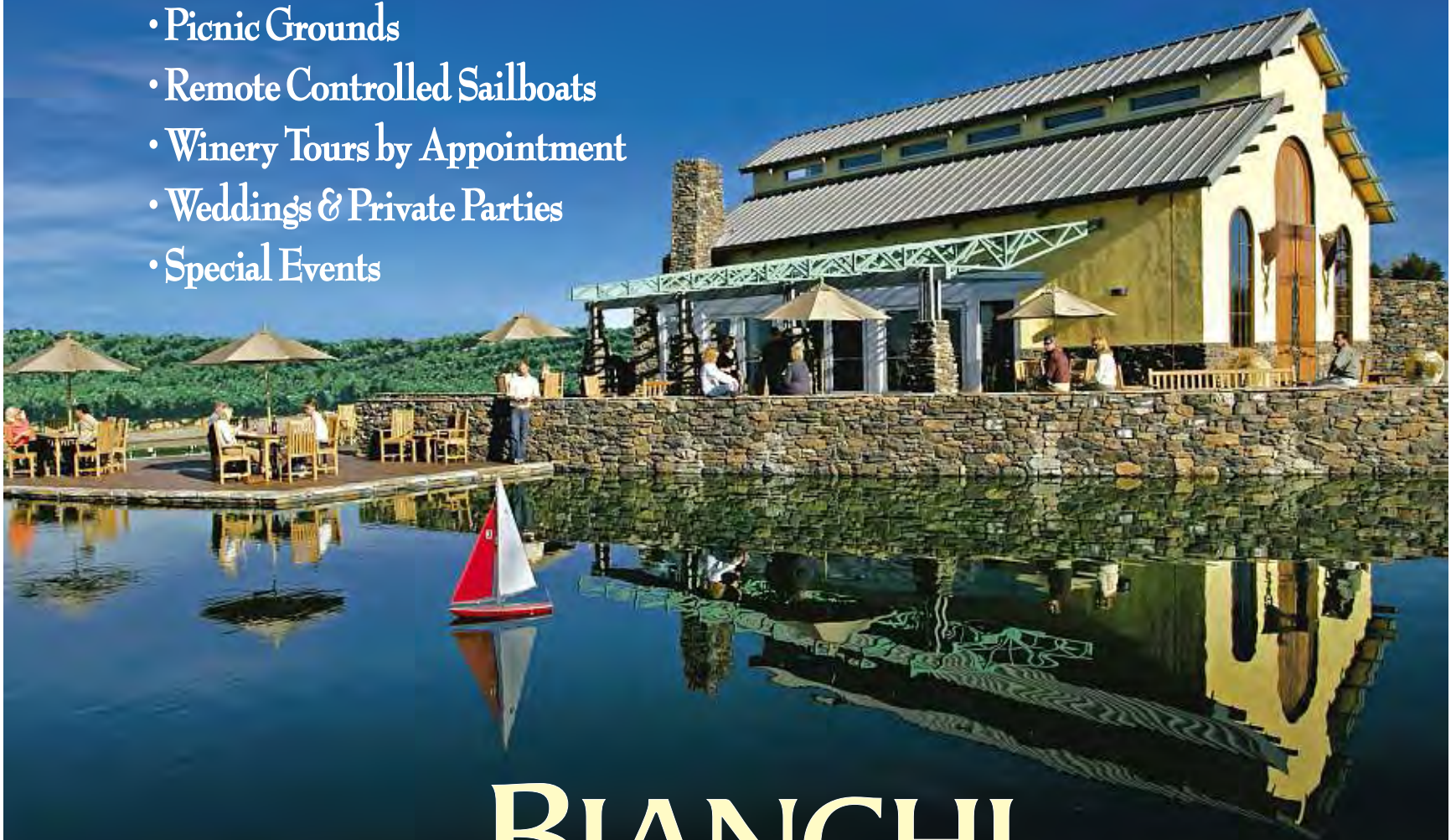
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hola, my name is noel

*I pick the leaves, so the sun shines on the grapes
in just the right way.*

I make the wine.

Postcards from the east side

By Sally Buffalo

When my East Coast parents are in town, I almost always take them on an afternoon of wine tasting.

It's an enjoyable way to spend the day, cruising along some of the county's prettiest country roads with frequent stops at scenic vineyards. Plus, it's a socially acceptable reason to sip wine during the day – which always relaxes familial relations.

During previous visits, we'd explored the reaches of the Far Out wineries, boogied away an afternoon at Castoro Cellars and wandered hither and yon through Edna Valley.

In search of pastoral scenery, I had always neglected the highway-dominated eastside of Paso Robles, not appreciating that just off Highway 46 are some of the best spreads in the area.

So we begin this afternoon with a stop at Robert Hall winery, where we enjoy the architecture, copper fountains, reflecting pools and brick arcades as much as the Rhône de Robles, Blanc de Robles, grenache and brut rosé (a tasting room and internet exclusive).

Like Vina Robles, which just opened next door, Robert Hall is among the local wineries to open super-sized but inviting new "hospitality centers," with cavernous tasting rooms, gift shops, conference and dining facilities and outdoor areas with elegant fountains and plenty of places to sit and enjoy the surroundings.

We mosey just across the highway, arriving at Eberle Winery just in time for a departing tour of the underground caves. The cool caves are a respite from the warm Paso afternoon and we enjoy walking among the barrels and trying to frame artful pictures of the long passageways lined with them. We end in the underground dining room and find ourselves jealous of those who have timed their visits to one of the monthly chef dinners that take place in the cozy room ringed with lanterns.

Back upstairs by way of the production area

and huge casks, my parents are delighted to be introduced to the idea of complimentary tasting, which has disappeared from all but a few of the area's wineries. It's a little crowded in the small tasting room, however, so we sample the wines – especially savoring the syrah, which Gary Eberle was the first to plant in Paso – and move on.

We venture east along the highway to the outpost of Tobin James Cellars and discover, to our pleasure, that the tasting room is open until 6 p.m. We have time to explore a couple more spots before returning and still make our 6:30 p.m. dinner reservations.

We head off the beaten path of Highway 46 onto roads you'd never guess were that near a major thoroughfare and end up at the wonderland of Clautiere Vineyard. The grounds are sprinkled with whimsical statues, ironwork and tree ornaments and the interior is a riot of color, pattern and fantasy. They describe their tasting room as "Edward Scissorhands meets the Mad Hatter at the Moulin Rouge," and they aren't kidding.

As we sip the roussane, mourvèdre and other Rhône wines, we have a blast trying on the kooky wigs and hats strewn about the place. It's

hard not to feel giddy here, even if you haven't had much to drink.

Our adventures in headgear take longer than planned and most other tasting rooms have since closed, though we do swing by Bianchi to gaze at the mini waterfall-fed lake and patio peninsula before making our way back to Tobin James.

If we thought Clautiere featured a jovial atmosphere, Tobin (where tasting is also complimentary) is a downright party. The tasting room, dominated by a magnificent antique mahogany bar, feels more like a raucous happy hour at the local saloon, even as its wines move easily from casual barbecue to fine dinners. The zin is killer, and I melt for the late harvest zin, "Liquid Love," and another dessert wine called Charisma, presented in the winery's trademark blue bottle.

But this dessert does not mark the end of the evening. We still have a fine meal – and more impressive wines – awaiting us at the cozy Bistro Laurent in downtown Paso before we mark the end to another day of wine discovery on the Central Coast.



SNAPSHOTS FROM AN EASTSIDE WINE OUTING

(clockwise from left): Sally posing with the Eberle mascot (Eberle means "small boar" in German) outside the tasting room. Sally and her father, Robin, showing off some of the fanciful wigs and hats at Clautiere Vineyard. Whimsical sculptures and tree ornaments adorn the grounds outside Clautiere.

Our picks for what wines to buy now

By Laurie Daniel

There are still some older vintages available, but the local wines you'll see in stores these days are most likely to be whites from 2005 and 2006, as well as reds from 2004 and 2005. The 2005 vintage in particular shows great potential, but some of the more age-worthy 2004 reds are just being released.

THREE TO DRINK NOW: Some very fresh, crisp whites from 2006 are available, and a prime example is the **2006 Tangent Ecclestone (\$20)**, a white blend dominated by pinot gris and viognier, along with some riesling and small amounts of pinot blanc, orange muscat and albariño. This bright wine displays fleshy flavors of white peach and citrus, an intriguing spicy note and a long, racy finish. If your meal calls for a white that's richer, try the **2005 Wolff Vineyards Old Vine Chardonnay (\$20)**, which offers fleshy tropical fruit and lemon cream flavors along with a great core of acidity. Red-wine lovers looking for immediate gratification should pick up the **2005 J. Lohr "Los Osos" Merlot (\$15)**, a smooth, easy-to-drink merlot with plump blackberry and cassis flavors along with some attractive spice notes.

THREE FOR THE CELLAR: The **2004 Estancia Meritage (\$33)**, a blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and petit verdot from the east side of Paso Robles, is big and concentrated, with dark cherry and cassis fruit, some nice spice, a hint of mocha and a long finish marked by firm but approachable tannins. Some of Paso's Rhône-style reds are good candidates for aging, too. The **2004 Clayhouse Estate Cuvee (\$28)**, a blend of syrah, petite sirah and grenache, is ripe and smoky, with berry fruit, hints of mocha and spice and a tannic edge on the finish. The **2004 Austin Hope Syrah (\$42)**, from the Hope Family Vineyard on Paso's west side, is a ripe, dense wine with juicy black raspberry fruit, a nice peppery note and very firm structure.

Laurie Daniel writes a weekly wine column for The Tribune.



PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOW



187+ACRES Along Jolon Road

With a 140 acre vineyard planted in mature high production Wine Grapes featuring 109 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon, 22 acres of Merlot and 9 acres of Cabernet Franc. Most of this large vineyard is planted on 11' x 6' spacing. In addition to this very productive Vineyard there is a 2500' long landing strip for easy access by private aircraft. **\$3,725,000**



“Harmony Farms” - Stunning 52+ acres with panoramic hilltop view and a luxurious home of approximately 7200 sq. ft. A Premium Quality 40 Acre Merlot Vineyard is meticulously maintained. A 5000 sq. ft shop may be ideal for conversion to a winery and tasting room. Every detail regarding this property is impressive from the design and construction to the gorgeous setting. **\$4,750,000**



“Sin Falta Vineyard”

A beautiful property with 158 acres of Wine Grapes. Great climate, deep rich soils and an abundance of water estimated at 1100 GPM. This professional operation includes equipment sheds, septic system, two irrigation wells, pumps and large reservoirs, perimeter fencing and a mobile home occupied by a full-time caretaker. **\$3,500,000**



53 Acres with 28 acres of mature producing Vineyard on disease resistant root stock. The home was built in 1992, has 2 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths and quality crafted with covered patios and decks. Located within the large barn is a 1 bedroom, 1 full bath guest quarters that could be easily converted to a Winery and Tasting Room. Located in Southern Monterey County. **\$1,900,000**



“Every great wine in the world comes from a vineyard with it’s roots in Limestone”

Vineyard Drive Estate and Vineyard
Located in the highly sought-after west side area, this fully developed property includes a fabulous home with four bedrooms and five and one half baths, office/library, media room, Butler’s Pantry, swimming pool,

outdoor kitchen and so much more. Stunning views stretch across the vineyards, farmland and oak covered hillsides. Perhaps the most important feature is the 14 acres of highest quality Cabernet Sauvignon wine grapes and the one acre of world class Zinfandel. This property not only offers fabulous Linne-Calodo soil, but also an ideal climate. The winery building with barrel storage and wine making facility is “climate controlled” for perfect temperature year round. All the farming equipment will be transferred to the new owner. **\$2,950,000**



50 Acres in Templeton

Excellent east side location with easy access from Templeton, Atascadero and Paso. A rambling ranch house has lots of possibilities for updating. Additionally a single wide mobile home is suitable for caretaker or rental. The soil is Linne Calodo #152 which is the most desirable for premium quality wine grapes. Includes redwood barn, ag well and perimeter fencing . **\$1,100,000**



Quality Zinfandel Vineyard

Westside location for this 10 acre parcel planted with an 8 acre vineyard. Offers a nearly new 30' x 40' metal Barn/Workshop with concrete floor, complete fencing and gated entry. A 2003 Hallmark modular home offers 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms and a den. Great Opportunity! **\$695,000**



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Marriott, Mission and Bellasera, oh my!

Visitors to San Luis Obispo County have new options for where to stay with the recent opening of four hotels.

A 138-room **Courtyard by Marriott Hotel** opened this summer in south San Luis Obispo, just off Los Osos Valley Drive near Highway 101. The 86,716-square-foot hotel features a terrace for outdoor entertaining, two meeting rooms, a pool, spa and restaurant.

The county's second **Courtyard by Marriott, in Paso Robles**, was expected to be open by the end of September, just in time for fall har-



vest celebrations. The 130-room hotel on South Vine Street has a restaurant, bar and meeting facilities for up to 100 people.

Also new in Paso is the **La Bellasera Hotel and Suites**, a posh, boutique-style, 60-room hotel near the interchange of Highways 101 and 46. Rooms are equipped with kitchenettes, fireplaces and spas, and the hotel also has a conference center, upscale restaurant and bar.

In Pismo Beach, the Mission Inn opened its doors with 120 rooms, a cafe, lounge, business center, free wireless Internet, pool and spa. It's on the east side of Highway 101

at Fourth Street and James Way, but the five-acre property sits atop a bluff and many rooms feature ocean views.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY STEPHANIE LAIRD



It's small and early, but good

The **2007 wine grape harvest** got an early start in San Luis Obispo County, with a handful of wineries that began

picking grapes in mid-August, nearly two weeks earlier than normal. Picking is now in full-swing at most vineyards.

The crop is smaller than those in the previous two years, but the quality appears better, local winemakers say. A cold and dry winter and temperate summer temperatures contributed to the harvest starting earlier, as well as the premium quality winemakers are expecting.

Wine grapes are the county's most valuable crop, worth more than \$150 million in 2006, according to the county agricultural commissioner's annual report.

Wrangling up a modern cowboy retreat

John King — the entrepreneur behind the Cliffs Resort, Apple Farm Inn, Sycamore Mineral Springs, the Inn at Morro Bay and numerous other coastal resorts — has a new project in the works.

Vaquero de los Robles — which means "Cowboy of the Oaks" — is planned to feature a 280-room resort, 18-hole golf course and golf academy, two restaurants, conference center, spa, vineyard and wine tasting center on 400 acres near the Paso Robles Municipal Airport. The first phase of construction is beginning this year and should open in 2009, with the second phase to follow in 2010 or 2011.



localgrapelines

EOS Estate Winery in Paso Robles wine country — one of San Luis Obispo County's largest producers — has been sold to Tennessee-based Sapphire Wines for an undisclosed amount. It's one of the biggest sales ever for the region, said Stacie Jacob, executive director of the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, with one industry expert believing the deal could have been about \$35 million. The winery is expected to continue operating, with plans to grow production further.

Vina Robles opened a large new hospitality center and tasting room in August on Highway 46 East, next door to Robert Hall. The 14,000-square-foot center features a retail store, banquet room and outdoor courtyards with fountains. Plans call for a restaurant and hotel on the site in the future.

Sextant Wines opened a tasting room at 3536 S. Higuera St. in San Luis Obispo, the former location of Windemere Winery. The shopping plaza is a temporary home, as the owners plan to build a winery and tasting room in Edna Valley. The young winery, known for its Templeton-grown zinfandel, purchased Windemere and a 25-acre vineyard at Old Price Canyon Road at Highway 227 earlier this year.

HARVEST WINE TOUR

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DOLPHIN BAY HOTEL AND RESIDENCES in Pismo Beach is a definitive example of resort luxury on the Central Coast. Above, guests enjoy a refreshing dip in the bluff-top pool, just steps away from Lido, one of the finest restaurants in the area. A penthouse suite, below, offers ultra-luxurious accommodations, including a roomy ocean view living room with a flat-panel television (left), an exquisite formal dining room (center) and a master bedroom (right) that features a huge walk-in closet and a full bath with a jetted tub, not shown.



Luxury Hotels *on the Central Coast*

By Rebecca Juretic • Photos by Jay Swanson

Sometimes travel is about stepping outside your comfort zone. Other times, comfort is the primary destination.

A new breed of luxury hotels in San Luis Obispo County is meeting travelers' yearnings to be pampered, catered to, perhaps even spoiled. Each offers a slightly different experience and its own take on luxury.

Many amenities, however, come standard at higher-end hotels these days, including high thread-count sheets, jetted bath tubs, fireplaces, flat-panel televisions, wireless high-speed Internet and plenty of room to stretch out and relax.

Here are three local hotels that aspire to this new level of luxury.



Dolphin Bay Hotel and Residences, Pismo Beach

The spacious suites at the Dolphin Bay Hotel and Residences have all of the comforts of home – that is, if your home is a posh city penthouse.

Each one- and two-bedroom suite includes a living room, dining room, sizeable gourmet kitchen, even a laundry area. Like the layout of a home, bedrooms are completely separate from living areas to allow for privacy and seclusion. Suites are generously

sized, ranging from 900 to over 2,000 square feet.

Each suite is equipped with all of the upscale amenities you wish you had at home – honed travertine floors, wool carpets, surround sound entertainment center, large walk-in closet and furnished deck. The kitchens have custom cabinetry, granite countertops and top-of-the-line appliances, including a Wolff range. Some suites have a

Continues on the next page





THE BEAUTIFUL AVILA LA FONDA HOTEL, a tribute to the artistry of Old Mexico, is located one block from the beach in Avila Beach. The warmth and hospitality afforded guests is reminiscent of the slower-paced lifestyle south of the border, yet all the amenities one would expect at an upscale modern hotel can be found as well.

From the previous page

jetted tub and fireplace and nearly all offer up stunning ocean views. The ultra-luxurious penthouse suites feature more overall space and closets large enough to stash your entire wardrobe, if you so choose.

All rooms are stylishly decorated to feel like a luxury home. Sophisticated, high-end furnishings are a mix between contemporary and traditional with a hint of laid-back coastal style.

Even pets are pampered at the Dolphin Bay Hotel. When you and a furry friend reserve a designated pet room, your pooch will receive a special gift basket at check in. If you have little tykes in tow, they are presented with fun gifts – includ-

ing a personalized rubber duckie – upon arrival.

Although you may be tempted to spend your entire stay in the comfort of your suite, the hotel offers other diversions. There is an on-site fitness center. Their infinity-edge pool and Jacuzzi, encircled by swaying palms, take full advantage of views offered by the hotel's bluff-top location.

The on-site restaurant, Lido, offers a menu that emphasizes fresh seafood, local products and local wines. For a little extra pampering, the hotel also has La Bonne Vie spa, offering everything from massages to cellulite reduction treatments.

For most, however, the ocean offers the best entertainment. You can walk the public bluff-top trail that meanders just behind the hotel, enjoy nearby beach access or simply take in the view

from your private balcony – three wonderful ways to experience some of the most stunning coastline on the Central Coast.

2727 Shell Beach Road, Pismo Beach

800-516-0112

www.thedolphinbay.com

Rates (ranging from lowest-priced in the off-peak season to best room in peak season): \$305-\$1225

Avila La Fonda Hotel, Avila Beach

Step inside the lobby of Avila La Fonda Hotel, and you'll feel like you have traveled in both time and space. The hotel was modeled after a 19th-century Mexican village with its Spanish architecture and a façade reminiscent of colorful Mexican casitas.



EACH ROOM AT THE AVILA LA FONDA HOTEL is unique, yet every room is warm and inviting with lots of Mexican artwork and skylights. At the top left, a four-poster bed promises luxury relaxation. Below left, a sitting room off the kitchen offers a Murphy bed in the left corner and a pull-out sofa bed. On the right is the cozy lobby.

Avila La Fonda offers up the hospitality, warmth and exuberance of Mexican culture. Fountains splash throughout the property, giving the feel of an inviting Spanish courtyard. Floor tiles were handmade in Mexico, some still bearing the paw prints of the coyotes that tread on the drying clay.

The hotel is also a tribute to the artistry of Mexico. Colorful murals and Mexican art adorn the textured, patina-painted walls. Stained glass turns windows and skylights into brilliant prisms of light. Tile murals depict a variety of Central Coast landscapes.

The style of Avila La Fonda is cozy and rustic with all of the modern amenities you could wish for. There are 30 suites, all with jetted tubs for two, showers with multiple shower heads, towel warmers, fireplaces, iPod home centers and Bose

CD players. Laundry stations with complimentary supplies are located on each floor.

Most rooms have balconies and half have full kitchens. Some come with a Murphy bed or pull-out sofa bed. One room opens up to a private lanai equipped with a barbecue.

The room décor offers a contemporary slant on the Spanish theme with simple, comfortable furnishings, leather seating, Mexican art and sculpture and Spanish textiles. Bathrooms have a warm, Latin ambience with mosaics and painted murals.

Six rooms at Avila La Fonda are pet-friendly. There are also rooms that are handicap accessible and others that have aids for the hearing impaired.

Adding to the warm hospitality of Avila La Fonda, guests are invited to a nightly wine recep-

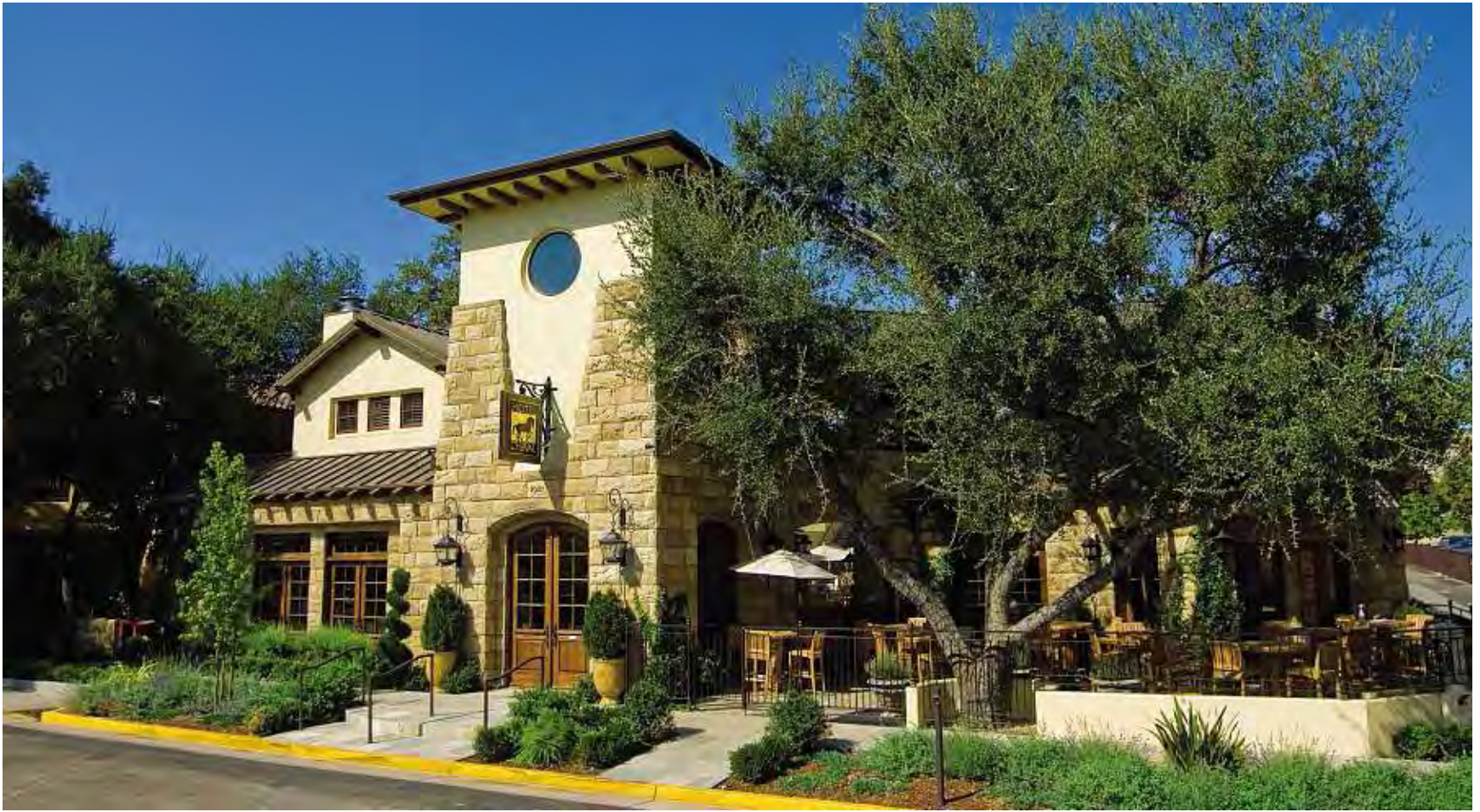
tion. The rest of the day, the hospitality room is stocked with complimentary beverages, fruit and fresh baked cookies. The hotel's 24-hour pantry offers other nibbles and beverages for a fee. In the library you can borrow pleasure reading, books on local history, music and movies. The hotel spa, Nekidd, offers treatments in line with the "organic" lifestyle, along with organic clothing.

Avila La Fonda offers a different take on the beach resort. Set back a block from the beach, it's a little quieter, the pace is a little slower. It's a good thing – you'll want to take time to savor this small but sweet slice of Mexico.

101 San Miguel St., Avila Beach
805-595-1700
www.avilalafonda.com

Rates (ranging from lowest-priced in the off-peak season to best room in peak season): \$120-\$450

Continues on the next page



CLOCKWISE, FROM LOWER LEFT: At Hotel Cheval, the lobby provides a rustic charm, making guests feel welcome. A central courtyard with its wood-burning fireplace is a nice place to relax with a glass of wine in the evening. Nestled under a beautiful old oak tree, the picturesque Hotel Cheval looks as though it's been transplanted from Provence or Tuscany – in fact it's in the heart of downtown Paso Robles. The Pony Club features a custom horseshoe-shaped bar and a great selection of local wines.



CONTEMPORARY, SOPHISTICATED décor and European elegance can be found in all the rooms at Hotel Cheval. Amenities include flat-paneled televisions, jetted tubs and fireplaces in most rooms.

From the previous page

Hotel Cheval, Paso Robles

Robert and Sherry Gilson were inspired to build Hotel Cheval after their travels in Europe. From its stone-clad exterior to its plush guest rooms, the hotel exudes European elegance with warm, rustic charm that puts guests at ease.

Hotel Cheval offers an intimate experience; its beautifully landscaped, limestone-paved courtyard is encircled by just 16 guest rooms, making you feel as if you're vacationing at a private villa in Tuscany or France.

Rooms offer contemporary, sophisticated décor with restful muted tones and clean-lined furnishings. All but two have fireplaces and some have decks.

Cheval means horse in French and the equestrian theme is revealed in playful ways throughout the hotel. Rooms are named after famous horses, equestrian gear adorns walls, and even their "do not disturb" room signs are made of "shoo-fly" horse hair tassels.

Although the hotel is small and intimate, there are many private nooks and alcoves throughout the property for private conversation, relaxation and solitary reflection. A favorite spot to sit in the evening is in front of one of the two outdoor wood-burning fireplaces. Or you can dive into a good book in the hotel library, which has the warmth of a gentleman's study.

Before guests head out on leisurely wine tasting adventures, most tuck into the hotel's complimentary continental breakfast delivered to guests' rooms Monday through Friday. A hot buffet is served up on weekend mornings.

Starting at 3 p.m. and continuing through the evening hours, guests can enjoy wine, champagne, beer and appetizers at The Pony Club. Cozy and sophisticated, it has the feel of a Parisian café with seating both inside and outside on the patio. The Gilsons even designed its zinc horseshoe-shaped bar after one they admired in France.

If you're hungry for something more substantial, you are just blocks away from a variety of excellent restaurants and a quaint shopping district in downtown Paso Robles.

Then there is the attention to detail at Hotel Cheval: light-as-air down comforters, thirsty bamboo and cotton blend towels, a stash of umbrellas in lobby. Even with the extravagances of upscale hotels these days, it is often the thoughtful little touches that are the greatest luxury.

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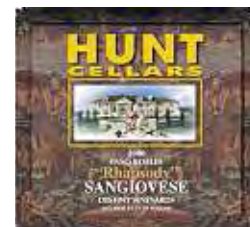
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SCENES FROM A WINEMAKER'S DINNER: Servers pour a selection of wines at Vina Robles' new tasting bar as guests arrive, mingle and sample passed appetizers. Diners are greeted with neat rows of wine glasses at their seats. The main course of Angus filet is served to guests by professional wait staff.



Winemaker's dinners demystified

By Dawn White • Photos by Joe Johnston

The winemaker dinner. To those in the know, it's an ideal opportunity to drink remarkable wines, dine on the finest dishes from renowned chefs and spend the evening chatting with interesting people, all in a lavish setting full of ambiance.

But to the uninitiated, the winemaker dinner can be intimidating, a mysterious event that holds the opportunity for faux pas or the fear you won't belong. The questions are many: What if I'm not a wine connoisseur? What should I wear? Do I need to arrive early? Or should I be fashionably late?

Winemaker dinners are a staple of San Luis Obispo County wineries' calendars, in addition to the festivals and tasting room events. Wine, as most wine lovers will tell you, is meant to be enjoyed with food, and wineries see these dinners as a way to introduce their wines to you with the best of culinary and social accompaniment.

Anyone who appreciates wine – and good food and good company – should experience one at least once.

So here, we lift the veil and answer all those questions you may have been hesitant to ask.

Q. What is a “winemaker’s dinner?”

A. At the core, it's simply a multicourse dinner at a winery or restaurant where each course is paired with a complementing wine.

Q. Why do wineries hold them?

A. “It's a way for a winery to showcase their wines to the public,” says Gary Eberle, owner and former winemaker at Eberle Winery in Paso Robles. “Wine always tastes better with food and when you're having a good time.”

It's also a way to celebrate with the public during events such as the Harvest Wine Tour and Zinfandel Festival, said Debbie Nichols, event coordinator at Castoro Cellars.

Q. Is one winemaker’s dinner basically like all the rest?

A. No. Winemaker dinners can be held in wine caves, in the vineyards, in barrel rooms, at restaurants, on boats or a variety of other locations.

Eberle often hosts their dinners in their caves, while wineries such as Edna Valley hold them in a banquet room overlooking the vineyards. Cass Winery hosts its in their majestic library and Justin often holds them in the well-known Isosceles Center.

Continues on page 58





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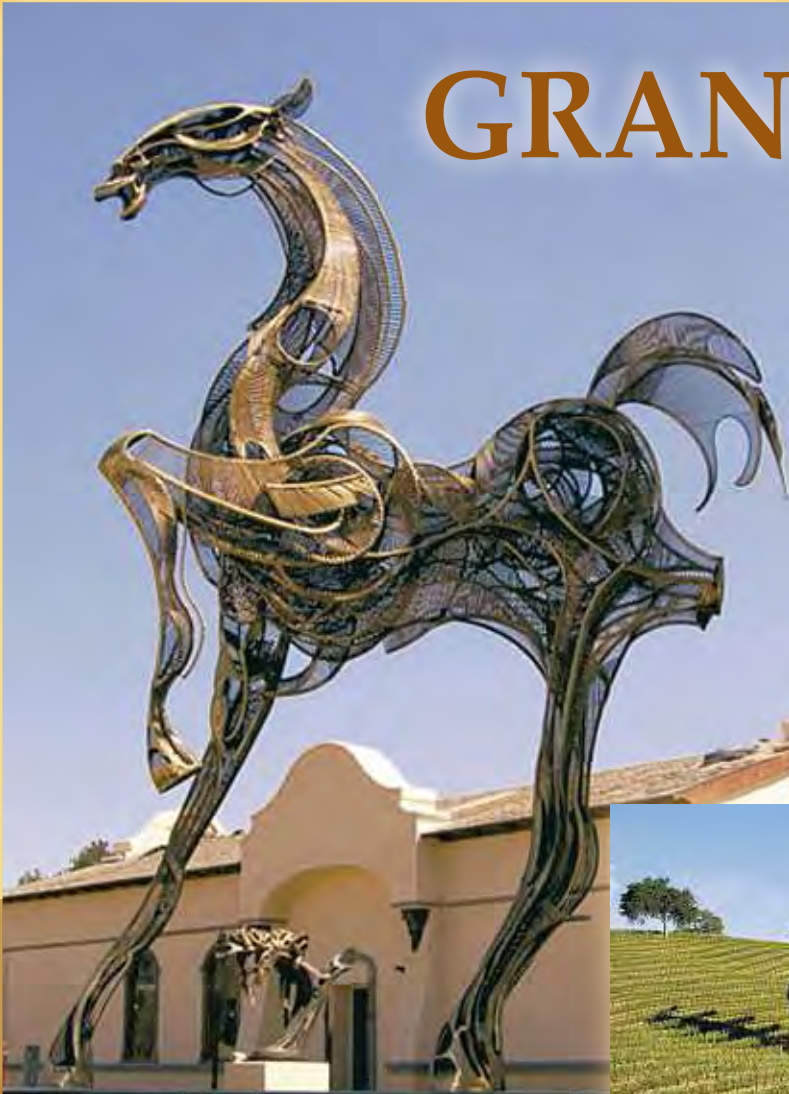
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Spanish transplants take root in the New World

By Raven J. Railey

Start with a warm Paso Robles evening. Add an inky tempranillo, an array of tapas and a dash of imagination – it could feel like a vacation to Madrid.

These days, you don't have to leave the Central Coast to find an authentic Spanish wine experience, as wineries are discovering

that Paso's dry summers are an ideal climate for the grape that provides the foundation of Spain's prestigious rioja and ribera del duero wines.

Recent plantings of tempranillo, albariño and other Spanish grapes are flourishing here and winemakers are crafting wines with them that are making wine fans and critics take notice.

"It's a process of experimentation and discovery," said Castoro Cellars winemaker Tom Myers, who has been making tempranillo for a decade.

Like other wineries in the region, Castoro has branched out to try many lesser-known varieties from different parts of Europe to see what fits well with local climates and soil types.

"So many new varieties are being brought in from the world and produced in California," Myers said. "There wasn't that much of a range of wines produced 25 years ago."

Something 'different'

Paso Robles is a prime spot for such experimentation, said Rick Potruch of Opolo Vineyards, in part because there's still open space where growers can try new grapes.

Rare varieties let winemakers play with different flavor profiles. As wine drinkers grow curious to explore something "different," tasting rooms increasingly sell small releases of little-known varieties or their own blends with catchy monikers like Loco, The Big Easy Rosé or Matador Rosé.

Tempranillo is used for most of Spain's daily table wines as well as for its priciest vintages.

Until recently, the tiny amount available in California was used mostly to blend into other red wines, such as cabernet sauvignon. But a handful of wineries are making terrific wines with 100 percent tempranillo.

In the past few years, a growing number of them have captured medals at competitions in California,

Dallas and even Spain itself.

At this summer's Los Angeles International Wine & Spirits Competition, the Best Wine title went to Silver Stone Wines' 2004 Tempranillo. Another Paso Robles winery, York Mountain, took Best White Wine honors with its 2005 Albariño.

Earthy — and hard to find

At the 2007 Central Coast Wine Classic, California winemakers compared notes on tempranillo during a seminar.

The wines poured ranged from soft, fruitier versions, like the one Castoro produces, Myers said, to black wines with heavy tannins. In all, he found a common thread revealing the grape's personality.

"Tempranillo, to me, always has a bit of earthiness and black licorice characters," Myers said. "It appeals to people who think they don't like red wine, but there's enough complexity for the more experienced wine drinkers. That makes it a big seller in our tasting room."

Local wineries that make tempranillo varieties and blends say the bottles sell quickly.



PHOTO BY JAY SWANSON

AWARD-WINNING TEMPRANILLO from Silver Stone Winery.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Wines of Spanish origin are growing in popularity, but they are still uncommon in restaurants and stores. The two usually found on the Central Coast are tempranillo and albariño. Others to look for include verdelho and graciano.

Spanish-style blends may also list "garnacha" and "mataro." Usually called "grenache" and "mourvèdre," these reds are popular in France's Rhône

Valley. Spaniards also crush them and say they are native to Iberia.

Tempranillo: (temp-rah-NEE-o) This earthy, spicy red pairs with almost any dish. It replaces cabernet sauvignon or merlot and complements red meats, rich cuisine and seafood.

Often used in red blends, more 100-percent tempranillos are being seen in California. It also appears in rosé and dessert form.

Silver Stone's tiny release of 250 cases was nearly exhausted by the time its staff learned of the awards.

"I got over 500 orders for cases," said general manager Cel Tustin, laughing. "This is like a salesperson's greatest nightmare: lots of orders and no wine to sell."

Those who craft tempranillo tend to make small lots of it. Castoro is probably the largest producer in the county, with up to 1,500 cases a year. Justin released 500 cases of Reserve Tempranillo this year. It's sold out until next July, when the 2006 vintage will be released.

Most said if they could get more fruit, they'd make more.

Of all the grapes crushed in California last year, only 0.1 percent were tempranillo, according to the Crush Report. Nearly 900 acres of it were reported in the state. About 100 of those were so young they weren't bearing fruit yet.

A natural fit

Like Paso Robles, several regions in California mimic tempranillo's native Spanish climates, where dry summer temperatures reach the 100s and high 90s during the day, then cool off at night.

"Northern San Luis Obispo County is a really great area for growing the Spanish varietals like tempranillo," said Martin & Weyrich winemaker Alan Kinne. In the mid-1990s, he began traveling to Spain to study its wines. "That really extreme temperature variation you have here, they have there."

But its history in California is scant compared to French and Italian wines.

"The access to varietals from France has been much easier," Kinne pointed out. "France has been in the mainstream of world culture – politically and agriculturally. Spain and Portugal, both of them were under fascist rule for nearly three-fourths of the 20th century."

More wines are being imported from



GRAPHIC BY PHILIP BROOKER

Spain, Argentina and Chile. But here the vines are being planted a few acres at a time.

"I think what's going to happen is that most of the larger wineries are going to change existing root stocks over to tempranillo, to have it every year," said Silver Stone's Tustin, who is planting three acres with the grape.

Tempranillo developed a following among Wild Horse customers, but the winery hasn't produced it in two years, said winemaker Mark Cummins, because it lost a contract with the supplying vineyard in San Benito County. The winery still makes albar-

riño and verdelho, a white Portuguese grape.

In Edna Valley, the Niven family is crushing tempranillo this harvest for a yet-to-be-named label to explore Spanish-style blends, said John Niven, vice president of sales and marketing for Baileyana and Tangent. With grapes still on the vine, he hoped for a 2009 release.

Tangent is dedicated to "alternative white wines," making 1,000 cases of albariño this year. To produce more, the family planted 50 acres, which they believe to be the largest albariño vineyard in North America.

Most of Tangent's wines go to stores and restaurants, where Niven says off-beat whites have a better shot than unusual reds of making the cut on wine lists.

Opolo's Potruch agrees that tempranillo's niche is in the tasting rooms.

"Most people walk into a restaurant and order a cabernet or merlot without looking at the lists," he said. "It's a hand-sell, but in a tasting room you're there to hand-sell anything."

"The quality of the tempranillo in our area is what's going to make it more readily accepted on the market or in a restaurant."

Here are some of the San Luis Obispo County wineries that make tempranillo or albariño. Call to check availability; limited-release wines often sell out.

Bella Luna Estate Winery
Bodegas Paso Robles (by appt. only)
Castoro Cellars
Four Vines Winery
Justin Vineyards & Winery
Martin & Weyrich
Maloy O'Neill Vineyards
Opolo Vineyards

Silver Stone Winery
Silver Horse Winery
Tangent Winery
Tobin James Cellars
Villa Creek Cellars
Vista Creek Cellars
Wild Horse Winery & Vineyards
York Mountain Winery

The diminutive of the word, "temprano," means "early," and this little grape buds early in spring and is often the first red to be harvested. Traveling under pseudonyms such as tinta roriz in Portugal and valdepeñas in California, tempranillo has been branded with local monikers by regionalistic Spaniards: tinta de toro, tinto fino, tinto del pais, cencibel, ull de llebre and aragonez.

Albariño: (al-bar-EEN-yo) A highly acidic, citrusy white, it makes a good companion for seafood, especially shellfish. It's often compared to whites such as riesling and viognier.

Albariño is native to the cool, coastal Spanish province of Galicia that sits just north of Portugal. In that country, it's called alvarinho.



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November 3rd	Holiday Trunk Show
December 1st - 2nd	Holiday Open House
December 1st	Holiday Wine Dinner
January 18th - 21st	Esprit du Vin Weekend
January 18th	Winemakers Dinner Theater
February 14th	Valentines Dinner

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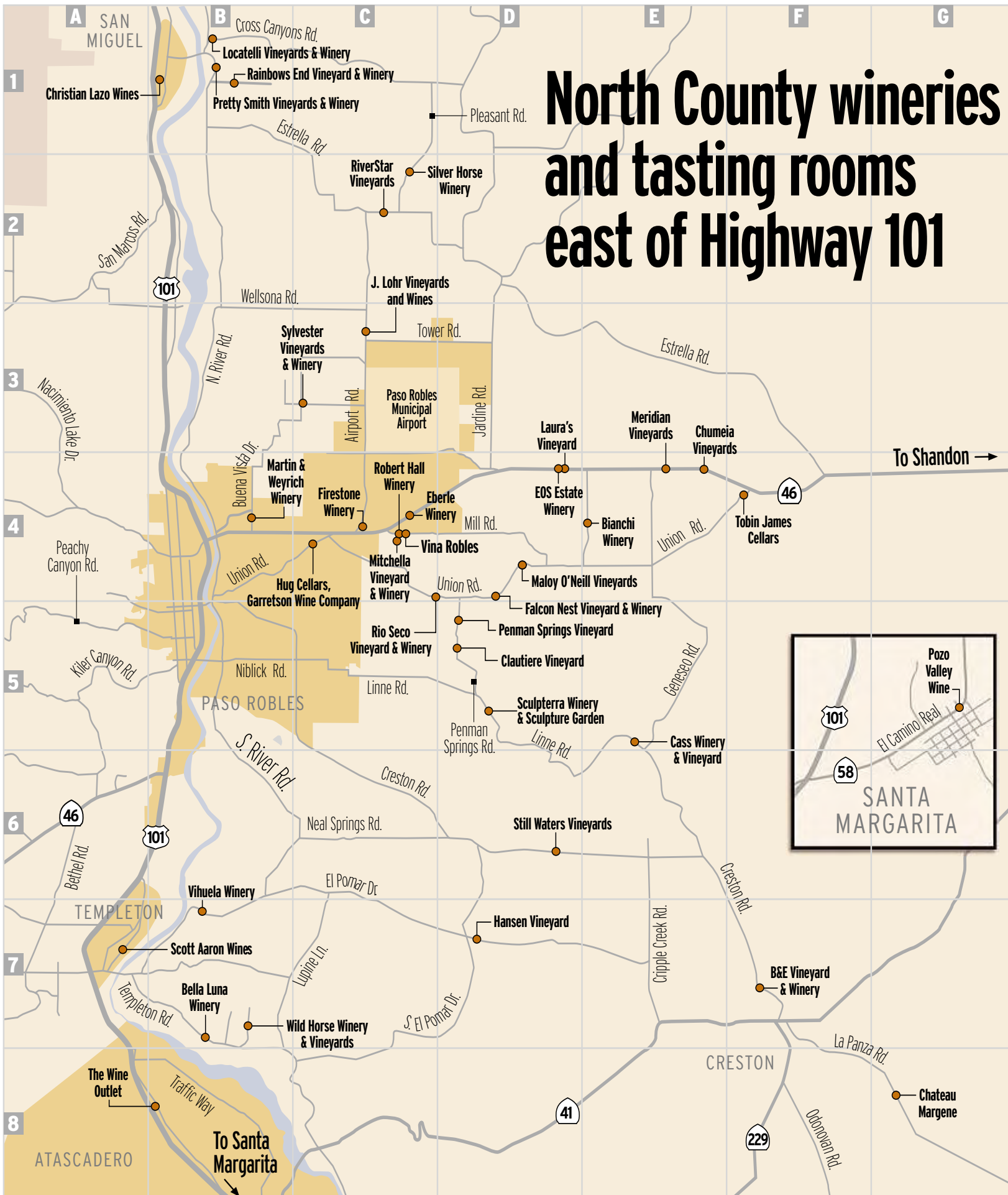
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North County wineries and tasting rooms east of Highway 101



North County Eastside wineries & tasting rooms

B&E Vineyard & Winery • 10000 Creston Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-4815 • www.bevineyard.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: merlot, meritage blend, cabernet (F7)

Bella Luna Winery • 1850 Templeton Road, Templeton • 805-434-5477 • www.bellalunawine.com • Open Sat-Sun 10-5, sometimes Friday
Popular varietals: sangiovese, tempranillo, Fighter Pilot Red (B7)



Bianchi Winery

3380 Branch Road, Paso Robles • 805-226-9922
www.bianchiwine.com • Open daily 10-5

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Most popular varietals: pinot grigio, zinfandel, petite sirah (E4)



Cass Winery & Vineyard • 7350 Linne Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-1730 • www.casswines.com • Open Mon-Fri 12-5, Sat-Sun 11-6
Popular varietals: Rhône varietals, Hacienda & Rockin' One (E5)

Chateau Margene • 4385 La Panza Road, Creston • 805-238-2321 • www.chateaumargene.com • Open Sat-Sun 12-5
Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon (G8)

Christian Lazo Wines • 249 10th St., Suite B, San Miguel • 805-467-2672 • www.christianlazowines.com • Sat-Sun 10-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, barbera (B1)

Chumeia Vineyards • 8331 Highway 46 East, Paso Robles • 805-226-0102 • www.chumeiavineyards.com • Open daily 10-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, barbera (E4)

Clautiere Vineyard • 1340 Penmen Springs Road, Paso Robles • 805-237-3789 • www.clautiere.com • Open daily 12-5
Popular varietals: Rhône varietals and blends (D5)



Eberle Winery

3810 Highway 46 East, Paso Robles • 805-238-9607
www.eberlewinery.com • Summer hours: 10-6 daily, winter hours: 10-5 daily

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Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, Italian varietals, viognier (C4)



EOS Estate Winery • 5625 Highway 46 East, Paso Robles • 805-239-2562 • www.eosvintage.com • Open daily 10-5
Popular varietals: petite sirah, late harvest muscato (D4)

Falcon Nest Vineyard & Winery • 5185 Union Road, Paso Robles • 805-226-0227 • www.falconnestwine.com • Open daily 10-7:30 & holidays
Popular varietals: reds (D4)

Firestone Winery • 2300 Airport Road, Paso Robles • 805-591-8050 • www.firestonewine.com • Open daily 10-5
Popular varietals: Bordeaux varietals, merlot, cabernet sauvignon (C4)

Garretson Wine Company • 2323 Tuley Court, Suite 110, Paso Robles • 805-239-2074 • www.garretsonwines.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: Rhône varietals (C4)

Hansen Vineyard • 5575 El Pomar Drive, Templeton • 805-239-8412 • Open Fri-Sun 11:30-5
Popular varietals: cabernet, syrah, viognier (D7)

Hug Cellars • 2323 Tuley Court, Suite 120D, Paso Robles • 805-226-8022 • www.hugcellars.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5 & by appointment
Popular varietals: syrah, pinot noir (C4)

North County Eastside wineries & tasting rooms

(EASTSIDE MAP ON PAGE 34)



J. Lohr Vineyards and Wines

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Popular varietals: *Bordeaux and Rhône varietals (D4)*



Locatelli Vineyards & Winery • 8585 Cross Canyons Road, San Miguel • 805-467-0067 • www.locatelliwinery.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-4

Popular varietals: *petite sirah, merlot, cabernet sauvignon (B1)*

Maloy O'Neill Vineyards • 5725 Union Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-7320 • www.maloyoneill.com • Open Fri-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5 & by appointment • **Popular varietals:** *cabernet, syrah, Bordeaux blends (D4)*

Martin & Weyrich Winery • 2610 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 805-238-2520 • www.martinweyrich.com • Summer hours: 10-6 daily, Winter hours: Sun-Thurs 10-5, Fri-Sat 10-6 **Popular varietals:** *sangiovese, pinot grigio, moscato allegro (B4)*



Meridian Vineyards

7000 Highway 46 East, Paso Robles • 805-226-7133

www.meridianvineyards.com • Open daily 10-5

With award-winning limited release wines, Meridian is the premier stop on your Central Coast tasting tour. Enjoy our meticulously maintained gardens, panoramic vineyard views and intimate picnic areas. Visit the gift shop for elegant giftware, gourmet foods and incomparable wines.

Popular varietals: *chardonnay, cabernet, cabernet blanc (E4)*



Mitchella Vineyard & Winery

2525 Mitchell Ranch Way, Paso Robles • 805-239-8555

www.mitchella.com • Open Fri-Sun 12-5

Mitchella is a small family-owned estate vineyard and winery making tiny lots of premium handcrafted wines. Located just off Highway 46 East and Mill Road, where you can sip wine while enjoying the breathtaking views of Paso Robles.

Complimentary tasting. “Life is an Adventure, Drink Wine.”™

Popular varietals: *cabernet, syrah, port (C4)*



Penman Springs Vineyard • 1985 Penman Springs Road, Paso Robles • 805-237-7959 • www.penmansprings.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: *reds, whites & dessert wines (D5)*

Pozo Valley Wine • 2200 El Camino Real, Santa Margarita • 805-438-5015 • www.pozovalley.com • Open Fri-Sun 12-6
Popular varietals: *merlot, cabernet, zinfandel (G5)*

Pretty Smith Vineyards & Winery • 13350 North River Road, San Miguel • 805-467-3104 • www.prettysmith.com • Open Fri-Sun 10-5
Popular varietals: *Bordeaux varietals (B1)*

Rainbows End Vineyard & Winery • 8535 Mission Lane, San Miguel • 805-467-0044 • 866-999-WINE • www.rainbowsendvineyard.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-4 & by appointment • **Popular varietals:** *reds (B1)*



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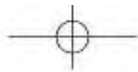

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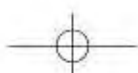
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www.pasolivo.com

North County Eastside wineries & tasting rooms

(EASTSIDE MAP ON PAGE 34)

Rio Seco Vineyard & Winery • 4295 Union Road, Paso Robles • 805-237-8884 • www.riosecowine.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet franc (C4)



RiverStar Vineyards

7450 Estrella Road, San Miguel • 805-467-0086
www.riverstarvineyards.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5

We at RiverStar Vineyards & Cellars are committed to producing high-quality wines that are derived from select fruit, hand harvested and hand crafted in small lots to give our wines the character, elegance and style you demand.

Popular varietals: sauvignon blanc, merlot, syrah, cabernet, Affinity, petite sirah, port style (C2)



Robert Hall Winery

3443 Mill Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-1616
www.roberthallwinery.com • Summer daily 10-6, winter daily 10-5

Discover the essence of Paso Robles with a visit to the Robert Hall Winery Hospitality Center. The tasting room overlooks the vineyards of the Hall Ranch and features award-winning wine.

Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, Rhône de Robles, meritage (C4)



Scott Aaron Wines • 422 S. Main St., Templeton • 888-611-9463 • www.scottaaron.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-6
Popular varietals: Bordeaux, viognier syrah, cabernet franc (A7)



Sculpterra Winery and Sculpture Garden

5125 Linne Road, Paso Robles • 888-302-8881
www.sculpterra.com • Open 10-5 Fri-Sun & by appointment Mon-Thurs

Sculpterra Winery sculpts the land, the vines and the grapes to create an ultra premium bottle of wine for your enjoyment. Sculpterra Winery has combined wine and art with a distinctive line-up of wines and an original sculpture garden in a beautiful setting to create a unique wine country experience.

Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, merlot, syrah, zinfandel, petite sirah, red blend, chardonnay, pinot grigio (D5)



Silver Horse Winery • 2995 Pleasant Road, San Miguel • 805-467-WINE • www.silverhorse.com • Open Fri-Mon 11-5
Popular varietals: Bordeaux, rioja varietals (C2)

Still Waters Vineyards • 2750 Old Grove Lane, Paso Robles • 805-237-9231 • www.stillwatersvineyards.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5
Popular varietals: sauvignon blanc, viognier, Bordeaux reds (D6)

Sylvester Vineyards & Winery • 5115 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 805-227-4000 • 800-891-6055 • www.sylvesterwinery.com
Open Sept-May 11-5 daily, June-Aug 11-6 daily • *Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, chardonnay, merlot (C3)*

Tobin James Cellars • 8950 Union Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-2204 • www.tobinjames.com • Open daily 10-6
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, syrah (F4)

Vihuela Winery • 995 El Pomar Drive, Templeton • 805-886-5400 • www.vihuelawinery.com • Open Sat-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, syrah, Concierto del Rojo (B7)



Vina Robles

3700 Mill Road, Paso Robles • 805-227-4812
www.vinarobles.com • Open Sun-Thurs 10-5, Fri-Sat 10-6

Vina Robles is a premium California winery with a Swiss lineage and a vision for estate-crafted wines that express the excellence and individuality of our noble terroir. Under the guidance of owner Hans Nef and Winemaker

Matthias Gubler, Vina Robles specializes in red wines from our Huerhuero and Jardine vineyards in Paso Robles.

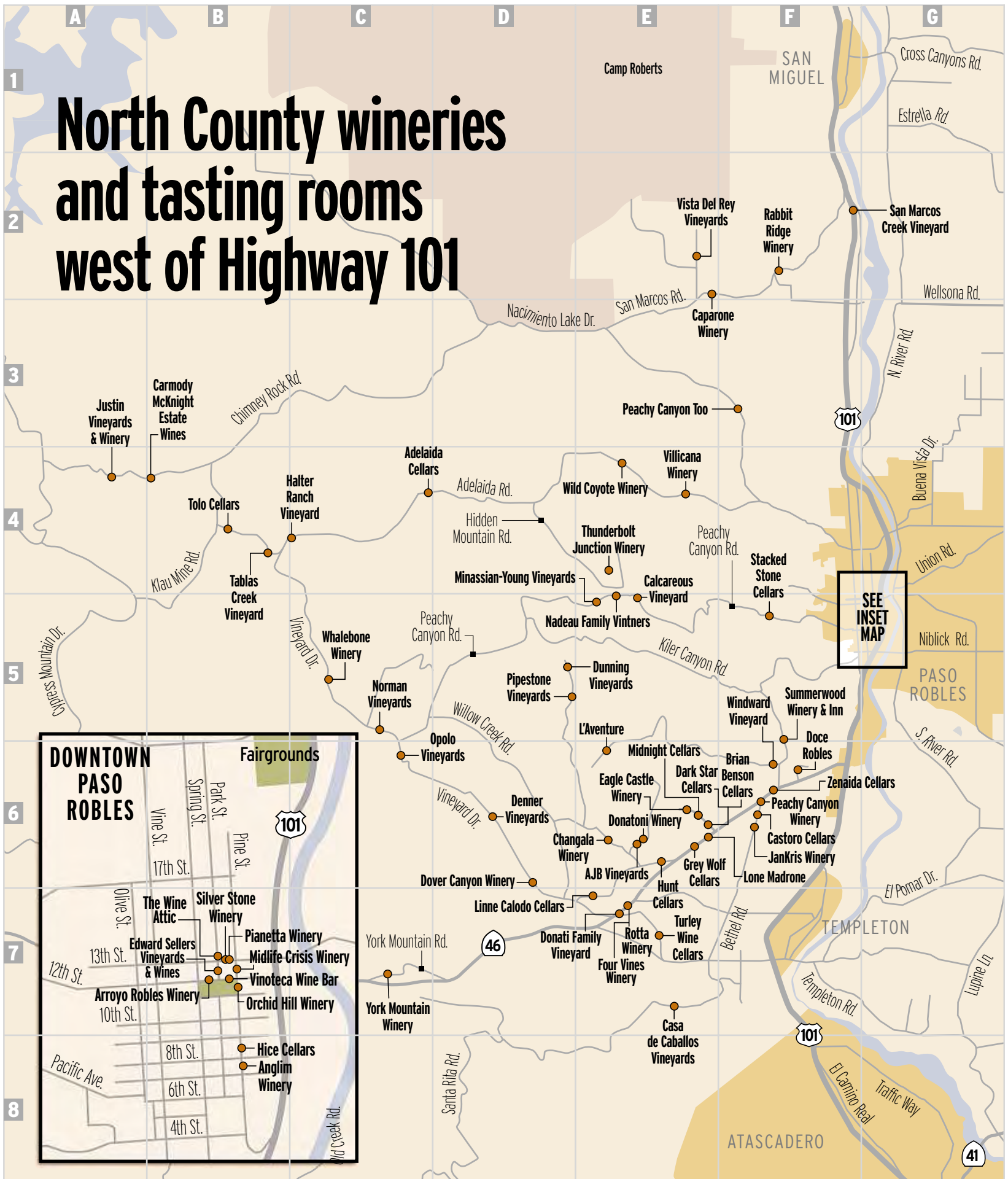
Popular varietals: cabernet, petit verdot, sauvignon blanc, syrah (C4)

Wild Horse Winery • 1437 Wild Horse Winery Court, Templeton • 805-434-2541 • www.wildhorsewinery.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: pinot noir (B7)

The Wine Outlet • 2280 El Camino Real (in the outlet center), Atascadero • 805-462-WINE • www.wineoutlet.net • Open daily 10-6
Wine and coffee shop with wine tasting (B8)



North County wineries and tasting rooms west of Highway 101



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North County Westside wineries & tasting rooms

(WESTSIDE MAP ON PAGE 40)



Adelaida Cellars

5805 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-8980 • 800-676-1232
www.adelaida.com • Open daily 10-5

Adelaida Cellars is a family-owned winery situated 16 miles from the coast in the Santa Lucia Mountains. Our award-winning cabernet, chardonnay, pinot noir, Rhône style blends and syrah originate in estate vineyards that are highly regarded for their lean chalky soils, temperate climate and intensely flavored fruit.

Popular varietals: *pinot noir, cabernet, Rhône varietals (C4)*



AJB Vineyards • 3280 Township Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-9432 • www.ajbvineyards.com • Open Sat-Sun 12-5
Popular varietals: *Italian varietals, sangiovese, nebbiolo (E6)*



Anglim Winery

740 Pine St., Paso Robles • 805-227-6813

www.anglimwinery.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5:30, Sun 12-5:30 & by appointment

Anglim sources the finest fruit from local growers to produce elegant Rhône varietals and limited production winemaker favorites under our small, family-owned label. Stop by our tasting room to discover our wines in the intimate setting of the original train depot in downtown Paso Robles. Complimentary wine tasting.

Popular varietals: *Rhône whites & reds, zinfandel, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon (B8)*



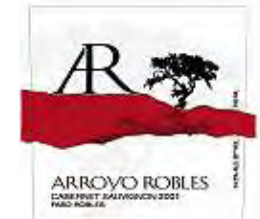
Arroyo Robles Winery

739 12th St., Paso Robles • 877-759-WINE • 805-226-5454

www.arroyorobles.com • Open daily 11-7

Arroyo Robles is a family owned and operated winery in Paso Robles. We are committed to making your wine tasting experience a memorable one. Join us at our wine shop and tasting room in downtown Paso Robles. Let us show you the true beauty of Paso Robles wines.

Popular varietals: *cabernet, syrah, sparkling wine (B7)*



Brian Benson Cellars • 2985 Anderson Road, Paso Robles • 805-296-9463 • www.brianbensoncellars.com • Open Fri-Sun 11:30-5
Popular varietals: *syrah, zinfandel, red blends (E6)*



Calcareous Vineyard

3430 Peachy Canyon Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-0289

www.calcareous.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5 & by appointment

Experience Calcareous Vineyard's award-winning wines as you enjoy the breathtaking panoramic views from our tasting room. The calcareous (limestone) soil provides a distinct characteristic in our Rhône and Bordeaux style wines.

Popular varietals: *Rhône and Bordeaux varietals (E5)*



Caparone Winery • 2280 San Marcos Road, Paso Robles • 805-467-3827 • www.caparone.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: *reds, nebbiolo, Italian varietals (E2)*

Carmody McKnight Estate Wines • 11240 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-9392 • www.carmodymcknight.com • Open daily 10-5, major holidays • **Popular varietals:** *Meritage Cadenza, sparkling & dessert wines (B4)*

Casa de Caballos Vineyards • 2225 Raymond Ave., Templeton • 805-434-1687 • www.casadecaballos.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: *pinot noir, riesling (E7)*



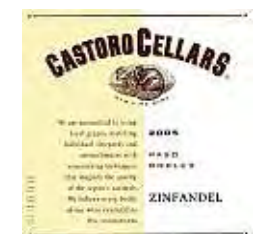
Castoro Cellars

1315 North Bethel Road, Templeton • 805-238-0725 • 888-DAM-FINE

www.castorocellars.com • Open daily 10-5:30

The husband and wife team of Niels and Bimmer Udsen established Castoro Cellars with the goal of producing world-class wines. Inside the Mediterranean-styled tasting room there is always a varied selection of new releases, single vineyard and library wines to enjoy. Additionally, featured are local artisan products, interesting gifts and gourmet food items.

Popular varietals: *zinfandel (F6)*



North County Westside wineries & tasting rooms

(WESTSIDE MAP ON PAGE 40)

Changala Winery • 3760 Willow Creek Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-0421 • www.changalawinery.com • Fri-Sun 11:30-5
Popular varietals: viognier, syrah, red blend (E6)

Dark Star Cellars • 2985 Anderson Road, Paso Robles • 805-237-2389 • www.darkstarcellars.com • Open Fri-Sun 10:30-5
Popular varietals: Ricordati, cabernet, zinfandel (E6)

Denner Vineyards • 5414 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-239-4287 • www.dennervineyards.com • Open Fri 11-5
Popular varietals: Rhône varietals & blends (D6)

Doce Robles • 2023 Twelve Oaks Drive, Paso Robles • 805-227-4766 • www.docerobles.com • Open daily 10:30-5:30
Popular varietals: reds (F6)



Donati Family Vineyard

2720 Oak View Rd. (corner of Vineyard Drive & Hwy 46 West) Templeton • 805-238-0676
www.donatifamilyvineyard.com • Open Daily 10-5

Family. Estate. Visio. These are the guiding principles of our small, family-owned vineyard and winery. We specialize in producing high-end wines from our estate vineyard in Paicines, Calif. Join us in our new hospitality center located off Highway 46 West and Vineyard Drive in Templeton and taste the fruits of our labor. Award-winning Bordeaux blends and much more.

Popular varietals: Bordeaux varietals, claret, meritage, syrah, chardonnay, pinot blanc, pinot grigio (E7)



Donatoni Winery • 3225 Township Road, Paso Robles • 805-226-0620 • Open Sat-Sun 12-5 & by appointment
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, syrah (E6)

Dover Canyon Winery • 4520 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-237-0101 • www.dovercanyon.com • Open Thurs-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: Rhône varietals, zinfandels (D6)

Dunning Vineyards Estate Winery and Country Inn • 1953 Niderer Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-4763 • www.dunningvineyards.com
Open Thurs-Mon 11-5 & by appointment • *Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet, syrah (D5)*

Edward Sellers Vineyards & Wines • 1220 Park St., Paso Robles • 805-239-8915 • www.edwardsellers.com • Thurs-Mon 12-7
Popular varietals: Rhône-style wines (B7)

Eagle Castle Winery • 3090 Anderson Road, Paso Robles • 805-227-1428 • www.eaglecastlewinery.com • Open daily 10:30-5:30
Popular varietals: cabernet, zinfandel, cab/syrah blend (E6)

Four Vines Winery • 3750 Highway 46 West (at Cider Creek Bakery), Templeton • 805-237-0055 • www.fourvines.com • Summer 11-6, Winter 11-5 • *Popular varietals: zinfandels, Rhône blends, tempranillo blend (E7)*

Grey Wolf Cellars • 2174 Highway 46 West, Paso Robles • 805-237-0771 • www.greywolfcellars.com • Open daily 11-5:30
Popular varietals: reds, zinfandel, syrah blends (E6)



Halter Ranch Vineyard

8910 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-226-9455
www.halterranch.com • Open daily 11-5

Savor a taste of old California at our westside Paso Robles tasting room. Our historic ranch provides ideal conditions for cultivating superior wine grapes and making world-class wines. Hillside vineyards, limestone soils and sustainable farming practices enable us to produce estate-grown wines of the highest quality.

Popular varietals: syrah, cabernet sauvignon, viognier, sauvignon blanc (C4)



Hice Cellars • 821 Pine St., Unit D, Paso Robles • 805-237-8888 • www.hicecellars.com • Open Fri-Sun 12-5 and by appointment
Popular varietals: alicante bouchet, cabernet sauvignon, syrah (B8)



Hunt Cellars

2875 Oakdale Road, Paso Robles • 805-237-1600
www.huntcellars.com • Open daily 10-6, winter 10:30-5:30

Named one the best wineries in the state of California, Hunt Cellars has become one of the most highly acclaimed wineries with hundreds of prestigious awards, many scoring 90-94 points, best of class and gold medals.

Popular varietals: cabernet, syrah, port (E6)



North County Westside wineries & tasting rooms

(WESTSIDE MAP ON PAGE 40)

JanKris Winery • 1266 North Bethel Road, Templeton • 805-434-0319 • www.jankriswinery.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: Crossfire, Riatta, Picaro blends (F6)

Justin Vineyards & Winery • 11680 Chimney Rock Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-6932 • 800-726-0049 • www.justinwine.com • Open daily 10-5 • *Popular varietals: Isosceles, Bordeaux blend varietals (A4)*

L' Aventure • 2815 Live Oak Road, Paso Robles • 805-227-1588 • www.aventurewine.com • Open Thurs-Sun 11-4
Popular varietals: Paso blends, syrah, cabernet (E6)

Linne Calodo Cellars • 3030 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-227-0797 • www.linnecalodo.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: Rhône blends, zinfandel blends (E7)

Lone Madrone • 2485 Highway 46 West (at Sycamore Farms), Paso Robles • 805-238-0845 • www.lonemadrone.com • Open daily 10:30-5
Popular varietals: cabernet and reds (E6)

Midlife Crisis Winery • 1244 Pine St., Suite A, Paso Robles • 805-237-8730 • www.midlifecrisiswinery.com • Open Thurs-Mon 10:30-6
Popular varietals: merlot, pinot grigio, sparkling wine (B7)

Midnight Cellars • 2925 Anderson Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-8904 • www.midnightcellars.com • Open daily 10-5:30
Popular varietals: Mare Nectaris, zinfandel (E6)

Minassian-Young Vineyards • 4045 Peachy Canyon Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-7571 • www.m-yvineyards.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, Rhône varietals (E5)

Nadeau Family Vintners • 3860 Peachy Canyon Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-3574 • www.nadeaufamilyvintners.com • Open Sat-Sun 12-5, most holidays & by appointment • *Popular varietals: zinfandel, Rhône varietals and blends (E5)*

Norman Vineyards • 7450 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-237-0138 • www.normanvineyards.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: Monster zinfandel, syrah, No Nonsense Red (C5)



Opolo Vineyards

7110 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-238-9593
www.opolo.com • Open daily 10-5

Opolo Vineyards is located on a beautiful 70-acre mountain site, west of Paso Robles. Here, the poor mountain soils, high daytime temperatures and cool nighttime temperatures combine to yield intense grapes that are the necessary ingredient to produce fine wines.

Popular varietals: Rhapsody Bordeaux blend, zinfandel (C6)



Orchid Hill Winery • 1140 Pine St., Paso Robles • 805-237-7525 • www.orchidhillwine.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5:30 & by appointment
Popular varietals: pinot noir, syrah, zinfandel (B7)

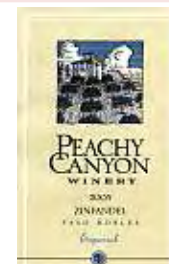


Peachy Canyon Winery

Old School House Tasting Room – 1480 North Bethel Road, Templeton
805-236-1918 • www.peachycanyon.com • Open daily 10-5

Visit our tasting room and enjoy a picnic on our grounds or cozy up to the fireplace. Browse among the fine gift and food items and taste the magic in each Peachy Canyon wine.

Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, blends (F6)



Peachy Canyon Too • 2020 Nacimiento Lake Drive, Paso Robles • 805-237-7848 • www.peachycanyon.com • Open Fri-Sun 10-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, blends (F3)

Pianetta Winery • 829 13th St., Paso Robles • 805-226-4005 • www.pianettawinery.com • Mon, Th, Fri 12-6, Sat-Sun 11-6
Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, syrah, sangiovese (B7)

Pipestone Vineyards • 2040 Niderer Road, Paso Robles • 805-227-6385 • www.pipestonevineyards.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5 & by appointment • *Popular varietals: syrah, viognier, grenache (D5)*

North County Westside wineries & tasting rooms

(WESTSIDE MAP ON PAGE 40)

Rabbit Ridge Winery • 1172 San Marcos Road, Paso Robles • 805-467-3331 • www.rabbitridgewinery.com • Open Wed-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, Italian varietals (F2)

Rotta Winery • 3750 Highway 46 West (at Cider Creek Bakery), Templeton • 805-237-0510 • www.rottawinery.com • Open April-Oct: Mon-Fri 11-5, Sat-Sun 11-6; Nov-March 11-5 daily • *Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet franc, dessert wines (E7)*

San Marcos Creek Vineyard • 7750 N. Highway 101, Paso Robles • 805-467-9260 • www.sanmarcoscreek.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet, merlot (F2)

Silver Stone Winery • 827 13th St., Paso Robles • 805-226-2788 • www.silverstonewines.com • Open winter: Wed-Sat 12-7, Sun 12-4; summer Mon-Thurs 12-7, Fri-Sat 12-8, Sun 11-4 • *Popular varietals: syrah, chardonnay, pinot noir (B7)*

Stacked Stone Cellars • 1525 Peachy Canyon Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-7872 • www.stackedstone.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, Bordeaux blends, syrah (F5)

Summerwood Winery • 2175 Arbor Road, Paso Robles • 805-227-1365 • www.summerwoodwine.com • Open daily 10-6
Popular varietals: Diosa, Sentio, Diosa Blanc (F5)

Tablas Creek Vineyard • 9339 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-237-1231 • www.tablascreek.com • Open daily 10-5
Popular varietals: Southern Rhône varietals & blends (B4)

Thunderbolt Junction Winery • 2740 Hidden Mountain Road, Paso Robles • 805-226-9907 • www.thunderboltjunction.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: merlot, dry muscat (E4)

Tolo Cellars • 9750-1A Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-226-2282 • www.tolocellars.com • Open Fri-Mon 11-5
Popular varietals: aged wine, blends, Asini zinfandel blend (B4)

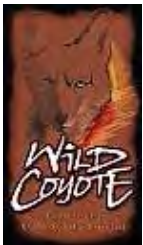
Turley Wine Cellars • 2900 Vineyard Drive, Templeton • 805-434-1030 • www.turleywinecellars.com • Open daily 9-5
Popular varietals: old vine zinfandel (E7)

Villicana Winery • 2725 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-9456 • www.villicanawinery.com • Open Thurs-Sun 11-5 & by appointment
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon, blends (E4)

Vinoteca Wine Bar • 835 12th St., Paso Robles • 805-227-7154 • www.vinotecawinebar.com • Open Tues-Thurs 4-10, Fri-Sat 4-11, Sun 4-8
Wine bar with tasting of local and global wines (B7)

Vista Del Rey Vineyards • 7340 Drake Road, Paso Robles • 805-467-2138 • Open most Sun 11-5, during special events & by appointment
Popular varietals: zinfandel, barbera, pinot blanc (E2)

Whalebone Winery • 8325 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-239-9020 • www.whalebonevineyard.com • Open Fri-Mon 11-5:30, Tues-Thurs 12-5
Popular varietals: Bob Wine red table wine (C5)



Wild Coyote Winery & B&B

3775 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-610-1311
www.wildcoyote.biz • Open daily 11-5

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Popular varietals: zinfandel, syrah, merlot, meritage, vintage port (E4)



Windward Vineyard • 1380 Live Oak Road, Paso Robles • 805-239-2565 • www.windwardvineyard.com • Open daily 10:30-5
Popular varietals: pinot noir (F6)

The Wine Attic • 1305 Park St. Alley Way, Paso Robles • 805-227-4107 • www.thewineattic.com • Open Tues 11:30-6, Wed-Fri 11:30-8, Sat 11:30-9, Sun on holiday weekends 11-3 • *Shop and café with wine tasting (B7)*

York Mountain Winery • 7505 York Mountain Road, Templeton • 805-238-3925 • www.yorkmountainwinery.com • Open daily 11-4
Popular varietals: albariño, pinot nior, syrah (C7)

Zenaida Cellars • 1550 Highway 46 West, Paso Robles • 805-227-0382 • www.zenaidacellars.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: zinfandel, syrah, Zephyr (F6)

North County wineries & tasting rooms— TASTINGS BY APPOINTMENT

Barreto Cellars • 5115 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 805-474-8276 • www.barretocellars.com • *Popular varietals: tempranillo, verdelho*

Bear Cave Cellars • 1227 Park St., Suite B, Paso Robles • 805-238-4329 • www.bearcavecellars.com • *Popular varietals: cabernet, syrah, zinfandel*

Black Hand Cellars • 6305 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 805-712-WINE • www.blackhandcellars.com • *Popular varietals: syrah, red Rhône and Bordeaux blends*

Diamond Jem Vineyard • 7290 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles • 805-237-1424 • www.diamondjemwinery.com • *Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon*

Écluse Wines • 1520 Kiler Canyon Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-4998 • www.eclusewines.com • *Popular varietals: Bordeaux & Rhône-style reds*

Fralich Vineyard & Winery • P.O. Box 818, Templeton, 93465 • 805-434-1526 • www.fralichvineyard.com • *Popular varietals: Rhône varietals, viognier, syrah*

Fratelli Perata Winery • 1595 Arbor Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-2809 • www.fratelliperata.com • *Popular varietals: Italian varietals, cabernet, merlot*

Gelfand Vineyards • 5530 Dresser Ranch Place, Paso Robles • 805-239-5808 • www.gelfandvineyards.com • *Popular varietals: petite sirah, syrah, Quixotic*

Jack Creek Cellars • 5265 Jack Creek Road, Templeton • 805-226-8283 • www.jackcreekcellars.com • *Popular varietals: pinot noir, syrah, chardonnay*

Kukkula • 45 Main St., Templeton • 805-434-5475 • www.kukkulawine.com • *Popular varietals: Rhône reds, zinfandel*

Le Cuvier • 9750 Adelaida Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-5706 • www.lcwine.com • *Popular varietals: reds & whites, barrel-aged at least three years*

Madison Cellars • 4540 Highway 41, Paso Robles • 805-237-7544 • www.madisoncellars.com • *Popular varietals: Rhône & Bordeaux varietals*

McClellan Vineyards • 4491 S. El Pomar Drive, Templeton • 805-237-2441 • www.mcclellanvineyards.com • *Popular varietals: syrah*

Nichols Winery & Cellars • 5115 Buena Vista Road, Paso Robles • 310-305-0397 • www.nicholswinery.com • *Popular varietals: pinot noir, chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon*

Poalillo Vineyards • 1888 Willow Creek Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-0600 • *Popular varietals: zinfandel, cabernet, chardonnay*

Redline Wines • 6305 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 805-434-WINE • www.redlinewine.com • *Popular varietals: syrah, pinot noir*

RN Estate Vineyard • 7986 N. River Road, Paso Robles • 805-610-9802 • www.rnestate.com • *Popular varietals: red Rhône and Bordeaux blends*

Ronan Cellars • 6305 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 805-238-0833 • www.ronancellars.com • *Popular varietals: cabernet franc, zinfandel, syrah*

Sextant Wines • P.O. Box 391, Paso Robles • 866-833-WINE • www.sextantwines.com • *Popular varietals: zinfandel, petite sirah, zin/petite sirah blends*

Skyhawk Lane • 6305 Buena Vista Drive, Paso Robles • 213-200-4661 • www.skyhawklane.com • *Popular varietals: Red Fusion, Three Cane, syrah*

Terry Hoage Vineyards • 870 Arbor Road, Paso Robles • 805-238-2083 • www.terryhoagevineyards.com • *Popular varietals: red & white Rhône blends*

Venteux Winery • 1795 Las Tablas Road, Templeton • 805-610-9293 • *Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, syrah, petite sirah*

Via Vega Winery • 2378 Adobe Road, Paso Robles • 805-423-2190 • www.viavega.com • *Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, syrah, port*

Victor Hugo Winery • 2850 El Pomar Dr., Templeton • 805-434-1128 • www.victorhugowinery.com • *Popular varietals: petite sirah, zinfandel, Opulence*

Zin Alley Winery • 3730 Highway 46 West, Templeton • 805-238-0959 • www.zinalley.com • *Popular varietals: zinfandel*

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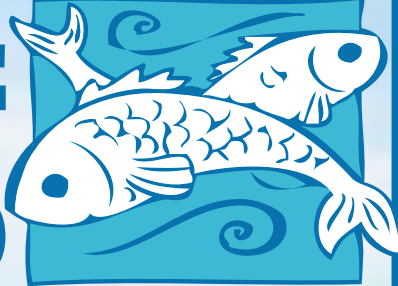
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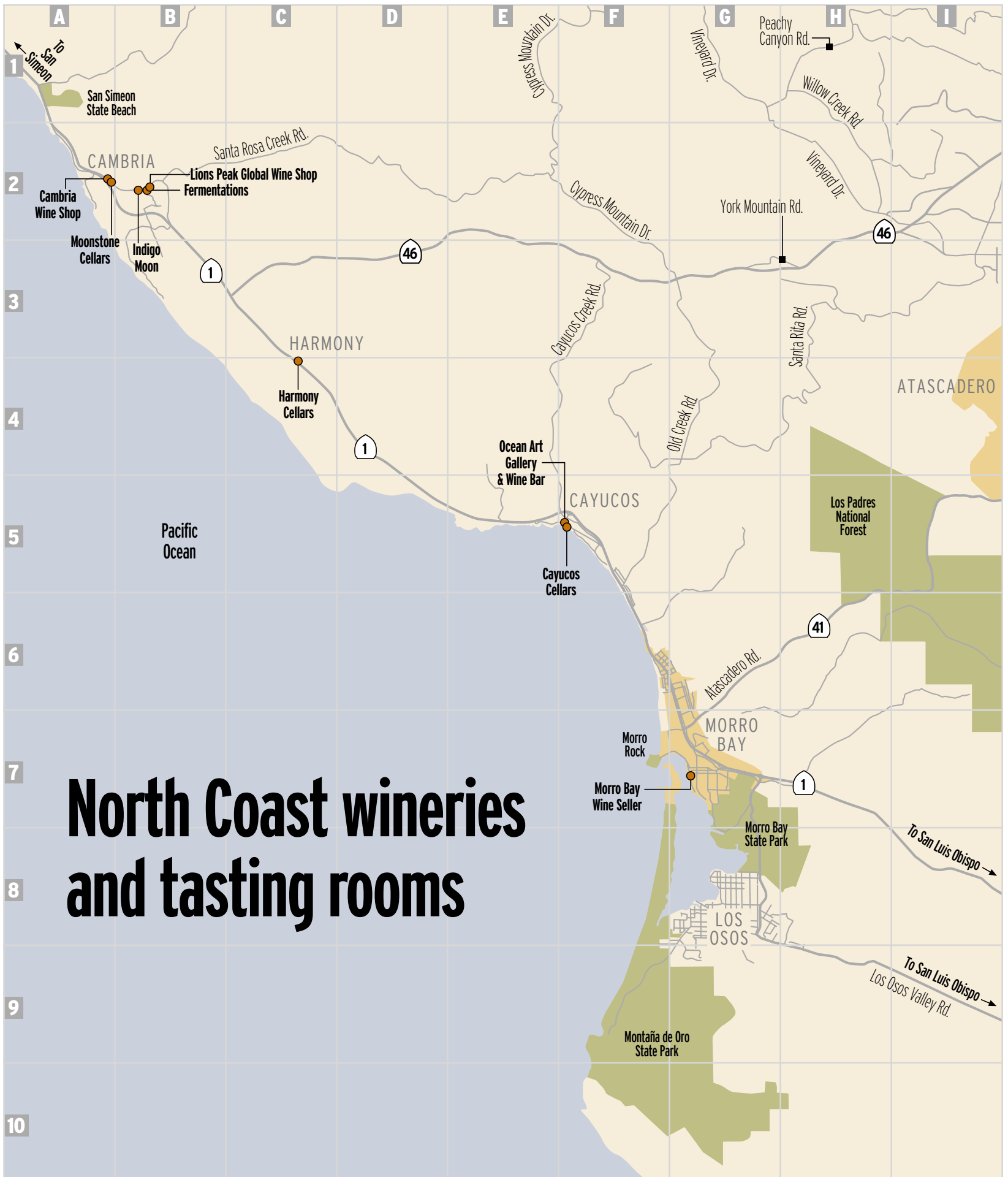
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North Coast wineries and tasting rooms

North Coast wineries & tasting rooms

Cambria Wine Shop • 788 Main St., Cambria • 805-927-0990 • Open Sun-Thurs 11-5:30, Fri-Sat 11-7
Shop with tasting of local boutique and other wines (A2)

Cayucos Cellars • 131 N. Ocean Ave., Cayucos • 805-995-3036 • www.cayucoscellars.com • Open Wed-Mon 11-5
Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet (F5)

Fermentations • 4056 Burton Drive, Cambria • 800-446-7505 • www.fermentations.com • Open daily 10-10
Shop with tasting of hand-crafted wines (B2)

Harmony Cellars • 3255 Harmony Valley Road, Harmony • 805-927-1625 • 800-432-9239 • www.harmonycellars.com • Open daily 10-5; 5:30 in July & August • *Popular varietals: chardonnay, cabernet, merlot (C4)*

Indigo Moon • 1980 Main St., Cambria • 805-927-2911 • Open Mon-Th 10-6, Fri & Sat 10-9, Sun 10-3
Café with wine tasting (B2)



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Popular varietals: cabernet sauvignon, viognier, zinfandel, The Sisters, Rhône, Bon Courage, mourvedre, barbera, chardonnay (B2)

Moonstone Cellars • 801 Main St., Suite C, Cambria • 805-927-9466 • 877-517-9463 • www.moonstonecellars.com • Open daily 11-5:30
Popular varietals: syrah, chardonnay (A2)

Morro Bay Wine Seller • 601 Embarcadero #5, Morro Bay • 805-772-8388 • www.morrobaywineseller.com • Open daily at 10
Shop with tasting of regional and international wines (G7)

Ocean Art Gallery & Wine Bar • 148 N. Ocean Ave., Cayucos • 805-995-0234 • www.oceanartgallery.net • October-April: Wed 1-5, Thurs-Sun 11-5. May-September: Wed-Sun 11-5 • *Wine bar with tasting of regional wines (F5)*

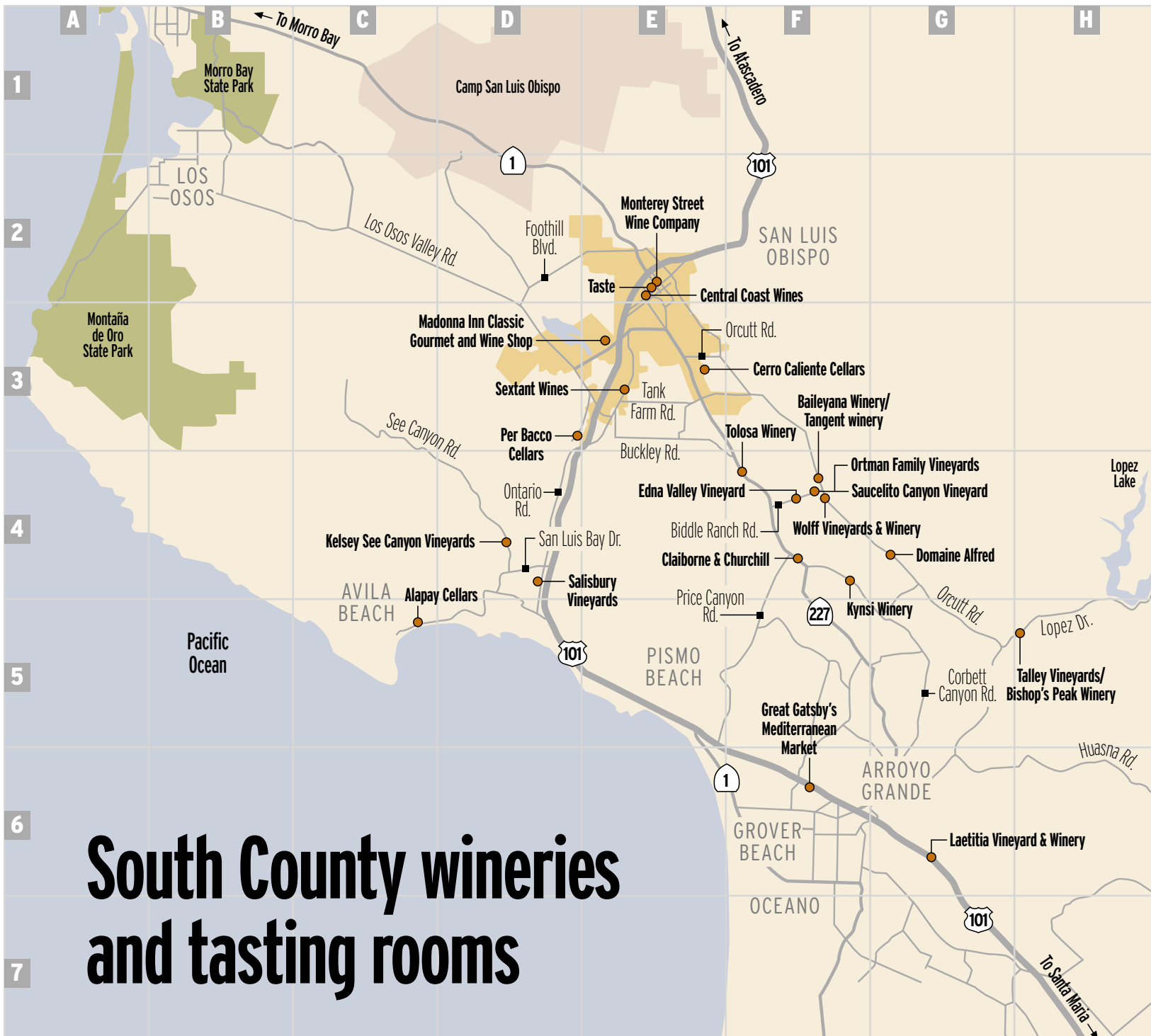
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South County wineries and tasting rooms

Alapay Cellars • 415 First St., Avila Beach • 805-595-2632 • www.alapaycellars.com • Open daily 10:30-6, open Fri until 8
Popular varietals: viognier, pinot noir, zinfandel (C5)



Baileyana & tangent Wineries

5828 Orcutt Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-269-8200
www.baileyana-tangent.com • Open daily 10-5

Experience two unique wineries from the Edna Valley of San Luis Obispo pouring under the same roof: Baileyana and tangent. Both wineries are located in the Independence schoolhouse located at 5828 Orcutt Road in San Luis Obispo. We are open daily from 10 am-5 pm, and for more information visit our Web site at www.baileyana-tangent.com or call 805.269.8200.

Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir, sauvignon blanc (F4)

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South County wineries & tasting rooms

Central Coast Wines • 712 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo • 805-784-WINE • www.ccwines.com • Open Sun-Wed 11-6, Thurs 11-9, Fri-Sat 11-8
Shop with tasting of Central Coast wines (E2)

Cerro Caliente Cellars • 831 Via Esteban, San Luis Obispo • 805-544-2842 • www.cerrocalientecellars.com • Open Fri-Sun 11-5
Popular varietals: Bordeaux blends, merlot, syrah (E3)

Chateau de Deighton • 6985 Ontario Road, San Luis Obispo (at Salisbury Vineyards) • 805-595-WINE • www.chateaudedeighton.com • Open weekends • *Popular varietals: zinfandel, cuvee noir (D4)*

Claiborne & Churchill Vintners • 2649 Carpenter Canyon Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-544-4066 • www.claibornechurchill.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: gewürztraminer, riesling, pinot noir (F4)

Domaine Alfred • 7525 Orcutt Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-541-WINE • www.domainealfred.com • Open daily 10-5
Popular varietals: pinot noir, chardonnay, syrah (G4)

Edna Valley Vineyard • 2585 Biddle Ranch Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-544-5855 • www.ednavalley.com • Open daily 10-5
Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir, cabernet (F4)

Great Gatsby's Mediterranean Market • 1750 El Camino Real, Grover Beach • 805-473-8466 • www.greatgatsbyswine.com • Open daily 10-7 • *Shop with local and Napa wines for tasting (F6)*

Kelsey See Canyon Vineyards • 1947 See Canyon Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-595-9700 • www.kelseywine.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: syrah, apple chardonnay, zinfandel port (D4)

Kynsi Winery • 2212 Corbett Canyon Road, Arroyo Grande • 805-544-8461 • 805-544-6181 • www.kynsi.com • Open Thurs-Mon 11-5
Popular varietals: pinot noir, syrah, pinot blanc (F4)




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South County wineries & tasting rooms

(SOUTH COUNTY MAP ON PAGE 50)

Laetitia Vineyard & Winery • 453 Laetitia Vineyard Drive, Arroyo Grande • 888-809-VINE • www.laetitiawine.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: pinot noir, chardonnay, sparkling wine (G6)

Madonna Inn Classic Gourmet and Wine Shop • 100 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-784-2438 • www.madonnainn.com • Open daily 9-7 • *Shop with tasting of private label wines (E3)*



Monterey Street Wine Company

1255A Monterey St., San Luis Obispo • 805-541-1255 • www.montereystreetwines.com

Open Mon-Wed 11-7, Thurs 11-9, Fri-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-5
 Monterey St. Wine Co. is a wine and gourmet cheese shop with a wine tasting bar. Featuring wines from around the world as well as wines from the Central Coast. Visit the wine bar for a taste or a glass of wine and cheese. Join us every Friday evening for a special wine tasting.
Shop with tasting of wines from around the world (E2)



Ortman Family Vineyards • 3080 Biddle Ranch Road (at Saucelito Canyon Vineyard), San Luis Obispo • 805-473-9463
www.ortmanvineyards.com • Open daily 10-5 • *Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir (F4)*

Per Bacco Cellars • 1850 Calle Joaquin, San Luis Obispo • 805-787-0485 • www.perbaccocellars.com • Open daily 11-5
Popular varietals: pinot grigio, chardonnay, pinot noir (D3)

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South County wineries & tasting rooms

(SOUTH COUNTY MAP ON PAGE 50)

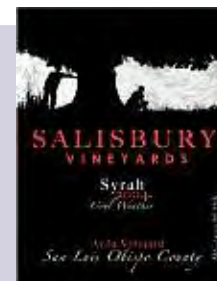


Salisbury Vineyards

6985 Ontario Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-595-WINE
www.salisburyvineyards.com • Open daily 11-6

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Popular varietals: pinot noir, syrah, chardonnay (D4)



Saucelito Canyon Vineyard • 3180 Biddle Ranch Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-543-2111 • www.saucelitocanyon.com • April-December: daily 10-5. January-March: Thurs-Mon 10-5 & by appointment • **Popular varietals:** zinfandel, cabernet sauvignon (F4)

Sextant Winery • 3536 S. Higuera St., Suite 240-B, San Luis Obispo • 866-833-WINE • www.sextantwines.com • Open Thur-Mon 11-5 **Popular varietals:** zinfandel, petite sirah and zinfandel & petite sirah blends (E3)



Talley Vineyards & Bishop's Peak Wines

3031 Lopez Drive, Arroyo Grande • 805-489-0446
www.talleyvineyards.com • Open daily 10:30-4:30

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Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir (H5)



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South County wineries & tasting rooms

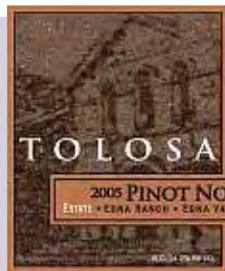
(SOUTH COUNTY MAP ON PAGE 50)



Taste

1003 Osos St., San Luis Obispo • 805-269-8278
www.taste-slo.com • Open Mon-Sat 11-9, Sun 11-5

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Tolosa Winery

4910 Edna Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-782-0500
www.tolosawinery.com • Open daily 11-5

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Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir (F4)



Wolff Vineyards • 6238 Orcutt Road, San Luis Obispo • 805-781-0448 • www.wolffvineyards.com • Summer hours: Open daily 11-5; winter: Thurs-Sun 11-5 • *Popular varietals: chardonnay, pinot noir, syrah (F4)*

South County wineries & tasting rooms— TASTINGS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

Brophy Clark Cellars • P.O. Box 955, Nipomo • 805-929-4830 • www.brophyclarkcellars.com
Popular varietals: pinot noir, sauvignon blanc, syrah

Piedra Creek Winery

6425 Mira Cielo, San Luis Obispo • 805-541-1281 • margaretzuech@digitalputty.com
One of the smallest wineries in the state (600/700 cases a year). Wines are handcrafted from pruning the grapes to bottling the wine. San Floriano is a unique blend that begins at the crusher rather than after the wine is made. Zinfandel is from Benito Dusi Vineyard. Pinot noir is estate grown.

Popular varietals: zinfandel, San Floriano, pinot noir



Rancho Arroyo Grande Winery • 591 Hi Mountain Road, Arroyo Grande • 805-474-0220 • www.ranchoarroyograndewines.com
Popular varietals: zinfandel, cuvee, chardonnay

Wedell Cellars • P.O. Box 2213, Pismo Beach 93449 • 805-489-0596 • www.wedellcellars.com
Popular varietals: pinot noir, chardonnay

Wood Winery • 555 El Camino Real, San Luis Obispo (formerly Wild Wood Vineyard) • 805-546-1088 • www.wildwoodwine.com
Popular varietals: pinot noir, syrah, viognier

Winemaker's dinners demystified

From page 25

Dinner ambience can vary by the time of year. A Valentine's Day dinner would likely be filled with rich ingredients in a romantic setting while a fall harvest dinner could entail seasonal ingredients in a rustic locale such as a barn, field or wine cave.

Q. Who plans the menu?

A. It's the chef's creations with the winemaker's influence, say Alice Cass, owner of Cass Winery in Paso Robles.

The chef usually brings some ideas to the winemaker and they bounce them back and forth. For example, a chef who wants to use tomatoes in a dish may be overruled by the winemaker who thinks the tomato's acidity is too high for a particular wine.

Some chefs are local but some wineries such as Justin bring in chefs from around the country and world, said Debby Baldwin, co-owner of Justin Vineyards & Winery.

Q. Do I need to be a wine connoisseur to attend one?

A. Definitely not. Most people attend because they want to learn about wine while enjoying some interesting dishes in a unique setting, said Cass.

"You'll see how the wine will complement the food and vice versa," she said. "The whole experi-

ence is about tasting a beautiful glass of wine and having a dish that will complement it."

Q. What can I expect if I go to one?

A. Winemaker dinners can differ greatly, but people generally dress up slightly to get into the festivities of the event. Attire varies from California casual to evening casual.

Events usually start with an appetizer hour accompanied by the first course of wine, said Cass. It's a chance to mingle, walk around and taste light hors d'oeuvres such as oysters, canapés and artisan cheeses.

Arrive on time to take full advantage. You can stroll in a little later, but you'll want to be sure to be there by the time people are seated for dinner.

Guests dine at communal tables and are welcomed by the winemaker or winery operator, who may talk about what to look out for when tasting the wine with the food.

Since multiple courses of wine and food are served at these dinners, portions and glasses of wine are usually smaller. Even so, with multiple courses, it ends up being a little more wine and food than consumed on an average night out.

"Typically, it's a five-course dinner with passed appetizers and wine," said Eberle. "It's probably one

of the best bargains in the food and wine industry."

Q. Will I get a chance to talk to the winemaker or the chef?

A. Usually. The chef is typically introduced at the end of the event, after he or she is finished with the dinner courses, says Eberle. The winemaker will talk briefly between courses and will often mingle with guests during and after dinner.

Sometimes, chefs make frequent appearances. At Cass Winery, the chef and winemaker come out between courses and talk about why the food and wine are paired together. At Justin, the chef will answer questions throughout the evening, said Baldwin.

Q. What should I expect to spend?

A. \$75 to \$150 per person. Some may consider that hefty, but for an upscale multiple-course dinner paired with premium wines, it's reasonable. And with tax and tip included, it can be an eclectic way to spend a special night out.

Q. How can I find out about upcoming dinners?

A. Various sources provide information, including the wineries themselves, restaurants and newspapers, or check with the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance and the San Luis Obispo Vintners & Growers Association.

My dinner at Vina Robles

By Sally Buffalo

I have to admit I was a little nervous.

I've spent plenty of time in the county's tasting rooms and at festivals and events such as Roll Out the Barrels and the Pinot & Paella Cookoff. But I'd never before attended a winemaker's dinner.

What to wear? Will I have to talk about wine the entire night? Will there be a test? OK, so no test, but even the name – Winemaker's Dinner: It sounds so official and exclusive.

One concern was put to rest as soon as I entered Vina Robles' new hospitality center for its inaugural winemaker's dinner last month: The dress ranged from casual – nice khakis for the guys and jeans with heels for the girls – to more fancy. I landed right in the middle of the pack

with my black skirt and tie-front blouse.

We were ushered to the tasting bar, where we were offered the 2006 Sauvignon Blanc, the 2005 RED4 or the Vina Robles Brut, then left to mingle, explore or lounge in the many nooks and spaces the new center offers, plucking canapés from the trays that made the rounds.

After about an hour, we were directed into the dining area, a tall room decked out in large, green-clothed tables, each guest's five wine glasses lined in a neat row.

We were welcomed by one of the owners then served a salad of split haricot vert, steamed wild gulf shrimp and warm caviar dressing from Chef Jeff Jackson of the acclaimed rustic Range Restaurant in Santa Margarita. The elegant dish paired sublimely with the 2006 Roseum we were poured.

The winemaker, Matthias Gubler, stood after the first course and explained a little about the wines and their pairings. He said the next one – his 2003 cabernet sauvignon with Jackson's provençal onion soup with black olive cream – might be a little unusual, as cabs are normally reserved for heavier foods.

For the main course, a petit fillet of Angus beef on crispy truffled risotto, porcini mushrooms and marchand de vin sauce, we had two red wines to try: the 2004 Syréé and the 2004 Signature.

Throughout the night, the conversation with my table-mates took in our jobs, travels and perspectives as well as wine, but here we had a fun discussion about who liked which wine better with the dish and why.

I was nearly stuffed from the delicately cooked Angus fillet – such dishes being a specialty of



PHOTOS BY JOE JOHNSTON

MORE SCENES FROM A WINEMAKER'S DINNER: The elegantly lit fountain outside the dining area at Vina Robles provides an inviting spot to get away from the crowds for a quiet moment. Guests mingle and chat over wine and canapés in the winery's new tasting room before being seated for dinner. A server pours 2006 Roseum to pair with the meal's first course. Diners at large tables enjoy each other's company in addition to the wine and food.

Jackson's kitchen – but had to make room for dessert, a bitter chocolate and Montmorency cherry mouse with pistachio sabayon and local berries. I'm normally a fan of dessert wines, but this exquisite dessert had enough sweetness and flavor that the 2003 petite sirah paired with it perfectly.

As we heaved our full bodies toward the exit at the end of the meal, souvenir wine glass in hand, I considered the value. All those courses and wines at a fine restaurant likely would have cost me more than the \$85 dinner. And I would not have had the opportunity to meet fellow diners with similar interests, let alone the chef and winemaker behind my meal.

"It's really about breaking bread," said Marc Laderriere, who heads sales and marketing for the winery but clearly enjoyed the evening beyond the requirements of his job. "It's as much about the company as the food and the wine."

Turn to page 62 for one of Chef Jackson's recipes from the dinner.

IT'S HARVEST SEASON!

OCTOBER 19-21

Paso Robles Harvest Wine Tour

More than 90 wineries in the Paso Robles area host individual events to celebrate the beginning of the 2007 vintage. A multitude of activities will be available, including winemaker dinners, barrel sampling, live music, food pairings, cooking classes and grape stomping. Cost varies by event; some free. Reservations may be required for some events. Find a complete listing at www.sanluisobispo.com/wine.

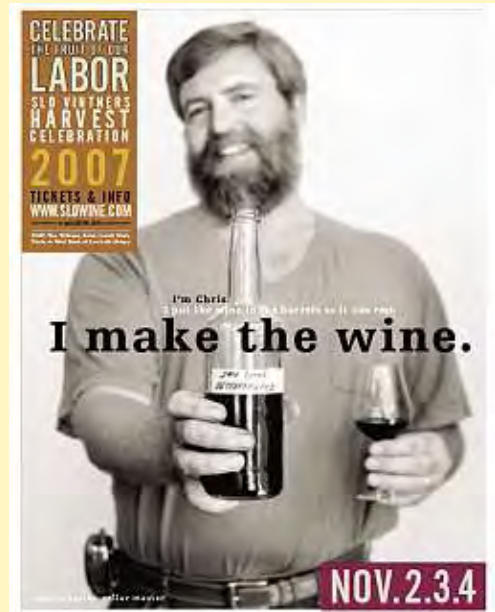
800-549-9463 or www.pasowine.com

NOVEMBER 2-4

San Luis Obispo Vintners 17th Annual Harvest Celebration

Celebrate South County's annual harvest with a weekend of wine tasting and gourmet foods. Friday night features winemaker dinners at individual wineries (cost varies; reservations recommended). Saturday's Grand Tasting, with live jazz, wine and food and auctions, will take place at Avila Beach Golf Resort from 1-5 p.m. Tickets are \$75; reservations recommended. Sunday is Open House at many of the wineries.

805-541-5868 or www.slowine.com



Oct. 6-7

Morro Bay Harbor Festival

A variety of live entertainment, wine and beer tasting, family-fun activities and lots of seafood. New to the lineup this year is a chowder cook-off, oyster eating contest and a festival home show. \$8; children 12 and under free with an adult.

805-772-1155 or www.mbf.com

Oct. 7

Winery Music Awards Finale

After a summer of playing music in the vineyards, the six independent artists chosen as finalists will compete for the grand prizes at the Winery Music Awards final competition concert at River Oaks Hot Springs & Spa in Paso Robles from 2-8 p.m. \$50.

800-838-3006 or www.winerymusicawards.com

Oct. 20-21

Pismo Beach Clam Festival

The 61st annual Clam Festival kicks off on Saturday morning with a parade followed by two days of chowder contests, clam digging, music and food.

805-773-4382 or www.pismochamber.com

Oct. 20

"Best of the West" Wine Tasting

(Sold out, though wait list is available)

The Far Out Wineries, a group of 16 wineries in the Paso Robles area, will hold a seminar and wine tasting at Opolo Vineyards. A selection of gourmet cheeses and breads will be available. \$55.

805-237-0138 or <http://faroutwineries.com>

Oct. 25-28

Jubilee By the Sea Jazz Festival

Annual jazz event produced by the Basin Street Regulars with more than 20 bands in various locations over three days. Free shuttle to events. \$75.

800-443-7778 or www.pismojazz.com

Nov. 8-10

Cal Poly Homecoming

Cal Poly celebrates Homecoming with a weekend full of wine tasting, barbecues, banquets, receptions and the Cal Poly vs. North Dakota State football game. Event cost and locations vary.

888-CAL-POLY or www.homecoming.calpoly.edu

Nov. 9

Cayucos By-the-Sea Wine & Food Festival

Third-annual festival with food from local restaurants and 12 wineries, including Bianchi, Cayucos Cellars, Castoro Cellars, Eagle Castle, Martin & Weyrich, Robert Hall, Tablas Creek and Wild Horse. Veteran's Hall. 4-8 p.m. \$6.

805-995-1200 or www.cayucoschamber.com

Nov. 26-Dec. 22

Cambria Holiday in the Pines

Cambria's hotels, restaurants and merchants offer discounts, sponsor events and give away prizes. The town is full of festive decorations and holiday lights as well as places to do your holiday shopping. On Thursday nights, special events for families and friends will take place at different Cambrian locations. Free.

805-927-3624 or www.cambriaholidays.com

Dec. 7

Holiday Friday Night Wine, Cheese and Crafts Evening

The 13 Paso 46 West Wineries are coming together at Eagle Castle Winery for holiday baked goods and gourmet cheeses paired with wines. Local crafts related to wine and the holidays also will be available for purchase. 6-8 p.m. \$15 per person, \$25 per couple at the door.

888-8-WINERY or www.paso46westwineries.com

Dec. 1

Morro Bay Lighted Boat Parade

Local boats adorned with holiday lights cruise along Morro Bay's waterfront. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Preceded by live music all day. Free.

800-231-0592 or www.morrobay.org

Dec. 8

Paso Robles Vine Street Victorian Showcase

Fourteen blocks of Victorian homes decorated for the holidays with Santa, Scrooge, dancers, storytellers, hot chocolate, music and more. 8th-21st streets from 6-9 p.m. No cars or dogs allowed.

805-238-4103 or www.pasoroblesdowntown.org

Jan. 1

28th annual Cayucos Polar Bear Dip

Brave the icy Pacific with hundreds of other swimmers to celebrate the new year at the Cayucos Pier at noon. Festivities begin at 10 a.m. No wetsuits, but costumes are welcomed. Free.

www.cayucoschamber.com

March 14-16

Paso Robles Zinfandel Festival

Winemaker dinners, open houses, food pairings, silent auctions and seminars are among the events offered by Paso Robles wineries. Tickets for the Grand Tasting and Auction will go on sale in December.

800-549-9463 or www.pasowine.com

Search our online directory of San Luis Obispo County wineries

Get maps, guided tour info, articles from our wine columnists, events listings and more.

SanLuisObispo.com





PHOTO BY JOE JOHNSTON

CHEF JEFF JACKSON of The Range Restaurant in Santa Margarita served this salad as a first course at a recent winemaker's dinner at Vina Robles.

Simple, elegant and delicious

The Range Restaurant is the kind of place John Wayne would have liked.

Located in the tiny outpost of Santa Margarita, the place exudes a cowboy vibe.

There are animal hides on the wall and the focus is on the meat, though there is a rather interesting assortment and a French influence mixed in.

The Range doesn't take reservations or credit cards, and Chef Jeff Jackson boasts that there's not even a computer on the premises.

But that doesn't mean he's not capable of producing something chic.

Here, Jackson shares with us a recipe he uses for many of the wine dinners he cooks for. It's a dish he comes back to again and again, he says, because it's simple yet elegant and goes with almost any white wine and even rosé.

The secret, he says, is to take the time to split the greens. You'll end up with a more upscale and delicate dish.

— Sally Buffalo

Salad of split haricots verts, steamed wild gulf shrimp and warm caviar dressing

SERVES 6 AS A STARTER COURSE OR SALAD OR 4 AS LIGHT ENTRÉE

- 1/2 pounds gulf shrimp, peeled and butterflied with tail left on**
- 1 pound haricots verts (or other tender young green beans)**
- 3 shallots**
- 1/2 cup white wine**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 1/2 cup clam juice (available in most stores) or fish stock**
- 1 cup heavy cream**
- 1/2 ounce caviar (finely snipped chives will work as an alternative)**
- Dash of white balsamic or rice wine vinegar**
- Dash of olive oil**
- Salt and pepper**

For the dressing:

Reduce by half one cup of wine with two chopped shallots and bay leaf. Add clam juice then reduce again by half. Add cream. Bring to a boil then blend and strain.

For the greens:

Blanche beans until tender and easy to split. Cool and then pull each bean apart into two sections. Add vinegar, one chopped shallot and olive oil then season with salt and pepper.

For the shrimp:

Season shrimp with salt and pepper then place them on a sheet pan and add the remaining 1/2 cup wine. Set the oven to 350 degrees and steam the shrimp until just done.

Assembly:

Place beans in center of plate, and arrange shrimp around them. At the last minute, add the caviar to the warm cream sauce then spoon the sauce over the shrimp and garnish as desired.

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