Buena Vista Winery: honoring history while celebrating the future (Photos)

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Wine tasting at California's oldest winery (Sylvain Gentile)

Karla Erovick | *SF Romance Travel Examiner*

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*California's oldest winery recently underwent a historic renovation making a favorite destination even better. **Buena Vista Winery**, founded in 1857 by Count Haraszthy, has been making noteworthy wine for over a century. Now with the renovation of the champagne cellars guests can enjoy a variety of wine experiences in the oldest wine caves in California.*

Arriving at the property, guests are treated to a history stroll along a tree-lined path with signs sharing significant moments in the winery's past, leading up to the tasting room. Located in a historic stone building, the tasting room has a spacious tasting bar and upstairs museum showcasing a more detailed history of the winery and the Count's illustrious life. Buena Vista was voted Winery of the Year by California Tourism Association in 2013 for good reason.

No appointment is needed for the tasting room. Should you desire something more personalized, you can select from a Tour and Barrel Tasting, Blending Seminar or tasting in the Bubble Lounge, all in the newly opened champagne caves, by appointment.

While some of Buena Vista wine is widely distributed, premium wines are available through the winery (and wine club) and feature smaller production and unique varietals and blends. Every wine tells a story, like Attila's Selection Zinfandel named for the Count's son or Legendary Badge, a nod to the Count's foray into law enforcement.

*Be sure to sample some of these unusual wines such as **2012 Count's Selection French Colombard** with orange blossom, ginger and lemongrass aromas and a crisp finish. The **2012 Count's Selection Pinot Meunier** exhibits earthy characteristics along with lush red fruit. And the **2012 Legendary Badge**, a silky red blend, tastes of red and black fruit and the perfect balance of tannins.*

The newly renovated Champagne Cave is stunning. I was fortunate to receive a private tour by the Count himself. We passed the giant oak tanks full of the newly harvested wine undergoing fermentation. Workers on ladders performed punch-downs to ensure the juice stay in contact with the skins for maximum flavor.

***Blending Seminars** held in the caves allow guests to customize their own unique blend with a personalized label creating a signature bottle of wine to commemorate their visit. They can also reorder their own special blend to impress friends and family or give as gifts. This is a fun team building exercise or to celebrate a special occasion.*

*The **Bubble Lounge** is an elegant pearl-colored salon where one can sip champagne while enjoying the chic ambiance and soothing music. Chandeliers, ivory colored furniture, crystal and a fireplace create an inviting ambiance for savoring a bottle of bubbly. You can't go wrong with a sparkling wine by Buena Vista, a JCB 21 or 69, or Champagne produced in France by JCB. You may not want to leave!*

Tables are scattered around the property for guests to enjoy a picnic with a bottle of Buena Vista wine in this bucolic setting. You can even make advance reservations for a picnic to be provided for you during your visit.

*There are a number of winery events throughout the year including a **Masquerade Ball** on October, 25, 2013 and a **Crab Feast** on February 25, 2014 for wine club members. During the Summer, Shakespeare is performed outdoors under the stars.*

*Details: **Buena Vista** is located at 18000 Old Winery Road in Sonoma, just minutes from the Square and is open daily from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. except major holidays. Telephone 800.926.1266, website **www.buenavistawinery.com**.*

About the Author: Karla writes about wine, food, horse racing, and exotic car events, as well as undiscovered travel locations. Discover more from over 400 travel articles of places to explore.

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