

A number of times we've enjoyed fun yet relaxing getaways to the picturesque town of Sonoma.

As home to [Buena Vista Winery](#), the state's oldest commercial winery and Gundlach Bundschu, the earliest family-run winery ever established in California, the town is considered California wine industry's place of origin. And Sonoma has many other unique distinctive connections to our state's early history that should pique a visitor's interest.

SONOMA

BY DON AND ANN JACKSON

A Charming Getaway to California Wine Industry's Birthplace

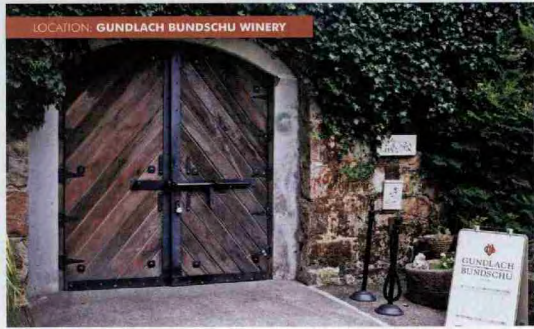


CONSIDER THESE:

For 25 days, Sonoma was the first capital of the California Republic during the Bear Flag Revolt in 1846 and where a makeshift homemade state flag first appeared; Sonoma State Historic Park includes: the San Francisco Solano Mission, the last and furthest north mission in California and the only mission built under Mexican rule rather than during the Spanish reign; the historic Sonoma Barracks; and the founder

of Sonoma, General Mariano Vallejo's 20 acre estate and classic gothic home. parks.ca.gov. The 1904 Depot Park Museum, on the National Register of Historic places, provides delightful displays of yesteryear and a fine train car exhibit. depotparkmuseum.org. Visits to these historic landmarks will give visitors a behind the scenes look into our state's rich cultural heritage and sometimes tumultuous beginnings. California history buffs will be especially enthralled at the wagon loads of historical background info that they'll learn when visiting these sites.

LOCATION: GUNDLACH BUNDSCHU WINERY





MORE TO DO AND SEE:

Wine tasting is the number one activity in town and here are four of our faves. **Buena Vista**, rather coincidentally, was the first winery we visited in wine country many years ago and as one of our all time favorite producers of chardonnays and pinot noirs it's often our first stop for wine tastings when heading north. It is housed in a beautiful original building and historical tours are available. After many years of iffy ownership and declining reputation, a new owner has infused the necessary capital and enthusiasm to bring the estate and cellars even beyond its former elite status. buenavistawinery.com; Gundlach Bundschu is known for premium estate bottled wines and, much to our liking, the driest Gerwurztraminer we've ever tasted. A seasonal winemaking tour and cave tasting is a recommended option. gmbun.com; Gloria Ferrer, a sibling of Spain's Frexinet, has possibly won more awards for their premier celebratory premier sparkling wines than any other California vintner. gloriaferrer.com; and Sebastiani Winery, one of Sonoma's most famous vintner's since the early 1900's has a stunning tasting complex and tour. sebastiani.com. Two other wonderful ways to