

EDITOR'S NOTE

Digging deeper to find real gems

Twice a year, the Food & Wine staff produces a special section on Sonoma County, and each time we plan it, we unpeel more layers of this area. The region is a popular tourist destination, but there's so much to discover beyond the main attractions.

In this issue, we go a little off the most-traveled paths to places that even frequent visitors might have overlooked.

The **Robert Ferguson Observatory (Page M22)** is an undiscovered gem, a place where you can actually see the harvest moon. Then there's the **Occidental Arts and Ecology Center (Page M14)**, which is working to preserve the environment. And if you want a back-to-nature experience, stay in a tent on 1,200 acres of wilderness at **Stewarts Point (Page M16)** on the northern Sonoma coast.

Sonoma is a destination that effortlessly blends the old and new, and nothing shows this as clearly as what Jean-Charles Boisset is doing to reinvigorate California's oldest winery: **Buena Vista (Page M16)**. It's a lot of history and a little bit of Disneyland.

Spring is the perfect time for a jaunt. This weekend is the annual **Passport to Dry Creek (this page)**, but the region's **tasting rooms (Page M4)** host visitors throughout the year. We'll tell you what to expect and guide you to some of the tasting rooms that produce excellent Zinfandel.

We'll also take you on a little side trip to Kenwood and the **Mayo Reserve Room** and the newly reinvigorated **Kenwood Restaurant (Page M18)**.

Part of the allure of the county is that there's much more than wine — so we'd like to introduce you to **Andy's Produce (Page M10)** in Sebastopol, a business that is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

So stay with us. In this issue, we hope that we've unraveled just a bit more of Sonoma County's mystery and allure.

— *Michael Bauer, Chronicle executive Food & Wine editor*

On the cover

Champagne glasses stacked on a table in a special events room at Buena Vista Winery. Photo by Jason Henry / Special to The Chronicle.