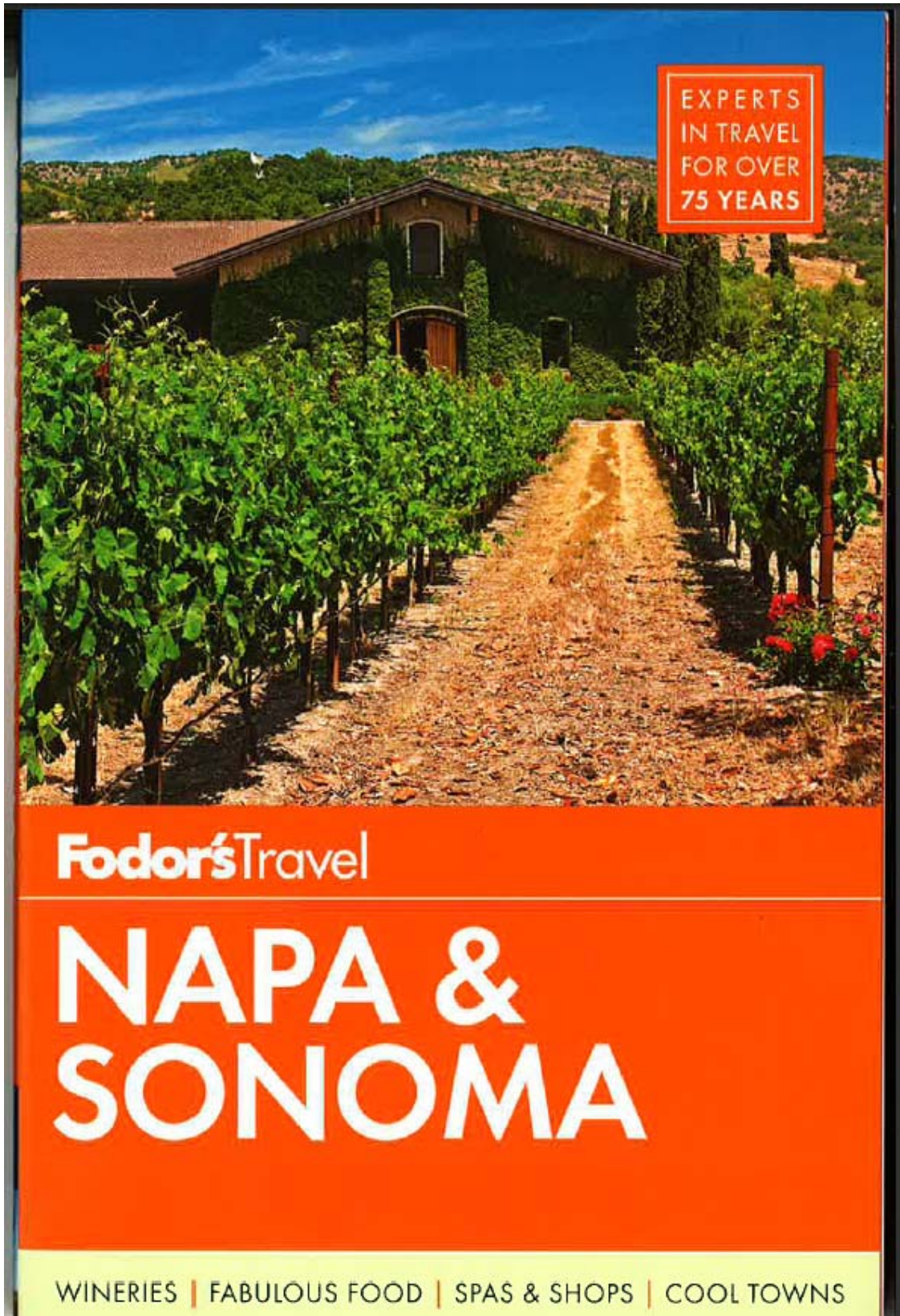


Fodor's Travel – Napa & Sonoma 2015 by Daniel Mangin



EXPERTS
IN TRAVEL
FOR OVER
75 YEARS

Fodor's Travel

NAPA & SONOMA

WINERIES | FABULOUS FOOD | SPAS & SHOPS | COOL TOWNS

NAPA AND SONOMA TOP ATTRACTIONS

Blending Seminars

At Franciscan, Joseph Phelps, Raymond, and elsewhere you can try your hand at fashioning a Bordeaux-style blend from Cabernet Sauvignon and other grapes. In addition to having a fun and educational time, you'll appreciate all the more the skill and knowledge crafting fine wines requires.

IF YOU LIKE

History

History buffs often head first to Sonoma to view its mission and related sites near Sonoma Plaza. Stops at Buena Vista and Bartholomew Park wineries provide insights into 19th-century California wine making. Over in St. Helena, you can learn the Napa side of the story at Charles Krug and Beringer.

Buena Vista and Bartholomew Park, Sonoma.

These two wineries east of Sonoma Plaza occupy land once farmed by Agoston Haraszthy, who ushered in the modern era of California wine making when he planted European grape varieties. Exhibits, photos, and artifacts at each winery illustrate his accomplishments.

Fodor's Travel – Napa & Sonoma 2015 by Daniel Mangin



Tastings in Raymond's atmospheric Barrel Cellar include wines that are still aging.

Raymond Vineyards. All the world's a stage to Jean-Charles Boisset, Raymond's charismatic owner—even his vineyards, where his five-act Theater of Nature includes a well-executed series of gardens and displays that explain biodynamic agriculture. The theatrics continue indoors in the disco-dazzling Crystal Cellar tasting room (chandelier and other accoutrements by Baccarat), along with several other spaces, some sedate and others equally expressive. Despite goosing up the glamour—gal pals out for a fun afternoon love this place—Boisset and winemaker Stephanie Putnam, formerly of Hess and Far Niente, have continued the winery's tradition of producing reasonably priced premium wines. The Cabernet Sauvignons and Merlots often surprise. ■ **TIP→** Concerned about dogs being left in hot cars during tasting, Boisset established the on-site Frenchie Winery, where canines lounge in comfort while their guardians sip wine. ☎ 849 Zinfandel La., off Hwy. 29 ☎ 707/963-3141 🌐 www.raymondvineyards.com 📄 Tastings \$25-\$50; tour and tasting \$45 ☺ Daily 10-4.

Fodor's Travel – Napa & Sonoma 2015 by Daniel Mangin

Buena Vista Winery. The site where modern California wine making got its start has been transformed into an entertaining homage to the accomplishments of the 19th-century wine pioneer Count Agoston Haraszthy. Tours pass through the original aging caves dug deep into the hillside by Chinese laborers, and banners, photos, and artifacts inside and out convey the history made on this site. Reserve tastings (\$40) include library and current wines, plus ones still aging in barrels. The stylish former press house (used for pressing grapes into wine), which dates to 1862, hosts the standard tastings. ■ **TIP** → **Chardonnays and Pinot Noir, several inventive red blends, and a vibrant Petit Verdot are the strong suits here.** ☎ 18000 Old Winery Rd., off E. Napa St. ☎ 800/926-1266 🌐 www.buonavistawinery.com 📄 Tastings \$15-\$40; tours \$10-\$35 ☺ Daily 10-5; tours by appointment.

☺ *Labor Day–Memorial Day, Mon. and Wed.–Fri. 11-5, weekends 10-5; Memorial Day–Labor Day, weekdays 11-5, weekends 10-5.*

DeLoach Vineyards. Best known for its Russian River Valley Pinot Noirs, DeLoach also produces Chardonnays, old-vine Zinfandels, and a few other wines. Some of the reds are made using open-top wood fermentation vats that have been used in France for centuries to intensify a wine's flavor. Tours focus on these and other wine-making techniques and include a stroll through organic gardens and vineyards. You can also take wine-blending a seminar, compare California and French Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs, or (on weekends only) relax with a wood-fired pizza and a glass of wine. ■ **TIP** → **The sparklers and still wines of the JCB label, whose letters match the initials of its dapper creator, DeLoach's Burgundy-born owner, Jean-Charles Boisset, are poured in a separate tasting room.** ☎ 1791 Olivet Rd., off Guerneville Rd. ☎ 707/526-9111 🌐 www.deloachvineyards.com 📄 Tastings \$15-\$100, tour \$20 ☺ Daily 10-5, tour daily at noon.