

# CHLOE

WE CELEBRATE THE JOURNEY

THE WINE AND TRAVEL ISSUE

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SWEDEN'S SINGER SONGWRITER

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FAIRMONT VISA SIGNATURE ONE-OF-A-KIND DINING SERIES

DREAM BIG IN CALIFORNIA

CASA ELLUL, PRIVATE PARADISE IN THE HEART OF VALLETTA

# Dream Big

## TO LIVE BIG

By CHLOE Wine & Cuisine Editor Angela Aiello

Sonoma County has a special place in my heart. In this beautiful place seven years ago, I first saw what wine can bring into the lives of myself and others. It was my very first real trip abroad and I was hooked. From that moment on, I knew wine was my calling. I was recently blessed to go back, and Sonoma pulled me in even further. It was better than I remembered, and my moments of reflection were met with feelings of inspiration. In Sonoma, there is so much passion for wine and life it is impossible not to feel it, and even more impossible to let it go. You will find exceptional restaurants and fun personalities driving the culinary and wine side, not to mention beautiful landscapes. Relax and unwind at The Farmhouse Inn located in Russian River Valley. This incredible place is the epitome of luxury. With a Michelin star restaurant that will blow your mind, decadent suites, on-site spa, and house-made soap for your bathing pleasure – you won't be able to stop smiling. Plan at least three nights for the ultimate getaway. Minutes from downtown Sonoma, The Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa is the absolute perfect wine country getaway. Beautiful rooms, a delicious restaurant on-site (Santé), and stellar staff, this hotel is nothing short of pure bliss. Spend the day shopping and sampling in Sonoma Plaza, with 100+ shops, wine tasting rooms and more. Could you imagine a better way to spend the day? Arrive right before sunset at The Girl & The Fig and have a cocktail at the bar while you wait for your table. With a great local wine menu, your server will recommend the perfect pairing with your meal. Head to [Buena Vista Winery](#) and blend your own wine, design your own label and enjoy one of California's pioneering wineries. This place is simply gorgeous, so allow enough time to see the sights and taste at the bar. Visit Sebastopol and see the cool things going on at Spirit Works Distillery. From Sloe Gin to music-inspired whiskey, this place is really amazing. I ended up buying a sweatshirt, I loved the experience so much! Get in touch with nature during a visit to Jack London State Historic Park. Whether you're riding horses, taking a historical house tour, hiking or picnicking under Sonoma Mountain, it is not to be missed. Stop at Benzinger Family Winery for a tasting of seriously awesome wines. These wines

are available for purchase in Canada, and I buy them by the case load. Organic and biodynamic, they are simply mind-blowing. I personally love the merlot. In the mood for pizza and beer? Stop in at the Russian River Brewing Company and try their beers in a tasting flight. This was great to share with my fellow travellers. We tried 22 different brews, from sour beers to stouts. Stop into Wind Gap Wines located in Sebastopol. Their open concept tasting room is designed to look and feel like wine country.

With its eternal sunshine, booming culinary and drinks scene, and majestic natural landscapes, it is no wonder why California draws many of us in. The West coast has a vibe of its own, with a bit less structure, more vitamin D, abundant creativity and an undeniable ease of life. What does California Wine Country do so well that touches the soul of so many visitors? Well for one, the wine is out of this world. Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and other notable varietals are made by talented and spiritual individuals who are connected to the land and the environment. The people are generous, kind and gracious, and above all they are happy. This graciousness floods from heart to heart and the feeling is simply magical. I'm getting all excited here, but if you're like me and choose to spend money and time traveling, you will understand how a place can truly change you. Wine country travel is picking up pace around the globe, and for good reason. It offers the finest foods, welcoming people, delicious wines, and photo opportunities at every angle. I often find that wine country is where my purest moments of reflection occur. I am close to nature, surrounded by positive energy, well fed and incredibly relaxed with a glass of wine in my hand. These are the moments when the busy world stops and I have time to hear the birds sing, feel warmth around me and bask in gratitude.

I encourage everyone to visit California and bring a little bit of sunshine back with you.



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