

PARKS IN A STATE OF TRANSITION

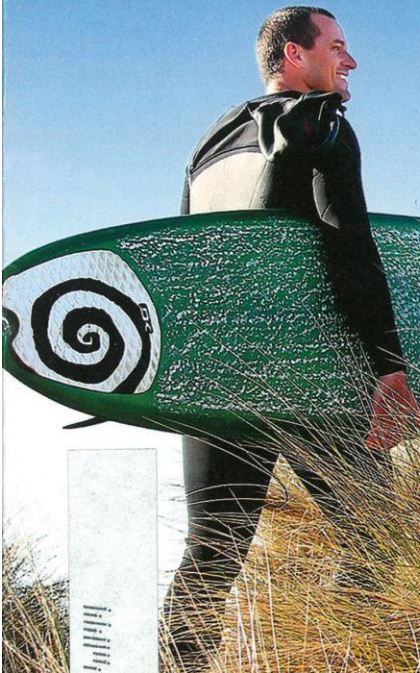
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A LIGHT-FILLED VILLA IN HEALDSBURG p.112

Sonoma

The Heart of Wine Country

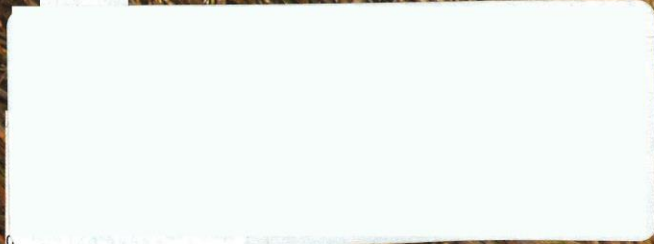


11
exhilarating
adventures
await p.84

air land & sea

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play

sipping

WINERY TASTING ROOMS TO VISIT



Cool off in the caves, pack a picnic, enjoy music on the weekends, or take a guided hike or yoga class. It all happens in summer at various Sonoma tasting rooms.

VIRGINIE BOONE recommends these wineries for July-August exploration.

Auteur Wines, 373 First St. W. Sonoma, 707-938-9211, auteurwines.com. Open by appointment in a cozy house off the Sonoma Plaza (walk-ins welcome on Saturdays), Auteur makes exceptional Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from various coastal sites. Its staff is happy to guide visitors through a tasting of five of its wines (\$25), in order for them to develop an understanding and appreciation for the nuances of Mendocino, Carneros and other cool-climate regions. Tastings are conducted at a communal table fit for conversation and conviviality.

Bartholomew Park Winery, 1000 Vineyard Lane, Sonoma, 707-939-3026, bartpark.com. Located just outside the town of Sonoma on a 21-acre, certified organic estate, Bart Park, as it's often called, holds library tastings of older vintages in the parlor, and

there is the Yoga & Wine Experience (\$60 for two hours) every second Sunday through October, at 10:30 a.m. The winery is operated by the folks at Gundlach Bundschu Winery, within a 300-acre park with incredible picnic grounds and hiking with views.

Boheme Wines, 3625 Main St., Occidental, 707-874-3218, bohemewines.com. Cool-climate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are the main focus at this small producer, which operates a tiny tasting room in downtown Occidental. All the wines are vineyard-specific and show distinct varietal characteristics; all are top-notch. Open Friday through Sunday, and weekdays by appointment.

Buena Vista Winery, 18000 Old Winery Road, Sonoma, 800-926-1266, buenavistawinery.com. A world of

delights awaits at Jean-Charles Boisset's reimagined historical ode to founder Agoston Haraszthy, from expansive gardens and picnic grounds to the well-curated wine tool museum. Many tours and tastings are possible, in addition to a Be the Count Blending Experience (\$100), where participants blend their own bottle of wine, complete with label. Available daily at 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. by appointment, the session requires a reservation 48 hours in advance.

Bryter Estates Winery, 25 E. Napa St., Suite E, Sonoma, 707-363-0525, bryter.com. This downtown Sonoma producer makes a wide range of wines, from Sauvignon Blanc and two Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnays to a selection of Pinot Noirs and Cabernet Sauvignons.

Comstock Wines, 1290 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg, 707-723-3011, comstockwines.com. One of the newest additions to Dry Creek Valley, Comstock offers several tasting and touring options, from a blending semi-

nar with winemaker Chris Russi (\$75) to stocked picnic baskets with the wine of your choice (reserve ahead). Because wine tasting draws many health-conscious visitors, there's also Yoga in the Vines every other Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. (\$25), followed by Sauvignon Blanc and breakfast on the patio. Comstock produces Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Viognier, Chardonnay and a whole lot more.

Donum Estate, 24500 Ramal Road, Sonoma, 707-939-2290, thedonumestate.com. Open by appointment only, Donum is among the most skilled makers of Carneros Pinot Noir and a small amount of Chardonnay, too. Anne Moller-Racke is the viticulturist extraordinaire behind the meticulous planting that goes into the wines, made by Dan Fishman and Kenneth Juhasz. Don't miss the West Slope Carneros Pinot Noir from Donum Ranch.

Gundlach Bundschu Winery, 2000 Denmark St., Sonoma, 707-938-5277, gunbun.com. The historic winery has a wealth of wines to taste, and is a good place to hunker down in the caves for a tasting, often accompanied by a closer look at the vineyards along the way. The producer's Sonoma Coast Gewürztraminer is a particularly fun wine to try, along with its Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Tempranillo.

Hanzell Vineyards, 18596 Lomita Ave., Sonoma, 707-996-3860, hanzell.com. Open by appointment only, via CellarPass (cellarpass.com), Hanzell is well worth the effort, a legendary property and producer of age-worthy, structured and elegant Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs. The Heritage Winery Tour (\$45) begins in the Ambassador's 1953 Vineyard and goes through the winery and barrel-aging cave before a sit-down tasting of current wines. The more in-depth Private Estate Tour (\$65) takes visi-



Trione Vineyards and Winery in Geyserville.

photo courtesy Trione Vineyards and Winery