

OUR NEW TEST GARDENS, REVEALED!

Sunset

WINE LOVER'S GUIDE

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SIP, AND THE \$11 BOTTLE TO BUY NOW

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GRANDDAUGHTER
GIA TALK FAMILY
AND VINES

FALL'S BEST
COMFORT FOOD

HAWAII
DREAM TOWN

18

SPECTACULAR
SPOTS TO
CELEBRATE
SONOMA
COUNTY
WINE MONTH

VISIT US AT SUNSET.COM | OCTOBER 2016

ROAD TRIP

SURPRISE! IT'S SONOMA

*Want a bit of adventure with your
world-class Chardonnay?
Treasures await in the heart
of wine country.
By Christine
Ciarmello*

*Where
wine meets
waves*
SONOMA COAST'S
TIMBER COVE



AROUND SONOMA TOWN

1. ALFRESCO ART SHOW
It's not just grapes you'll encounter in the vineyards of **The Donum Estate** in Carneros, but very large art pieces. In addition to terra-cotta warriors and bronze animal heads (see page 20), you'll confront the 40-foot-high face *Jaume Plensa*. Incredible Pinots and Chardonnays are then poured either in the former dairy barn or in a room overlooking local mountains. \$50 tasting; thedonumestate.com.

2. SCORING WINE TO MUSIC
Can a musical composition change how wine tastes? That's for you to uncover at **Buena Vista**, the historic 1857 winery now owned by wine mogul Jean-Charles Boisset. The Frenchman restored the location a few years ago, adding his signature (whimsical) flourishes, like the music-and-wine experience. Two choices for your taking: symphony music, recorded or live. You can also join a tasting that invites you into an animatronic museum of wine-making tools (\$25). Tasting from \$20; buenavistawinery.com.

3. A HIKE WITH CABERNET
The word "park" in **Bartholomew Park Winery** is to be taken literally. The tasting room is in 400 acres of old oaks and madrones, surrounded by the Cab-friendly Mayacamas Mountains. A museum includes Victorian photographer Eadweard Muybridge's photos documenting viticulture back in the day. \$10 tasting; bartpark.com.



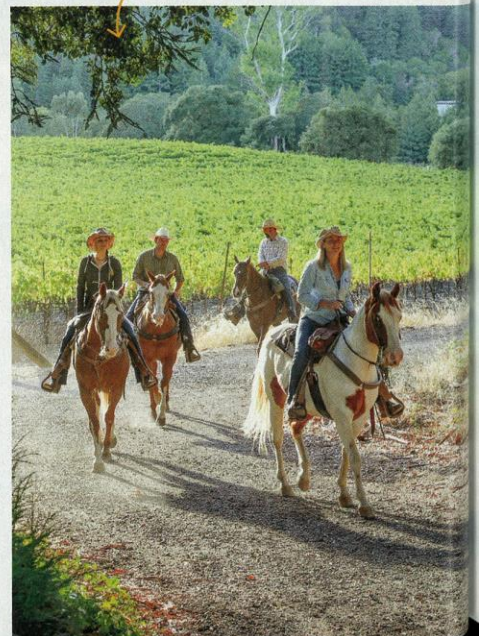
FROM TOP Garden tasting table at Three Sticks Wines; Three Sticks mural by artist Rafael Arana.



4. WELCOME HOME TO THE 1840S
You'll be transported to old Mexican territory of Northern California from the moment you set eyes on The Adobe at **Three Sticks Wines**. The Sonoma town structure was built circa 1842, bought in 2012 by Three Sticks' owner Bill Price, and restored historically, with artful touches by designer Ken Fulk. Even better is what's to drink: Behind the bottles is winemaker Bob Cabral, who built Williams Selyem into a legendary label. This is his new gig. Tasting from \$35; threestickswines.com.

5. CAVE MEN AND WOMEN
You might be met with a moment of reverence when mentioning **Hanzell Vineyards** in Sonoma Valley. Its founder, James David Zellerbach, who was U.S. ambassador to Italy under Eisenhower, was a pioneer, first bottling from the hills of the Mayacamas Mountains in 1957; in subsequent decades, winemaker Bob Sessions built a legacy of wine quality unmatched in the county. Hanzell's heritage tour welcomes you into this world of caves, barrels, and exquisite Pinots and Chards. Tour and tasting \$45; hanzell.com.

TRIPLE CREEK HORSE OUTFIT ON THE TRAIL OF JACK LONDON



6.

A LITERARY WINE GALLOP

Jack London State Historic Park is one of the most fascinating in the system, connecting nature to the area's storied literary past in Glen Ellen. **Triple Creek Horse Outfit** leads guided horseback riding tours into its 1,400 acres, ending at Benziger Winery for a tasting. Since 2016 is the centennial of London's death, a commemorative three-hour ride brings you to the place where a famed photo of the author was snapped. \$330; triplecreekhorseoutfit.com.

NORTH OF SANTA ROSA

7.

COCKTAILING AT A WINERY

Medlock Ames turns out some terrific dark reds, highly drinkable on an outdoor table next to its gorgeous tasting room in a quiet part of Alexander Valley. But come 5 p.m., the tasting room's back door opens onto the world of a dark-wood saloon. Herbs picked from the garden are muddled and slapped to concoct some original cocktails at Alexander Valley Bar. A brilliant transition to the evening—aka winetailing. Tasting from \$15; medlockames.com.

8.

TOUR DE FRANCE

Visiting **Jordan Vineyard & Winery** for an Estate Tour & Tasting (\$120) feels a little like having free run of a French-style *Downton Abbey*, especially when staffers wearing brass nametags welcome you into the foyer with fresh-cut roses and spa water. A full-time chef prepares tasty fixings for the 90-minute tour that ushers you from breakfast by the fountain to bento-box pairings near a lake, culminating in 360° valley views. About 80 employees are needed to maintain the apiaries, orchards, gardens, olive trees, animals (donkeys and cows), and the grapes. Tasting from \$30; jordanwinery.com.

9.

BUBBLY PAIRING PAR EXCELLENCE

Wine drinkers are always on the hunt for a great pairing. They'll find the real spoils in The Bubble Room at **J Vineyards & Winery**, a five-course exploration of unexpected bites (lobster ravioli in nasturtium leaves, or watermelon

TASTING PLUS IN SONOMA COUNTY

At nearly 1,600 square miles, Sonoma County is vast. Plan a getaway that lasts a day or week, with activities centered in different parts of the region (pages 22–24), and lodging options in each (page 26).



Illustration by JOHN S. DYKES

IRON HORSE VINEYARDS
INDULGE IN AN
AFTERNOON OF SIPPING
AND SLURPING



topped with unagi) matched with a range of wines, hosted by a dotting staff. Take time to peek at the jars displayed at the Terrace; each contains a J soil with differing qualities, like fine sandy "Steinbeck" and gravelly clay "Arbuckle." Five-course pairing menu \$95, tasting from \$20; jwine.com.

10.
GET DIRTY IN THE FIELD

By the time **La Crema's** estate tour (\$65) is over, you'll know how to decipher the strange notations on vineyard blocks, recognize distinct microclimates and ecosystems, and drink elegantly from a wineglass as you putter around the roughly 200 acres on a golf cart. The Russian River home once belonged to iconic local personalities Saralee and Richard Kunde, whose eccentric design choices included an elevator that moored as it ascended from floor to floor, and, currently, a classic London phone booth and a retired cargo truck as garden art. While La Crema wines are widely distributed, visitors to the estate can taste special bottles that are poured only here. Tasting from \$15; lacrema.com.

HEADING TO THE COAST

11.
OYSTER GIRLS PARTY

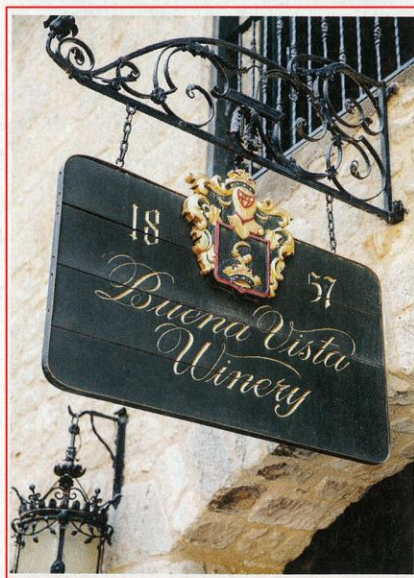
You can't deny the pairing of bubbles and oysters, and **Iron Horse Vineyards** will not deny you either. Sunday is the day to reserve a picnic table beneath a redwood gazebo. The Oyster Girls are on hand, shucking the bivalves (\$3/oyster) for

purchase. The cost is \$35, the flat fee for a picnic table (which seats up to six), plus a minimum of one bottle (bubbles start at \$42). Govino glasses included. \$25 tasting; ironhorsevineyards.com.

12.
GEOLOGICAL PAIRING WITH AN OCEAN VIEW

Take advantage of **Fort Ross Vineyard's** elevation, ranging from 1,200 to 1,700 feet above the sea with breezes and views from the balcony. A marker of the terrain here in one of the state's newest AVAs (approved in 2012) is the San Andreas Fault, which crosses the land 2 miles away at Fort Ross State Historic Park (fortross.org). A hike through the historic orchards will reveal telltale signs of geologic rumblings. At the Fort Ross-Seaview Wine Festival (from \$20; Oct 15; fortross-seaview.org/events), you can taste bottles highlighting the juice that grows in these AVAs. →

S **DIGITAL BONUS** Do a deep dive into Sonoma's wine regions with tips from our complete travel guide: sunset.com/sonomaguide.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Tasting Bar at Iron Horse Vineyards; fresh oysters at Iron Horse; Buena Vista Winery.

