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Go Barreling

To really gain an understanding of the essentials of winemaking, ditch the tasting room for the barrel room. Here are three places where you can learn what happens after the harvest. *s.t.*

1 Raymond Vineyards
 (Saint Helena) Enjoy a barrel tasting program that lets you experience the difference between wines still maturing in tightly grained French oak and make side-by-side comparisons with their finished counterparts from earlier vintages. Barrel tastings are available daily. Tours are \$30 per person. 707.963.3141, raymondvineyards.com

2 Ladera Vineyards
 (Angwin) The new barrel tasting experience includes a tour of the 1886 ghost winery (a winery built between 1860 and 1900) and then an in-depth barrel education, wherein you'll learn what role the different barrel types play in enhancing the overall flavor and structure of wine. After the tour, enjoy tasting four current-release wines. Available daily by appointment. Tours are \$45 per person. 707.965.2445, laderavineyards.com

3 Del Dotto Vineyards
 (St. Helena/Napa) The Estate Tour and Barrel Tasting program in the St. Helena location's Venetian Cave lets guests taste eight wines directly from the barrel to better appreciate the differences between wines produced in oak from different forests, including side-by-side comparisons. After exiting the caves, enjoy house-made nibbles. Barrel tastings are available daily. Tours are \$60 per person. 707.963.2134, deldottovineyards.com

