



10 Best Wineries and Vineyards to Sip and Swirl in Napa Valley

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Napa Valley is synonymous with great wine. More than 400 wineries call it home. One of the hardest parts about visiting is deciding where to go once you're there. In Napa Valley there are distinct microclimates and terrains that define the grapes that grow within their boundaries. These regions or appellations are called American Viticultural Areas, or AVAs. The Napa Valley was California's first recognized AVA, but within it exists 16 additional AVAs, including well-known spots like Calistoga, Oakville, Yountville, Rutherford and St. Helena.

Hundreds of wineries are open to the public in Napa Valley. Some are historic, while others like **Raymond Vineyards** have a modern feel. Some wineries offer one-of-a-kind views or off-road adventures, while others like **Whitehall Lane Winery**, offer cooking classes and distinctive food. And since 95% of Napa Valley wineries are family owned, there's a good chance you'll hear some good stories along the way.

Large or small, wineries want you to enjoy yourself while you are there. While wine tasting is the primary reason you're visiting, often times it's just one of many things you'll experience at a winery. Every wine tasting is uniquely different, so plan on visiting several wineries during your time in the area. If you need some help deciding where to begin, the list below will get you started.

Raymond Vineyards

If you like surprises, you'll love Raymond Vineyards. Vibrant, colorful and modern, Raymond Vineyards does wine tasting with a twist. Glitzy by Napa Valley standards, there are a number of rooms visitors can taste in when visiting the winery. The Crystal Cellar focuses on aerating wine. The out-of-the-ordinary tasting room is encased by stainless steel walls and has a mirrored bar. Raymond Cabernet Sauvignons are poured from hand-crafted Baccarat crystal decanters. Decked head to toe with red velvet, the Red Room is a by appointment lounge, complete with pool table. Half a dozen themed rooms give visitors a variety of tasting possibilities. Raymond Vineyards is glamorous, and it knows it. If you're looking for a traditional Napa Valley wine tasting experience, Raymond Vineyards probably isn't for you. But before you decide old-school is the only way to go in Napa Valley, know that Raymond farms more than 300 acres in Rutherford, St. Helena and Jameson Canyon. Its estate vineyards are certified organic and Biodynamic, and the winery generates 100% of its energy needs from on-site solar panels. (707.963.3141)