

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

Why Cabernet Season Is the Best Time of Year to Take a Napa Valley Road Trip



After what was deemed a “near perfect” growing season, autumn’s bountiful harvest left the Napa Valley ripe for winter relaxation. From November until April, the pace around wine country slows down. The grapes have been brought in and the new vintage rests in cellars throughout the Valley, giving winemakers the chance to relax and chat with tasting room guests in a way they can’t during busier months. Winter is also when Napa’s famed cabernets are released, giving visitors the chance for a first taste of some iconic wines.

Beyond the vines, the perks of road tripping through the quiet of winter are many. Snag a table at one of the Valley’s sought-after, Michelin-starred restaurants, cozy up with a hot toddy by the fire pit, wind along a blissfully traffic-free Highway 29, and snap photos of the brilliant swaths of mustard flowers popping up everywhere. This guide delivers a blend of new and noteworthy along with well-loved local haunts for a perfect long weekend (or longer!) in Napa Valley.

Yountville: Taste of the Town

Down the street, pop into Jean-Charles Boisset's opulent [JCB Tasting Salon](#) for an unmatched sensory experience. Gilded mirrors adorn a matching ceiling hung with sparkling, Baccarat crystal chandeliers while leopard print stools surround a gleaming tasting table. To sip sans bling, visit family-run [Stewart Cellars](#), one of Yountville's newer additions, where you can sample a flight of five different wines in the airy Tasting Hall. Or settle in by the fireplace in the rustically elegant Nomad Heritage Library for the 2016 Nomad Cabernet tasting.