

CALIFORNIA

Best Napa Valley vineyards

Where to head for world-class wine in California

Alicia Miller and James Draven | Tuesday July 26 2022, 15:16pm

So, you're headed to Napa Valley and want to visit a winery. But which one? There are more than 400 open to the public in [California](#)'s prestigious vinous heart — and they're not all created equal. With your cash on the line (tastings are chargeable) you want an experience that goes above and beyond. That's where the wineries listed below come in — they deliver much more than samples of the region's esteemed cabernet sauvignon. They come with exclusive experiences and daring architecture, knock-out food pairings and insider tours. Book well ahead to secure your picks, as the valley gets busy. And hire a taxi too — pours can be generous.

16. Raymond Vineyards, St Helena

This 100 per cent solar-powered winery, certified organic and biodynamic, does things a little differently. [Raymond](#) is a lavish affair and was founded in 1974. The Red Room lounge, in particular, is decked out like a belle époque bordello in sumptuous velvet, lit by crystal chandeliers and can be visited by appointment only. The wine cellar has even hosted burlesque nights. Sample its sparkling rosé and cabernet sauvignons as you make yourself at home with a game of cards or a book from the offbeat library.

Where to stay There's lots to toast to at the [Vintage House*](#), but start with the daily champagne buffet breakfast that's included in the rate. It sits on a 23-acre space and there are lots of landscaped gardens and waterways to explore, while inside you'll find rustic rooms with huge bathtubs and a great spa.