

## Goodness Grapeness: 5 Days in Wine Country

Written by Melissa Larsen

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In the fall, wildfires devastated areas of California. Miraculously, all but two wineries in Napa and Sonoma Valleys were badly damaged. From zinfandel to zip-lining, the locales are bursting with wine, arts, adventure, shopping and dining—and you're invited on a five-day journey through the beloved, flourishing regions.

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### [Sonoma Valley](#)

#### Day 1

##### Get “Nutty” at Charles Schulz Museum

Consider yourself a Charlie Brown fan? Are you a Snoopy buff? If so, this museum offers the largest collection of original Peanuts art work in the world.

##### Eat, Drink and Be Merry at The Barlow

For a bite to eat or a brew—or two—The Barlow is a unique food, beverage, art campus and marketplace in Sebastopol. Grab a slice at Vignette Pizzeria, the first solo project for Chef Mark Hopper, or go a healthier route with an acai bowl from The Nectary.

##### Adventure with the Classic Zip-Line Experience by Sonoma Canopy Tours

Sonoma Canopy Tours is an adrenaline junkie's dream with two unique courses that include multiple zip-lines, sky bridges, a majestic spiral staircase and a rappel to the forest floor. Yup, that means views of the California Coastal Redwoods.

##### Check-in: Bodega Bay Lodge (pictured)

After an action-packed day, settle in to this quintessential California coastal retreat, offering romance and serenity. Come dinnertime, savor fresh, innovative dishes (think zinfandel-braised boneless Angus short ribs) at the on-site Drake Sonoma Coast Kitchen while taking in a sunset view over the Pacific.

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### Day 2

#### A.M. Picnic in Jenner (pictured)

Kick off Day 2 exploring the coastal village of Jenner, home of the River Estuary, where visitors will find Pacific harbor seals, brown pelicans, ospreys and great blue herons. The area's Goat Rock State Beach is a picture-perfect picnic spot.

#### Get Charmed at Guerneville

Endless charm and quirkiness await visitors of Guerneville. Take in a 50-minute tour of the historic Korbel Champagne Cellars (ending with a free tasting, of course) or stroll the area's retro Main Street bursting with old-fashioned shops, galleries and eateries.

#### Be One with Nature at Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve

The reserve, where visitors will find stately *Sequoia sempervirens* (coast redwoods) includes a visitor center, a large outdoor amphitheater, self-guided nature trails and a variety of picnic facilities for enjoying the breathtaking natural beauties.

#### Sip and Savor in Healdsburg

Nestled along the Russian River, Healdsburg offers small-town charm, award-winning vintages and a must-visit town plaza. It sits at the juncture of the Russian River Valley, Dry Creek Valley and Alexander Valley wine appellations, so wine-tasting is a must as is taking part in the monthly Healdsburg Artwalk that highlights more than 20 downtown galleries from May to December.

#### Tour and Tasting at Francis Ford Coppola Winery

One of the most recognized names in winemaking, the Geyserville-area winery offers a complimentary wine tasting available daily in the Main Floor Tasting Bar—making it the ultimate way to *wine* down after a long day.

#### Check-in: Geyserville Inn

The perfect final snapshot of Sonoma Valley, this beautiful 41-room inn is surrounded by vineyards on three sides and offers views of the Mayacama Mountains as a backdrop.

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### [Napa Valley](#)

### Day 3

#### "Mix Your Own" Mud Bath at Calistoga Motor Lodge & Spa

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In an area known for its natural hot springs and historic mud baths, guests can't miss out on the mix-your-own-mud bar at the cool, laidback Calistoga Motor Lodge & Spa. End your treatment with a spell in the spa relaxation garden for the ultimate anti-stress a.m.

### Tour and Tasting at Sterling Vineyards

There are two ways to taste at Sterling Vineyards: The Silver Experience, which focuses on pairing small-production wines with an artisanal cheese and a charcuterie platter, and the Platinum Experience featuring the winery's most sought-after reserve wines paired with amuse-bouche items.

### Check-in: Solage, an Auberge Resort

Settle into one of the 83 guest studios or six one-bedroom suites at this modern Napa Valley retreat. Check out the original artwork throughout the resort, borrow a bike for a pre-dinner ride or grab a few drinks at Solbar.

### Dig in at Sam's Social Club

Dine among the restaurant's Indian Springs Mission Revival-style architecture (or grab a seat on the patio with the geyser-fed water feature). Though the super-fresh menu changes daily, past favorites have included organic bone-in pork chop and pan-seared Loch Duart salmon.

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## Day 4

### Take a Hike at Robert Louis Stevenson State Park

Robert Louis Stevenson State Park is home of a five-mile hike to the top of Mt. St. Helena with a view of much of the San Francisco Bay Area. If kiddos are in tow, Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, located in the northern end of the valley between St. Helena and Calistoga, hosts family-based activities and trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

### Tour and Tasting at AXR Napa Valley

AXR Napa Winery recently purchased the pre-prohibition ghost winery estate, V Madrone Vineyard and Winery. Learn historic tales of this acclaimed 1880's site—from stories of Native American hunting grounds to being home of one of the first female winemakers in California—during daily reserved tours.

### Fresh Feasting at Farmstead at Long Meadow Ranch

At Farmstead, savor the likes of grass-fed beef meatballs, grilled trout and pulled pork sandwiches—just a few dishes from the menu of American farmhouse cooking.

### Tour and Tasting at Joseph Phelps Vineyards

New to this St. Helena's winery is the lineup "Playful Plates" wine and food experiences on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. If traveling on Friday, opt for the multi-course Bountiful Table or, on a Sunday, dig into the wine and cheese pairing.

### Check-in: Las Alcobas, a Luxury Collection Hotel (pictured)

A new staying spot in St. Helena, the elite Las Alcobas features 68 guest rooms and suites with terraces and outdoor fireplaces, proximity to Beringer vineyards and access to Atrio, the 3,500-sq.-ft. spa offering unique, artisanal treatments.

### Seasonal Scrumptiousness at Acacia House

This Georgian-inspired house whips up seasonal dishes that are influenced by the countries of origin of the surrounding grapes, including France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Germany. Start with local lamb tartare before enjoying striped bass or Sonoma chicken as the main entrée.

## Day 5

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### **Go Big Before Going Home with Napa Valley Aloft Balloon Rides**

Before ending your wine country adventure, soak in a bird's-eye view of the beautiful agricultural surroundings. Of course, be sure to have that camera handy.