

TRAVEL + LEISURE



travelandleisure.com OCTOBER 2013

GLADOW NEAD
COMMUNICATIONS

TRAVEL + LEISURE
SEPTEMBER 2013

An aerial photograph of the Napa Valley, showing rows of green vineyards in the foreground, a small farm building in the middle ground, and rolling hills and mountains in the background under a blue sky with light clouds.

THE BEST OF NAPA VALLEY

With cutting-edge wineries, farm-fresh food,
and sophisticated yet laid-back retreats, it's no wonder
California's iconic wine region has such enduring appeal.

Longtime visitor **RICHARD ALLEMAN** shares his insider's guide.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALEX FARNUM

WHERE TO TASTE

I prefer wineries that offer more than just a pour, where you can hike or bike, or see incredible art and architecture. Take the curving, Gaudiesque **Quixote Winery** in the Stag's Leap District, north of Napa. Designed in the 1990's by the Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser, this golden-domed building only opened to the public in 2007; don't miss their Petit Syrahs and Cabernets. Another must is the **Hess Collection**, which, in addition to having outstanding Cabernets and Chardonnays, showcases works by the likes of Robert Motherwell, Frank Stella, and Andy Goldsworthy in a 1903 stone winery. Michael Graves's stunning, postmodern Minoan temple—the centerpiece of **Clos Pegase Winery**, outside Calistoga—features gigantic sculptures by Henry Moore, Jean Dubuffet, and Robert Morris on its grounds.

For something on a more intimate scale, there's **Stony Hill Vineyard**: 160 heart-stopping acres on the slope of Spring Mountain, north of St. Helena. Call ahead to book a guided hour-long hike with Sarah McCrea, granddaughter of the founders: for \$100 per person, this includes a picnic lunch by redwoods and pours of Chardonnay. Go to **Swanson Vineyards** as much for the elegant but quirky atmosphere (you're seated in a carnival-like, cherry-red salon) as for the Cabernets. One to watch: the new tasting room and culinary center by Jarred Denton and Signum Architecture for **Hall Wines** in St. Helena. When finished, it promises to be a marvel of floor-to-ceiling glass windows, with views of the sheltered St. Helena valley floor. Also on the horizon is **Odette Estate Winery**, from former San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom, Gordon Getty, and John Conover (the trio behind PlumpJack Winery and CADE). When completed next year, the project—set on 36 acres off the Silverado Trail—will feature 18,000 square feet of caves, solar panels, and a planted living roof designed by Mexican architect Juancarlos Fernandez. Though Odette's first vintage won't be out until 2015, the estate has a temporary tasting room where you can sample other bottles.

If you're a collector, get in touch with wine experts David and Monica Stevens. The couple own **750 Wines**, a St. Helena store stocking the best labels, and they host tastings by appointment with lesser-knowns like Dakota Shy and Pulido Walker, up-and-comers like Matthiasson, and established names like Harlan and Bond.