

NAPA

WINE, FOOD AND CONVERSATION FROM NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS

THE SKIES WE CREATE

Through efforts large and small, Napa Valley vintners tackle climate change

Discover Your Napa
HOW TO PLAN THE PERFECT
NAPA VALLEY GETAWAY

In Pursuit of Excellence
A PASSION FOR QUALITY INSPIRES
LOCAL WINEMAKERS

Visionary Design
THE EXTRAORDINARY ARCHITECTURE
OF LOCAL WINERIES

This year marks the ninth year of partnership between J.P. Morgan and Napa Valley Vintners. It is our privilege to support an organization that dedicates itself to community betterment through philanthropic initiatives around healthcare and childhood education, a commitment Napa Valley Vintners has made for more than 40 years. J.P. Morgan values the importance of helping local communities and individuals grow, which has become a principal foundation for the longevity of our partnership.



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NAPA VALLEY

— CULTIVATING EXCELLENCE —

NAPA MAGAZINE
Spring/Summer 2023
Issue #15
Produced by | DCP

CONTACT US

Napa Valley Vintners
P.O. Box 141
St. Helena, CA 94574
707.963.3388
nvv@napavintners.com



@NapaVintners



napa valley vintners

NAPA magazine is published by
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SPRING/SUMMER 2023

Throughout this issue of NAPA magazine, you'll learn about our commitment to the land, our investment in the Napa Valley community and our efforts to produce world-class wines year after year. We also explore and celebrate the wondrous world of white wines produced in Napa Valley. From numerous varieties to varied experiences, there is something for everyone in Napa Valley. We hope you're inspired by our stories.

NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS

We asked this issue's writers what they enjoyed most about researching and writing their stories. Here's what they said.



“For me, this poem is part remembrance and part prophecy. It is a reminder of how far we have come and how much more still awaits, and how the universe is always conspiring in your favor.”

—ALISHA SOMMER (“A VALLEY’S SKY,” PAGE 4) IS A WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER AND ALL-AROUND CREATIVE WITH A PASSION FOR FOOD, WINE AND WORDS. ST. HELENA, CA



“As more and more Napa Sauvignon Blancs are aged in a mix of new and neutral oak, concrete and stainless steel, lending layers of complexity, I find myself ordering them at a restaurant more often.”

—JONATHAN CRISTALDI (“WHAT SOMMS ARE SAYING,” PAGE 6) IS THE NAPA VALLEY CORRESPONDENT FOR *DECANTER* MAGAZINE AND THE EDITOR AT LARGE FOR *THE SOMM JOURNAL*. HIS WORK ALSO APPEARS IN *FOOD & WINE* AND *DEPARTURES*. NOVATO, CA



“It’s amazing how many details go into the architecture and design of a winery. It’s not just a pretty place to sit and sip, though producing world-class wines and enhancing the natural beauty are obvious priorities. There’s the worker and visitor experiences to consider, too. With the latter, integrating various amenities and attractions makes for a much richer experience that reinforces what a special place Napa Valley is.”

—ANH-MINH LE (“A TOAST TO ARCHITECTURE,” PAGE 10) IS A FREELANCE WRITER AND EDITOR WHOSE BYLINES HAVE APPEARED IN *THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE*, *WSJ. MAGAZINE*, *CALIFORNIA HOME+DESIGN* AND *C MAGAZINE*, AMONG OTHERS. PORTOLA VALLEY, CA



“It was a privilege and a treat to experience the Napa Valley’s diversity of hospitality offerings and share my discoveries so visitors can choose the right ones for them.”

—DANIEL MANGIN (“FIND YOUR NAPA,” PAGE 14) IS THE AUTHOR OF *FODOR’S NAPA AND SONOMA*, WHOSE NEXT ISSUE COMES OUT IN AUGUST 2023. SAN FRANCISCO, CA



“Talking with this younger generation of Napa Valley winemakers reminded me how much the region thrives on resiliency and innovation, with such a strong sense of community and camaraderie behind the commitment to achieving quality.”

—VIRGINIE BOONE (“QUALITY WINEMAKING,” PAGE 18) IS THE SENIOR EDITOR AND CALIFORNIA CRITIC OF *THE NEW WINE REVIEW*, A NEW DIGITAL WINE PUBLICATION. KENWOOD, CA



“Whenever I speak with grapegrowers and winemakers in Napa Valley about their approach to the changing climate, I come away from the conversation more inspired and optimistic than I was before. For all of the challenges—and there are so very many—that climate change is causing, the professionals who are responsible for the wines we all love are among the most passionate and forward-thinking people around.”

—BRIAN FREEDMAN (“SMALL STEPS, BIG IMPACT,” PAGE 22) CONTRIBUTES TO *FOOD & WINE DIGITAL*, *FORBES.COM*, *WHISKY ADVOCATE* AND MORE. HIS FIRST BOOK, *CRUSHED: HOW A CHANGING CLIMATE IS ALTERING THE WAY WE DRINK*, WAS PUBLISHED LAST YEAR. HAVERFORD, PA



“I loved learning how Napa producers create unique white wine blends by combining familiar varieties, like Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, with unexpected grapes like Malvasia and Viognier. The summer season is the perfect time to explore these creative blends.”

—WANDA MANN (“SYMPHONY IN WHITE,” PAGE 28) IS THE EAST COAST EDITOR OF *THE SOMM JOURNAL* AND NEW YORK EDITOR OF *THE TASTING PANEL*. NEW YORK, NY

A VALLEY'S SKY

EXCERPTED FROM A POEM BY ALISHA SOMMER

I.

You find yourself nestled between hills split by green leafy seams. This nature-built quilt begs you for an ear. It wants to tell you a story of what is to come.

The expanse of this exponential sky and its quiet haze swallows you. You let it take you in.

The valley unrolls itself before you like a canvas begging you to make your mark.

II.

A January sky and earth the color of spent coffee grounds.

You watch the symphonic movement of their hands as they march through the vineyard.

Wrapped in thick jackets and gloves, they are graceful, measured, precise. "You have to have vision," he says. "Think not only of this year's harvest, but of the next, and then the one after that. And then the one after that."

Every squeeze shapes a future that is beyond you.

III.

An April sky and all that surrounds is glossy with potential. You are on the hunt for signs of new life: the first neon cluster of mustard; the electric tangerine of poppies; the soft tendrils of the pea; the gentle blooming of your desire.

You hope you have set the right conditions for growth.

IV.

A June sky and its heat, stubborn in its unwillingness to pledge an allegiance to fantasies, and ripples of green stretched across dusty red soil.

Up on the hilltop, your heels root into the rock that is a shoulder willing to bear the weight of your dream.

Tilt your mouth toward heaven to make your request.

1

BUD BREAK: The first buds of the growing season emerge from the dormant vine during bud break. Depending on vine variety and location, bud break can take place over a two-month period, reflecting Napa Valley's great viticultural diversity.



3

CANOPY MANAGEMENT: A complex process, canopy management refers to a variety of decisions and actions related to leaf removal, vigor management, shoot thinning and shoot positioning. The goal is to achieve the perfect balance of shade, sunlight and air circulation around each grape bunch, which will promote optimal ripening.



2

FLOWERING: After a month or so of vegetative growth, a vine develops bunches of tiny flowers. Each flower has the potential to form a single grape berry. When there is danger of frost, growers take great steps to protect the young shoots.

SEASONS OF THE VINEYARD

Napa Valley is known for its innovative, quality-driven wines that stand among the best in the world, and most winemakers will tell you that quality starts in the vineyard. Here are four seasons of the vineyard before harvest.

4

VERAISON: All grape varieties begin their yearly journey green in color. It's not until midsummer that red or white grapes reveal their identity. This period of grape pigment development is called veraison, signaling the onset of ripening as the grapes naturally sweeten.



THE MANY FACES OF NAPA VALLEY SAUVIGNON BLANC AND FOODS THAT COMPLEMENT

Only in Napa Valley, where vines thrive in an array of microclimates, elevations and terroirs, can Sauvignon Blanc be made to resemble traces of the Old World with its own unique New World stamp of ripeness and coiled-up energy.

From lean and linear styles to full-flavored, rich and weighty examples, these whites offer sommeliers ample opportunities for creative pairings. • BY JONATHAN CRISTALDI



“I look for examples that are made from blends of separate vineyard lots or clones and are aged in a variety of vessels—splashes of Sémillon, Sauvignon Musqué or other white varieties add further complexity. For a citrusy, green grassy Napa Sauvignon Blanc, goat cheese and asparagus tart is the way to go. For fruity, medium-bodied ones, a chicken burger or clam pizza.”

—NADINE BROWN, PRINCIPAL SOMMELIER, AT YOUR SERVICE, WASHINGTON, D.C.



“Site; *sur lie* aging; and judicious use of American or French oak, concrete and stainless steel is the recipe for Napa Sauvignon Blanc with typicity and a sense of place. I pair them with toasted baguette slices slathered with quark, topped with thin-sliced summer squash.”

—LAURA BRUNO, WINE DIRECTOR, ELEMENTS, SANCTUARY ON CAMELBACK MOUNTAIN, A GURNEY'S RESORT AND SPA, PARADISE VALLEY, AZ



“I’m drawn to bottles from lower elevations, where fog lingers, leading to more acidity in the wine. I love pairing them with crab cakes and cold fried chicken on a picnic.”

—TONYA PITTS, WINE DIRECTOR, ONE MARKET RESTAURANT, SAN FRANCISCO, CA



“The grape variety embraces Napa’s climate and it shows in the glass with real body and character. We also underestimate the ageability of Napa Sauvignon Blanc and I’m finding that my money is well spent on the upper echelon of bottles. Being from Louisiana, I always have a bottle close with grilled redfish, boiled shrimp and fresh oysters.”

—RICHARD KING, GENERAL MANAGER AND CO-OWNER, ELLERBE FINE FOODS, FORT WORTH, TX



“On hot days, I crave crisp, tropical, stainless-steel vinified Napa Sauvignon Blanc. On cooler days, I like barrel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc. For pairings, you can’t go wrong with oysters and crabs!

—ERIKA PARJUS, LEAD SOMMELIER AT BOTTLES WINE GARDEN, WASHINGTON, D.C.



EVERY YEAR IN JUNE WE COME TOGETHER AGAIN

For more than 40 years, the first weekend in June has been a time that we come together as a collective community to celebrate the best of Napa Valley with great food, exceptional wines and a good cause. The goal is to raise funds and celebrate our shared goal to build a brighter future for our iconic region. Here's a snapshot of the weekend.

 Visit collectivenapavalley.org for more information.



SATURDAY – WINERY EXPERIENCES, DINNER, LIVE AUCTION & DANCING

- WINERY EXPERIENCES: Get your boots dirty on a vineyard walk or in a blending session. Round out the afternoon over a casual lunch.
- DINNER: Begin the evening seated alongside vintners at an incredible dinner prepared by an award-winning chef.
- LIVE AUCTION: Dinner is followed by live music, dancing and an opportunity to acquire Napa Valley’s finest wines during a live auction.



FRIDAY – BARREL AUCTION & DINNER

- BARREL AUCTION: Taste wines straight from the barrel and bid to take the wines home.
- MARKETPLACE: Enjoy food and wine pairings from Napa Valley’s world-renowned restaurants and wineries.
- INTIMATE DINNERS: Vintner hosts treat you and fellow Collective members to exceptional wines, a delicious meal and warm hospitality.

FAR RIGHT TOP TO BOTTOM: JASON TINACCI; ALEXANDER RUBIN; BRIANA MARIE



Clos Pegase was designed by renowned architect Michael Graves, who drew upon ancient Greek references.

A Toast to Architecture

WINERIES ARE DRAWING ATTENTION AS MUCH FOR THEIR DESIGN AS FOR THEIR WINES

• BY ANH-MINH LE

Just as Napa Valley boasts a variety of wine grapes, from Albariño to Zinfandel, the architecture of its wineries is wide ranging, with influences as diverse as Greek mythology and couture gowns. Whether the buildings appear amid a backdrop of flourishing vines or are discreetly nestled on the grounds, there's a throughline: designs that evoke a sense of place, where world-class wines and singular tasting experiences await.

For some firms, a winery represents a rarity in their portfolio. Michael Graves, the postmodernist pioneer who passed away in 2015, designed more than 350 buildings during an illustrious career that spanned five decades, yet Clos Pegase was his only winery. Other architects more prolific in the valley, like Howard Backen and Jon Lail, often cite the setting as a continuing driving force. Also top of mind are production needs (to yield the finest wines) and visitor amenities (Clos Pegase's Cave Theater, for instance, holds concerts and dinners). As a result, wineries combine some of the most beloved aspects of Napa Valley culture—food, wine, the arts—in one place.

In 1984, the then-proprietors of Clos Pegase, Jan and Mitsuko Shrem, in conjunction with the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, held a competition to select the winery's architect. "Michael Graves' vision incorporates a principle of Greek mythology which separates the worlds of work and play," says Mary Ann Vangrin, vice president of communications at Vintage Wine Estates, which owns Clos Pegase. "Grand Minoan columns essentially divide the winery in half, with one side dedicated to winemaking and the other side to celebrations, tastings and hospitality."

In a 2010 interview, Graves, who was up against 95 other entrants, recounted that his goal was to "make a winery that worked.

“HAVING A 140-YEAR-OLD WINERY RUIN IS THE FIRST REASON THAT I FELL IN LOVE WITH THE LAND. HOWARD [BACKEN] DID A GREAT JOB OF MINGLING THE ORIGINAL OLD STRUCTURE WITH THE NEW ADDITION TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE IT HAS BEEN THERE FOREVER.” —HI SANG LEE, PROPRIETOR, DANA ESTATES

Wineries were starting to be designed by modern architects that were more about modern architecture than they were about wineries and the history and substance of winemaking.”

Vangrin notes that Graves “was inspired by the climate and the light in the Calistoga AVA.” A veranda overlooking the estate Applebone Vineyard offers a prime spot for tastings, while cave tours impart further winemaking insight. The winery is sited at the bottom of a volcanic knoll—a solid rock that houses 20,000 square feet of caves. “Aging wine in the rock is ideal because of its constant temperature of exactly 62 degrees year-round and 70 to 80 percent humidity,” explains Vangrin.

Much like wine, architecture can embody preservation and innovation. Take the Backen-designed Dana Estates winery, completed in 2010. The property’s vinification history, however, dates to 1883. “Having a 140-year-old winery ruin is the first reason that I fell in love with the land,” says Dana Estates owner Hi Sang Lee. “Howard did a great job of mingling the original old structure with the new addition to make it look like it has been there forever.”

Lee had seen Backen’s work at Harlan Estate and “really loved his style of design,” he says, referring to it as “original yet very natural and not showy.” For Dana Estates, Lee desired a balance between contrasting

elements: “old and new, East and West, outdoor and indoor, and fire and water.”

Rustic and elegant are also apt descriptors of Backen’s oeuvre. Since arriving in Napa in the 1990s, Backen has designed numerous wineries. The renowned architect has stated that rather than executing a certain style, he is compelled by the site and the land.

Winemaker Philippe Melka, who is currently consulting with Dana Estates, also participated in the design process. Lee recalls many hours discussing materials—stone, wood, metal, concrete. The main concern, he says, was making the best possible wines, “so every single material is chosen by the production team, and Howard made sure that those materials look good.”

At Ron and Susan Krausz’s Arkenstone Vineyards, the facilities rely on the low-tech (like gravity to move the fruit) and the state-



Arkenstone Vineyards, a winery on Howell Mounain, was designed by Napa resident Jon Lail.

of-the-art (pneumatic punch downs). The natural beauty and health of the Howell Mountain site were also considerations. To help maintain the integrity of the landscape, production happens subterraneously—with the exception of the above-ground crush pad.

The Krauszes enlisted Lail, whom they previously worked with on a residential endeavor. “We knew that as a longtime Napa resident, he understood the valley well,” says Susan Krausz. Lail moved to the area in the 1970s with his wife, Robin Daniel Lail, who later founded Lail Vineyards. “Jon and his team had the knowledge, skills, creativity and ability to navigate the complexities of the project,” Krausz adds.

A contemporary barn composed of metal in earthy hues nods to the region’s agricultural roots. “We wanted the tasting room to be elegant, yet welcoming, and have an unimpeded view of the vineyards, forest, meadow and mountains,” Krausz elaborates.

Sustainability is a priority at Arkenstone, which has “continuously farmed organically since the first plantings in 1998,” says Krausz, noting that winemaker Sam Kaplan is always on the lookout for new technology and practices with long-term benefits. (A recently purchased electric tractor reduces the use of diesel.)

According to John Conover, general manager and partner at Odette Estate Winery, its LEED Gold certification and CCOF accreditation reflect “our approach of not ‘owning’ any of the wineries, but being stewards of the land and locations from which we make wine.” Indeed, Odette architect Juancarlos Fernandez’s concept was “dictated by the

space and surrounding hills,” he says. (Prior to forming Signum Architecture with Jarrod Denton in 2011, Fernandez was a senior designer at Lail Design Group.)

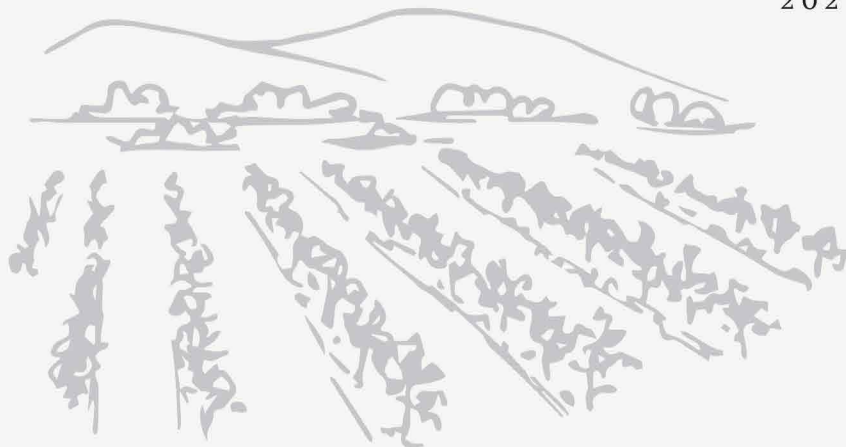
Two key features at Odette are the living green roof and sliding perforated aluminum screens. The shapes of the latter, which shade the crush pad and work area, were inspired by Oscar de la Renta dresses. Strikingly, the winemaking laboratory occupies recycled shipping containers. “It’s ahead, it’s different, it’s efficient. ... There’s nothing else like it,” says Fernandez.

It’s not only structures that are being reimaged, though. In 2015, Clos Pegase removed its water-thirsty lawns and installed a heritage garden with drought-tolerant plants and trees.

“We have seen so many beautiful winery projects throughout Napa Valley,” says Susan Krausz. “Each one tells a story of the ever-changing face of the valley and the folks who inhabit this amazing place.”



LEED Gold-certified
Odette Estate Winery
was designed by
Juancarlos Fernandez
of Signum Architecture.



BRIGHT ACIDS AND CONCENTRATED FLAVORS: THE 2021 WHITE WINE VINTAGE

The 2021 vintage will be remembered for low yields with intensely flavored, small berries and a smooth and uneventful harvest season. The season started off with very little rain, leading to the second year of drought conditions in Napa Valley. Harvest began early with white wine grapes picked starting on July 31. Here are a few insights into the vintage and why you may want to check these refreshers out.

SAUVIGNON BLANC

“

The fingerprint of the overall cooler temperatures of the 2021 vintage manifested into a Sauvignon Blanc of undeniable concentration which underscores its varietal character and makes it the perfect choice for summertime sipping.

—Richard Bruno, Winemaker, Acre Wines

CHARDONNAY

“

The 2021 vintage was certainly a great year for Napa Valley and Chardonnay, in particular. Due to the drought, grapes were picked earlier than normal and were lower yielding, but Chardonnay had the ability for longer hang time, letting flavors come to fruition, while still having great acid profiles.

—Eryn Cameron, Winemaker, Inner Circle Wine

VIIGNIER

“

In 2021, the fruit came in juicy with concentrated flavors. For Viognier, the aromatics are pretty—citrus blossoms and honeysuckle—while the flavors could be characterized as fresh pear, guava and stone fruits.

—Hope Goldie, Director of Winemaking, Darioush

CHENIN BLANC

“

In 2021 aromatic whites grown in Napa reached new heights of flavor concentration and will contribute to any warm summer day's enjoyment. Napa Valley Chenin Blancs were some of the most concentrated and flavorful they have ever been.

—Shaina Harding, Winemaker, Gaderian Wines



Scan this code to learn more about Napa Valley vintages.

11 WAYS TO

Find Your Napa

Tips and insights for the perfect Napa Valley visit

—
BY DANIEL MANGIN

With world-class restaurants, spas and of course winemaking, California's marquee wine destination is the complete package, offering travelers gracious hospitality, vast natural beauty and unsurpassable wine tasting experiences.

As a travel and wine writer considered in the know about things Napa Valley, people often ask me, "Where should I go?" There's a perfect Napa visit for everyone from novices to connoisseurs, I always respond, but with hundreds of tasting venues the key to a fulfilling time is narrowing the options given your interests and budget.

And guess what? You don't have to spend extravagantly to have a good time here. You can splurge, but you don't have to. Case in point: While researching the upcoming edition of *Fodor's Napa and Sonoma*, I began a splendid day at a posh big-name winery sampling meticulously crafted Cabernets paired with sophisticated bites. The day ended with a far less expensive tasting on a family winery's gravel patio, discarded barrels stacked haphazardly nearby. The contrast with the morning session couldn't have been starker, but my third-generation hosts charmed me with their unassuming vibe and rustic whites and reds.

Both venues are part of the Napa Valley I cherish. Below are suggestions to help you find *your* Napa (all prices are per person). ➤➤



Outdoor garden seating
at Bennett Lane.

ELISE ALLEN



1. BASK IN THE VIEWS

On a sunny day, a Signature Tasting (\$35) at Bennett Lane feels more like a garden party as guests bask in Calistoga Palisades views. The aptly named Vineyard View Tasting (\$50) at ZD Wines unfolds on a second-story open-air terrace with vistas of Rutherford to the Mayacamas Mountains.

2. GEEK OUT

A must-do for wine geeks and the other-wise curious, Vine to Vessel (\$120) at Bouchaine Vineyards in Los Carneros explores the effects of different aging vessels—concrete eggs, clay amphorae, an acacia barrel, large oak casks, a stainless-steel drum—on a wine’s flavor, texture, mouthfeel and aromas.

3. DRINK IN THE HISTORY

Beaulieu Vineyard in Rutherford bills its Georges de Latour Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, which debuted in 1936, as “the first cult Napa Valley wine.” Some tastings (from \$55) conclude with a de Latour pour.

4. EXPLORE A CAVE

All tastings (from \$30) at Pride Mountain Vineyards, atop St. Helena’s Spring Mountain, include a cave tour unlike others because the winery straddles Napa and Sonoma. The views are extraordinary, too.

5. ENJOY SPARKLERS ALFRESCO

A palate-cleansing sparkling-wine toast is a great way to commence a Napa Valley visit. Mumm Napa patrons enjoy flights alfresco (from \$40) on a terrace overlooking Rutherford vines. As part of extensive renovations, Domaine Chandon, perched on a Yountville hillside, has added new outdoor tastings (from \$50) amid its formidable Oak Grove.

6. HEAR A MULTIGENERATIONAL TALE

East of the Silverado Trail, Sage Canyon Road skirts Lake Hennessey on the way to Nichelini Family Winery, established by Swiss Italian immigrants in 1890. Aimée Sunseri of the fifth generation makes the wines showcased at present-day tastings (\$30), whose hosts recount the family’s travails and triumphs over 130-plus years.

7. MAKE YOUR OWN WINE

Participants in Conn Creek Winery’s Barrel Blending Experience (\$150) sample mountain and valley-floor Bordeaux wines aging in oak before fashioning their wines. Also in St. Helena, attendees at Joseph Phelps Vineyards’ Insignia Blending (\$150) seminar compare their creations to the current release of the winery’s legendary Insignia wine.



Cakebread Cellars.

8. BRING THE WHOLE FAM

Up to eight people of any age can participate in a Family Tasting (\$45) at Cakebread Cellars. The “communal walking experience” lasts 45 minutes or so. Book directly with the Rutherford winery.

9 TASTE ZINS AND PETITES

You won't find Cabernet at Napa's Robert Biale Vineyards, specializing in Zinfandel and Petite Sirah. Patrons of Valley Vista Tastings (\$50), held on a vineyard's-edge covered back porch, hear well-spun tales about farming challenges and a bootleg wine code-named Black Chicken.



Wine tasting on the back porch of Robert Biale Vineyards.

10. PICNIC WITH THE PESTONIS

Follow a Heritage Tasting (\$50) at Pestoni Family Estate Winery—the Swiss Italian ancestors of the current owners settled in the Napa Valley in 1892—picnicking (BYOF) on the grounds. Order a Merlot or Sangiovese to accompany your repast, and you'll be savoring it steps from where its Rutherford AVA grapes were grown.

11. SIP BY THE GLASS OR BOTTLE

Staffers serve the iconic Rombauer Vineyards Carneros Chardonnay and other wines by the glass (from \$14) for sipping on the St. Helena winery's terrace or in the landscaped garden. On weekdays, Clos du Val in Napa invites parties of up to four to book a table (\$10 per person) in the Silverado Trail winery's olive grove and share a purchased bottle.

▶ For Napa Valley wine events, winery visit itineraries and trip planner, visit napavalley.wine/visit/events.

PLUS: 5 DOWNTOWN TASTING ROOMS THAT OVERDELIVER

Fees at downtown tasting rooms are often lower than at wineries. The places below consistently overdeliver.

- **ROBERT CRAIG WINERY, NAPA:** Known for high-scoring mountain-grown Cabernets, the winery offers \$35 tastings at its 2nd Street Victorian.
- **HILL FAMILY ESTATE, YOUNTVILLE:** Doug Hill grows grapes for a who's-who of Napa Valley vintners' wineries but also produces his own wines, many of them Bordeaux-style reds served (from \$40) in an eclectically decorated storefront space.
- **ELIZABETH SPENCER, RUTHERFORD:** Visitors pass through "downtown" Rutherford's 1872 brick former post office on the way to garden tastings (from \$50); add \$15 to view the intriguing Kathleen Thompson Hill Kitchen Memories Collection of cooking utensils.
- **NIGHT WINES, ST. HELENA:** This boutique winery's owners also operate The Saint wine bar, where for \$40 you can taste their lush, tannic Spring Mountain Cabernets.
- **LAWER FAMILY WINES, CALISTOGA:** Curated art shows provide the backdrop for tastings (from \$30) of European-style Bordeaux reds, plus sparkling wine and Sauvignon Blanc.



QUALITY

WINEMAKING

The passionate pursuit of excellence in the Napa Valley wine community

—
BY VIRGINIE BOONE



STEWART CELLARS

Blair Guthrie, winemaker for Stewart Cellars.

Napa Valley has risen to become a world-class wine region over a short amount of time, relative to its counterparts in the Old World. Though it has grown grapes for more than a century, the modern wine business we know today really began in the 1960s and 1970s.

Legends like Andre Tchelistcheff, Robert Mondavi, Louis Martini, Warren Winiarski and many others believed from the beginning that Napa Valley wines could rival the best in the world. They were right.

It's been an upward trajectory ever since, with new generations coming into the fold and making their own mark on Napa Valley wine. Inspired by the past but grounded in the present, today's winemakers maintain and sustain this commitment to quality and push it forward.

The core ingredients that go into this heightened quality include Napa Valley's ideal mix of climates and soils; the utmost care and attention to the hands-on farming practices required to grow the best grapes year after year; the persistent prioritization of quality over quantity; and a high level of investment in cellar equipment, including for sorting and fermentation, in addition to barrels.

Most importantly, there is an even higher level of investment in the people that it takes to make it all happen, from the vineyard to the tasting room.

"The winemaking community in Napa Valley has always put quality above anything else," says Kale Anderson, winemaker/owner of Kale Wines and Kale Consulting. "The track record is there."

GREAT WINE FROM GREAT VINEYARDS

"You can't have a great wine without a great vineyard," says Blair Guthrie, winemaker for Stewart Cellars. "I still can't put my finger on what really makes a great vineyard great because it is probably a matrix of things, but terroir and a dedicated vineyard team would be two of the major inputs."

Adding to that sense of intrigue, Guthrie notes, is the fact that there are vineyards he works with that at first glance don't necessarily *look* as though they would produce anything special, but do, year after year. And that amazing fruit, in the right hands, gets turned into amazing wine.

The hands matter of course. The human element behind farming philosophies and practices makes a world of difference.

“I aim to make true wines, ones that express a site and a point in time,” says Clayton Kirchhoff, winemaker at Hudson.

“I get to do this with expressions of the estate as a whole, as with our estate Chardonnay and Phoenix red blend, as well as with even more focused vineyard-designate wines like our Little Bit, Ladybug and Seashell,” he adds.

Kale adds that since the 1970s it’s been understood, “take care of your site and it takes care of you.”

Making high-quality wine is also about long-term vision and investment.

“It comes at the expense of making money in the short term; it’s a long-term investment,” Anderson says. “There’s a lot of paying it forward.”

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Guthrie also believes that it’s crucial to be passionate and dedicated to the task at hand when making high-quality Napa Valley wines.

“You need to have a burning desire to achieve greatness and be willing to put in the time and effort required to achieve your goals,” he says. “Growing and making wines takes time, and nothing can be rushed.”

This includes a commitment to constant improvement in the vineyard and cellar. Guthrie does that by seeking out feedback, being open to learning and making changes as needed to refine his style.

But it’s not only about getting better, it’s about achieving consistency year after year.

“I liken making wine in Napa Valley to playing in the NBA,” he says. “You can’t just have one good game and expect to be MVP. Being the best is not a one-time achievement; it requires consistent and sustained effort over time. You need to be able to maintain high levels of workmanship and keep pushing yourself to improve every vintage.”

Anderson adds that part of what defines Napa Valley is the freedom to find the best expression of each variety and vintage.

“All the spaghetti’s been thrown on the wall,” he says. “We can pursue a wide variety of styles



Kristy Melton,
winemaker at
Freemark Abbey.

and ideas here and be successful. When risks are taken, success happens.”

FINDING BALANCE

Balance is a relative term, but to Kirchhoff it means taking the growing conditions of a vintage and making wines that express it in every sense—the weather the grapes feel, the emotions the vineyard and winery teams feel, and the way the fermentations happen in the cellar.

“The human component can lead to well-balanced wines,” he adds. “This is crucial both in the vineyard and the winery but needs to be balanced with creating wines that are full of flavor and enjoyable.”

SPIRIT OF RESILIENCY

One of the most consistent aspects of quality winemaking brought up again and again by Napa Valley winemakers is this: the spirit of resiliency that resides here.

“As we face climate change and social change, it is a resiliency to adapt that distinguishes Napa Valley,” says Kristy Melton, winemaker at Freemark Abbey.

“I LIKEN MAKING WINE IN NAPA VALLEY TO PLAYING IN THE NBA. YOU CAN’T JUST HAVE ONE GOOD GAME AND EXPECT TO BE MVP.”

—BLAIR GUTHRIE, WINEMAKER, STEWART CELLARS

“EVERY PART OF THE PROCESS IS IMPORTANT IN MAKING HIGH-QUALITY WINE. ... IT’S THE DETERMINATION, GRIT, INTELLIGENCE AND CAMARADERIE THAT DRIVES WHAT WE DO SO WELL.” —KRISTY MELTON, WINEMAKER, FREEMARK ABBEY

“Every part of the process is important in making high-quality wine,” she says. “It’s a beautiful place but it has to be dynamic. It’s the determination, grit, intelligence and camaraderie that drives what we do so well.”

She points to the farming background of the winemaking community, but also the technology and science that have advanced over time and become an important resource in making world-class wine. “We know we’ll figure it out,” she adds.

Resilience is crucial to Guthrie as well. “In the process of making great wine, you’ll likely face many setbacks and obstacles,” he says. “It’s important to be resilient and not give up when things get tough. I use these setbacks as learning opportunities to keep moving forward.”

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Napa Valley is a true community—strong in good times and bad. Often, the winemaker is celebrated for making a great wine. But many winemakers who get the glory don’t see it as a solo act.

“In my experience, it takes a plethora of people to make amazing wines,” Guthrie says. “From the vineyard worker checking the irrigation and the person running the de-stemmer to the bottling line crew, everybody has to do their job. Being the best requires working in conjunction with others to achieve the same goal.”

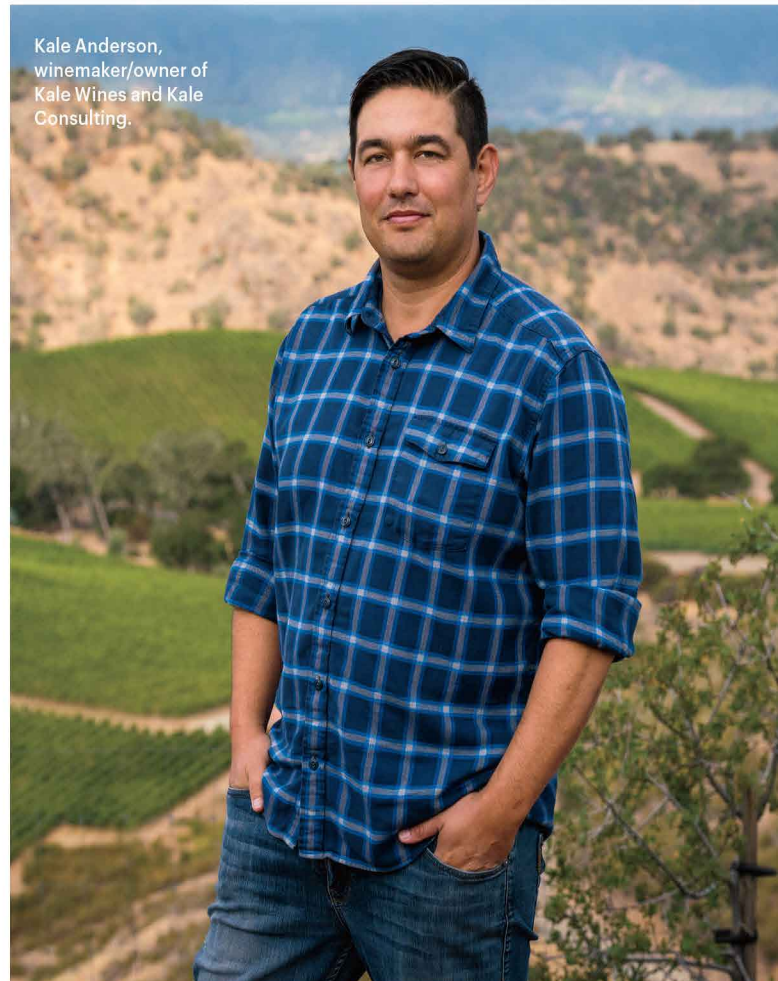
The community thrives due to a unique combination of education, experience and a sharing of expertise, something so many in Napa Valley credit to their neighbors.

“Napa has been a beacon for talent and like-minded people interested in wine for generations,” notes Kirchhoff. “Robert Mondavi captured this and helped catapult the reputation of the region. His use of the phrase that a rising tide lifts all ships is one that vintners continue to use today.”

LEFT TO RIGHT: HUDSON: SUZANNE BECKER BRONK



Clayton Kirchhoff,
winemaker at Hudson.



Kale Anderson,
winemaker/owner of
Kale Wines and Kale
Consulting.

HOW THE NAPA VALLEY WINEMAKING COMMUNITY IS FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

—
BY BRIAN FREEDMAN

It's easy to get caught up in the enormity of what climate change is doing to our world in general and Napa Valley's wine industry in particular. From the lengthening of fire season to droughts and more regular flooding rains that roll in from the Pacific, winemakers, grapegrowers, critics and consumers could be forgiven for occasionally feeling overwhelmed by the situation. Yet climate change has, surprisingly enough, been the catalyst for a number of positive changes, too.

Over the course of reporting and writing my book *Crushed: How a Changing Climate Is Altering the Way We Drink*, I regularly found my hopes being buoyed by the creativity, passion, resilience and vision of the people who grow the grapes and make the wines that have raised Napa Valley to the upper echelons of the world wine stage.

The importance of that cannot be overstated: Given Napa Valley's role as the most well-known wine region in the United States, and the far more public-facing nature of viticulture than most other forms of agriculture, Napa Valley has both a unique opportunity and a deeply important duty to model the kinds of behaviors and to implement the kinds of climate change-mitigating actions that will only continue to grow in importance in the coming years and decades.

And unlike the popular perception that it's the biggest projects that have the greatest impact, it's also in smaller, less dramatic ways that Napa's wine community is tackling this problem.

Georg Salzner is doing both at Castello di Amorsosa. In addition to getting entirely off the PG&E electricity grid through an ingenious combination of solar panels and a battery micro-grid, he's also installed a processed-water irrigation system. Yet Salzner has gone far more analog, too: In the late winter of 2023, he and his team took delivery of 50 sheep that he rented for six to eight weeks. They're part of an experiment: On a block of his estate



SMALL

Solar panels minimize
Castello di Amorosa's
carbon footprint.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of four articles in a series on climate change, mitigation and adaptation as experienced in Napa Valley winemaking.

The Napa Valley wine community is coming together to address the vast topic of climate change from a variety of perspectives. Our aim is to elevate all aspects of this work and inspire others to examine their own lives and the changes that they too can make.

STEPS, BIG IMPACT



Tod Mostero and Christian Mouéix survey vineyards at Dominus Estate.

vineyard, which was already organically farmed, he fenced the sheep into one-half of it, allowing them to graze the area between the vines. On the other side, he used the tractor that he always employed. He and his team will be doing two separate fermentations after harvest to determine if there's any qualitative or quantitative difference between the two. If the results are positive, then he will likely use them again next year, and on a larger percentage of his land, thus saving fuel (no need to fill up the tractor) and reducing the amount of organic fertilizer needed (nitrogen-rich sheep waste is fantastic in the regard).

"The purpose," he told me, "should not be to sell more. ... It's doing it for the right reasons. And when you do things for the right reasons, it often turns out to be better for quality."

That's a lesson that Anna Brittain, executive director of Napa Green, stresses as well. "The most basic foundation," she explains, "is tracking and monitoring your resource use. ... Once you [measure], then you catch opportunities." Napa Green helps its members look at the data and figure out what to do with it. "We make those cross connections. ... We talk about the water-energy-climate nexus," Brittain continues. She adds: "Understanding what you're using and keeping an eye on that is so essential."

Tod Mostero, director of viticulture and winemaking at Dominus Estate, feels the same way. Wine growing, he notes, is a part of agriculture that's in the public eye. As such, Napa's vintners can both have a significant impact on climate-change mitigation in general *and* show the way to others, pushing the limits of what the perceived possible is for agriculture writ large.

To do that, he and his team are working both in the vineyard

and in the winery, as so many of Napa's wine leaders are doing. For Mostero, it all starts with healthy soil that's full of microorganisms that sequester carbon and provide more of the right nutrients that his dry-farmed vines need to thrive above the land and to build healthy, complex and deep root systems beneath it.

Those vines aren't just the source of healthier grapes; they're also more resilient, he points out, growing with a tighter grain that itself is more resistant to disease. A consequence of that is the need for fewer inputs, which allows the soil to thrive more. And healthy soil, not just teeming with microorganisms but also writhing with beneficial insects, helps to attract the animals that consume them for food, and then *their* predators in turn. Using nature itself to help combat pests and diseases leads to more biodiverse land, a more complete ecosystem and less of a need for treatments. Put simply, Mostero says, "When our land thrives, we make better wine."

For the team at Dominus Estate, it's only the beginning. "I think it's just getting going," he points out. "Just measure one thing, just one thing. Pick a thing that you like or an area where you're not great in," and work to improve on it. "The progress that you make is so inspiring that it gives you the energy to keep going."

“THE PURPOSE SHOULD NOT BE TO SELL MORE. ... IT’S DOING IT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS. AND WHEN YOU DO THINGS FOR THE RIGHT REASONS, IT [OFTEN] TURNS OUT TO BE BETTER FOR QUALITY.”

—GEORG SALZNER, PRESIDENT, CASTELLO DI AMOROSA

Jason Moulton, director of winemaking and viticulture at Whitehall Lane, shares the same mindset. “The change I’m trying to make is significant,” he explains, “and I’m doing it little by little.” He and his team are even bucking what has become received wisdom that using legumes as cover crops is the best practice. Instead, as part of his no-till regenerative farming regimen, he has planted 56 acres of Oakville bluegrass, which lasts approximately 10 years; unlike many of the legumes that have become so popular, it’s not a host plant to the alfalfa tree hopper. This, in turn, helps with the longevity of his vines, necessitating less frequent replantings. The Whitehall Lane team is also steaming barrels to clean them, which uses less water than the industry average. These efforts and so many others there are impressive and impactful.

At Larkmead Vineyards, which has been one of Napa’s more prominent leaders in sustainability, winemaker Avery Heelan and her team are continuing that proud legacy. In addition to washing their barrels in a more water-conscious manner and using lighter bottles, they also are reducing the number of wines they produce, shrinking the size of their labels and even making changes to their packaging: Rather than each capsule and cork noting the name of that specific wine, all of them, starting with the 2021 vintage, will simply note that the wine inside is from Larkmead.

“Now,” she says, “our buffer zones can be massively reduced ... and we don’t have to order six to eight named corks. We’re ordering one.” This means acquiring more at once and cutting down on the carbon footprint associated with shipping. Larkmead has also switched to lighter six-pack shippers, which require less fuel to transport and are better for the workers who lift them.

Throughout Napa Valley, growers, winemakers and proprietors are all striving to stave off the most serious effects of climate change today, and to mitigate future ones, too. They’re embodying the axiom in Kimberly Nicholas’ excellent book, *Under the Sky We Make: How to Be Human in a Warming World*, going from a mindset of *the sky is falling* to learning how to live *under the sky we make*. It’s a crucial change in mentality and practical application. Everyone—from the people who are responsible for the great wines of Napa Valley to their legions of fans around the world—is benefiting from these efforts.



Whitehall Lane plants Oakville bluegrass to help with the longevity of its vines.

WHITEHALL LANE

NAPA VALLEY IS BUILT BY THE PIONEERS, VISIONARIES AND DOGGEDLY HARDWORKING PEOPLE BEHIND ITS EXCEPTIONAL WINES.

Here are little bits about why they do what they do and what guides, inspires and delights them.



JONATHAN WALDEN,
ELUSA WINERY

NAME A NAPA VALLEY VINTNER WHO HAS INFLUENCED YOU AND BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHY.

I was fortunate to work closely alongside Philippe Melka for a handful of years. His attention to detail, blending skills and general approach to winemaking influenced me in a big way. Great mentor and all-around great dude.

BROOK PRICE,
BELLA UNION

WHAT IS YOUR WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY?

Inspiration often comes from unexpected places, whether it be acquiring a new vineyard, sipping on an unexpected glass of wine or simply wanting to try something new. I am constantly wanting to learn, grow and develop new techniques.



LORENA HERRERA,
MI SUEÑO WINERY

WHAT DO YOU THINK MAKES NAPA VALLEY UNIQUE COMPARED WITH OTHER WINE REGIONS?

Napa to me is unique for its generous climate which provides us the opportunity to grow high-quality grapes and produce consistently every year. We are very proud farmers and winemakers humbled by the gift of Mother Nature.





BASTIEN LUCAS,
MAXVILLE WINERY

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST WORD YOU'VE USED TO DESCRIBE THE SMELL OR TASTE OF WINE?

One wine was triggering a memory; I believe I ended up describing it as the morning dew on a coastal day with sand warming up. ... It was very clear in my mind, at least!

ABIGAIL HORSTMAN,
TEXTBOOK

IF YOU COULD OPEN A BOTTLE OF YOUR WINE AND SHARE IT WITH ANY THREE PEOPLE (LIVING OR NOT), WHO WOULD THEY BE?

I'd open a bottle of Chardonnay to share with my favorite actor, Gene Wilder; my favorite comedian, Mitch Hedberg; and my favorite singer, Pitbull.

GUSTAVO AVIÑA,
PINE RIDGE VINEYARDS

WHAT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF IN YOUR WORK?

My current title is viticulture director for Pine Ridge Vineyards. Starting out as a vineyard worker and now managing 160 acres of estate vineyards for the winery along with my highly skilled team is something I'm incredibly proud of.



 To learn more about Napa Valley vintners, visit napavalley.wine/makers/vintners.



Vines at Flora Springs
Winery & Vineyards.

Symphony in White

NAPA'S WHITE WINE BLENDS

• BY WANDA MANN

Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc are single-varietal superstars that showcase Napa Valley's diverse terroirs and the essence of each grape variety. So why not experience the harmony that happens when Napa producers combine a variety of white wine grapes to create blends? Red wine blends may be more ubiquitous, but Napa's white wine blends are burgeoning in popularity and ready for the spotlight.

"We are not inventing a new style of wine but marrying Old World methods and grapes to New World terroirs," says Fritz Hatton, the owner of Arietta winery. Inspired by the white wine blends of Bordeaux, Arietta blends Sauvignon Blanc and Sémillon to create "a blend typically richer and more layered than a pure varietal Sauvignon Blanc."

White wine blends have always been on the radar of Enrico Bertoz, winemaker for Flora Springs Winery & Vineyards: "I grew up in Friuli, in the northeastern corner of Italy, where blending white indigenous varieties with international varieties has been done for ages." At Flora Springs, Bertoz encountered something surprising: a singular clone of Sauvignon Blanc that UC Davis confirmed is unique to Flora Springs. The wine was initially produced as a single-varietal Sauvignon Blanc to showcase the clone. But Bertoz and the Flora Springs team "decided a white blend was the best way to capture its complexity and nuances," so it is now blended with Chardonnay and Malvasia.

Brendel Wines winemaker Brittany Sherwood views white wine blends as a

“TO ME, A TRUE BLEND IS A WINE CRAFTED WITH INTENTION, USING DIFFERENT PARTS TO CREATE A BLEND THAT IS MORE HARMONIOUS AND DELICIOUS THAN IT WOULD BE AS STAND-ALONE PARCELS.”

—KIMBERLEE NICHOLLS, WINEMAKER, MARKHAM VINEYARDS

creative way to explore the capabilities of terroir. “Although Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay grow very well in Napa Valley, we are always looking toward the future and like to experiment with alternative varieties. We have two white Portuguese varieties, Malvasia Bianca and Fernão Pires, that both grow very well in St. Helena, and we wanted to showcase what these two aromatic and textured whites can do.” Sherwood blends them with Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay to make a “crisp, lively, textured white blend.”

What defines a blend with so many different varieties and styles at play? After all, in Napa, a bottle of wine is labeled as single-varietal if it includes 75 percent of the named grape. Kimberlee Nicholls, the winemaker for Markham, says, “To me, a true blend is a wine crafted with intention, using different parts to create a blend that is

more harmonious and delicious than it would be as stand-alone parcels.” Markham’s blend typically incorporates Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, and she believes blends “blur the varietal lines and provide a deliciously balanced glass to enjoy.”

“Other than true single vineyard block and/or single barrel selections, I mostly look at all wines as “blends,” says Arietta’s associate winemaker, Patrick Nyeholt. For him, “blending starts in the vineyard, progresses through our vinification strategies, and finalizes during blending sessions prior to bottling.”

Blends aren’t just an addition to the Paraduxx portfolio; they are the winery’s raison d’être. Its two white blends include Viognier with Chardonnay and a blend of Riesling, Gewurztraminer and Pinot Gris. Winemaker Cardiff Scott-Robinson shares, “Here at Paraduxx, we only make blends, so making a white blend was just what we were going to do. Plus, they are fun to make.”

And they are fun to drink, too. Scott-Robinson encourages wine lovers to not to be intimidated by white wine blends from Napa. “People know what to expect from a Chardonnay or a Sauvignon Blanc. When a white wine is labeled as a blend, there is the unknown factor at play. Sometimes that is daunting. For me, I think that it will provide something new and exciting that one might not find in a single-varietal wine.”



Above: Winemaker Cardiff Scott-Robinson, Paraduxx Winery. Left: Winemaker Brittany Sherwood, Brendel Wines.

Delicious Alt-Burgers

SUMMER'S BOUNTY INSPIRES LIGHTER FOOTPRINTS UPON THE PLANET • BY CATE CONNIFF

What says summer more than a juicy burger, from the grill, tucked into a soft buttered bun with all the toppings? Beef is not the only go-to when thinking about what to slip into that bun. While undisputedly delicious, beef has significant climate implications that may make it a once-in-a-while treat, or perhaps has fallen off the grocery list altogether.

With gardens and farmers markets in full swing, this might just be the moment to explore alternate protein burgers that not only tempt the taste buds but also align with the small steps we can all take to soften our footprints (carbon and otherwise) upon the planet.

“Exploring alternative proteins helps lighten the environmental load a bit, while still enjoying the deep satisfaction of a comforting, deeply flavorful burger,” says Chef Patrick Tafoya of Round Pond Estate. “While as a winery chef I begin with what’s in the glass when cooking, I also look to what’s in our abundant gardens when coming up with a dish.”

Chef Tafoya’s smoked turkey burgers with Cabernet sauce, spicy pickles and herb aioli draw upon the bounty of both the vineyards and the gardens to create sumptuous summer flavors and add a juicy moistness to his burger.



Scan this code for these alt-burger recipes and more.

The culinary gardens at St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery are also inspiration for creating Estate Chef Gretchen Stoops Luongo’s summer garden veggie burger with roasted red pepper schmear, shaved zucchini and red onion pickle with yeasted corn buns.

“I love working with ingredients from our amazing gardens in creating this veggie burger with so much texture, colors and moisture from summer vegetables,” notes Stoops Luongo. “I had some health issues a while ago that really brought home how what and how we eat has a dramatic impact upon our bodies and our planet.”



The gardens at St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery.

“EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE PROTEINS HELPS LIGHTEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL LOAD A BIT, WHILE STILL ENJOYING THE DEEP SATISFACTION OF A COMFORTING, DEEPLY FLAVORFUL BURGER.” —PATRICK TAFOYA, CHEF, ROUND POND ESTATE

▶ For more recipes and the wines that complement them, visit nvw.li/mg-pairing.



PATRICK TAFOYA

Chef at Round Pond Estate

Smoked turkey burgers with Cabernet sauce, spicy pickles and herb aioli.



GRETCHEN STOOPS LUONGO

Chef at St. Supéry Estate Vineyards & Winery

Summer garden veggie burger with roasted red pepper schmear, shaved zucchini and red onion pickle with yeasted corn buns.



MAKING MEMORIES

People make lifelong memories in Napa Valley every day. We'd love to see your Napa Valley memories on social media using the hashtag #NapaValley and follow us at @NapaVintners.



Follow us on Instagram @NapaVintners

Celebrating Together. Enjoying Wine. Doing Good.

In Napa Valley, we understand the importance of the greater community, a community of wine enthusiasts who share in our love of Napa Valley wines.

Collective Napa Valley is for all of us. There is a place at our proverbial table for anyone who enjoys wine and believes in doing good.

We invite you to join us for this innovative year-round program that allows Napa Valley wine enthusiasts to gather, raise a glass and invest in important initiatives in Napa Valley.

collectivenapavalley.org



COLLECTIVE
NAPA VALLEY



AS ELECTRIC AS
YOU WANT TO BE



[LEXUS.COM/ELECTRIFIED](https://www.lexus.com/electrified)

Humans carry a unique kind of electricity. And the only thing more unique than your spark ... is how you use it. That's what inspires every detail, every thrill, every Lexus innovation, even our approach to electric. From hybrids to plug-in hybrids to our first all-electric, the RZ. This is a new take on electric. Inspired by, created for ... and powered by you.

LEXUS IS A PROUD PARTNER OF NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS