

GETAWAYS

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& EVENTS



2024 SEASON GETAWAYS *plus* FALL EVENTS CALENDAR (P12)

DELICIOUS VIEWS

Fall is the perfect time for a taste of California wine country

By Lori Rackl | FREELANCE WRITER

Autumn is special in California's Napa and Sonoma counties.

Vineyard workers scurry to get freshly plucked grapes to the crush pad. Leaves on the vines morph from tidy rows of green into waves of red, orange and gold. It's not just a beautiful time to visit wine country.

It's a busy time. Be sure to make reservations for tastings and tours at these six wineries that are especially enticing in the fall.



Courtesy Jordan Vineyard & Winery

Jordan

This slice of the Alexander Valley grape-growing region is best explored on an **Estate Tour & Tasting**, a three-hour odyssey that kicks off with a glass of bubbles at Jordan's French-inspired chateau. A Sprinter van then ferries guests to the gardens, where you can help yourself to figs, apples and whatever else is ripe for the picking. Then meet Maverick and Goose, a pair of miniature donkeys charged with guarding the luxe henhouse. (Owner John Jordan is a pilot and presumably a Top Gun fan.) An alfresco olive oil tasting by the lake segues into the grand finale: a light lunch prepared by a Michelin-star chef, served in a glass-walled aerie atop the highest point of the 1,200-acre property.

Visit at 1474 Alexander Valley Road, Healdsburg. jordanwinery.com

Food and wine pairings are a popular option at picturesque Jordan Vineyard & Winery in Healdsburg.



Sonoma Valley Trail Rides offers horseback tours of Bartholomew Estate's historic vineyards.

Bartholomew Estate

Outdoorsy oenophiles have no shortage of things to do — or drink — at this historic site, where wine grapes were first planted nearly two centuries ago. Take a horseback ride through the vines. Go on a guided forest bathing experience. Lace up your hiking boots and hit the 3-plus miles of trails meandering through **Bartholomew Park**, a 375-acre expanse that once belonged to the vineyard empire of Agoston Haraszthy, often called the father of California's wine industry. Just about the only place to buy Bartholomew's wines is on site. There's no better place to enjoy them than under the oak and eucalyptus trees in the uber-tranquil tasting garden. All wine sale profits go toward preserving the surrounding park, the perfect venue for a fall picnic.

Travel to 1000 Vineyard Lane, Sonoma.

bartholomewestate.com



Domaine Carneros sticks to traditional methods to make its acclaimed sparkling wines, which can be enjoyed at its French-inspired chateau.

Domaine Carneros

The morning fog lifts like a curtain to reveal the scenic Los Carneros AVA (American Viticultural Area), a region famed for its sparkling wine. It's no coincidence that Taittinger, one of the most respected Champagne houses in France, chose this part of California to set up shop in the 1980s. The resulting Domaine Carneros offers tasting flights of its bubbles — along with caviar, vegan cheese pairings and plenty more — on the Instagram-friendly terrace of the winery chateau, standing regally at the gateway to Napa Valley. For a more autumnal feel, warm up with some of Domaine Carneros's estate-grown pinot noir.

Visit at 1240 Duhig Road, Napa.

domainecarneros.com

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Kunde's mountaintop tasting deck overlooks Sonoma Valley from an elevation of 1,400 feet.

Kunde

The appeal of this fifth generation, 1,850-acre estate hasn't gone unnoticed. Seth Rogen and Geena Davis got married here (not to each other). It's where much of the filming took place for *Bottle Shock*, a film based on the 1976 Judgment of Paris competition that catapulted California wine onto the international stage. And Kunde's tasting deck, tucked into the trees at 1,400 feet above sea level, is hard to beat for views. Get an up-close look at the checkerboard vineyard blocks — planted with nearly 20 red and white varietals — as you're driven to this elevated platform during the **Mountain Top Tour & Tasting**. The two-hour experience includes a visit to Kunde's wine caves and sweeping vistas of Sonoma Valley.

Travel to 9825 Sonoma Highway, Kenwood.
kunde.com



Far Niente's charming stone winery has a spot on the National Register of Historic Places.

Far Niente

Premium chardonnays and cabernets aren't the only draw at this premiere Napa Valley estate. In autumn, the fan-shaped leaves of the 100-plus ginkgo trees leading to the entrance gates turn a sunny yellow — a spectacle that's been known to draw quite a crowd. (Have a reservation for a tasting or risk getting shooed away by security.) The 19th century stone winery that's the centerpiece of this immaculately landscaped property has a spot on the National Register of Historic Places. Book a tour that includes a trip to the extensive wine caves lined with French oak barrels. And be sure to savor what has to be one of the finest dessert wines in California: the honey-hued *Dolce Late Harvest*.

Visit 1350 Acacia Drive, Oakville.
farniente.com



Coursey Graves

Discreetly clinging to the rocky slopes of Bennett Mountain, this hillside winery is an enviable location not only for growing the varietals that go into Coursey Graves' flagship red blend, but for soaking up views of the vineyards that blanket Bennett Valley. The winery's owners, a couple whose home sits at the top of the estate (elevation 1,500 feet), transformed this one-time sheep farm into something that feels like a real-life Monet painting. The grounds boast a pollinator garden by a cute pond that's tricked out with a wooden bridge and rowboat — an idyllic backdrop for tasting these small-batch, Old World-style wines.

6860 Serenity Way, Santa Rosa.
courseygraves.com

Sip top-notch wine in a storybook setting at the boutique winery Coursey Graves.

Where to stay

It's impossible to forget you're in wine country at the 64-room Alila. The **Napa Valley** resort's impressive vineyard views come courtesy of its well-known wine-making neighbor, Beringer. Guests are just a short walk from charming downtown St. Helena, and an even shorter walk to Alila's new standout restaurant, Violetto.

In **Sonoma**, MacArthur Place is a 69-room gem made up of historic buildings, serene gardens and, like Alila, a top-notch spa. Save room for the cast-iron Parker House rolls at MacArthur Place's signature restaurant, Layla. The resort is conveniently close to Sonoma Plaza, but far enough away to feel like a secluded retreat.

