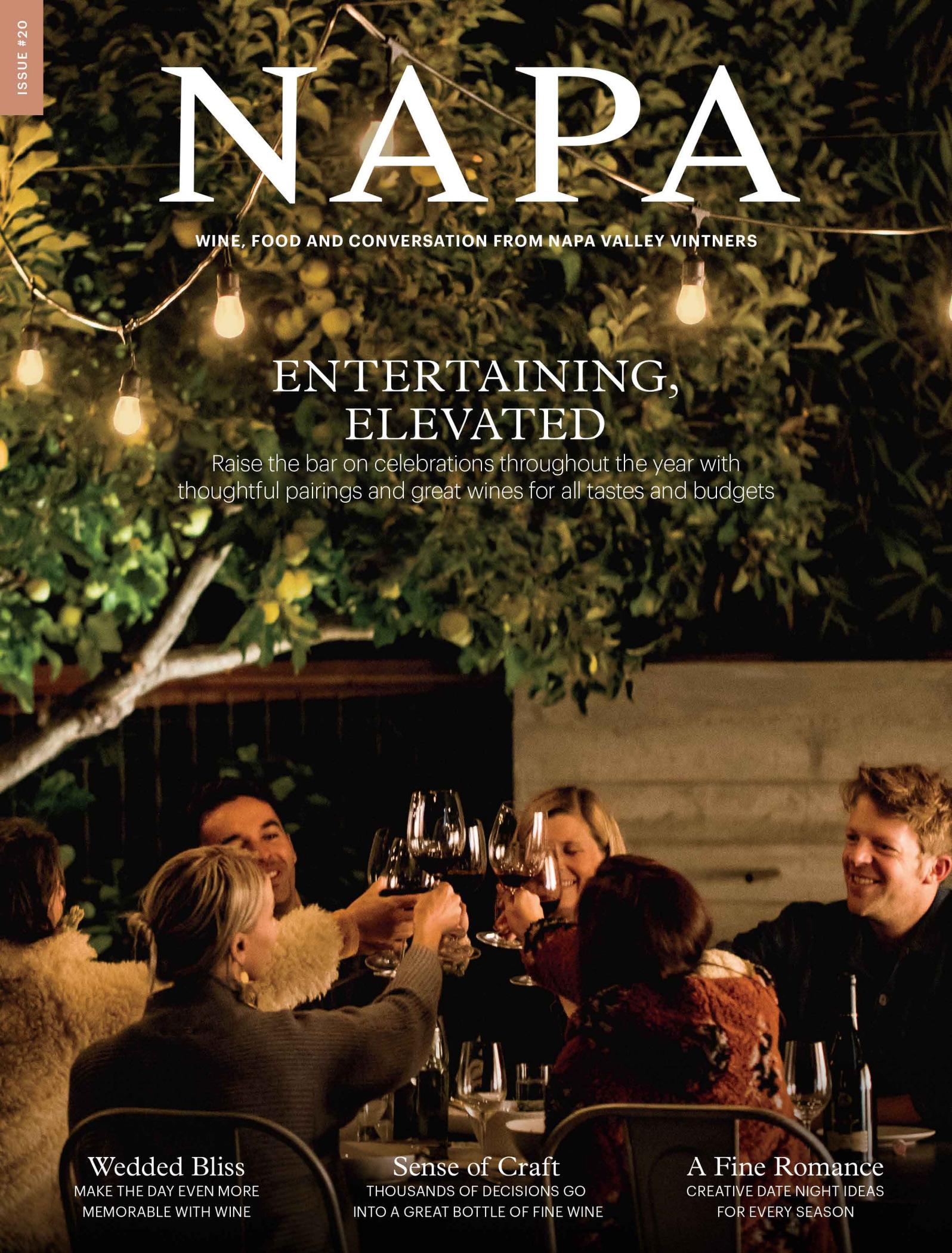


NAPA

WINE, FOOD AND CONVERSATION FROM NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS

ENTERTAINING, ELEVATED

Raise the bar on celebrations throughout the year with thoughtful pairings and great wines for all tastes and budgets



Wedded Bliss

MAKE THE DAY EVEN MORE
MEMORABLE WITH WINE

Sense of Craft

THOUSANDS OF DECISIONS GO
INTO A GREAT BOTTLE OF FINE WINE

A Fine Romance

CREATIVE DATE NIGHT IDEAS
FOR EVERY SEASON

J.P.Morgan

J.P. Morgan takes pride in helping to foster, preserve, and elevate Napa Valley.



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NAPA VALLEY

— CULTIVATING EXCELLENCE —

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CONTACT US

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

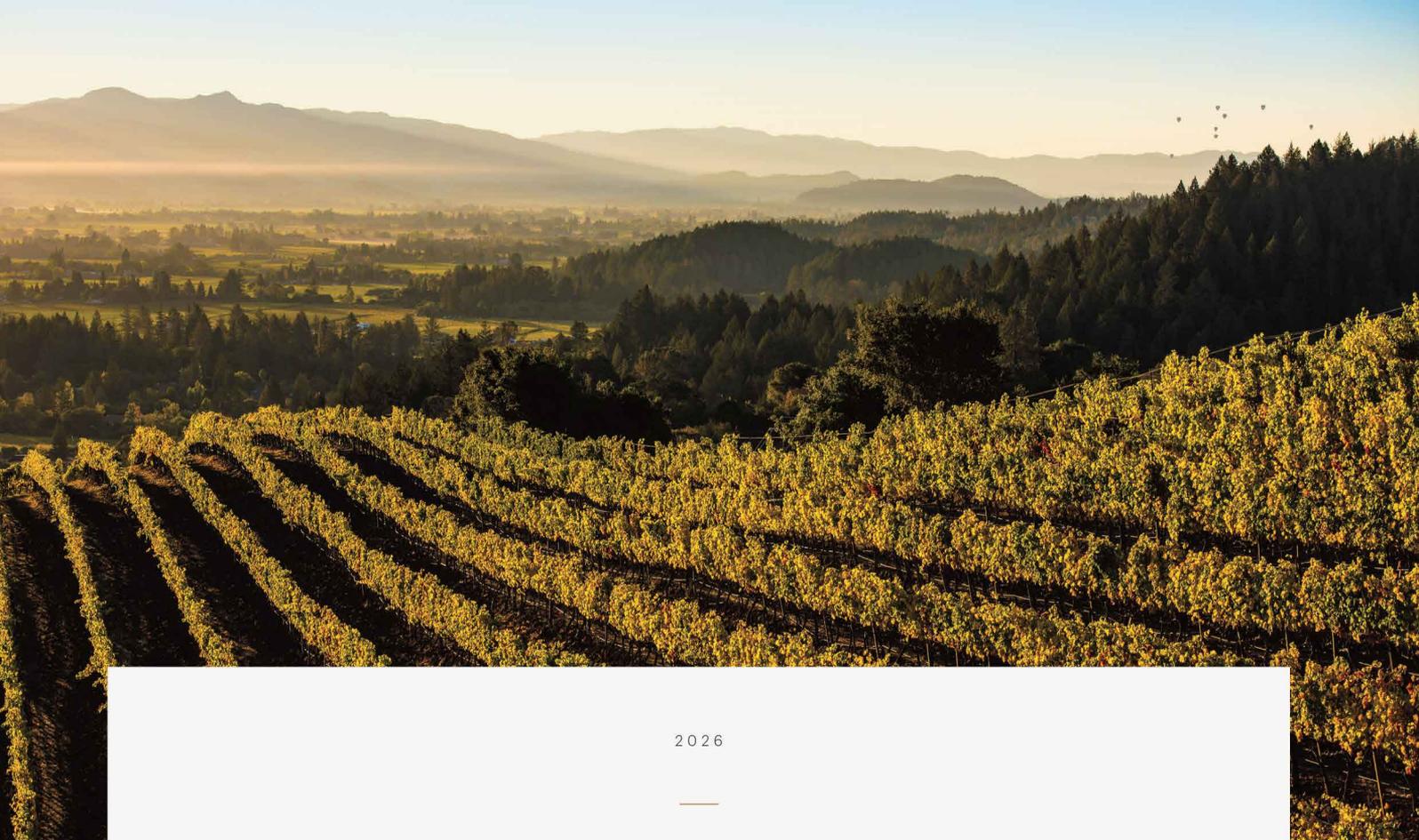


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napa valley vintners

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2026

Wines made with care have a unique way of transforming life's sweet moments, both large and small, into memories that resonate through time. Wine is celebratory and expressive. Its nuances connect you to the people whose skill and passion find a place in our hearts and on our tables.

When we gather to share a bottle of Napa Valley wine, we connect not only to one another but also to the craftsmanship with which the wine is created. Tender care of the land, the nurturing of vines, the meticulous attention to the winemaking process and a deep sense of caring for the community come together to create something especially beautiful.

It is the stories behind these hard-working people and the lands they cultivate that get shared with you every time you pop the cork on a bottle of wine.

NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS

BOB MCCLLENAHAN

MEET OUR CONTRIBUTORS

We asked this issue's writers and photographers what they enjoyed most about working on their stories. Here's what they said.



“In writing about next-generation wine clubs, I appreciate how much the future is leaning into personalization of these clubs. I love that wineries are thinking outside the box and building programs that allow customers to choose their own wine adventures.”

—MATT VILLANO (“WINE CLUBS 2.0,” PAGE 4) WRITES ABOUT WINE AND TRAVEL FOR PUBLICATIONS INCLUDING *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, *THE WALL STREET JOURNAL*, *AFAR*, *TRAVEL + LEISURE* AND OTHERS. SONOMA, CA



“As I helped plan weddings for two of my nearest and dearest over the last year, I realize what an irreplaceable part wine can play within a wedding. The ring, band and venue are all important, but a great bottle of wine on every table is a truly special connector (especially for a good dance floor).”

—KATE DINGWALL (“FROM CELEBRATORY TOASTS TO GENTLE NIGHTCAPS,” PAGE 12) CONTRIBUTES TO *WINE ENTHUSIAST*, *FORBES.COM*, *FOOD & WINE*, *TORONTO STAR*, *TORONTO LIFE*, *MAXIM*, *INSIDEHOOK*, *THE VINTNER PROJECT* AND *CANADA'S 100 BEST*. TORONTO, ONTARIO



“Having photographed the weddings of numerous couples in Napa Valley, I see how wine can make the celebration even more special—and I enjoy capturing that for my clients.”

—KATIE MONROE (“FROM CELEBRATORY TOASTS TO GENTLE NIGHTCAPS,” PAGE 12) IS A NAPA VALLEY WEDDING AND LIFESTYLE PHOTOGRAPHER AND OWNER OF *KREATEPHOTOGRAPHY.COM*. WINDSOR, CA



“These winemakers impressed me with their devotion to their vineyards and the near spirituality of their work, letting go of ego and becoming one with the land. My personal wine journey began in the Napa Valley, a place that remains dear to me.”

—DAVE MCINTYRE (“PASSION AND SKILL,” PAGE 16) HAS BEEN WRITING ABOUT WINE AND FOOD FOR 30 YEARS, INCLUDING 16 YEARS AS THE WEEKLY WINE COLUMNIST OF *THE WASHINGTON POST*. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF *DAVE MCINTYRE'S WINELINE* ON SUBSTACK. SILVER SPRING, MD



“We discovered how intentionally pairing wines with activities creates beautiful layers of memory. A lot of them reminded us that meaningful connections happen in quiet moments!”

—ALLIE AND BECCA CALEGARI (“DATE NIGHTS THROUGH THE SEASONS,” PAGE 20) ARE THE CREATIVE FORCE BEHIND *LADY & THE GENTLEWOMAN*, A LIFESTYLE BRAND CELEBRATING LIFE ONE SIP, STORY AND DINNER AT A TIME. ALLIE, ORIGINALLY FROM ITALY, SERVES AS CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND BRAND STRATEGIST, WHILE BECCA, A CALIFORNIA NATIVE, HANDLES BRAND PARTNERSHIPS AND OPERATIONS. NAPA, CA



“It's impressive that many Napa Valley winemakers embrace the challenges of mountain viticulture to create a distinct style of Cabernet Sauvignon. Mountain wines possess captivating qualities that make them exciting to drink and explore.

—WANDA MANN (“SIPS WITH ALTITUDE,” PAGE 22) IS THE EAST COAST EDITOR OF *THE SOMM JOURNAL* AND NEW YORK EDITOR OF *THE TASTING PANEL*. NEW YORK, NY



“There's a fair bit of intimacy involved in offering up your one bite and one sip wine pairing, with your personal style succinctly on display, a reminder that food and drink can be a way of connecting with one another.”

—TRACI DUTTON (“CANAPÉS: THE HAIKU OF SNACKS,” PAGE 26) IS A WINE, BEVERAGE AND HOSPITALITY PROFESSIONAL AT THE CULINARY INSTITUTE OF AMERICA, CALIFORNIA AND MANAGES MEDIA TASTINGS FOR THE NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS. CALISTOGA, CA



“My experience all too often is that when people speak of Napa Valley wines, they have an image of a single entity, a single varietal or style of wine. But my 30 years of richly diverse and engaging Napa Valley wine experiences have taught me just the opposite.”

—PETER GOLDMAN (“UNIQUELY NAPA VALLEY,” PAGE 29) BECAME PASSIONATE ABOUT WINE IN 1993 WHILE ATTENDING KEVIN ZRALY'S WINE COURSE IN NEW YORK CITY. IN 2018, HE BEGAN WRITING ABOUT WINE THROUGH *VINIFERA COLLECTION*. WILTON, CT



Castello di Amorosa offers multiple benefits to wine club members, including tastings and insider tours.

WINE CLUBS 2.0

AS THE SAYING GOES, MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES

BY MATT VILLANO

People join wine clubs, or subscriptions, for all sorts of reasons: to get to know a particular winemaker's style over time, to explore characteristics of a specific nested appellation, to create relationships with wineries and to receive warm hospitality when visiting.

And yes, there are also generous discounts and highly reduced shipping costs.

In the past, most wine clubs operated on an ordained model—consumers signed up and would receive a set number of predetermined bottles every quarter or trimester.

Today, though, many wineries are taking a far more flexible approach. Consumers can decide how many bottles they wish to receive, when they wish to receive them and which specific varietals they'll get. Members often receive advance notice of the release of limited-production wines and in some cases, gain access to special winery events designed as a thank you to loyal customers.

“People really want to create an individualized approach to acquiring wine through a club membership,” says Ellen Luchtel, co-owner of Fortunati Vineyards. “The best wine clubs enable that sort of flexibility.”

YOU CHOOSE

Some vintners have structured their wine clubs around the amount members may want to invest annually in their shipments. Others are designed around choosing specific inclinations in wine (Reds only? A rosé extravaganza?) and how many shipments per year a member may want to receive.

At Fortunati Vineyards, members of the “Friends of Fortunati” wine program can select a preferred quantity of wine per shipment (six, 12 or more bottles) with a correlating discount (either 15 or 25 percent, depending on quantity), and they may select the varietals they prefer from their diverse portfolio of small production wines.

Luchtel noted that club members get other perks too, including complimentary tastings at the winery and invitations to release parties and other events throughout the year.

Castello di Amorosa, the famous castle winery in Calistoga, has evolved its wine club into a loyalty program whereby when customers buy a certain amount of wine annually, they are automatically enrolled in one of four different levels of membership.

Some member benefits include complimentary wine tastings, special tours of otherwise private areas of the castle, insightful newsletters, wine-maker notes enhancing a wine’s enjoyment and invitations to some of the epic wine club events throughout the year.

AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Other Napa Valley wineries are evolving their clubs to appeal to members seeking to both simplify and customize the purchasing process online.

Take Baldacci Family Vineyards. This winery, in the Stags Leap District, recently rolled out an online-only wine club that enables subscribers to purchase any three bottles of their choice with a minimum six-month interval. General manager Kellie Duckhorn adds that subscribers to the Royal Stag Subscription can choose when they’d like the wine delivered—all from a profile page on the winery’s website.

“The hope is that subscribers will experiment and explore to see if they like something they’ve never tried,” she says. “This is very different from traditional clubs, which have shipments that are fixed by date and product. Baldacci has embraced the Subscribe and Save model which meets today’s buyer in a place that provides flexibility and savings.”

The Markham Merit Society at Markham Vineyards in St. Helena also allows members to log in to an online profile and choose from an array of options.

Vice president of direct-to-consumer and marketing Dai Deh notes that the Markham Vineyards wine club was designed to provide maximum

flexibility and customization by giving members the choice of when they would like to receive their shipments (four windows per year) and how many shipments they would like to receive. All tiers of the wine club receive 20 percent off their wine shipments and flat-rate shipping ranging from one cent to \$15.

Markham Vineyards also recently launched subscriptions, a subscribe-and-save option (5 percent off and 50 percent off shipping) that lets people get wine on any recurring frequency they’d like.

So, if you’re looking to build up your wine collection and ensure you have several great bottles on hand for any occasion, joining a wine subscription is a great place to start.

EXPLORE MORE NAPA VALLEY WINE CLUBS

Use our Winery Map to find the wine club that works best for you.

- Under filters, go to “Features” and select “Wine Club.”
- Browse the wineries and click “Profile” to read more.
- Select “View Details” under *Wine Club Membership*.



Scan this code to learn more about exploring Napa Valley wine clubs.

Psst ... there’s lots of great tools here to explore all Napa Valley wineries and plan your next trip.



“THE HOPE IS THAT SUBSCRIBERS WILL EXPERIMENT AND EXPLORE TO SEE IF THEY LIKE SOMETHING THEY’VE NEVER TRIED. THIS IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM TRADITIONAL CLUBS, WHICH HAVE SHIPMENTS THAT ARE FIXED BY DATE AND PRODUCT.”

—KELLIE DUCKHORN, GENERAL MANAGER, BALDACCI FAMILY VINEYARDS

THE SPIRIT OF NAPA VALLEY

Auction Napa Valley Is the Must-Attend Event of the Year



2025 Napa Valley Barrel Auction guests raise a glass.

THIS JUNE, WINE AND FOOD ENTHUSIASTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WILL GATHER IN NAPA VALLEY FOR THE MOST SPECTACULAR EVENT OF THE YEAR: AUCTION NAPA VALLEY.

Capturing the true Napa Valley spirit, this weekend-long event is packed with outstanding wines, delicious food, one-of-a-kind experiences, extraordinary hospitality and the opportunity to mix and mingle with some of Napa Valley's most noteworthy winemakers and vintners.

The festivities kick off on Thursday, June 4, with welcome dinners at wineries throughout the valley and continues on Friday, June 5, with the ever-popular Napa Valley Barrel Auction. Held at the magnificently renovated Robert Mondavi Winery, attendees can sample

"I consider the Barrel Auction to be the greatest opportunity for any wine lover. It's a chance to not only experience great wine but also get a preview into a vintage that is unmatched by any other wine experience in the U.S. When you add the culinary experience—a progressive walk of bites through the greatest restaurants in the Napa Valley—it truly becomes special. All of this, of course, raises money for great causes."

—GRANT LONG JR., ATTENDEE SINCE 2013

“The Napa Valley Barrel Auction is my Super Bowl and it’s the event I look forward to most. I always drink the wines I bring home at big gatherings or a nice night out to dinner with my fiancée. They taste even better in the sharing of the stories behind the wines and the memories of meeting the winemakers who created them.”

—ALEX BALDWIN, ATTENDEE SINCE 2024

“The Barrel Auction rush is filled with great wine, delicious food, music and laughs, but winning the bid and joining the top 10 bidders creates lasting connections, with wineries warmly welcoming you and winemakers greeting you like an old friend as you uncover even more bottles to love. We can’t wait to go back this year.”

—SHAWN CASEY-WHITE, ATTENDEE SINCE 2002

wines from over 150 wineries, served directly from the barrel. Taste with the winemakers themselves as you learn about the vintage, vineyard and style of the wine they’ve crafted. Best of all, you’ll have the opportunity to bid on and win 12-bottle cases of your favorite wines to take home and savor for years to come.

While the barrel tasting, and bidding, is undoubtedly an exciting element of this treasured fête, there is more to enjoy. Revel in refreshing whites, rosés and bubbles, expertly prepared dishes from food purveyors across the valley and the feel-good vibes of a live band, with delightful surprises to discover along the way. You’ll leave the Barrel Auction with a deep appreciation for all things Napa Valley.

Those who have all-access tickets continue the Auction Napa Valley weekend with intimate vintner-hosted dinners and the crescendo of the festivities, a dinner and live auction at the historic Inglenook winery. Attendees raise their paddles to win rare wine collections, luxurious vacations, high-fashion treasures and unique experiences to take your breath away.

Best of all? Funds raised throughout the weekend benefit the Napa Valley Vintners Youth Wellness Initiative, ensuring a healthy future for generations to come.

We hope to see you in June. Learn more and purchase tickets at collectivenapavalley.com.





Scan this code to learn more about the 2026 Auction Napa Valley.



From left: A live auction brings the weekend to a dramatic conclusion. Wines tasted straight from the barrel provide insight into the winemaking process.



VINTAGE OF A LIFETIME: NAPA VALLEY 2023 VINTAGE

The 2023 growing season will be remembered as one of the most remarkable in Napa Valley's history. With steady, mild weather from bud break to harvest, the vines enjoyed optimal conditions resulting in above average yields, and the extended hang-time allowed fruit to reach its full and promising potential.

The outcome? A vintage of extraordinary distinction.

Harvest began around Labor Day with white varieties, while Cabernet Sauvignon followed in late September through early October. By mid-November, the final clusters were picked, bringing a long harvest to a very happy close. Vintners embraced the unhurried pace, which allowed balanced flavors to fully develop on the vine.

For red wines, the extended ripening period delivered grapes with mature skins and seeds, key to creating wines with structure and longevity. Winemakers are already praising the vintage for its vibrant freshness, purity of fruit and undeniable elegance. These wines will come to market soon. Stock up and enjoy them for years to come.

“I have no doubt that 2023 will go down as one of the most phenomenal vintages ever in Napa Valley.”

*—Karen MacNeil, author of *The Wine Bible* and creator of *WineSpeed**

“Looking at the wines, the 2023s show remarkable purity and finesse while at the same time bringing beautiful depth and concentration.”

—Jeb Dunnuck, jebdunnuck.com

“As the fruit began rolling in across the valley, there were whispers of a ‘once in a lifetime’ vintage. Having tasted hundreds of 2023 barrel samples by now and comparing these to all Napa Valley vintages I’ve tasted going back through the 1960s, they might just be right.”

*—Lisa Perrotti-Brown, MW, *The Wine Palate**



Scan this code to learn more about this remarkable vintage and the people behind it.

THE LIFE CYCLE OF WINE

FROM SEASONAL PRUNING TO BOTTLING, HERE ARE 12 PHASES OF WHAT IT TAKES TO CRAFT NAPA VALLEY'S DISTINCTIVE WINES



WINTER PRUNING

Cutting back old growth from the previous season prepares the vines for the season ahead.



BUD BREAK

When the first new shoots emerge from the dormant vine.



FLOWERING

Tiny flowers appear on the vines for the first time in the season, leading to pollination and fertilization.



FRUIT SET

The pollinated flowers form small green berries.



CANOPY MANAGEMENT

Positioning, pruning and thinning spring growth ensures optimal grape production and ripening.



CROP THINNING

The removal of extra grape bunches balances yield and ripeness of the fruit.



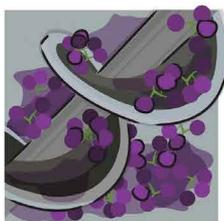
VERAISON

When grape berries begin to grow larger, soften and change color on the vine.



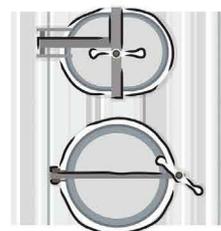
HARVEST

Once grapes have ripened, they are removed from the vine.



CRUSH

The harvested grapes are broken down to release juice.



FERMENTATION

The process of using yeast to convert the sugars in grape juice into alcohol.



AGING

This specialized process of storing wine allows flavors, aromas and characteristics to develop.



BOTTLING

Bottles are filled with wine then sealed with a cork or cap and foil.



Discover more about the life cycle of wine and the stages of any given vintage.

THESE NAPA VALLEY VINTNERS ARE PARTNERS IN LIFE AND IN ENTERTAINING

Here's a look at their favorite ways to bring people together to enjoy wine

GENTLEMAN FARMER WINES

JEFF DURHAM, VINTNER, GENTLEMAN FARMER WINES

JOE WOLOSZ, VINTNER, GENTLEMAN FARMER WINES

WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT EVERY WINE-LOVING ENTERTAINER NEEDS?

A good playlist to set the mood. Jeff is into '70s R&B with some '80s pop, and I lean toward a French House music playlist. We also have instruments around: the accordion for me, the clarinet for Jeff and a piano and guitar for others to jump on and jam. You'd be surprised how many percussionists there are once we put out a conga!

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO ENTERTAIN GUESTS?

Family recipes served family-style. Joey is Polish, and I am Italian, so we have our grandmothers recipes that we love to share with others. Joey also has his well-worn Mastering the Art of French Cooking by Julia Child (from which he read his wedding vows to me), which gets a lot of use. Most of what we cook is on our website so that our food and stories continue to be shared.



LANG & REED NAPA VALLEY

REED SKUPNY, ASSISTANT WINEMAKER, LANG & REED NAPA VALLEY

MEGAN SKUPNY, DIRECTOR OF SALES & MARKETING, LANG & REED NAPA VALLEY

DO YOU RECOMMEND SERVING A WINE PAIRING WITH EVERY DISH, OR DO YOU PREFER TO HAVE A SELECTION OF WINES PEOPLE CAN CHOOSE FROM?

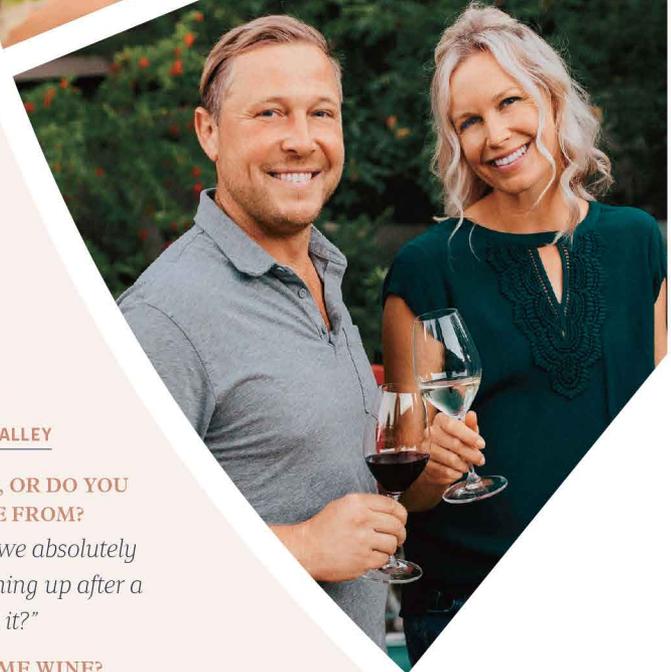
By no means should a dish have a wine assigned to it. That being said, we absolutely love nailing a pairing. There is an old New Yorker comic of a couple cleaning up after a dinner and the man says, "Sure they drank it, but did they get it?"

WHEN YOU'RE HOSTING A DINNER PARTY, WHAT'S YOUR WELCOME WINE?

We like to have at least two options: a lighter white wine and a clean, brisk red. This allows people to chat and get that first glass in as they navigate introductions and hugs.

WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOW TO HANDLE WINES THAT GUESTS BRING?

We love it when a guest brings a bottle, and one should never, ever turn it down or judge. We do clearly and honestly ask if it is for our cellar or dinner. If the latter, we open it immediately and acknowledge the kind gift for our table.



MEET OUR VINTNERS

ALPHA OMEGA

MICHELLE BAGGETT, OWNER AND CHIEF BRAND OFFICER, ALPHA OMEGA

ROBIN BAGGETT, OWNER AND MANAGING PARTNER, ALPHA OMEGA

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WAY TO ENTERTAIN GUESTS?

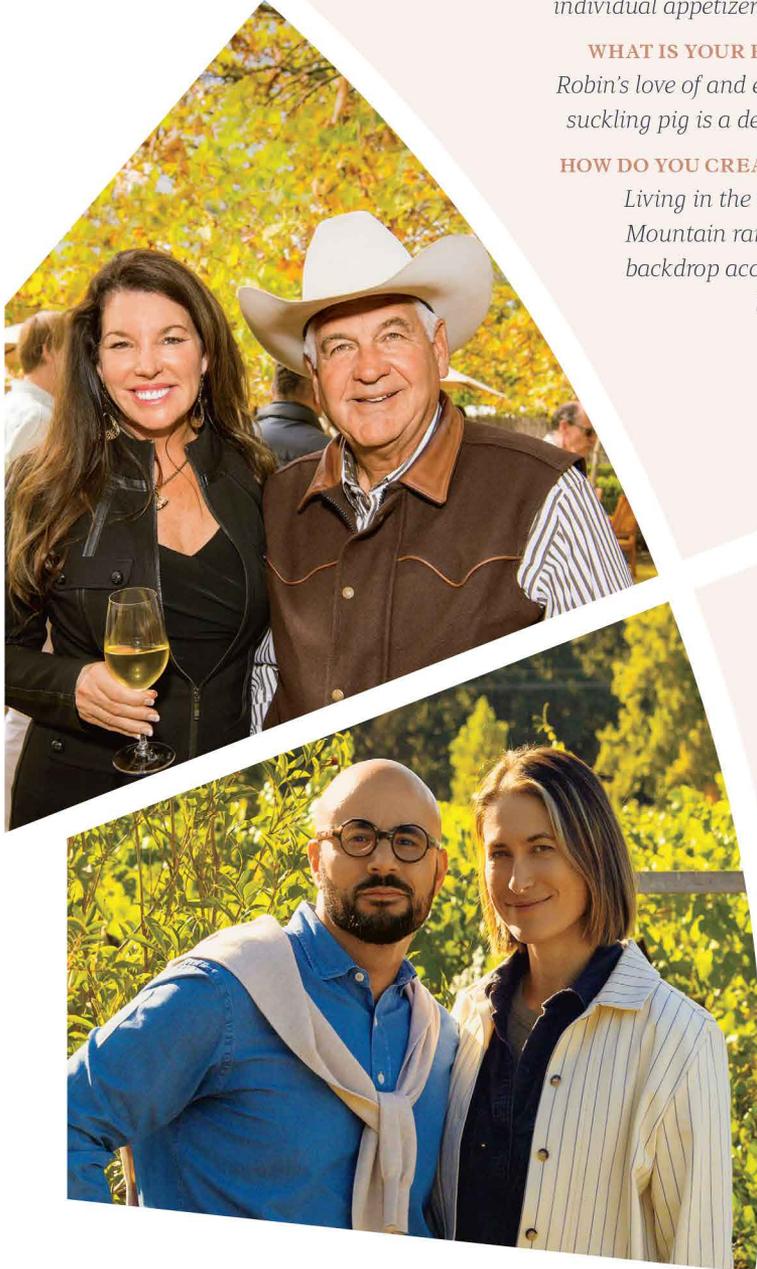
We source as locally as possible, using the seasons to express colors on the plate. We harvest fruits and vegetables from our gardens, frequent farmers markets and acquire meats from Napa County 4-H students. Once the meal is compiled, we like to place individual appetizers on the table, followed by platters of food served family-style.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE WINE AND FOOD PAIRING TO SERVE GUESTS?

Robin's love of and expertise with BBQ is well known in Napa Valley. His smoked suckling pig is a delicacy served as an appetizer with our Reserve Chardonnay.

HOW DO YOU CREATE THE VIBE OF NAPA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY AT HOME?

Living in the midst of vines and the towering Mayacamas and Vaca Mountain ranges provides a remarkable setting by itself. The perfect backdrop accompanied by relaxed family-style dining and gracious hospitality that Napa Valley is known for.



LAWRENCE WINE ESTATES AND DALLA VALLE VINEYARDS

MAYA DALLA VALLE, WINEMAKER, DALLA VALLE VINEYARDS

CARLTON MCCOY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, LAWRENCE WINE ESTATES

HOW DO YOU SELECT WINES WHEN ENTERTAINING?

We typically go to the cellar and pull a variety of wines that we're interested in at the time. Typically, a sparkling wine, textured white wines as well as lighter and fuller reds. We don't worry much about pairing as much as offering a variety of styles to try.

HOW DO YOU CREATE THE VIBE OF NAPA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY AT HOME?

The Napa Valley at its core is about exceptional products without pretense. We serve excellent food and great wines but keep it casual with family-style dishes and large platters and pots that can be passed around.

WHAT IS THE ONE THING EVERY WINE-LOVING ENTERTAINER NEEDS?

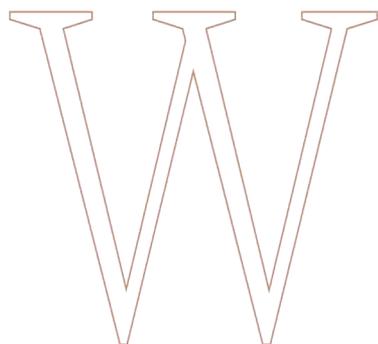
An ice bucket. Not one of the small decorative ones. An ice bucket that can hold multiple bottles and plenty of ice.



Get to know more Napa Valley vintners and their stories at [napavalley.wine/makers](https://www.napaValley.wine/makers).

WAYS TO MAKE YOUR WEDDING WINES MEMORABLE

WRITTEN BY KATE DINGWALL ~ PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATIE MONROE



hen Lorenzo Trefethen of Trefethen Family Vineyards got married, he did so under the majestic, massive walnut tree in the middle of their Oak Knoll vineyards.

And then there was the wine, which celebrated his friends, family and the valley in which he grew up. His parents, John and Janet—some of

Napa Valley's earliest advocates—brought out birth-year bottles they squirreled away long ago. There were sparkling wines from Schramsberg Vineyards, served in Balthazar bottles. Their late-harvest Riesling was poured alongside cake, made with strawberries picked on the Silverado Trail.

Wine is an integral part of weddings. There are the toasts, raised to dear friends and happy couples. There are bubbles that underscore the ebullience of the occasion and glasses that empty as the night goes on and revelry continues.

You don't need to choose rarefied wines to make these moments special, as memorable wedding wine moments can happen on any budget. It's the day that will be remembered, touched lightly, and thoughtfully, by wine.

{ A Pre-Wedding Toast }

Slip into your dress or suit up with something special in hand. Open a bottle that sets the mood for the day—maybe that's sparkling wine, a cheery rosé or something you've been saving for a special occasion.

{ Start with Spritzes }

Weddings tend to start early and stretch well into the evening. Serving hard liquor can lead to exhaustion or overconsumption, so start off the event with light, elegant wine-based cocktails. Spritzes, customized with fresh juice or fruit, are always a crowd favorite. Use a base of sparkling wine or opt for a refreshing twist with flavorful rosés or white wines, which will keep guests hydrated for the fun to come.

Keep zero-proof wines on hand to make any of the above drinks excellent for abstainers.

{ Approachable and Affordable }

While a wedding is definitely the time to celebrate, keep in mind that during the festivities, no one is going to be sniffing and swirling. Don't bring out the back vintages or budget-breaking bottles during dinner or dancing—stick to smartly priced, well-made bottles.



Mumm Napa offers an array of bubbles for every budget: floral sparklers for topping up spritzes and toast-worthy Brut bottles.

At \$20 to \$25 a bottle, Black Stallion Estate Winery's entry-level Chardonnays, Sauvignon Blancs, Cabernet Sauvignons and Pinot Noirs drink well above their sticker price.

Bell Wine Cellars' Scoundrel Red (\$20), is a richly spiced Cabernet Sauvignon-Syrah blend, perfect for pairing with barbecue, lamb and other boldly flavored dishes.

{ Memories, Etched }

Caroline Stewart Guthrie married her husband, Blair, in Napa 10 years ago. They still have a soft spot for weddings. At their winery, Stewart Cellars, they'll etch magnums with anniversary and other special dates and are happy to have couples spend time at the winery creating something for their wedding day.

"There's a couple getting married in wine country next fall," says Caroline. "They're coming out this fall to help harvest a wine that will be custom labeled and served at their wedding. It's a really unique experience leading to their big day. There's usually a photographer along for the ride, too."

{ Custom Labels }

Wineries, like Trois Noix, offer custom-designed labels for happy couples or other special occasions. "We love to get creative," says Trois Noix owner Jaime Araujo.

AXR Napa Valley, a historic estate with wine by renowned maker Jean Hoefliger, has a private label program, where couples can weigh in on a custom label and bottle half barrels or full barrels in either 750ml bottles or larger formats (up to 9 liters).

{ A Sparkling Statement }

As a third-generation Napa Valley vintner, Trefethen's wedding was best celebrated with a

sparkling wine made down the road; he sabered a 12-liter bottle of vintage Schramsberg Vineyards at his pre-wedding pool party. Schramsberg Vineyards' Hugh Davies lent him his large-bottle holster for the occasion, as well as his historic saber.

"Hugh gave me a few great tips for sabering such a large bottle, like making sure it was sitting in an ice bath for at least an hour before sabering," says Trefethen, with a laugh. "It still took me three tries before it popped!"

A grand toast of sparkling wine—sabered, if you dare—is a triumphant way to celebrate your newly minted marriage. Schramsberg Vineyards, Chandon and Frank Family Vineyards all make bottles worth a celebratory pop.

{ Bigger is Better }

Speaking of big bottles: What better occasion than a wedding to open something large and in charge? Bell Wine Cellars stocks 3- and 6-liter bottles, as does Trefethen Family Vineyards. Open them for a show-stopping moment, then move the wine into decanters for easier service.

Grgich Hills Estate has 5-liter bottles of 1986 Cabernet Sauvignon, 3-liter bottles of the 2016 Paris Tasting commemorative and 12-liter bottles of their 2021 Paradise Block—enough for all your loved ones.

If you are opening a bigger bottle on your biggest day, save it. Instead of a guest book, let your guests sign their love right on the glass with metallic markers.

{ Make It a Moment }

However you decide to weave wine into your wedding day, be sure to take a moment together and enjoy a private toast to the memorable event you've put together, and to the many memories you will make in the future—hopefully over a bottle of your favorite wine.

Wine is an integral part of weddings. There are the toasts, raised to dear friends and happy couples. There are bubbles that underscore the ebullience of the occasion and glasses that empty as the night goes on and revelry continues.



PICKING THE RIGHT WINES

How do you ensure you have the perfect wines to backdrop the big day? Here are a few tips.

AVOID THE NICHE: Now is not the time to turn your aunt onto orange wine. Pick wines that appeal to everyone.

OVER ORDER: A good rule of thumb is one bottle per person. While that may seem like a lot, the rule ensures the bar doesn't run dry. Besides, there should be plenty leftover to open on future anniversaries.

YOU CAN'T GO WRONG WITH BUBBLES: This *is* a celebration, after all. American-made bubbles offer all the ebullience and energy of Champagne, but with price tags that can snuggle into any budget.

GIVING THE GIFT OF WINE

While wine helps fuel connection and celebration at a wedding, it's also a thoughtful way to keep the memories flowing for years to come. Attending a wedding? Consider one of these wine-esque gifts for the happy couple.

BACK-VINTAGE BOTTLES: Do you know the year the couple met? Many wineries across Napa Valley have access to back vintages for just such an occasion. Priest Ranch has wines well into the early aughts, while Farella Vineyard and Trefethen Family Vineyards have generous cellars of bottles from the 1980s and '90s.

CUSTOM-ENGRAVED GIFTS: Napa Valley Engraving will engrave decanters, stoppers, flutes, glasses and openers for the happy couple. Consider a custom box, engraved with their name and anniversary. Pop a bottle of something meaningful for the full effect.

ANNIVERSARY WINES: Are there special wines on the wedding table? Take note, and on their first anniversary, send a case of that cuvée to their home. It's a gift that keeps on giving.



PASSION AND SKILL



Quintessa winemaker
Rebekah Wineburg says
intuition is a key part of
her process.



Crafting Wine from a Thousand Decisions

BY DAVE MCINTYRE

A fine wine is an expression of place, time and personality woven into a liquid tapestry, telling a unique story. That may sound like alchemy, but it takes a lot of hard work, vision and skills honed over many vintages. Even in Napa Valley, where Robert Louis Stevenson said “the wine is bottled poetry,” making wine involves so much more than fermenting grape juice.

Ask winemakers and vineyard managers about the craftsmanship that goes into making a Napa Valley wine and you’ll hear reverence and humility, but also pride at the knowledge, intuition and relentless attention to detail required.

“Wine has a singular ability to translate place and time into something that can be shared with others and bring joy,” says Rebekah Wineburg, winemaker at Quintessa winery in Rutherford, on the valley floor. Key to that is understanding the nuances of particular vineyards. “Quintessa’s site has a strong character and my role is to express that in the wine,” she says.

At Quintessa’s biodynamic estate, vineyard workers prune each vine like a sculptor might shape a block of marble, guiding the story of last year’s season into the new vintage. “There is a repetitive practice, meditative even, but it’s also intuition,” says Wineburg. The attention continues through harvest, when pickers make several passes through the vineyard to harvest grapes at optimum ripeness rather than pulling ripe and underripe bunches in one fell swoop. Such meticulous care is laborious and expensive, but enhances quality in the wine.



Pride Mountain Vineyards CEO and director of winegrowing Steve Pride, left, and winemaker Matt Ward.

Quintessa’s premier red wine includes a cultural element: The winery is owned by the Huneeus family, of Chilean descent, and the Bordeaux-style blend includes Carménère, a grape common in Chile but rarely grown in Napa Valley.

Further north, at Pride Mountain Vineyards, CEO and director of winegrowing Steve Pride knows how each section of his vineyard, at 2,000 feet elevation on Spring Mountain, is situated toward the sun. During the growing season he manages the canopy of leaves on the vines to optimize sun exposure on the grapes. Even as he steers the grapes toward optimum ripeness each year, Pride maintains a long-term perspective.

“Making a fine wine requires the ability to picture in your mind’s eye the characteristics of the final wine and to understand what you have to do over several years to create it,” says Pride.

“Each bottle of wine is the sum of thousands of decisions,” adds Matt Ward, Pride Mountain Vineyards’ winemaker. Like Wineburg at Quintessa, Ward also mentions intuition. “People say winemaking is a blend of art and science, but for me it’s more about understanding and intuition. I want to understand this place so well that the path forward is intuitive, even if I can’t say why. And every vintage I understand it a little better, adding to the potential these wines offer.”

Winemaking’s long-term perspective includes stewardship of the

land. Napa Green and other sustainable, organic, biodynamic and regenerative certifications aim to ensure vineyards are farmed in a way to ensure their viability for generations.

Stewardship was foremost in mind for Ricardo and Dayva Jimenez when they purchased Firetree Family Vineyards in Carneros in 2021. Veterans of the hospitality industry in Miami and Caracas, Venezuela, they dreamed of owning a vineyard they could pass on to their children. After purchasing Firetree Vineyard, an established site with a growing reputation for fine Chardonnay, they began using regenerative farming techniques and earned certifications from Napa Green and Fish Friendly Farming. They participate in an experimental cover crop program with the Napa County Resource Conservation District and use goats and Babydoll sheep to feed on weeds in the vineyard.

“When we are in the vineyard, we feel we found the perfect place to achieve our generational goals, and we hope our kids and future grandkids and great-grandkids continue this passion,” says Dayva Jimenez.

“Making a fine wine requires the ability to picture in your mind’s eye the characteristics of the final wine, and to understand what you have to do over several years to create it.”

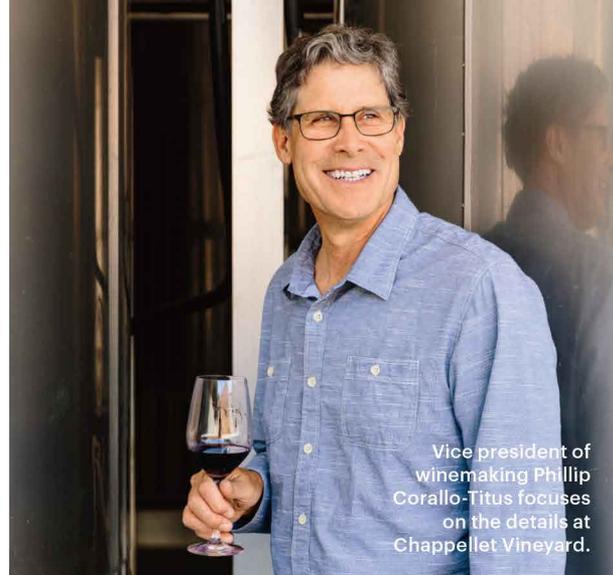
—STEVE PRIDE, CEO AND DIRECTOR OF WINEGROWING, PRIDE MOUNTAIN VINEYARDS

Vineyards are rarely homogeneous. At Chappellet Vineyard on Pritchard Hill, in the eastern part of Napa Valley, Andrew Opatz treats the vineyard he manages as though it were several small estates. “Over time, you learn various parts of the hill, how various clones or rootstocks handle different situations,” he explains. “So when something happens, we can remember what worked in similar conditions eight, 10 or 15 years ago. And if we get a heat spike in early September, when the ripening grapes are most vulnerable, we know which parts of the vineyard will show stress first. Over time, you just learn the nuances of the nooks and crannies of the hill that perform better in a warmer year or really shine in a cooler, milder year.”

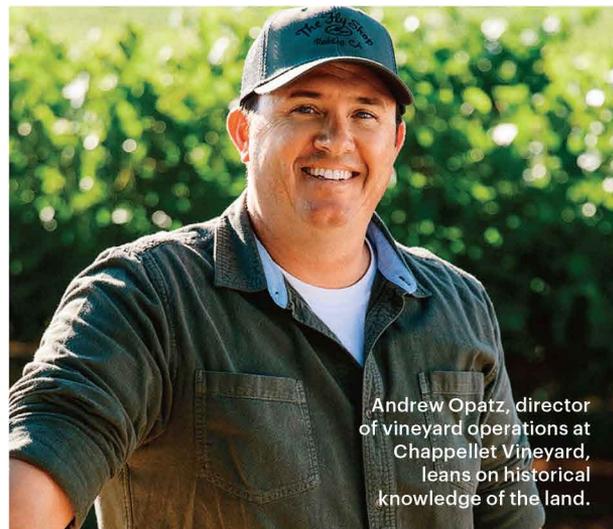
This all may sound romantic, but there’s a lot of grunt work that goes into making fine wine, work that doesn’t usually make the glossy magazines. Those thousands of decisions Ward mentioned extend from the vineyard into the winery once the grapes are harvested. How long to leave the juice on the skins before allowing fermentation to begin; how often to punch down the cap of skins or pump the juice over it; when to put it into barrels and for how long; and even the type of barrel all influence the flavor of red wines. For white wines, whether to ferment and age in concrete, steel or wood and whether to induce the secondary malolactic fermentation to soften the wine are just some considerations in shaping the final wine.

The most important decision in the vineyard is when to harvest, influenced by the style of wine the vintner desires and the weather forecast. In the winery, a crucial stage is blending the final wine. That’s when the winemaking team sees the result of the thousands of decisions they made in the vineyard and the winery throughout the growing season and harvest.

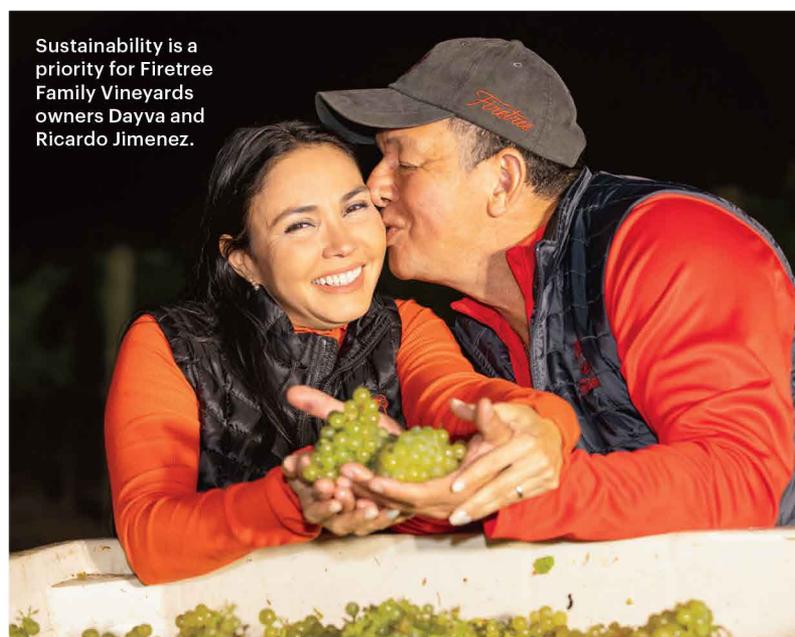
“All of that catches back up to you,” says Phillip Corallo-Titus, vice president of winemaking at Chappellet Vineyard. For each



Vice president of winemaking Phillip Corallo-Titus focuses on the details at Chappellet Vineyard.



Andrew Opatz, director of vineyard operations at Chappellet Vineyard, leans on historical knowledge of the land.



Sustainability is a priority for Firetree Family Vineyards owners Dayva and Ricardo Jimenez.

vintage, Corallo-Titus and his team blend three Cabernet Sauvignon-based wines: Pritchard Hill, a single-vineyard Cabernet from a spot on the estate called Hideaway and a Signature Cabernet Sauvignon. Deciding which of dozens, if not hundreds, of individual wines go into each blend is an intricate process involving their skills and intimate knowledge of how the vines have performed in previous years.

“If you’re splitting the difference between two wines of equal quality when blending, saying this one goes in because it has just a little blueberry note instead of a red note, then you’ve done your job,” says Corallo-Titus. “People say art, they say it’s science, but you know, in a way it’s all kind of the same. And craftsmanship, I think, is a pretty good description of this process.”

Such craftsmanship puts the finishing touches on the wine’s liquid tapestry, a coda to a story of a vintage that goes deeper than just a year on the label, a story the wine itself will tell one day when the cork is pulled and the wine meets its lucky audience.



DATE NIGHTS
Through the Seasons

ENHANCE ROMANTIC MOMENTS WITH NAPA VALLEY WINES THAT MATCH YOUR MOOD

—
BY ALLIE AND BECCA CALEGARI

IF you ask us, the most memorable date nights often happen right at home. Skip the reservations and crowds. You may just discover that all you really need is each other and a thoughtfully chosen Napa Valley wine to turn any ordinary evening into something special.

Napa Valley's diverse terroir produces wines with personalities as unique as the couples who enjoy them. Whether you're planning a restful winter evening or a creative summer adventure, there's a Napa Valley wine perfectly suited to set the mood and nurture your connection.

Here are four seasonal date ideas for intentional romance through every season.

WINTER: FIRESIDE BLIND TASTING

When the nights grow long and temperatures drop, create your own intimate salon. Light a fire and pick a theme—aged cheeses, dark chocolates or even fancy nuts—and set up a blind tasting for two. Blindfolded, each partner takes turns guessing flavors, rating favorites and laughing at the wildly wrong guesses (because yes, you can confuse brie with butter if you try hard enough). For extra fun, include a blind wine tasting with 375ml bottles, perfect for sampling.

WINE MATCH: Try Clos du Val Cabernet Sauvignon or Faust Cabernet Sauvignon, both available in convenient 375ml bottles that deliver the perfect boldness for this mellow evening. Their rich, complex profiles offer their own mystery to unravel alongside your blindfolded challenges, while their robust structure stands up to aged cheeses and dark chocolates.

SPRING: SUNSET KAYAKING AND RIVERSIDE PICNIC

Celebrate the season of renewal with a golden hour adventure on the water. Rent kayaks for the afternoon and paddle along a peaceful river or lake. Pull your kayaks onto a scenic spot along the shore, open a refreshing bottle of wine and enjoy a riverside picnic as the sun sets and the day winds down.

WINE MATCH: Phifer Pavitt Wine Date Night Sauvignon Blanc or Long Meadow Ranch Winery Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc complement this active springtime date. Their bright, fresh character mirrors the sparkling water and pairs beautifully with light picnic fare, while their crisp finish provides a welcome refreshment after your paddling adventure.

SUMMER: BACKYARD MOVIE MARATHON

Transform your outdoor space into a private cinema. String up lights, set up a projector and create your own film festival featuring movies that tell your love story, perhaps films from the year you met or movies you've referenced in your relationship.

WINE MATCH: Ceja Vineyards and Hill Family Estate Pinot Noirs offer the ideal balance for outdoor entertaining. Light enough not to overwhelm on warm evenings yet complex enough to keep things interesting through a double feature, their bright red fruit flavors complement movie snacks surprisingly well.

FALL: CANDLE-POURING WORKSHOP

Embrace the season of cozy nights by creating your own custom candles at home. Pick up a candlemaking kit and select fall scents like vanilla, spiced apple or cedarwood. Set up your workspace and blend fragrances that capture your favorite autumn memories while enjoying intimate conversation. Once you've finished your candles, use empty wine bottles as elegant candleholders for a romantic finishing touch.

WINE MATCH: Try Bella Union Chardonnay or Heitz Cellar Chardonnay to create a mellow backdrop for this sensory evening. Their smooth, rounded character suits the intimate nature of candlemaking, while subtle vanilla and spice notes echo the warm fragrances you're blending into your creations.

THE SECRET:

The beauty of these date nights lies in their simplicity and the thoughtful touches that make them memorable. Each Napa Valley wine brings its own personality to the evening, elevating simple moments into cherished memories. The key is matching the wine's character to the mood you want to create.

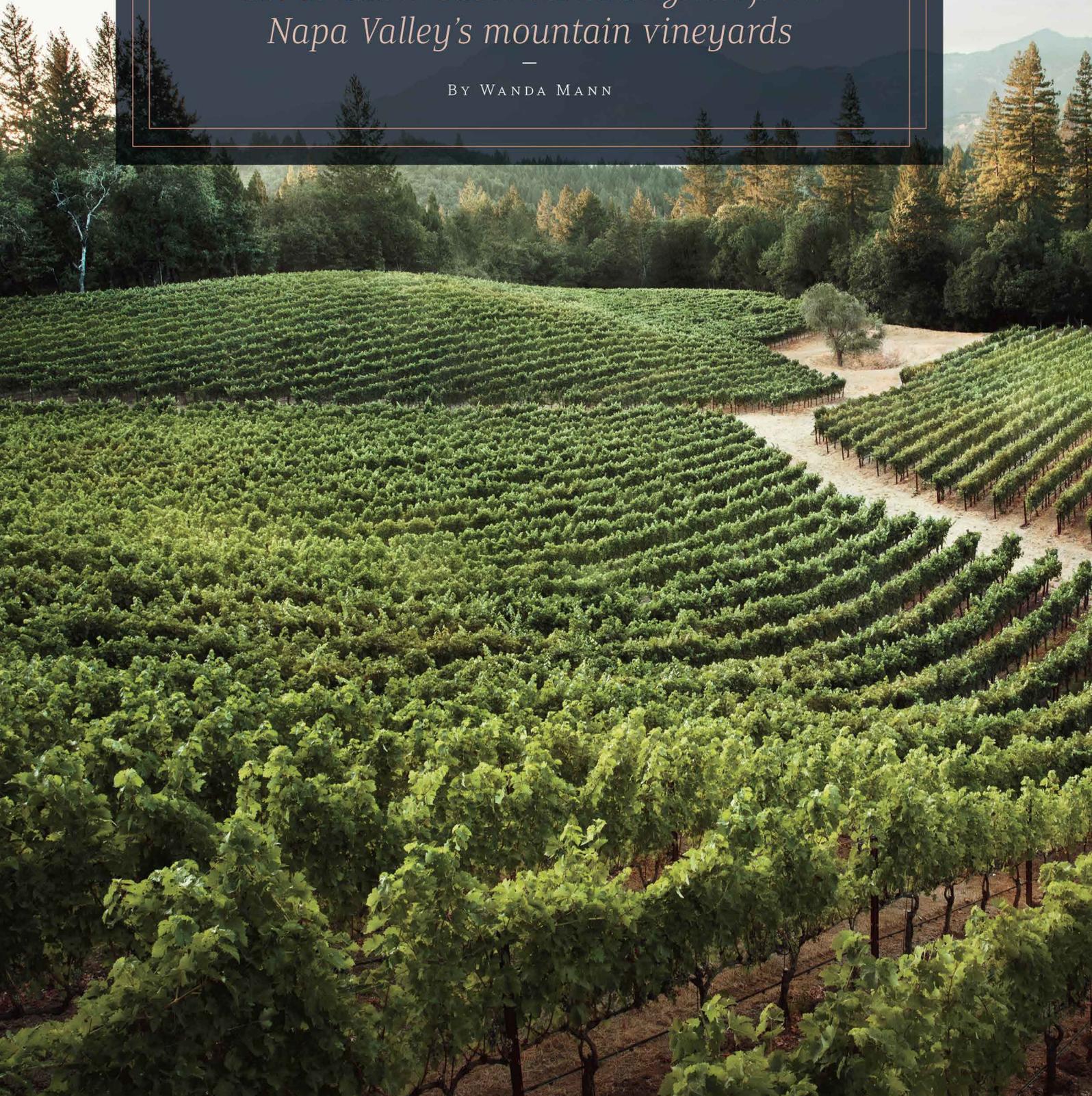
Remember, great date nights are about intention. When you choose a wine that complements your planned activity, you're setting the stage for connection and the kind of intimate experiences that make relationships flourish.

After all, the world's finest wines deserve to be part of life's finest moments, no matter how simple they may be.

SIPS *with* ALTITUDE

*Get to know Cabernet Sauvignon from
Napa Valley's mountain vineyards*

—
BY WANDA MANN





Lokoya, in the Diamond Mountain District, produces full-bodied wines influenced by its above-the-fogline location.

MICHAEL SUGRUE

Winemakers embrace the adage that great wine starts in the vineyard.

From the valley floor to the mountaintop, Napa Valley's vineyards yield exceptional Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. Many Napa Valley producers are captivated by the impact of soaring altitudes on Cabernet Sauvignon grown in the region's five mountain AVAs—Atlas Peak, Diamond Mountain District, Howell Mountain, Mount Veeder and Spring Mountain.

So what is it about mountain Cabernet Sauvignons that makes them so enticing?

WHAT'S HAPPENING UP THERE

High-altitude vineyards in Napa Valley can be situated more than 2,600 feet above sea level, but it isn't only height that distinguishes them from their lower-altitude brethren. "From the soils to the movement of air on the mountains, to the angle and access to the sun, the environment on the mountains is markedly different from that on the valley floor," explains winemaker Chris Carpenter, who works with grapes from each of Napa Valley's mountain AVAs in his role as winemaker at Cardinale, Lokoya, La Jota Vineyard Co., Mt. Brave and Caladan. "Higher elevations result in closer proximity to the sun, with more sunlight available, as these sites are typically above the fogline. Sunlight increases flavor concentration, driving it ever higher," says Carpenter. He believes the impact of that concentration "ultimately comes through in the wines," and the discernible characteristics include "incredible weight and texture" and "a lifting acidity."



David Arthur Vineyards winemaker Nile Zacherle touts finesse in extraction for mountain wines.



Diamond Creek Vineyards president Nicole Carter, left, with winemaker and vineyard director Graham Wehmeier.

HEIGHTENED FLAVORS

“Tannins can be big in the mountains, so we often take a lighter approach with regard to extraction,” says Graham Wehmeier, winemaker and vineyard director of Diamond Creek Vineyards. Nile Zacherle, winemaker for David Arthur Vineyards, whose vineyards loom at an elevation of more than 1,100 feet on Pritchard Hill, takes a similar stance: “Mountain wines can be a bit bolder if you aren’t careful and push them to a high extraction level,” notes Zacherle, adding: “I like to use the analogy that just because you have a fast car doesn’t mean you have to drive it fast.” And although Pritchard Hill is not a designated nested AVA, “it has become known for its powerful and distinctive Cabernet Sauvignon.”

SLOW AND GRACEFUL AGING

Collectors should take note that Cabernet Sauvignons from Napa Valley’s mountain vineyards possess another desirable attribute—aging potential. “Mountain wines can take longer to become approachable, so they often require more patience,” says Wehmeier. But it’s worth it. “Mountain wines tend to have higher concentrations of natural acidity, which contributes to the freshness and energy of the wine,” explains Carpenter: “Tannins and acid also preserve wines, so in higher concentrations they tend to produce wines that age exceptionally well.”

HEEDING THE CALL OF HEIGHT

In 1985, the allure of Napa Valley’s high-elevation vineyards compelled Italy’s aristocratic winemaking Antinori family to found Antinori Napa Valley in Atlas Peak, 1,600 feet above the valley floor. Accustomed to cultivating grapes in the rolling hills of Tuscany, Antinori was naturally drawn to

“MOUNTAIN WINES TEND TO HAVE HIGHER CONCENTRATIONS OF NATURAL ACIDITY, WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO THE FRESHNESS AND ENERGY OF THE WINE. TANNINS AND ACID ALSO PRESERVE WINES, SO IN HIGHER CONCENTRATIONS THEY TEND TO PRODUCE WINES THAT AGE EXCEPTIONALLY WELL.”

—CHRIS CARPENTER, WINEMAKER, CARDINALE, LOKOYA, LA JOTA VINEYARD CO., MT. BRAVE AND CALADAN

“THE BEAUTY OF THE WINE IS THAT EACH PLACE IS DIFFERENT, GIVES A DIFFERENT EXPRESSION. ... WHAT YOU WANT TO SEE AND WHAT YOU WANT TO TASTE IS THE DIFFERENCE IN PERSONALITY THAT MAKES THE WINE UNIQUE. AND NAPA VALLEY IS ONE OF THE BEST PLACES IN THE WORLD FOR MAKING WINES OF SUCH DISTINCTION.”

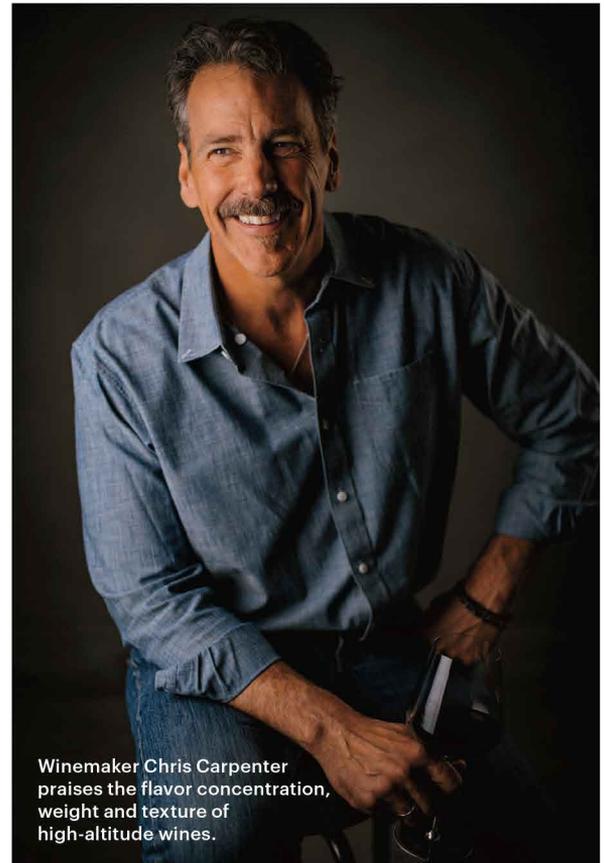
—RENZO COTARELLA, CEO & CHIEF ENOLOGIST, ANTINORI NAPA VALLEY

the Atlas Peak AVA: “We felt at home once we were here,” says Renzo Cotarella, CEO & chief enologist of Antinori Napa Valley. “The personality of the wine from the mountains, in general, is completely different than wine from the valley floor,” and he praises their particular style of “finesse.” Says Cotarella, “They are intense, but they’re not too heavy, even if they are very rich.”

GREAT CHALLENGE, GREAT REWARD

And while the rewards are great, working mountain vineyards is no walk in the park for winemakers. “Mountain viticulture is always challenging due to access and terrain,” explains Zacherle. For example, in addition to the steep slopes, “another challenge is water availability and soil drainage that requires additional resources and management to ensure that the vines are getting enough to support their growth.” Wehmeier echoes this sentiment: “Farming is more expensive on a slope, especially in the case of terraces, since smaller, slower tractors are needed.”

Yet, despite the rigor and expense, Napa Valley’s winemakers embrace the opportunity to craft Cabernet Sauvignon from these high-elevation vineyards because mountain wines showcase the



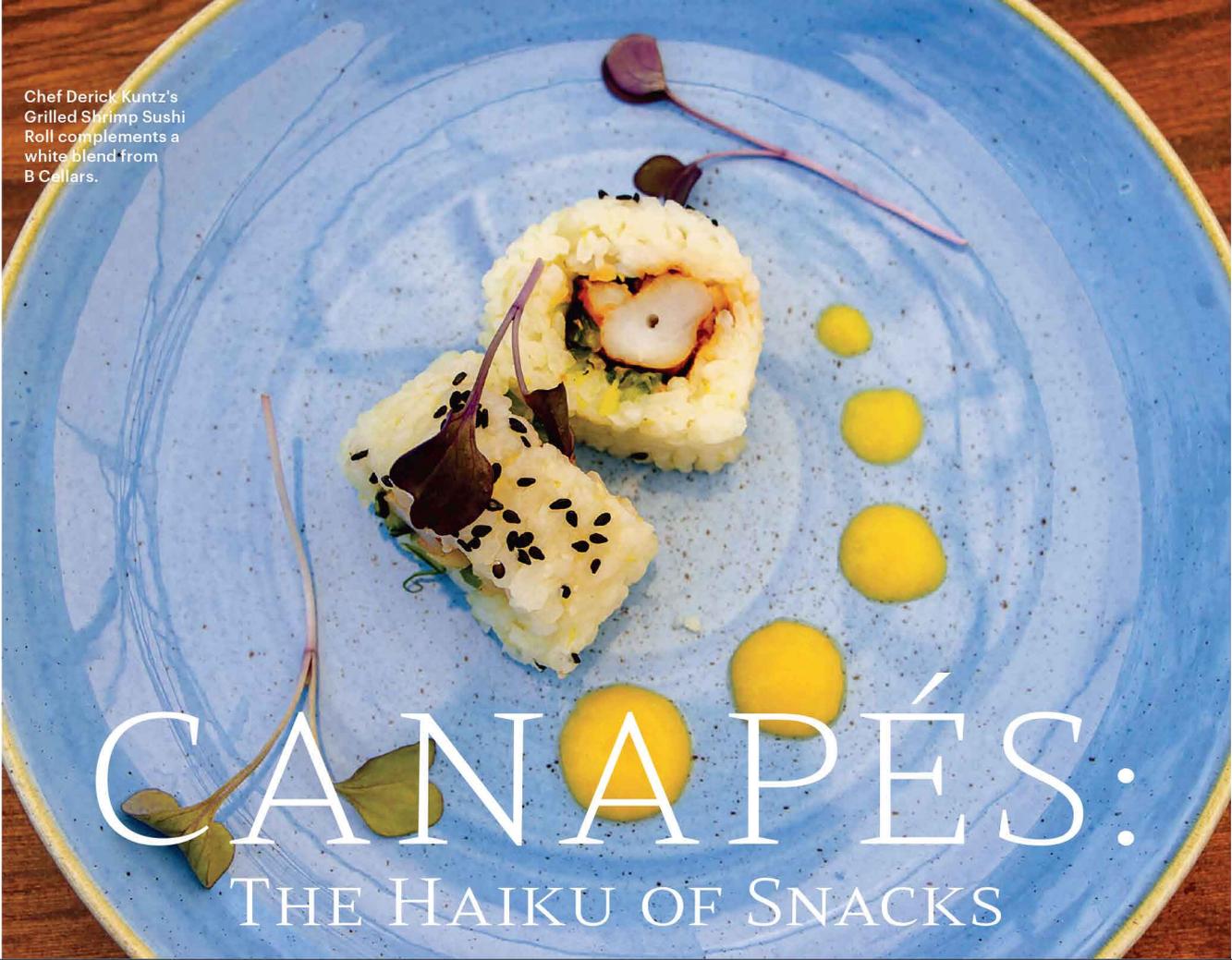
Winemaker Chris Carpenter praises the flavor concentration, weight and texture of high-altitude wines.

region’s ability to produce terroir-driven wines that convey a distinct, yet authentic, aspect of its signature varietal. “The beauty of the wine is that each place is different, gives a different expression,” says Cotarella. “The winemaker doesn’t want to change the soul of the place. What you want to see and what you want to taste is the difference in personality that makes the wine unique. And Napa Valley is one of the best places in the world for making wines of such distinction.”



Antinori Napa Valley in Atlas Peak sits 1,600 feet above the valley floor.

Chef Derick Kuntz's Grilled Shrimp Sushi Roll complements a white blend from B Cellars.



CANAPÉS: THE HAIKU OF SNACKS

CREATE A BEAUTIFUL SPREAD OF FLAVORFUL BITES FOR YOUR NEXT GATHERING

BY TRACI DUTTON

“The cocktail party no longer means a bottle of gin, a can of sardines and a package of potato chips from the corner grocery,” writes James Beard in the opening of *Hors d’Oeuvre and Canapés*.

With lighter drinking and eating habits these days, restoring a bit of that magic hour ritual with interesting Napa Valley wines, a deft touch with simpatico bites and a small circle of friends creates an interlude at the end of the day.

The canapé is the haiku of snacks. Based on the French word for sofa, a canapé is a careful construction of bread or pastry base, a thin layer of highly flavorful spread topped with a morsel of something savory.

Final presentation is nothing to skimp on and so the fresh herb leaf, flower petal or dainty sliver of edible decoration is required, as is the effort of using that beautiful tray, platter or board that may not get enjoyed otherwise. Done well, a canapé is a provocative yet satisfying nibble that completes, rather than distracts from, the good sips of wine and good people you’ve gathered.

This is not the safe spread of dips, neutral cheese and packaged salumi slices, but a chance for you to practice what you may know or want to know about flavor, balance and harmony—many of the same characteristics that compose a wine of note.

When you’ve finished dreaming about the soul and seasoning of a canapé and its neighboring wine, stock up a few things to have on hand when inspiration strikes and the doorbell rings.

Remember to keep things petite and easy to eat—no utensils, no melting, no dripping, nothing overly heat-sensitive. No sog. Three or four pieces for each guest, to complement one or two glasses of wine is sufficient, enough to fascinate and not fill up. A backup bag of quality chips is good to have on hand, just in case (sorry, James).

In the end, though, it’s about the communal mood, for, in the words of Mr. Beard, “Food is our common ground, a universal experience,” making a canapé something bigger than a bite.

We asked some of our Napa Valley vintners for perfect cocktail party pairings. Here's what they shared:

VILLA RAGAZZI

MICHAELA RODENA, WINEGROWER
ROSATO DI SANGIOVESE, OAKVILLE

WHAT'S IN YOUR WINE SNACK/COCKTAIL PARTY PANTRY?

Our Villa Ragazzi Rosato di Sangiovese is bone dry, crisp and delicate with red fruit flavors and aromas. I like crab meat on a cracker spread with bit of mayo, spritzed with lemon and sprinkled with a touch of chopped basil. Also chopped ham with finely diced onion and enough mayo to hold it together on crackers, decorated with minced chives.

ANCIEN

KEN BERNARDS, WINEMAKER & PROPRIETOR
TERESA BERNARDS, GENERAL MANAGER & PROPRIETOR
MINK VINEYARD PINOT NOIR, COOMBSVILLE

WHAT ARE SOME TASTES AND FLAVORS YOU WOULD INCLUDE IN THE PERFECT BITE OF FOOD FOR YOUR PINOT NOIR?

The terroir of Coombsville Pinot Noir has an emphasis on minerality and mouthwatering tannins with fruit bursting of blueberries and pomegranate. A favorite pairing is our Coombsville Compote with goat cheese crostini playing on savory and sweet attributes of the blueberries, cherries and fresh thyme.

B CELLARS

DERICK KUNTZ, CHEF
WHITE BLEND, NAPA VALLEY

WHAT GLOBAL FLAVORS WOULD YOU INCLUDE IN THE ONE-BITE "LITTLE TREAT" FOR THE WHITE BLEND?

Our white blend begs for tropical flavors and a touch of spice or heat to help expand and emphasize its inherent complexity and the layers of exotic spice and fruit notes. The zesty clean acidity of the wine pairs well with a little zip from some chili or horseradish. Our Grilled Shrimp Sushi Roll with yuzu, ginger, mango, and jalapeño and Tuna Poke with Wasabi Aioli both make complementary small bites.



Scan this code for these and other recipes from chef Derick Kuntz.

PAULA KORNELL SPARKLING WINE

PAULA KORNELL, FOUNDING PARTNER
BLANC DE NOIRS AND BLANC DE BLANCS, NAPA VALLEY

FOR YOUR SPARKLING WINE, WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE SPLURGE BITE?

It would be a toss-up between a bump of fine caviar or beautiful seared foie gras on an apple slice ... oh, but then there are oysters!"

AND A BARGAIN BITE?

Popcorn with truffle salt.

Paula Kornell Blanc de Noirs also pairs well with Paula's Fig Canapé with Gorgonzola Dolce (see recipe on page 28). The bite plays up the earthy fruit in the wine and provides a creamy counterpart to the lively effervescence.

BEST BITES

PAULA KORNELL DUG INTO HER FAMILY RECIPE BOX FOR A COUPLE OF TIMELESS CANAPÉS.



Paula Kornell

FIG CANAPÉ WITH GORGONZOLA DOLCE

THESE DELECTABLE BITES PAIR WELL WITH BLANC DE NOIRS. MAKES 24

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ounces gorgonzola dolce
- 3 ounces cream cheese
- 12 medium-sized, fresh ripe figs (any variety)
- 24 small, crisp dried fruit and nut crackers
- 4 tablespoons honey or top-quality balsamic vinegar, for drizzling
- ½ cup toasted and finely chopped green pistachios

DIRECTIONS

1. In a small bowl, using a hand mixer, combine room temperature cheeses and whip to a creamy consistency.
2. Slice a fresh fig in half lengthwise and place on cracker.
3. Dollop about 2 teaspoons of cheese mixture on figs. Drizzle with either honey or balsamic vinegar and sprinkle with chopped pistachios.



SMOKED SALMON EN BRIOCHE

FOR PAULA'S BLANC DE BLANCS, THIS CLASSIC CANAPÉ IS ACCENTED WITH A HINT OF SPICY HORSERADISH. THE WINE IS VIBRANT AND PLAYFUL, CREATING AN EXQUISITE MATCH. MAKES 24

INGREDIENTS

- 6 thin slices brioche (from a loaf)
- 4 ounces crème fraîche
- 1 tablespoon grated horseradish, or to taste
- 4 to 6 ounces thinly sliced smoked salmon (find the best that your budget allows)
- Fresh dill fronds

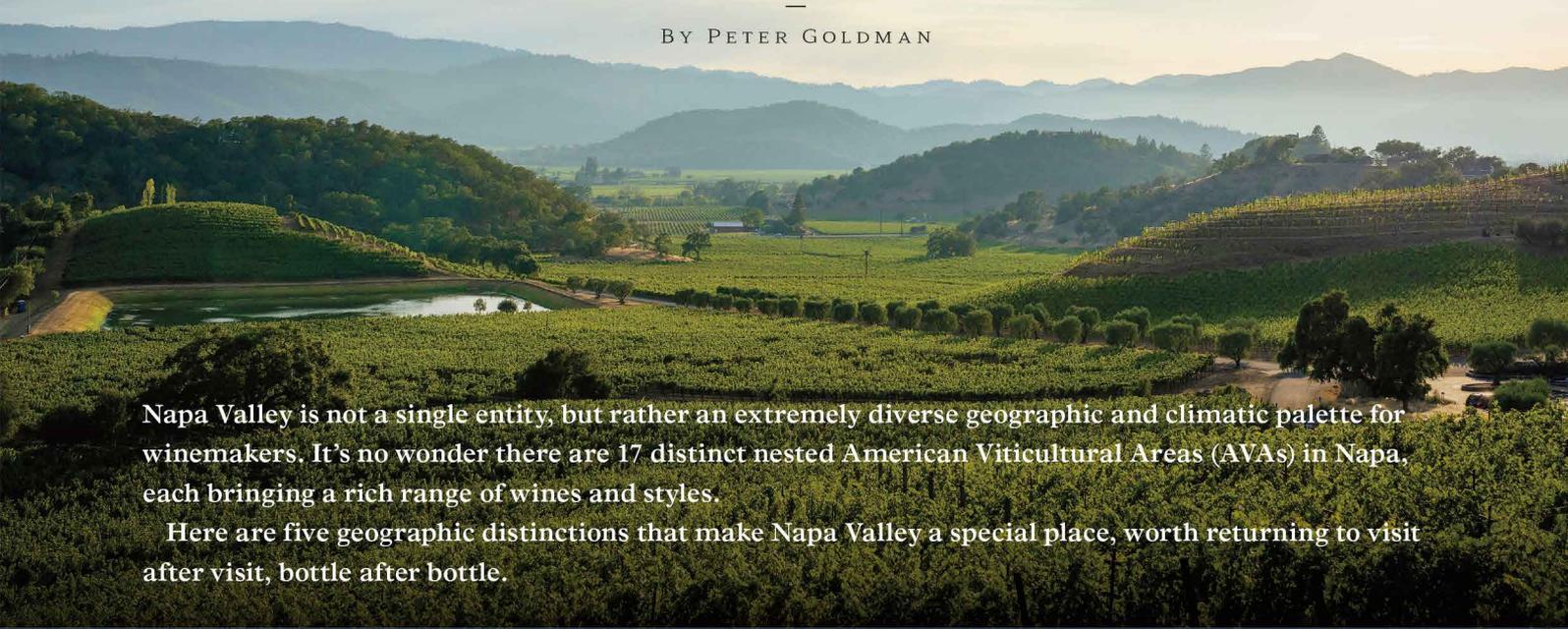
DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325°F.
2. Cut each slice of brioche into four triangles and lay on sheet pan. Toast, watching carefully, until pale golden brown, about 3 to 5 minutes, flipping the toasts halfway through. Cool on a rack.
3. Combine crème fraîche and horseradish and spread on cooled toasts.
4. Arrange smoked salmon on top of toasts, trimming as necessary. Top with a small piece of dill frond.

Uniquely Napa Valley

FIVE GEOGRAPHIC DISTINCTIONS THAT MAKE THE REGION SO SPECIAL

BY PETER GOLDMAN



Napa Valley is not a single entity, but rather an extremely diverse geographic and climatic palette for winemakers. It's no wonder there are 17 distinct nested American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) in Napa, each bringing a rich range of wines and styles.

Here are five geographic distinctions that make Napa Valley a special place, worth returning to visit after visit, bottle after bottle.

1 SCALE AND SCOPE: Napa Valley is 30 miles long and five miles wide, with 45,000 acres under vine. By comparison, that is just 20% the size of Bordeaux. Napa County produces 4% of California's grape harvest and just 0.4% of world production.

2 CLIMATE VARIATION: Napa Valley's southern tip, closest to the San Pablo Bay, is quite cool with typical summer highs reaching 80 degrees. Further north, in St. Helena and Calistoga, summer highs can reach 95 degrees or higher. These climatic differences impact countless winegrowing decisions and result in an array of wine varietals and styles.

3 UNIQUELY NAPA: During the growing season, the cooling fogs from the Pacific Ocean blanket portions of the valley floor and foothills, while the mountain vineyards may be exposed to radiant morning sun, but at a lower overall temperature because of altitude. This weather phenomenon is known as *diurnal shift* and helps to achieve ripeness and balance in grapes, resulting in the characteristic structure of Napa Valley wines.

4 GEOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE: In addition to the valley floor, there are distinctly defined foothills and mountain ranges. The Vaca Mountains on the east and Mayacamas Range on the west border Napa Valley with only five miles between at the widest point. These ranges rise

to 2,600+ feet, with vineyards and wineries dotted all along the foothills and mountains.

5 DIVERSE TERROIR: These broadly distinct geographic areas: valley floor, foothills and mountain ranges are richly diverse in soil types, flora composition, sun exposure and altitude, making every vineyard block distinct from the next. When you consider the shifts in temperature and rainfall from vintage to vintage, each bottle tells a unique story (see page 16).

EXPERIENCE IT FOR YOURSELF

Enjoy a mountain-grown Cabernet Sauvignon (see page 22) alongside one from the valley floor, and note the differences in aromas, flavors and styles with these recommendations from Peter.

From the mountains:

- Keenan Winery Cabernet Sauvignon, Spring Mountain
- Robert Craig Winery Cabernet Sauvignon, Howell Mountain

From the valley floor:

- Larkmead Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon, Calistoga
- Dominus Estate Napanook Cabernet Sauvignon, Yountville



Visiting Napa? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED!

WHETHER YOU'RE PLANNING AN ANNUAL GIRLS' TRIP, A FAMILY-FRIENDLY WINE COUNTRY WEEKEND OR A ROMANTIC GETAWAY, WE'VE GOT ALL THE RESOURCES YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR NEXT VISIT TO NAPA VALLEY THE BEST YET.

WINERY TRIP PLANNER

Use our winery map to research which destinations you'd like to visit, add them to your custom trip planner or opt for one of our curated one-day tasting itineraries.

napavalley.wine/visit/map

EVENTS CALENDAR

Enjoy live music, great wines and delicious food while learning more about our fantastic Napa Valley wines.

napavalley.wine/visit/events

RESERVATION TOOLS

While some wineries take walk-ins, we recommend reserving your experiences in advance. Check out TOCK and CellarPass to make booking easier.

exploretock.com/city/napa-valley

cellarpass.com/region/napa-valley/tours-and-tastings

VISIT NAPA VALLEY

For a comprehensive listing of hotels, restaurants and other activities in Napa Valley, we recommend utilizing the many resources at visitnapavalley.com.



CASA MANI RESORT NAPA VALLEY

Casa Mani Resort Napa Valley, Curio Collection by Hilton, is redefining the downtown Napa experience. Opening in early 2026, this reimagined resort introduces a transformative wellness spa, a state-of-the-art fitness center and a vibrant dining scene that celebrates Napa’s culinary artistry. Spacious suites, lush outdoor spaces and curated experiences invite guests to connect, recharge and savor the essence of wine country.



—
curiocollection.com/casamaniresortnapavalley
 1075 California Blvd., Napa
 Instagram: @casamaniresort





THE MERITAGE RESORT AND SPA

Nestled at the gateway to Napa Valley, The Meritage Resort and Spa offers a luxurious retreat surrounded by rolling vineyards and sun-drenched hillsides. Guests are welcomed into elegant rooms and suites that blend contemporary style with classic wine country warmth, many featuring private terraces overlooking the resort’s lush grounds.

Dining at The Meritage is a celebration of flavor, from farm-to-table cuisine at Olive & Hay to dry-aged meats and innovative seafood dishes at Ember Steak. The resort’s expansive estate invites exploration, with vineyard trails, a serene pool terrace and the world-renowned Spa Terra—tucked inside an underground cave—for an unforgettable wellness escape. Whether savoring a meal, strolling through the vineyards or simply unwinding in refined comfort, The Meritage Resort and Spa captures the essence of Napa Valley living with effortless sophistication.

—
 meritageresort.com
 875 Bordeaux Way, Napa
 Instagram: @meritageresort



SPA TERRA AT THE MERITAGE RESORT AND SPA

Spa Terra at The Meritage Resort and Spa offers an unparalleled wellness experience set within a majestic underground estate cave. Surrounded by natural stone and a serene ambiance, guests are transported to a world of tranquility and renewal. The spa features signature treatments inspired by Napa Valley’s healing botanicals, from soothing massages and rejuvenating facials to restorative body rituals. Every detail is designed to promote balance and relaxation, blending modern techniques with timeless serenity. Spa Terra offers a transformative escape that celebrates the harmony of nature, wellness and luxury.

—
 meritageresort.com/wellness/spa-terra
 875 Bordeaux Way, Napa
 Instagram: @meritageresort



EMBER STEAK AT THE MERITAGE RESORT AND SPA

Ember Steak at The Meritage Resort and Spa delivers an elevated dining experience where fire, flavor and craftsmanship unite. The menu showcases perfectly aged steaks, expertly prepared to highlight depth and richness, alongside an impressive selection of fresh, artfully presented sushi. Dishes are paired with an award-winning wine list featuring the finest vintages from Napa Valley and beyond. With its sophisticated ambiance, refined service and dedication to culinary excellence, Ember Steak invites guests to indulge in a distinctive fusion of tradition and innovation—where every bite and sip embodies the essence of wine country dining.

—
 embersteak.com
 875 Bordeaux Way, Napa
 Instagram: @embersteak



WEDDINGS AT THE MERITAGE RESORT AND SPA

Love intertwines between the vines at The Meritage Resort and Spa, a 36-acre haven perfectly poised to host your dream Napa Valley wedding in quintessential wine country style. Host your ceremony amongst budding vines in our vineyard and dance the night away in our underground Estate Cave or in one of our several ballrooms. Planning is made seamless with our wedding packages that include food and beverage, rentals, vineyard transportation and other essentials while still leaving plenty of room for you to tailor the big day your way. With over 10 distinctive wedding settings, including one of Napa’s only vineyard venues, you can celebrate every event of your wedding weekend against a beautifully unique backdrop.

For culture celebrations that span multiple days, our Maharani-certified team is well-versed in the intricacies of Indian and Asian weddings. Special packages include extended event times and authentic cuisine by the region’s top caterers.



meritageresort.com/gather/napa-weddings
 875 Bordeaux Way, Napa
 Instagram: @meritageresort



MEADOWOOD NAPA VALLEY

Set among 250 acres in the forested hillsides of St. Helena, Meadowood Napa Valley has long served as a touchstone for travelers to Napa Valley. Lodge-style guest rooms and suites are thoughtfully appointed with individual fireplaces and private terraces. Featuring extensive complimentary fitness offerings, five manicured tennis courts, three separate pools, an award-winning spa and peaceful hiking trails, Meadowood is a haven for both active guests and those seeking ultimate privacy and tranquility.

Elegantly relaxed, Forum restaurant is a culinary center and gathering place, with seasonal menus inspired by Meadowood Farm and the region’s remarkable bounty. The Wine Center offers a unique immersion into the nuances of wines from Napa Valley and around the world through individual classes, curated weekend retreats and year-round programming with notable vintners.



meadowood.com
 900 Meadowood Lane, St. Helena
 Instagram: @meadowoodnapavalley



AUCTION

NAPA VALLEY

Join us for a weekend
celebration of great wines
and delicious cuisine
in one of the most stunning
destinations in the world.

JUNE 4-6, 2026



For more information visit:
CollectiveNapaValley.org

