



Mud City *Weekender*

ALL THINGS CALISTOGA

MAY 2014



COURTESY PHOTO

Re-connected in life, love by zinfandel — Laura & Michael Swanton

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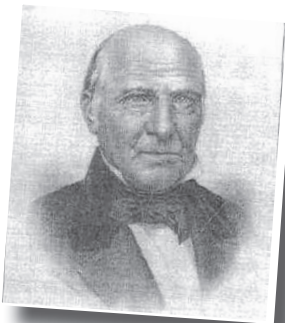
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Welcome to the Mud City Weekender, your best guide to all things Calistoga



Sam Brannan
Founder
of Calistoga

You have come to the right spot, to this town of Calistoga, if you are looking for a place to slow down, relax, put up your feet and enjoy life.

In the *Mud City Weekender* we offer you some insights into Calistoga and hope you get to know us a little bit better, through our restaurants, shops, wineries and spas. After all, isn't that what drew you here in the first place?

But remember, we're not just another stop in the wine country. We're our own unique little version of heaven, filled with local characters and quirky personalities – all of them calling out a big Calistoga welcome!

Visit our spas, wineries, restaurants and shops. Take time for the Sharpsteen Museum. Go on a hot air balloon ride and see us from the clouds. Find out why Calistoga is

a special place in our hearts as well as yours.

We started the *Mud City Weekender* almost 13 years ago to help visitors discover Calistoga during their stay here. Tired of all the slick, glossy magazines that tout Napa Valley but seem to stop short of coming this far north, we wanted to bring our town to the center of your attention by writing just about our wineries, our events, our history.

That's why not only will you find stories about wine and mud and food, but you'll find tidbits about our community and its history, too.

Small businesses keep the heart of Calistoga beating, and without them this would just be another bedroom community without that spark of life our business community brings. Thanks for coming, and come back and visit anytime. We'll be here to welcome you home.

—Pat Hampton, Publisher



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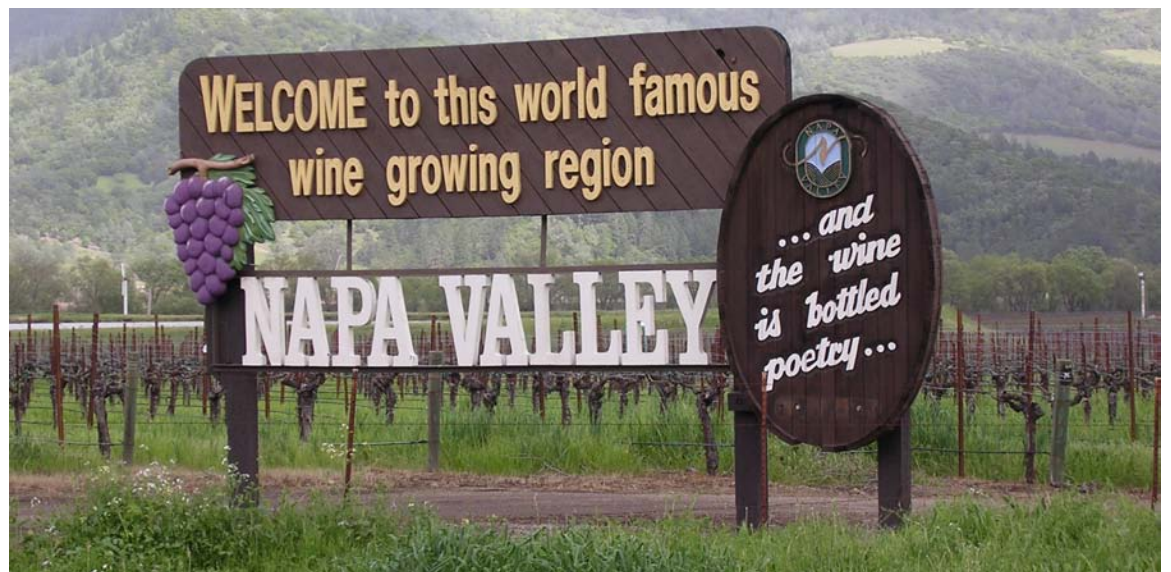
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Tamber Bey Vineyards blends passions:

Wine making and the extreme sport of endurance horse racing

By Christine Plant

MUD CITY WEEKENDER

Tamber Bey Vineyards opened at 1251 Tubbs Lane, Calistoga in the fall of 2013, but why open a winery in a world-class horse facility?

The old Sundance Ranch sat vacant for two years waiting for a new owner, until Barry and Jennifer Waitte purchased the property in 2012 - a perfect setting for the pair to match their passions, wine and horses.

The 15,000 square foot covered horse arena was remodeled to accommodate the winemaking facility, thus creating the winning combination.

Tamber Bey is named for Barry's first endurance horses, Tamborina and Bayamo. Jennifer and Barry are both competitive endurance riders, an interest that brought them together when he was relatively new to the sport and shopping a 'top notch' horse. He purchased his next horse, Sam, from her in 2000. At that time Jennifer lived in Orange County shortly before she took a three-year position in Abu Dhabi training a string of horses for the president of United Arab Emirates.

Jennifer, who is learning the wine industry from Barry, talked about her love of horses and her enthusiasm for the extreme sport of endurance riding.

"I've been into horses my whole life, and competing in endurance racing since 1989 when I did my first race. I've logged 10,000 miles in competition. That's a lot," she offered with a certain pride.

When asked to describe endurance racing, she summed it up this way: "Endurance racing is long distance, cross country horse racing. It's one horse and one rider working as a team over the entire distance."

The sport originated in America in 1955 when a small group of equestrians rode from Lake Tahoe crossing the Sierra Nevada to Auburn in under 24 hours, covering 100 miles over difficult



COURTESY PHOTOS

Jennifer and Barry Waitte compete in the sport of endurance riding, including the famous Tevis Cup, that covers 100-miles in 24 hours. Their horse facility and winery is on Tubbs Lane at the Sundance Ranch.

terrain, high altitude and extreme temperatures. It became known as the Tevis Cup, named after Lloyd B. Tevis one of the first riders. It is the oldest endurance race and one of the most difficult 100-mile rides in the world.

Arabian horses are the chosen breed for endurance racing because of their agility and stamina. The race covers a 50 or 100-mile course consisting of all types of topography and natural obstacles like a fallen tree, a river crossing or opening a gate.

Circumnavigating sheer granite formations over the Sierras is a huge challenge for horse and rider on the Tevis Cup Race, covering 100 miles in 24 hours. Races are highly regulated by veterinarians along the course where the horse undergoes a mandatory veterinary inspection for soundness of body and dehydration. It must pass the physical and take a compulsory rest period where water is provided before being allowed back on the course. The

number of rest stops is determined by the difficulty of the terrain. If the horse is found to be unsound or dehydrated, it is pulled from the race. 'Vet-gates,' as they are known, can be as short as 15 minutes or take more than an hour for the horse to recover and get back on the course. Meanwhile, the clock ticks on for the rider in the competition.

First to cross the finish line and pass the final vet inspection is the winner. "It's not an easy thing to pass the exams as you go through each check-point," said Jennifer. Asked if she'd ever had a horse pulled from a race, Jennifer laughed and said, "I don't get pulled from the races. I've been doing this too long. I'm very careful." Then quickly added, "I shouldn't say that, because now I might jinx myself!"

Typically a race may have from 20 to 200 hundred riders all massed at the start. With the announcement 'the course is open' the race begins. It's not a mad dash for the front; although Jennifer remarked, "There's always a handful of people who start out in front and go fast," she explains. She remembers the time when she was last to start out of 96 horses and finished the race in third position. "I've learned the race is not won in the first 100 yards." However, she keeps a competitive eye on the stronger teams.

Sitting just outside the tasting room looking down the long rows of spacious stalls at the winery with Mt. St. Helena center stage, Jennifer explains how she trains her four endurance horses.

"That mountain right there. We train in the afternoon, the hottest part of the day. The horses are trailered to the staging area; then we take the service road to the top, a distance of five and half miles. We trot and canter the horses all the way to the top twice without stopping. That's a round trip distance of 22 miles. We do it twice a week."

When asked how she keeps fit herself, Jennifer replies, "I cycle, but the best way to stay in



See **TAMBER BAY** on page 14

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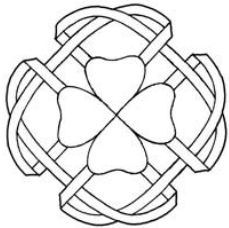


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Celtic Cards

by M. Antoine *MAY 2014*



Aries

March 21-April 19

News of a birth will bring happiness to you and those close to you. This is a time of financial growth, and a more relaxed feeling of security. A great weight has been lifted from your shoulders both in a material and spiritual sense. Travel plans are just ahead for you. Enjoy!

Taurus

April 20-May 20

There will be a feeling of force and energy around you this month. There will be much movement and change that could result in relocating your home or employment. This is a time where you will need to plot and plan with great precision, and the end results could be most beneficial.

Gemini

May 21-June 20

This month will have you looking at life with a new appreciation for love and devotion. What or whom you love or become devoted to is not clear, but you end up with a new sense of awareness that helps you plan for the future. There is a "new" you on the horizon.

Cancer

June 21-July 22

What you have been wishing for could materialize this month. Your wish could come true, but with a great deal of added responsibility. This is not a time to confuse wishful thinking with intuition. Prayer is asking... Meditation is listening for an answer. Take time to listen.

Leo

July 23-August 22

This is a time of prosperity and healing. Someone near to you has been acting in a self centered and narrow-minded way. This person is jealous of your achievements, and needs to learn spiritual balance. Sometimes friendships have to end to allow both parties to grow and move forward.

Virgo

August 23-September 22

There will be a mental expansion and force this month. You will want to change things for the better, but will have to let some old habits go to make room for the new way. You will feel energized and ready to move forward, but will need a plan. Caring is not always interfering. Be gentle to a sensitive soul.

Libra

September 23-October 22

The seed has been planted and roots have grown. A new journey has started, and you will feel inspired and relieved as you move forward. The old ways have not worked, and the new ways are still forming. Be patient and you will be amazed by what lies ahead.

Scorpio

October 23-November 21

This is a time for tempering, purifying, and cutting away. The emotional thickets that have grown around you are no longer a protection but more of a prison. The time to chop down and clear away is now. There is a new horizon and it is clear and bright. Walk out towards it.

Sagittarius

November 22-December 21

The goal you have set your mind on is close and attainable. Watch for important clues that will let you know which ways to turn and which ways to avoid. A family member may become upset with you and the direction you are headed, but as long as you stay true to your ideals you will be victorious.

Capricorn

December 22-January 19

This is a time of Karmic loss. You have little control over the direction that things will go for the next few weeks, but know that the end result will be positive. Watch your energy level as you will be tempted to take on more than you can handle. Let someone else pick up the slack for a while.

Aquarius

January 20-February 18

An act of self-sacrifice will be the right thing to do at this time. You will be able to better the world by one small gesture you make. What you do at this time will blossom and spread to many for a long time to come. Wow! You are about to change your world and that of many others.

Pisces

February 19-March 20

A time of growth and new beginnings is in the plan. You are starting to feel tired of the same old routine and the rut you find yourself in. This is a time when you will unload and discard both material and emotional baggage, and make room for new ideas and goals.



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By Kathy Bazzoli

MUD CITY WEEKENDER

On a September morning of 1885, Mrs. Emma Eels stood watching at the uprooting of an old fir tree stump on her property just west of the town of Calistoga. She had named her snug 108 acres "Forest Farm" and always made a point of taking a daily constitutional. This particular day would change her life and send her in a direction she would not have imagined.

As the old fir tree was being pulled from the ground, Mrs. Eels noticed a peculiar blue-gray clay that came up from the roots. She picked up a piece of the clay and, with her penknife, shaved off a small amount.

She fingered the substance and noticed the clay was free of grit and smoothness yet left a powdery residue. Brushing the residue from her hands, she saw the powder had readily polished her wedding ring. Taking more pieces of this substance into her kitchen, she attempted to clean and polish her silver, glass and jewelry. Everything glistened immediately. She then tried scouring the counters and floors and found this clay had removed all dirt and stains easily.

Even though Mrs. Eel's was very excited by her discovery, as were the many lady friends with whom she shared her discovery, she was in mourning over the untimely death of her husband, the Reverend James Eels. Three years later, Mrs. Eel's circumstances changed dramatically.

By 1888, after a chemical



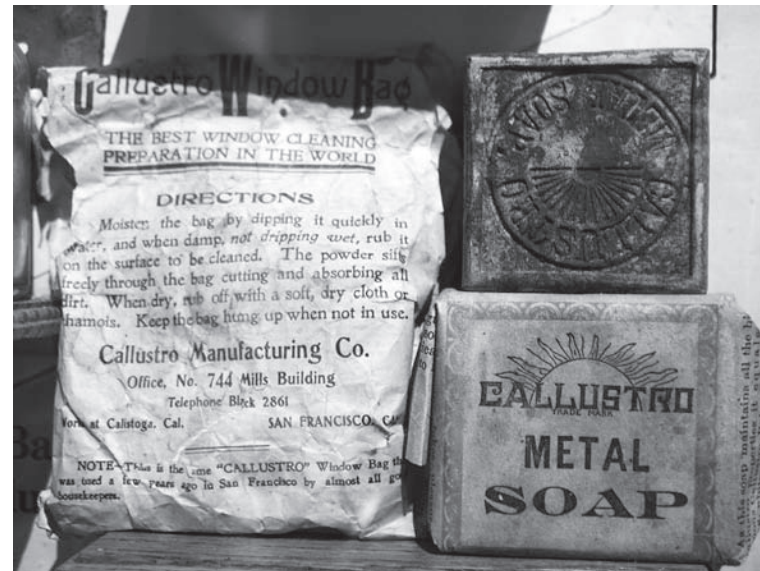
Mrs. Emma Eels (above left) discovered a new fine, clay on her Calistoga property that became a popular natural polish until a scalawag named George Proctor ruined the company.

analysis of the clay had been performed finding properties of silica, alumina, and magnesia, Mrs. Eel's discovery was widely known. She had explored her acreage and found the substance to be everywhere, from on top of the ground to a few inches below the surface.

With seven of the women closest to her, "The Callustro Company" was established and incorporated for the manufacturing and marketing of "the greatest cleaning preparation in the world." Mining began and a large 3-story mill was built on her property. Enough initial shares were sold at \$1.00/per to put \$100,000.00 into their treasury.

Even though she and her partners had not yet developed a plan to pay dividends to the stockholders, Callustro ("Cal" for Calistoga and "lusto" for luster) was launched.

The mill was built against



PHOTOS TAKEN AT THE SHARPSTEEN MUSEUM CALLUSTRO DISPLAY

a hillside to accommodate a gravity-fed procedure. The raw substance was mined, delivered by wagon loads and dumped into the top floor where a brick furnace was used for drying. It was then passed along to a crusher

(which had a capacity of 1½ tons per hour), descending to a second floor pulverizer. Down to a worm conveyance system to separate the powder into four grades (very fine for polishing powder to coarse for use as a mechanics de-

greasing soap) the final product was packaged and labeled for shipment.

Mrs. Eels and her partners shared a fierce wish to succeed. Callustro was getting more and more popular and sales were increasing as shipments were delivered across the country. Sometime in late 1890, Mrs. Eels was contacted by George H. Proctor, former manager of Napa Woolen Mills, who claimed to be representing a group of investors from Chicago. An offer was made to purchase Callustro, and the property, for \$300,000. Included in the offer was a promise to purchase \$40,000 of product per year for forty years to begin with an installment payment of \$5,000.

A new corporation titled The Callustro Company of Chicago was allegedly established by Mr. Proctor and his "wealthy investors". Mrs. Eels, her partners and stockholders were to remain and

See **CALLUSTRO** page 10



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The Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, 1891

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PHOTO BY PAT HAMPTON

Calistoga Farmers Market is open every Saturday, year 'round, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Sharpsteen Plaza.

Farmers Market every Saturday offers world of fresh food, art

In town for the weekend and looking for unique crafts and organic, local foods? Walk on downtown and check out the Calistoga Farmers Market every Saturday morning at the Sharpsteen Museum Plaza on Washington Street, across the lane from city hall, open each Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Fresh, locally grown seasonal produce, vine and tree-ripened fruits and vegetables, colorful cut-flowers and nursery grown ornamental plants are part of the fare each week, although selections vary with the growing season.



Gourmet and pre-packaged food, Mediterranean deli items,

olive oils and vinegars, fresh seafood, smoked salmon, crepes, quiches and fruit pies are also known to be available.

Additionally, there is a corner for artisans to display and sell their unique and creative crafts and gift items. Most Saturdays there is live music and fresh coffee and breakfast items as well.

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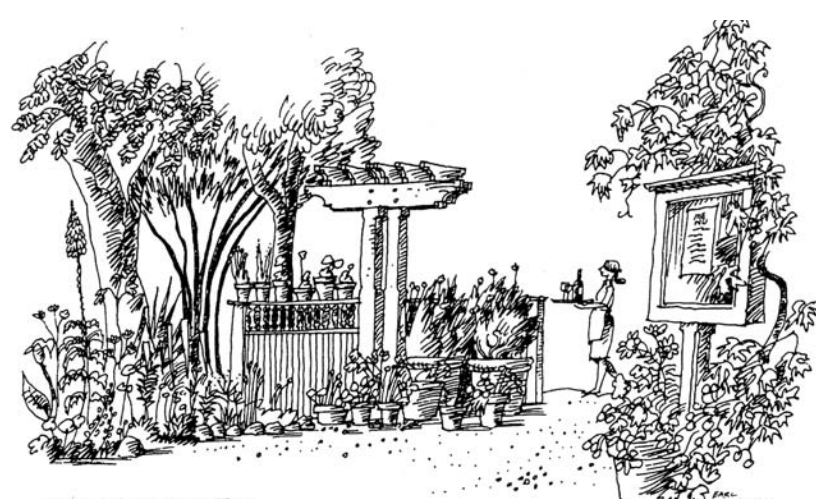
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Laura & Michael Swanton, Zahtila Vineyards

Re-connected in life, love by zinfandel

By Tony Poer

MUD CITY WEEKENDER

The Calistoga Winegrowers call it “The Nine Points.” It’s a document drawn up by the group early last year to define what makes the northern end of Napa Valley a very nice place to grow wine grapes.

The list, tailored to Calistoga, is a version of the French concept of *terroir*, which describes how the soil, climate, and location of a vineyard can affect the wine made from it. Originally an internal memo, it should soon be hitting a Growers website near you.

Were they to include an often overlooked idea inherent to the definition of *terroir* — human interaction with the vines — the Growers might want to change the title of their document to “The Ten Points.” But this is for a future memo.

In the meantime, humans in the Calistoga AVA are practicing the vine interaction thing every day. A couple of them, Laura and Michael Swanton at Laura Michael Wines, are doing it exceptionally well.

When Laura Swanton and her then-husband purchased the two-acre Oat Hill Vineyard and adjoining home just outside Calistoga from local pharmacist John Traulsen in 1999, she was a busy applications engineer at Cisco Systems in San Jose, and he was an aspiring gentlemen farmer.

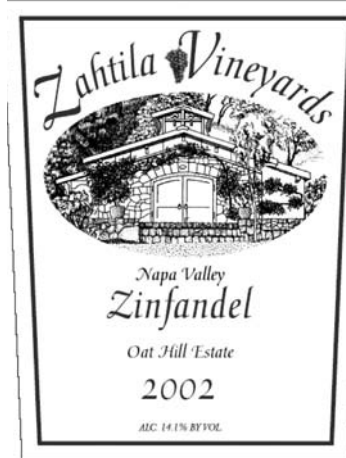
“We’d come up here essen-

tially looking for a second home,” Laura said, seated at the desk in her and Michael Swanton’s home-office. Freshly returned from a sales trip to Lexington, Kentucky, she recounted the various — and sometimes curious — turns her life at the winery had taken over the last 15 years.

“A winery was not on the radar screen, but my ex-husband was somebody who would jump at the chance to do something cool and new,” she said. “We came up here and literally stumbled across this little winery for sale, and it changed our life.”

Traulsen Vineyards was a Zinfandel-centric label in the 1980s and 90s. John Traulsen produced about 700 cases a year from Sonoma County fruit and from the bowl-shaped, hillside vineyard he had planted and named for the oat farm it had been at one time. The pharmacist’s varietal blueprint for the property was an early factor in how Laura would eventually develop her own brand.

She grew up in Phoenix, not necessarily dreaming of one day owning a winery and vineyard in California. But by way of a business degree at Arizona State University and a high tech job in an aerospace firm, she ended up taking the Cisco position in the mid-90s, heeding what she described as “the siren call of Silicon Valley.” Her first marriage (to her current husband — more on that in a bit) had ended in 1991. She and her second husband made frequent weekend visits



to Napa Valley. She had discovered in college that she preferred wine to other drinks, so the wine country a couple hours away was an easy draw.

“We would come to small wineries,” Laura recalled. “You know, you start at the big ones. You go to Mondavi, you go to [Beaulieu], and you go to Beringer. But then you start looking at the smaller houses. I couldn’t honestly tell you most of the brand names that I was buying back then, but I was tasting things from ’84 and ’85, and that was an epiphany. All of a sudden, that was my ‘Ah-ha!’ moment.”

After the purchase from the Traulsens in 1999, the couple finished renovating the Swiss Cottage-inspired home the following year, along with the vineyard, the compact winemaking facility, and pretty much everything else on the fixer-upper property.

They bottled their debut vintage of ’99 Zinfandel under the Zahtila Vineyards label (her previous last name). Concurrently working at Cisco and developing the brand, Laura split her time between San Jose and Calistoga for about three years until the second marriage ended. “After the harvest of ’01,” she said, “he decided he didn’t want to do this anymore, so off he went. He let me buy him out, and I kept it.”

Laura left her Cisco job in 2002 to run the fledgling winery by herself. With foresight and a broad range of high tech business experience, she sought help from a variety of sources, including the respected vintner, Robert Pecota.

“I am not cut from the cloth of ‘Don’t ask any questions,’” she emphasized. “I joined Napa Valley Vintners immediately. Collectively, I figured there was about a million years of wine experience there. I sat down at length with Vincent Arroyo and with Bob Pecota, two very different business models and two very successful business models for different reasons. They were very instrumental in, you know, sort of guiding me towards what to do. I was glad to be able to meet those two gentlemen at that time.”

One of the things Pecota helped Laura figure out was how to create sales channels for a production of Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon that had grown at a faster pace than she would have liked. She said that her former husband had “leapt into large production, for us, very quickly. So

we ended up making a lot more wine than we should’ve in the vintage of 2000, when we added Cabernet to the lineup.”

“We did solely Zinfandel in ’99. We made about 900 cases. And then when we added Cabernet, we jumped our production up close to 2,000 cases, with no sales channel built.”

Pecota shared his own thoughts on Laura’s early efforts in an email. “As we all know,” he wrote, “it’s one thing to make wine, but more challenging to sell wine and build a brand. In the spirit of ‘barn building’ all small wineries seem to possess, I helped Laura by recommending various vineyards for grape supply, but more importantly introduced her to some of my distributors who eventually took on her brand.”

In the mid-2000s, she adjusted the winery label, changing Zahtila Vineyards to Laura Zahtila Vineyards. Over the next several years, in the interest of increasing direct-to-consumer profitability, she began to dial back distribution around the U.S.

“I’m not a distributed brand,” she said, describing her current winery business model. “I tried that. In fact, 98% of our wines are being sold direct to the club and from the tasting room. That’s how we’re doing it. That’s why I’m still alive here.”

Despite Pecota’s help, she confessed that “distribution was killing me.”

See LAURA on page 12



Villa Ca'Toga

Carlo Marchiori opens the doors of his Palladian villa, Ca'toga, located just north of Calistoga. This splendid residence and workshop offers an enlightening glimpse into the private world of an artist. A large Salon and six other rooms are completely decorated in trompe l'oeil frescoes. The garden and grounds offer surprises of pools, statues, fountains, Roman ruins and 18th century follies.

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CALLUSTRO

Continued from page 7

be protected under the proposed purchase contract.

The first \$5,000 was received and manufacturing increased to accommodate the large shipments going east to Mr. Proctor.

Manufacturing continued as Mrs. Eels waited for the next installments to be sent, which never came.

Unfortunately as it turns out, this was intentional. Mr. Proctor was attempting to devalue Callustro thereby placing Mrs. Eels in the position of having to sell the company for less, or force her completely into bankruptcy as he had no intention of paying her another dime. His ultimate goal would have given him the entire company, including property and all remaining assets, leaving Mrs. Eels, her

partners and all stockholders absolutely broke and without recourse.

Luckily, Mrs. Eels had not yet signed the purchase contract and was able to end the relationship with Mr. Proctor without losing her company.

This ordeal took almost a year. Consequently, Mrs. Eels was left with thousands of dollars worth of unsaleable inventory which was to be bought by Mr. Proctor, and debtors were in line for payment. On January 20, 1892, Mrs. Eels met with the stockholders at their annual meeting. There was only \$4.20 left in their treasury with no way of raising more funds to revive Callustro. The meeting was adjourned with another meeting set for February, but it was too late. Callustro shut its doors for the last time.

The main part of the mill still stands among trees at the

edge of a creek. The landing platforms have long since gone where a large wooden water tank has fallen in. The roads to the mill are overgrown, pieces of the brick oven made of native stone lay silent and the dream of Callustro has disappeared from memory.

"Across the creek is a group of ancient apple trees, remnants of the century-old orchard. The trees, though sadly neglected, still bravely bear lovely blossoms in the spring and usually a plentiful crop of apples in the fall. They are scarcely noticed by the hurrying motorists on the nearby highway who are also unaware of the dreams of a few ambitious women who, many years before the passage of the nineteenth amendment, had set their sights on becoming successful queens of the cleanser market."

Read about the Callustro story at the Sharpsteen Museum, 1311 Washington St., open daily 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free admission.

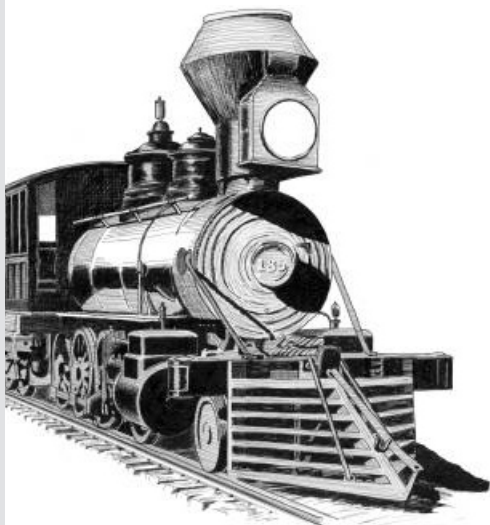


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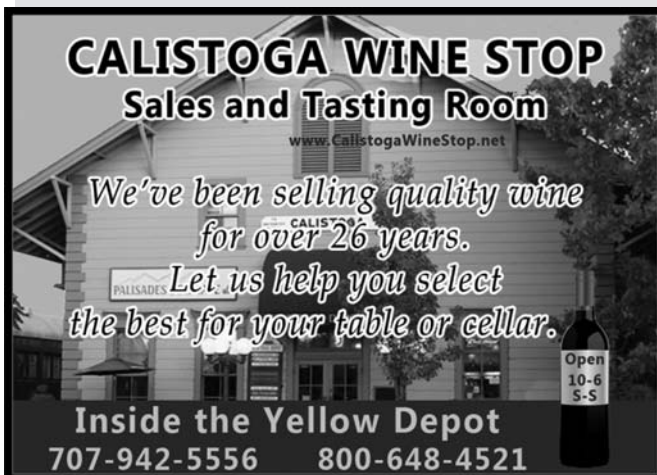
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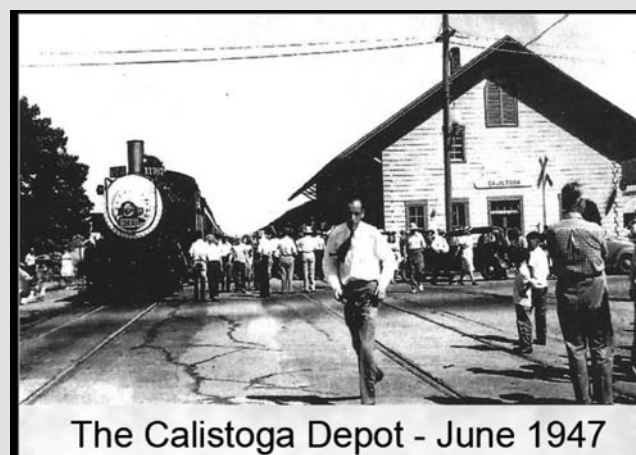
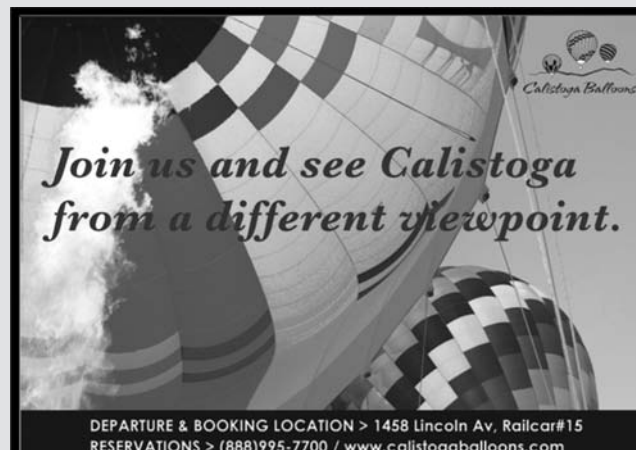
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The Calistoga Depot - June 1947

LAURA MICHAEL

Continued from page 9

The recent trip to Kentucky was arranged through a Lexington-based friend of Laura's to conduct private tastings for a group of wine enthusiasts. ("Kentucky was very good to me," she politely bragged to her interviewer. "I sold a lot of wine.")

Besides the 500 members in the Laura Michael wine club spread across the U.S., the only significant out-of-state presence she maintains through a distributor is in Oklahoma, fittingly the home state of her grandparents. In fact, she is most likely the only Calistoga vintner whose website has a "Find by Region" page that lists the unlikely duo of California and Oklahoma in the drop-down window.

Laura Michael wines have a strong following over in Oklahoma City, thanks in large part to longtime supporter Stan Stack, owner of Beau's Wine Bin. The enthusiastic retailer has had them on Beau's shelves since that first Zinfandel vintage.

"I carry a ton of small California wineries," Stack explained over the phone. "As a matter of fact, one of our main strengths is the hidden treasures, wines like Laura's and a few more that are mom-and-pop, kind of like my store is a mom-and-pop place."

"Let's put it this way," he said. "Laura's one of my favorites."

Stack opened the high-end shop with his wife, Mary, in 1995, when boutique Califor-

nia wineries were beginning to experience a surge in national popularity.

"We met Laura because she had Zinfandel. When we first went to [Premiere Napa Valley], we couldn't afford most of the Cabs. We were looking for things with an easier and quicker return, and that would be much less expensive. Her Zinfandel was unbelievable."

Stack recalled having a difficult time educating his clientele on Laura's—and others'—"red" Zinfandels when, less than 20 years ago and despite the artisan winery craze, the Sutter Home White Zin phenomenon still held sway for less savvy consumers.

"It was horrible," he said. "The first couple, of years, when you'd say 'Zinfandel,' people would just duck and run, because they all believed that you were talking about white Zin for the longest time, from '95 to 2001. Then we finally got everybody to realize that Zinfandel was a red grape!"

In addition to Oat Hill, Stack brings in a small amount of the Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel Laura produces from fruit grown by the Mayo family in Healdsburg. Since starting the winery, her Cabernet Sauvignon has also come from purchased fruit. Notably, a pair of vineyards owned by one of California's best-known growers, Andy Beckstoffer, has supplied Laura with high-quality Cabernet, as well as a measure of distinction. "His name is much more well-known than mine," she



COURTESY PHOTO

Laura and Michael Swanton in the tasting room at Laura Michael Wines in Calistoga off Lake County Highway near the Silverado Trail.

said, "so it was a good thing for the brand."

More recently, the grower Jim Doyle in Rutherford began to sell her Cabernet grapes from his Whitehall Farms Vineyard. And locally, the picturesque Barlow Vineyard, a few miles down the Silverado Trail from her property, has provided Cabernet for her Calistoga AVA bottling.

It's good PR for the current president of the Calistoga Winegrowers to put the appellation on her wine labels, though, much to her credit, Laura has done so with

her Zinfandel since 2006, even before the AVA was approved by the Federal government.

She claims to place equal importance on all the wines and takes a surprisingly democratic attitude, considering that Oat Hill Vineyard is, essentially, her backyard.

"I certainly treat the wines, all the wines that we make, with tender, loving care. With the Oat Hill, I work out there, I sweat out there, I bleed out there, but it's not any more special to me than the other wines we make."

That said, the estate vineyard, planted almost entirely to Zinfandel, is the piece of property over which she and Michael exert the most direct control. Vital to their efforts to farm the sloping, labor-intensive two acres is their consulting foreman, Placido Garcia.

Ask a Calistoga local if they know, or know of, Garcia, and they're likely to say yes, though not necessarily in the Laura Michael context. In addition to being the vineyard foreman and a 40-year employee of Chateau

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Zahtila Vineyards (above) borders the Oat Hill Mine Road trail and is home to the Swanton's Swiss-inspired residence (left), tasting room and winery. Open 10-5pm daily, appointments are required. A \$10-\$25 tasting fee per person includes five-nine wines. Seven current releases can be sampled for \$15 and Reserve Cabernet tasting can be sampled for \$10.

Montelena, he served on the Calistoga City Council from 2006 to 2010 and has sung in public performances many times. He is, as they say, kind of a big deal. And he helped John Traulsen plant Oat Hill in 1980.

“Well, years ago I used to do almost 100% of it,” Garcia said over the phone, asked about his consulting role. “I’ve known the property for so many years. We planted those vineyards a long time ago for Jack Traulsen. When Laura decided to keep the business, I decided to keep helping her.”

Since Oat Hill is ever-present in their lives on the property and because she and Michael handle the winter pruning of the vines themselves, Laura noted that Garcia’s main responsibility is to bring in vineyard teams to handle focused vine maintenance tasks during the rest of the year.

“You know, when you have these guys that are very knowledgeable and very experienced in vineyards but were always at the end of their day or were on their day off, they’re tired. And so for the most part, when we contract with a team like that, we come in and we ask them to do one thing and one thing only: do a pass and do ‘this,’ whatever ‘this’ is. That way they can be fast, and it’s somewhat mindless, and they can just blow through. Michael and I can do it, but it would take us too long for just the two of us.”

“I think the vineyard’s in the best shape of its life,” she added. “My husband has paid an enor-

mous amount of attention to it.”

Garcia echoed Laura, saying that “Michael is easy at learning, and learning fast about taking care of the cellar and taking care of the vineyards, too. And Laura’s the same: she’s got a lot of knowledge about the vineyards and the wine.”

“Laura and Michael have been through a lot. They know the business now. Michael’s doing a lot of the heavy work for Laura. Before, Laura was alone. When she remarried Michael, they made a good team. They control everything over there. I hope in the future it could be something like Montelena.”

Garcia didn’t mention that they had “re-remarried,” though that was the end result of the couple’s highly unlikely reunion in 2006. It’s also why the old Zahtila label that debuted in ’99 is now called Laura Michael Wines.

It was the Zinfandel that did it.

“Michael was doing some research on the internet,” Laura said, explaining the extraordinary coincidence that brought them back together. “We had completely lost touch. We were apart for 15 years and hadn’t spoken in 10. He’d married for a second time and divorced for a second time, and I also did. He was doing some research on Napa Valley Zinfandel and didn’t know my new last name, did not know that I’d changed careers. He’d had an epiphany over a bottle of Zin that wasn’t mine.”

Her first ex-husband, as she described it, “ended up on my

website, looking at my face, and read the bio and said, ‘That’s my ex-wife!’”

This was in the early part of 2006. In May of that year, Michael came out to San Francisco for his niece’s college graduation from USF. He’d initiated an email correspondence with Laura, and during the trip carved out a day to drive up to Calistoga and find out what this Zinfandel phenomenon was all about from a winery owner—to whom he happened to once be married.

One thing led to another. They struck up a new friendship, then started dating (again, 23 years later) in 2007. In May of 2010, Michael came on board Laura’s winery as Vice President and, for good measure, married her for the second time that summer.

In a two-person company (or three, counting Jim Kozier, who mans the snug tasting room next door to the house one or two days a week), Michael and his president-wife must constantly multi-task.

A structural engineer by training, he’s responsible for the majority of the winemaking and physical work, while Laura handles the business side. “I do all of the books,” she said, describing her typical work week. “I work in the tasting room five days a week and manage the wine club. I do all outbound sales. You know, I’m running us administratively and from a sales perspective. I’ve

See LAURA MICHAEL on page 20



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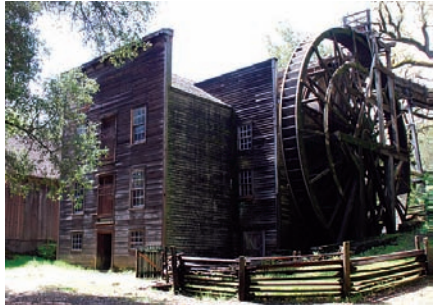
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TAMBER BEY
Continued from page 5

good riding shape is to do a lot of riding. There is no other exercise that works the body like riding.

We do shorter distances to get ready for longer distances and slowly build up the mileage until we are fifty-mile-fit."

A lightweight hybrid of an English and trail saddle is used

for the long rides and a Biothane bridle that is easily rinsed. In the tack room she displayed the special rubber shoes her horses wear on the trail when they race. "It's actually glued on," she says. "It has a tread like a tennis shoe." They look like giant Mary-Janes complete with strap, and the tread compares to a new set of tires.

As a long-time rider, trainer and competitor Jennifer had this to say about her sport: "I've been really successful in this sport because I've been doing it a long time. What I enjoy about it the most is the relationship I develop with the horse. For me it's not about winning and going fast.

TAMBER BEY

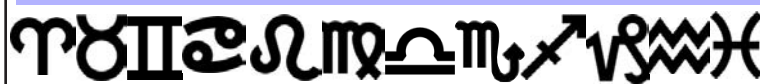


I've developed this relationship with the horse, and we've trained together to do this.

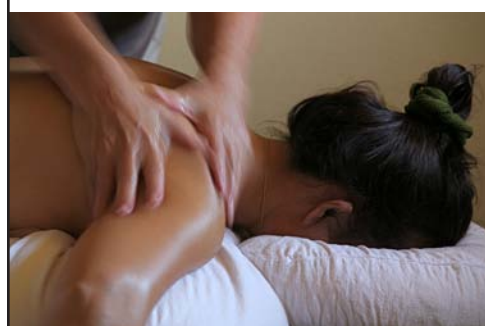
"To ride a horse fifty miles is an accomplishment. By the time I get to that point, I know the horse pretty well. My source of satisfaction is doing that. Taking a young horse, training him, then taking him to his first race and building him up until he's doing really well. That's what I enjoy most about endurance horse racing."

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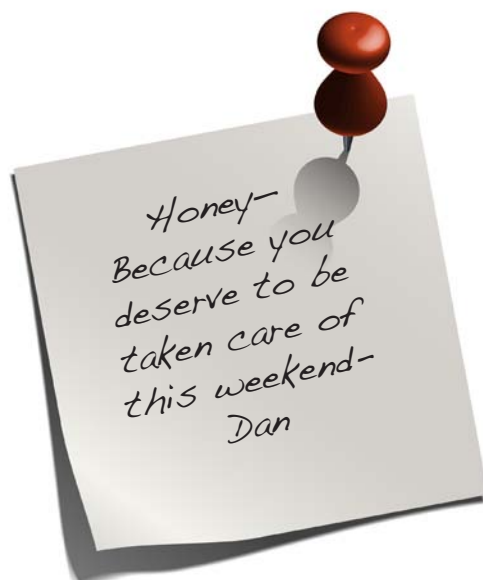


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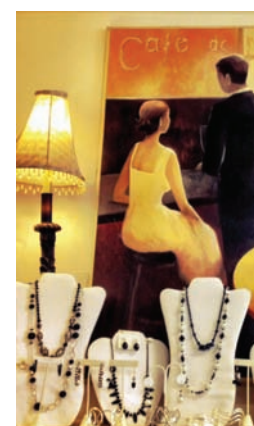
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SEASONS in the Vineyard

May: Bloom and set occur; fruit is vulnerable to frost. Only the strongest shoots are left on vines; focus is on producing fruit, not vegetation. Chardonnay blending begins.

June: Growers are busy with leaf and shoot removal, which gives the grapes adequate exposure to sunlight. Wineries are bottling Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

July: Vines are full of tight green, pea-sized berries. Veraison - green grapes soften and turn yellow or red. Red wines are blended back into tanks and bottled to make room for the next harvest.

August: Some fruit clusters are removed to provide optimum flavor development. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir harvest begins for sparkling wines. All equipment is serviced and readied for harvest.

September: Harvest of white grapes begins, soon followed by reds. Grapes are picked in the cool morning hours. Many wineries return the stems, seeds and skins to the vineyards to use as a compost.

October: Harvest slows by the end of the month. Red grape fermentation start with cold soaks in stainless steel tanks. Pump-overs or cap punching take place until fermentation is complete, then the juice is pressed off and sent to barrels.

November: Stirring of barrel fermentation. Chardonnay continues to keep fermentation going until complete.

December: Vines enter their dormancy period. Pre-pruning begins. First red wines are tasted and evaluated.

January: Vines are dormant. Crews are pruning and setting trellis systems. Red wines are racked and/or moved from tank to barrel.

February: Pruning and vine



preparations are complete. Sprinkler systems and wind machines are ready for frosty spring mornings.

March: Growing season is officially underway with bud break - a stage when vine buds crack open and small shoots emerge. This is the beginning of the new crop.

April: Vines show thick clusters of new leaves. Crews remove tiny shoots so only vital vegetation is left. White wines are released. Blending for red varietals begins. Frost is a threat.

Early settlers tapped valley's potential for growing grapes

Wild grapes certainly grew in abundance in early Napa Valley, but it took settler George Calvert Yount to tap the area's potential for cultivating wine grapes. Yount built one of the homesteads in the area and was the first to plant Napa Valley grapes in 1839. Soon after, other pioneers such as John Patchett and Hamilton Walker Crabb helped introduce the first vitis vinifera grapes to the area. Charles Krug is credited with establishing Napa Valley's first commercial winery in 1861. His success and leadership sparked a wave of new growth, and by 1889 there were more than 140 wineries in operation, including Schramsberg (founded in 1862), Beringer (1876) and Inglenook (1879).

By the turn of the 20th century the industry saw prices plummet amidst a sea of surplus grapes, and the arrival of phylloxera dealt vintners a stunning blow as more than 80% of the valley's vineyard acreage fell victim to the destructive root louse. An even greater threat to the Napa Valley wine industry arrived in 1920 with the enactment of Prohibition. Vineyards and wineries were abandoned over the next 14 years with only a handful of wineries continuing to operate by producing sacramental wines.

With the repeal of Prohibition in 1933, Napa Valley's wine industry began its slow recovery. During this time, John Daniel Jr., resurrected Inglenook, Georges de Latour re-established



Yount

Beaulieu Vineyards (BV), Louis M. Martini built his winery and the Mondavi family purchased Charles Krug Winery. Andre Tchelistcheff, a Russian émigré working in France, came to Napa Valley to work for BV and became one of the great figures and mentors in the history of Napa Valley wine.

The early 1940s marked an important point in Napa Valley's history when these early vintners realized they would be more successful working together than on their own. In 1944, seven vintners signed the agreement of association that formed the Napa Valley Vintners trade association, now nearly 500 wineries strong.

The prominence of Napa Valley wine on the world stage is largely due to the efforts of local vintners during the last 50 years. People like Robert Mondavi, Napa Valley's greatest marketer, fully embodied the collective spirit and camaraderie that gave rise to the valley's success and quality.

If a single event can be credited with putting Napa Valley on the map, it was the Paris Tasting of 1976. This blind, comparative tasting pitted Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay from California against the best wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy in a blind tasting. When the tasting was done, the judges had given top honors to Chateau Montelena Chardonnay and Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon. Napa Valley would never be the same.

- Napa Valley Vintners

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SHARPSTEEN MUSEUM

If you're a history buff, or just want to find out a little more about



The Sharpsteen Museum houses exhibits on the history and people of the Calistoga area. Open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at 1311 Washington Street across from City Hall.

how this spa resort town came into being, your visit has to include a stop at the Sharpsteen Museum, one of Calistoga's best self-tours.

Docents are on hand to explain the artifacts and displays as well as the wonderful dioramas that depict Calistoga at the end of the nineteenth century.

You can find the museum at 1311 Washington Street. Open every day from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. except Thanksgiving and Christmas. Admission is free, although donations are accepted.

Don't forget to stop and browse in the museum's gift shop. It is full of books and mementos of the past sure to please any discerning reader or shopper.

Good selection of women in the old West books as well as history of the Napa Valley. You'll also enjoy the selection of doorstops, china tea cups, and "antiques" on sale.

BALE GRIST MILL PARK



Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park is four miles south of Calistoga. Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., a small entry fee is collected in the gift shop on weekends by volunteer staff.

Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekends, visit the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park four miles south of Calistoga on Highway 29. Built in 1846, the Old Bale Mill has been restored to operating condition complete with its 36-foot wooden waterwheel. On weekends you can buy freshly ground cornmeal, whole-wheat flour and other gifts in the mill's store.

You can walk along the History Trail from the mill to Bothe Napa Valley State Park, a mile and a half north, and visit the Native American Plant Garden next to the visitor center.

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park also has hiking trails and picnic grounds which are open to the public. The 50 campsites are now open to the public because of new agreements between the state and a local non-profit. Amenities include restrooms and hot showers, picnic sites, and a summer swimming pool.

Call 942-4575 for more information.

OLD FAITHFUL GEYSER



Old Faithful Geyser of California is on Tubbs Lane just north of town.

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In years past, visitors arrived by horse and buggy, on foot or in Model-T's. Now you can drive into the parking lot yourself at 1299 Tubbs Lane.

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Open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., admission is \$14 for adults, \$12 for seniors, \$8 children 4-16.

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Call ahead to reserve space on Meadow Walk at 11 a.m. Saturdays and Nature walks at 11 a.m. Sundays. Admission \$10 for adults, \$9 for seniors and Juniors 12-17, \$5 children 6-11. Call 942-6667 for information and tour reservations. Young kids need a break from being inside?

PIONEER PARK

Take them to the city's prettiest play area, Pioneer Park on Cedar Street. Large, grassy shade areas for adults to sit and talk, fenced playground with jungle gym equipment for youngsters.

Public bathrooms on site, pets on leashes okay and alcoholic beverages are allowed in the park as well. BBQ and picnic tables available. The year-round Napa River flows next to the park. It's a nice place to cool off in summer, but do not let children play in water without adult supervision.

R. L. STEVENSON STATE PARK

Hiking to the summit from Robert Louis Stevenson State Park gives our outdoor visitors a breathtaking view of the Bay Area. Open during daylight hours only, the trail to the west climbs to the summit of Mt. St. Helena, the trail to the east goes to the cliffs of the Palisades. No restrooms or water are available, so go prepared and plan for sudden changes in the weather.

Take Highway 29 towards Middletown, and you'll see the parking lots on the right and left sides of the highway about seven miles from Calistoga.

CALISTOGA BALLOONS



Calistoga Balloons, the only hot air balloon company that will float you over the northern Napa Valley/ Calistoga in the early morning hours.

The fact that the Calistoga end of the valley has less fog than the lower part of the valley is a flying advantage for Calistoga Balloons. The colorful balloons are launched from various sites in Calistoga. Launch time is usually near sunrise.

Most people simply don't want the balloon to return to earth. But when your feet do touch the earth again, Calistoga Balloons offers champagne brunch at Michelin one star Solage restaurant after your flight. For more information on an adventure you won't soon forget, call Calistoga Balloons of Napa Valley at 942-5758.

Places to go, things to see, stuff to do...

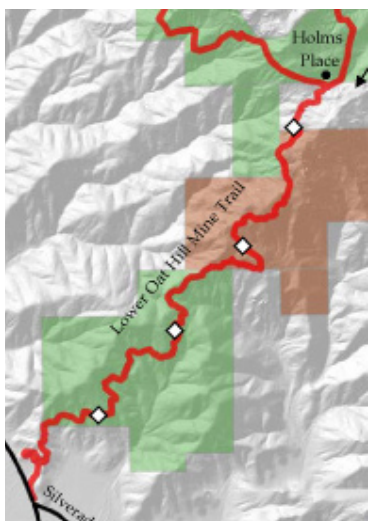
MUD BATHS & MASSAGE



Slow down, relax. Whether it's a mud bath or massage or facial or foot rub, you can find what you're looking for at Calistoga's selection of fine spas.

Wellness is the focus of Calistoga's heart, and local treatments are fashioned to give you the best experience possible, but you have to be an active participant! There are almost a dozen spas in town, so check them all out to find the one best suited for your needs. With mud baths, facials, aromatherapy, salt scrubs, steam baths, mineral pools, herbal wraps and other treatments offered, you'll find something to make you feel relaxed and rejuvenated again.

OAT HILL MINE HIKING/BIKING



The 8.3 long Oat Hill Mine Trail follows the original route between Calistoga and the western end of Aetna Springs Road in Pope Valley.

Construction of the Oat Hill Mine Road was started in 1873 to provide a transportation route between Calistoga and the quick-silver mines in the Palisades. It took 20 years to complete the project and the road was officially opened in 1893. Much of the road was constructed by Chinese laborers; hand-laid stone walls are visible at many locations along the trail.

Today the 8.3-mile-long Oat Hill Mine Trail follows the original route between Calistoga and the western end of Aetna Springs Road in Pope Valley. The trail provides a magnificent recreational experience for hikers, mountain bicyclists and equestrians. The Calistoga trail head is at the junction of Silverado Trail and Lake Street where on-street parking is available. Take lots of water, as there is no drinkable water on the trail. Stay safe.

CASTELLO DI AMOROSA



Castello di Amorosa is just south of town, where it took 15 years to build this authentic replica of an 11th century medieval castle.

The Castello di Amorosa has five towers and ramparts, 107 rooms on eight levels, all built over 15 years from antique materials and nearly 8,000 tons of stone. Regular tours are \$33 per person and tasting is \$18 per person. No reservations are needed for tasting five of the castle's wines. Reservations for tours are required, so call ahead at 967-6272. Children of all ages are welcome at the castle, and those 5 years and older are welcome on

tours (\$7 fee). The castle is at 4045 North St. Helena Highway. Open seven days a week, it is a remarkable achievement of medieval architecture just minutes from Calistoga.

PARADE LOVIN' CALISTOGA



The totally world famous Calistoga Lighted Tractor Parade draws thousands of gawkers each December.

We'll have a parade here at the drop of a hat, it seems, and that means more fun for us and for our town's visitors.

The *Silverado Parade* celebrates July 4 during the Napa County Fair. Floats, music, cars, organizations and colorful characters make this the biggest Fourth of July parade in the county. This year's theme for the parade and four-day fair is *Celebrate!*

The annual *Halloween Parade* has been a fall highlight for more than 60 years, and is always, always on Oct. 31. Hundreds of boils and ghouls line up by age to come down Lincoln Avenue at 6 p.m. before enjoying a costume contest and Haunted Carnival at the Community Center.

Not the end of our seasonal parade calendar, the *Calistoga Lighted Tractor Parade* blinks its way through downtown on the first Saturday in December, as we pay tribute to our agricultural roots with as many tractors, old trucks, backhoes, and old fire trucks we can decorate with working lights and music. Great fun for the entire family.

The Lighted Tractor Parade starts at 7 p.m., giving visitors

plenty of time for dinner before or after the parade in one of our fine eateries.

A little more locally focused but still drawing sidewalk supporters are the annual *Calistoga High School Homecoming Parade* in November and the *Our Lady of Guadalupe Parade* each Dec. 12.

But then again, we don't need much encouragement to have a community parade!

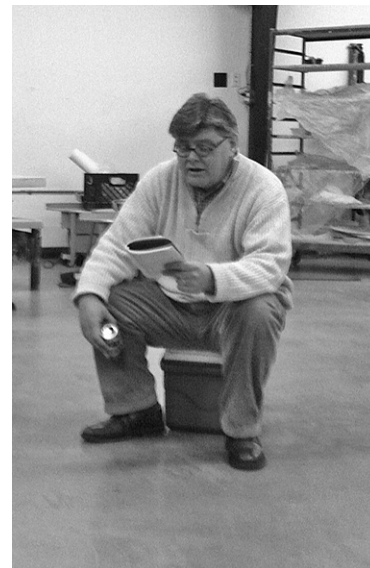
CRAZY FOR THEATER

Calistogans love to act, and we have one or two opportunities for visitors to enjoy the fun as well.

This year, the Calistoga Players are putting on a Spring production at the Calistoga Art Center in the Cropp Building at the fairgrounds.

"It's a Wonderful Life" took the stage for evening and matinee performances in November and December. Go to www.CalistogaArtCenter.org for more information.

The Calistoga Art Center also hosts a monthly Art Market from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., free and open to the public.



Actor Kevin Fitzpatrick rehearses his part in "It's a Wonderful Life" presented last season.

HOLIDAY VILLAGE

Returning for 2014 is the Calistoga Chamber of Commerce's



Holiday Village is a weekend-long celebration of all things Calistoga.

festive Holiday Village celebration with the annual Community Christmas Bazaar, Breakfast with Santa, downtown shopping, and the almost-world famous Calistoga Lighted Tractor Parade. December 6-7. Go to www.VisitCalistoga.com for more information.

NAPA COUNTY FAIR & FIREWORKS



Kids will find a variety of carnival rides at the annual Napa County Fair at the local fairgrounds on North Oak Street.

Napa County Fair's on-going theme is "Celebrate!" on July 4 at the fairgrounds on North Oak Street in Calistoga.

Stick around for the annual Silverado Parade on July 4 as thousands celebrate red, white and blue. Best fireworks show in the county at the grandstands on July 4 as part of fair admission following the grandstand show.

More places to go, things to see, stuff to do...



Take Lake County Highway to Middletown to try your luck at Twin Pine Casino, just 20 minutes from downtown Calistoga.

TWIN PINE CASINO & HOTEL

Where is California's newest and most exciting casino/hotel/restaurant destination?

It's just a short 15-mile drive north from Calistoga over scenic Mount St. Helena on Highway 29 – Twin Pine Casino & Hotel. There you'll find hundreds of the latest and most popular slots, and table games like Blackjack and Texas Hold'em Poker. You'll also enjoy live entertainment Thursday through Sunday – and all shows are free!

The Manzanita Restaurant (reservations at 707-987-1200) is renowned for its fine cuisine and extensive wine list. The Grapevine Bar & Lounge is a smoke-free environment and full-service bar featuring a large selection of wines and mixed drinks, beer on tap, and five big-screen high-def TVs.

Twin Pine's new hotel, (707) 987-0297, is an excellent choice for deluxe accommodations at modest prices with 60 non-smoking rooms to choose from.

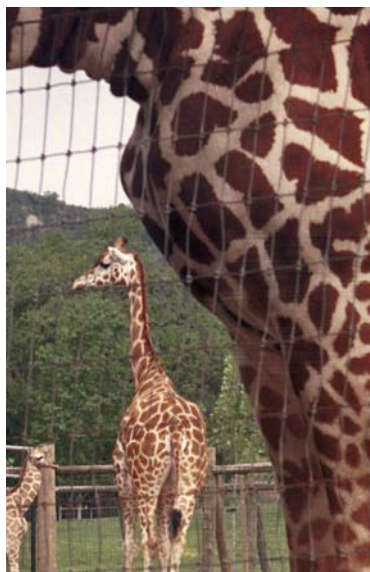
Want more? How about a unique wine-tasting room featuring the region's best award-winning wines, and a gift shop with great wine accessories, beautiful jewelry, clothing, glassware and its own broad selection of California wines.

Twin Pine Casino & Hotel is open 24/7. For more information call (800) 564-4872 or go to TwinPine.com.

SAFARI WEST

Explore the entire 400 acres of Safari West in a three-hour adventure led by one of their highly experienced guides in an open-air, authentic safari vehicle. Tours are offered at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., noon and 4 p.m. spring and summer, time changes in fall. Safari Tour prices are adults \$78; children 3-12 \$32, children 1-2 \$15. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the safari is scheduled to leave. Advanced reservations are required for all visits.

The experience includes a drive through the 12-acre Extreme Africa exhibit, where guests will be at one with the wild, observing giraffe, gazelle, scimitar-horned oryx, ostrich and other species of African antelope all living together. In one area you may find a cape



Giraffes, zebras, and more await the adventurous at Safari West.

buffalo and a zebra enjoying a refreshing break at the nearby watering hole.

Safari West Adventure drives are 2½ to 3 hours long and best suited for children over the age of 3 years old and may be uncomfortable for pregnant women.

Call (707) 579-2551 for more information.

MOUNT ST. HELENA GOLF COURSE

Mount Saint Helena Golf Course, "a diamond in the rough," is located on the grounds of the Napa County Fair with the entry



"A Diamond in the Rough," the nine-hole par 34 public Mt. St. Helena Golf Course at the fairgrounds is open seven days a week, 7 a.m. to dusk.

off Grant Street.

The golf course facility, a 9-hole/18-hole layout, par 34 (2,759 yards) is open 7 days a week, 7 a.m. to dusk (closed 4th of July week). Course rates are: Weekdays \$20/\$28, Senior Citizens \$20/\$28. Weekends and holidays \$24/\$34; Senior citizens \$20/\$28. Power cart rentals are \$10/\$13 per person. For the Pro Shop, call Kelly Hart at 942-9966.

BIKING AROUND



Contact the Calistoga Bikeshop at 942-9687 for bike rentals, tour routes, and their Cool Wine Tour.

The Calistoga Bikeshop Cool Wine Tour package includes: Comfort bike, complete with hel-

met, picnic or wine bottle pack, map, and lock; wine tasting education and concierge service; souvenir logo wine tasting glass; bottled water; free tastings at seven small out-of-the-way Calistoga wineries; wine pick-up and delivery and roadside assistance. Cost is \$79.99 plus tax per person.

Call the Bikeshop at 942-9687 or stop by 1318 Lincoln Avenue for rental information.

FARMERS MARKET



Every Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Calistoga Farmers Market is open for business year-round.

The Calistoga Farmers Market is open every Saturday between 9:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. year-round in the parking lot next to the police department on Washington Street. Visitors can also visit the neighboring Sharpsteen Museum.

Enjoy organic and natural produce from area farmers who bring vegetables, fruit, flowers, arts and crafts to the fair. Food and live music or entertainment. Morning coffee and walk-away breakfast treats also available for purchase.

SPRINT CAR RACES

When it comes to history and prestige, few tracks on the West Coast offer more than Calistoga Speedway and on Friday and Saturday, April 5-6, the picturesque half-mile will roar to life as the World of Outlaws Sprint Car



The King of the West Sprint Car Races are scheduled for June 21.

Series take over Wine Country. Labor Day Weekend, Aug. 30 & 31, brings the seventh annual Louie Vermeil Memorial Classic for wingless cars and midgets sponsored by USAC/CRA.

Call 942-5111 for information or go to www.calistogaspeedway.org for ticket prices and seating chart.

TROUT FISHING



The whole family will enjoy fishing at Smith's Trout Farm in Knights Valley.

Looking for something to do that the whole family will enjoy?

Then a visit to Smith's Mount St. Helena Trout Farm and Hatchery might be in order. Smith's is located seven miles up Ida Clayton Road in Knights Valley just north of Calistoga.

Smith's Mount St. Helena Trout Farm and Hatchery is open Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. from March through October. Cost for the day depends on the size of trout you catch, which varies from \$2 for a six inch trout to \$7 for an 11-inch trout. For more information call (707) 987-3651.

COMMUNITY POOL



The Calistoga Community Pool will open through Oct. 20 to locals and guests looking for a place to swim.

Decades in the making, but a beautiful result of community effort, the Calistoga Community Pool will open for the pre-season April 7 to May 9 and Spring Season from May 10 to June 6.

The pool is open to the public on a first come, first served basis. On hot days directors do expect to reach capacity and will not allow any additional patrons into the facility until others leave. Admission prices are: Calistoga Youth (2-17), free; Seniors (55+), \$3; Adults (18+), \$5; Water Aerobics/Arthritis Adult, \$5; Water Aerobics/Arthritis Senior, \$4; and Stroke Clinics, \$10;

Daily Fees for Non-Residents are: Youth (2-17), \$3; Seniors (55+), \$5; Adults (18+), \$6; Water Aerobics/Arthritis Adult, \$8; Water Aerobics/Arthritis Senior, \$6; and Stroke Clinics, \$15.

The pool is located at 1401 North Oak Street. Call 942-2844 for more information.

VETERANS MEMORIAL

The Calistoga Veterans Memorial



The Calistoga Veterans Memorial is at Logvy Community Park.

at Logvy Community Park commemorates those who have served in the nation's armed forces. Dedicated in 2009, the memorial includes over 300 bricks inscribed with the names of local veterans and family members as well as marble columns dedicated to the five branches of service.

Veterans Day and Memorial Day services, sponsored by the American Legion and local scout groups, are held at the memorial while Memorial Day services are held at both Logvy Park and Pioneer Cemetery on Foothill Boulevard. Pioneer Cemetery was deeded to the city of Calistoga in 1936 and contains over 500 graves.

LIVE MUSIC, ENTERTAINMENT



Concerts in the Park begin Thursday, June 19 at Pioneer Park on Cedar Street.

Calistoga is known as the live music town of upper Napa Valley, with music a part of the community's fabric, especially in the spring and summer when the

weekly Concerts in the Park happen at Pioneer Park every Thursday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Thriving nightlife scene includes live music every weekend Brannan's Grill and Hydro Grill & Bar from spring through fall. The Christian music event "Rock of Ages" is also held in October at the fairgrounds.

For more music event information, go to the chamber website at calistogavistors.com.

CULINARY CLASSES

If you are a foodie, there are adventures ahead for you! Check out the local B&B's which offer cooking classes along with their overnight stay packages.

Down the road the famous Culinary Institute of America holds public cooking demonstrations at 1:30 p.m. on the weekends for \$20 per person. Call 707-967-2320 for reservations and information.

CALISTOGA ART CENTER



The Calistoga Art Center offers classes for all ages.

The Calistoga Art Center was formed in 2002 by community members and art enthusiasts to expand and enrich the arts in the Napa Valley through education, experience, awareness and involvement.

The Calistoga Art Center is in the Cropp Building on North Oak Street at the fairgrounds.

Programming in the visual arts, ceramics, painting, drawing, photography, graphic, and textile arts is available.

Call 942-2278 or go to www.calistogaartcenter.org for more information and class schedules.



"It takes a great dog to make good wine."

– Vincent Arroyo

There is no better friend to a farmer than his dog, and at Vincent Arroyo Winery we are blessed with two exceptional canines. JJ, our Black Labrador, came to the winery after the harvest of 1999. JJ started making wine in the Arroyo tradition with a 2002 Chenin Blanc called "JJ's First." Vincent quickly realized that JJ was a natural

winemaker, so he soon advanced her to the red program where she has been making "JJ's Blend" ever since. Like many celebrity dogs, JJ has launched her own clothing line and her items can be purchased in our retail shop at the winery. In May of 2007 the winery's Chocolate Lab Bodega released her first wine which bears her signature name. The 2004 Bodega is a Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. Come play anytime. Bring your own tennis ball.



VINCENT ARROYO WINERY
2361 GREENWOOD AVENUE
CALISTOGA • (707) 942-6995

Tony Poer's Tasting Notes

LAURA MICHAEL WINES

2010 Laura Michael Wines Old Vine Zinfandel, Mayo Family Vineyards, Dry Creek Valley

Bright ruby-crimson; red fruit nose, notes of new oak, coconut, caramel; classic Dry Creek raspberry-red cherry fruit, very juicy and spicy, a bit dusty through finish; medium-bright acidity, great structure. Very elegant Zin. **\$35**

2010 Laura Michael Wines Zinfandel, Oat Hill Estate, Calistoga, NV

Dark ruby, extracted color; black fruit, black cherry, liqueur; deeper-darker aromas compared to Dry Creek, hints of earth and mineral on nose, a bit meaty-gamey, complex aromatics; dense, rich, broad fruit palate, black cherry, blackberry, brambly, cassis liqueur, a bit of jammy-ness though finish; great acid balance, finishes light. **\$45**

2008 Laura Zahtila Cabernet Sauvignon, Barlow Vineyards, Calistoga, NV

Red-black in glass; tight, dense, needs some air/decanting, non-fruit aromas, game, roasted meat, hints of cassis/dark red fruit, palate-coating, gets richer as it opens in glass, not fruit-forward yet; spicy red-black fruit, citrus peel, exotic, baked herbs, tobacco, more blackberry. Brooding and needs time or a lot of aeration. **\$52**

2007 Laura Zahtila Cabernet Sauvignon, Barlow Vineyards, Calistoga, NV

Red-black in glass; more approachable right out of the bottle, forward fruit aromas, sexy notes of ripe cherry, bing cherry, blackberry pie, hints of mushroom and earthiness, some mint; rich and juicy palate, jammy red fruits, spice, tobacco, more evolved than '08, broad and rich fruit. Super-complex. For the cellar but drinkable. **\$55**

2008 Fortified Dessert Wine, Laura's Theme, Calistoga, NV

Very rich, baked fruit, cooking spice. Warm notes of baked cherry, berry pie, candied red fruit, bright, spiced cherry, cinnamon, good acid balance. Very long and rich. Perfect chocolate/nuts/blue cheese wine. **500 ML - \$45**

LAURA

Continued from page 13

managed this whole process for so long, all roads lead to me."

But she is unreserved in her praise of, and appreciation for, her husband's transition from the world of engineering to winemaking. "When Michael got here full-time in 2010, he started learning from the barrel room team and the vineyard team, and then eventually he took over that role."

"Michael's like a sponge. He has just been learning and learning, and our consulting winemaker is helping him in the barrel room, and Placido continues to be a resource we're leaning on. But we also lean on resources that are afforded us through the lab that we use, the Napa Vintners educational programs, the Napa Valley Grapegrowers educational programs, and UC Davis extension courses. So Michael learns that way; that's his favorite way to learn."

This is the time of year when the Swantons bottle the two non-red wines they make, Chardonnay and dry rosé. Michael, who was

busy filtering the wines to get them ready, beckoned the interviewer over to the crush pad behind the tasting room to compare bright, frothy tastes of pre- and post-filtration Chardonnay while he shared his own version of the Laura Michael story.

"It was great," he laughed about his initial contact with Laura after coming across her website. "I actually got to write an email that started out saying, 'We may have been married at one time. How ya doin'?'"

Once they had reconnected, he began to invest in Laura's winery in 2006 and '07. Thereafter, he divided his time between being on the road for his engineering job and spending a few months at a stretch in Calistoga.

"Investing here, and then just showing up and being on-site more and more, and seeing how the business model worked, it just had to be the two of us, which means I had to assume responsibilities. I love it, it's great. My engineering background allows me to understand all the chemistry and all the operations, especially coming from heavy industry."

"I love the sensory side," he

said over the low thumping of the filter. "I never had that. You know, I had the engineering, the analytical, the data, the chemistry, the numbers, there was all that. But I love the sensory side of doing all this. It's so much fun, and it's such a new adventure to me."

Food compatibility in wines like those of Laura Michael is always a factor in their enjoyment. With Laura's focus on her club shipments and tasting room visits and sales, it takes some searching (or a trip to Oklahoma) to locate her wines in other venues. Right down the road, however, one of Calistoga's favorite restaurants is a dedicated supporter. Matt Spector and his wife, Sonjia, carry the wines regularly on their small, eclectic list at Jolē.

"Personally, I think all their wines are great," Matt said, kindly breaking away from a busy late afternoon of prepping for service to talk on the phone. "In fact, their Zinfandel is my wife's favorite request to bring home anytime we have it on the list."

The Sectors offer their guests a balanced menu of meats, fish, and produce. Matt thinks the Laura Michael wines, and the Zinfandels in particular, are a great match with his and Sonjia's food.

"When I came here as a novice drinker, that was my wine, my go-to wine. It was their Zinfandel. It seemed to be a palate pleaser, you know? It's got the fruit, it has enough acid. And then as you get here and you start drinking more and more, you find the different varieties, the ones that are high-alcohol, the ones that are lower in alcohol, and then you say, 'Wow, there's a lot going on in this grape.'"

Laura reflected—briefly, before moving onto the next task of the day—on her place in this corner of Napa Valley.

"I'm a huge proponent of Calistoga, and having consistently made two wines from the Calistoga AVA, it's showing me things. It's helping educate me about what makes Calistoga unique."

One of these things is Calistoga's cast of interesting characters. That Nine Point document drafted by the Growers will need to be revised someday.

Calistoga's Antiques, Collectibles & Consignment Stores

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Uncorking fun wine facts

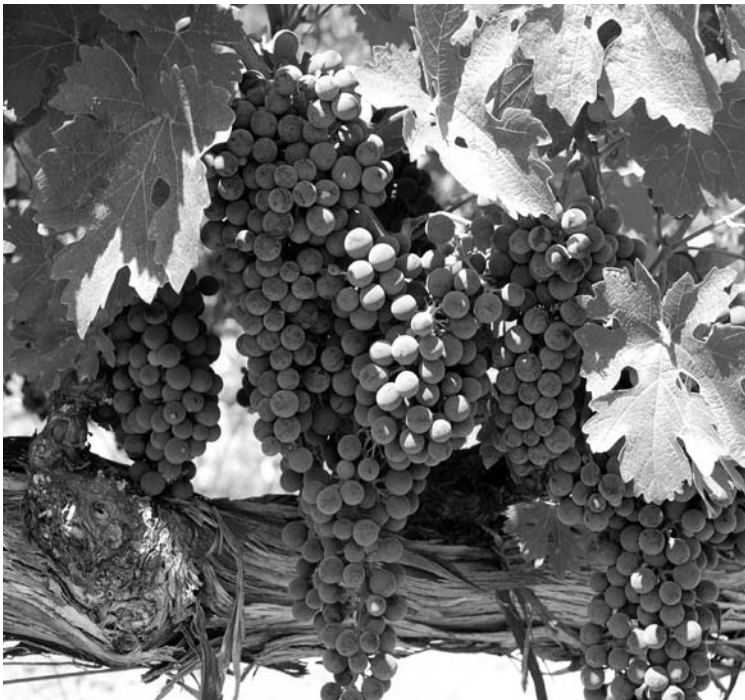
Napa Valley’s rare diversity of microclimates is ideal for growing fine wine grapes.

While Cabernet and Chardonnay are the most widely planted wine grapes, the Napa Valley holds many surprises for wine lovers looking for varieties off the beaten path.

Here are the most popular varietals planted in the valley:

Cabernet Sauvignon is the acknowledged “king” of red grapes in Napa Valley. Some Napa Valley Cabernet vines from the 19th century are still producing, but most were replanted in the last 20 years. Cabernet Sauvignon is a complex grape; its character can emerge as black currants, green olives, herbs, bell peppers or combinations of these with mint and leather. These wines age beautifully. When young they are best matched with robust red meat dishes; older Cabernets are superb accompaniments to roasts and steaks, and also complement many cheeses.

Chardonnay is among the most widely planted grape variety in Napa Valley. In France, the



great white Burgundies are made from the Chardonnay grape and Napa Valley labels have repeatedly won wine-tasting competitions against them, even in France! Napa Valley makes several types of Chardonnay, ranging from fresh, crisp wines to rich, complex wines with layers of flavors. With such a wide range of

styles, Napa Valley Chardonnays accompany a variety of dishes, from simply prepared seafood to lighter red meats.

Merlot has long been available in Napa Valley. Traditionally used as a blending wine, Merlot gained popularity in the early 1970s. Wines made from Merlot show lovely cherry-like aromas with hints of their sibling Cabernet’s herbaceousness. Because Merlot’s tannins are softer than those found in Cabernet, the wines are drinkable at an earlier age than most Cabernets. At the same time, Merlots reward aging by gaining finesse and complexity much as Cabernets do. Serve Merlot with any dish that calls for Cabernet or try it with lighter meats such as pork or veal.

Pinot Noir has been called the fickle grape variety because it makes some of the world’s best wines (Burgundian red) but is also one of the most difficult grapes both to grow and vinify. In France, these wines are exceptional only a few years in a decade. In California it has taken decades to make truly great Pinot Noir, and much progress has been made in the last eight to 10 years. Pinot Noir is less tannic and has less pigment than Cabernet and Merlot, so the wines are somewhat lighter. They can be very drinkable at two to five years of age and the best will improve for several years after that.

Sangiovese is an Italian varietal that has gone from cult status to full-blown success in the ‘90s. Napa Valley produces Sangioveses that are often ready to enjoy upon release. With hints of cherries, black tea and spice these wines enhance a wide variety of foods. Certainly with an array of creamy dishes and cheeses, mushrooms and game, this wine says mangia! In the mouth, Sangiovese is usually lighter than Cabernet, yet more full-bodied than its French cousins such as Gamay and can be as comfortable at a well-set table as at a picnic.

Sauvignon Blanc grapes make wines that appear under two names: Sauvignon Blanc and Fumé Blanc (a regional French nickname is “blanc Fumé”). These wines are increasingly popular as they have a distinctive character, often described as fruity with a touch of herbaceousness, and very good acidity. As with Chardonnay, you will find a range of styles — those that are crisp and “grassy” and others that have a ripe pineapple richness augmented by an oak bouquet. Because of their acidity, Sauvignon Blanc and Fumé Blanc are very enjoyable with shellfish and seafood.

Zinfandel, one of California’s most versatile and friendly grape varieties, was the mainstay of 19th century winemaking. Much of the world’s Zinfandel acreage is planted in the Napa Valley. This varietal is vinified as a light, easy-drinking red and a heavier, richly flavored version that rewards bottle aging, as well as a white or “blush” wine. With such a range of wine types, there is a Zinfandel for just about every wine enthusiast and for every imaginable food.

Rhone Varietals, chiefly Syrah among the reds and Viognier among whites, and Italian Varietals, chief among them, Sangiovese, as well as Barbera and Dolcetto, are increasingly popular.

For more information on the Napa Valley’s history of grapegrowing and winemaking, go to www.napavintners.com



- One barrel of wine equals roughly 20 cases, which equals 1200 glasses.
- A ton of grapes makes about 720 bottles of wine, or 60 cases.
- One vine annually produces between four and six bottles of wine, or between 20 and 30 glasses.
- Each bottle of wine contains about 2.8 pounds of grapes; therefore each 5-ounce glass of wine contains a little over half a pound of grapes.
- There are between 15 and 45 clusters of grapes per vine.
- One acre of land is home to between 900 and 1,300 vines.

Wine Bottle Quiz

Can you name these different wine bottle sizes?

This big daddy holds 36 bottles of wine

This momma holds 2 cases of wine

This giant holds 20 bottles of wine

This big baby holds 16 bottles of wine

This bottle holds a standard case

This size holds 8 750-ml bottles

Holds 4 750-ml bottles

Magnum

Bottle

Half Bottle

Piccolo/Spill/Pony

Holds 2 bottles of wine

Bottle, holds 750 ml of wine

Holds half a bottle

Holds 1/4 a bottle

Goliath

Solomon

Nebuchadnezzar

Balthazar

Salamazir

Methuselah

Jacobson



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cabernet, merlot and zinfandel wines.
- Bennett Lane Winery**
942-6684 • 3340 Highway 128
10 to 5 daily. Crush tours during harvest,
barrel tastings, chocolate and red wine
pairings every Saturday.
- Blair Estate**
942-8283 • By appointment only.
www.blaiestate.net
- Carter Cellars**
(707) 445-0311 • 1170 Tubbs Lane
Open by appointment, call ahead.
- CarverSutro**
Not open to the public.
Produces Petite Syrah exclusively.
www.carversutro.com
- Casa Nuestra Winery**
963-5783 • 3451 Silverado Trail
Daily 10-5. Family winery specializing in
rare varietals and unique blends.
- Castello di Amorosa**
967-6272 • 4045 St. Helena Hwy
Daily 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Entrance fee inc.
tasting, \$18 M-Thurs; Children 3-20, ent.
fee \$7. Castle tours are \$33 per person.
- Chateau Montelena**
942-5105 • 1429 Tubbs Lane
Daily 9:30-4. Tasting Fee: \$10.
Tours: 9:30, 1:30. Chardonnay and caber-
net sauvignon.
- Clos Pegase Winery**
942-4981 • 1060 Dunaweal Lane
Daily 10:30-5 Tours: 11, 2. Open to the
public. A crossroads of art and wine.
- Constant-Diamond Mountain**
942-0707 • 2121 Diamond Mtn Road
Open by appointment. Small quantities
from estate cabernet sauvignon grapes.
- Cuvaison Estate Wines**
942-2468 • 4550 Silverado Trail
Daily 10-5. Cave Tours & Tasting: 10:30
daily, fee \$15. Picnic tables.

CALISTOGA Wineries



Diamond Creek
Not open to the public.
www.diamondcreekvineyards.com

Dutch Henry Winery
942-5771 • 4310 Silverado Trail
Daily 10-4:30. Tasting Fee: \$10.
Small lots of handcrafted wines.

Dyer Vineyard
Not open to the public.
www.dyerwine.com

DYN 2880
Not open to the public.
www.dyn2880.com

Envy Wines
942-4670 • 1170 Tubbs Lane
Visit by appt. seven days a week
from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Frank Family Vineyards
(800) 574-9463 • 1091 Larkmead Lane
Daily 10-5. Tours, tasting and retail sales.
Sparkling wines and more.

Hans Fahden Vineyards
942-6760 • 4855 Petrified Forest Rd
Tasting and tours by appointment only.

Harris Estate Vineyards
Not open to the public.

Helena View Johnston Vineyards
942-4956 • 3500 Highway 128
Open by appointment only, afternoons and weekends.

H•L•R Cellars
942-1725 • 5136 Sharp Road
By appointment only. Heller Vineyards,
offering cab, merlot & proprietary blend.

JAX Vineyards
(415) 446-9505 • 3468 Highway 128
Open by appointment only.

Jericho Canyon Vineyards
942-9665 • 3322 Old Toll Rd
Open by appointment, closed Sundays.
Sauvignon blanc and cabernet.

Joseph Cellars
942-9999 • 4455 St. Helena Hwy
Wine tasting in cave \$20. Daily by appt.
Estate cabernet sauvignon, old vine zinfandel, chardonnay, and sauvignon blanc.

Kelly Fleming Wines
942-6849 • 2339 Pickett Rd
Family-run winery producing Estate cabernet and sauvignon blanc. By appt only.

Kenefick Ranch Vineyard
942-6175 • 2200 Pickett Rd
Not open to the public.

Knighton Family Vineyards
Not open to the public.
Makes cabernet sauvignon exclusively.

Knights Bridge Winery
Not open to the public.
www.knightsbridgewinery.com

Larkmead Vineyards
942-0167 • 1100 Larkmead Lane
Open daily by appointment only. Historic,

property producing estate cabernet, Bordeaux blends and sauvignon blanc.

La Sirena
942-1105 • PO Box 441
Tastings by appt. only. Cabernet, syrahs, dry muscat and more by Heidi Barrett.

Lava Vine
942-9500 • 965 Silverado Trail
Complimentary tasting with purchase.

Madrigal Vineyards
942-6577 • 3718 N. St. Helena Hwy.
Three generations of the Madrigal family have farmed the vineyards of the Napa Valley. Call for a tour and tasting.

Paoletti Winery
942-0689 • 4501 Silverado Trail
Thurs. - Sun. 9-5 Open by appointment.
Cabernet, malbec & sangiovese.

Phifer Pavitt
942-4787 • 4660 Silverado Trail
Tastings by appointment only. Mondays - Saturdays, at 11 a.m. or 1 p.m., at a cost of \$25/person. Makes cabernet.

Rancho de las Flores Cellars
942-5924 • 3942 Silverado Trail
Open for tasting 11-4, near daily. Cabernet and Blanco from colombard grapes.

net and Blanco from colombard grapes.

Reverie
942-6800 • 1520 Diamond Mtn Road
By appointment only. Small, ultra-premium cabernet sauvignon winery.

Schramsberg
942-4558 • 1400 Schramsberg Road
Tasting and tours by appointment only. Six vintage dated and two multi-vintage sparklers are produced each year.

Shypoke
942-0420 • 2882A Foothill Blvd
Producers of charbono, sangiovese and petite syrah. www.shypoke.com

Sterling Vineyards
942-3344 • 1111 Dunaweal Lane
Daily 10-4:30. Self-paced tours all day. Tasting and tour fee \$28. Take the tram to the top of the hill for breathtaking views.

Storybook Mountain
942-5310 • 3835 Hwy 128
Tasting and tours by appt. only, free with purchase. Zinfandel specialist since 1976.

Summers Estate Wines
942-5508 • 1171 Tubbs Lane
Daily 10:30-4:30 Tasting Fee: \$5 (waived

w/purchase). Picnic area and bocce ball.

Switchback Ridge
Not open to the public.
www.switchbackridge.com

T-Vine
942-1543 • 810 Foothill Blvd (Hwy 29)
Open daily for tours and tasting 10-4:30

Tedeschi Family Winery
(707) 501-0668 • 2779 Grant St.
emilvine@napa.net
Small family winery produces handcrafted wines. Call or e-mail for VIP tasting.

Tom Eddy
942-4267 • PO Box 1096
By appt. only. www.tomedywines.com.

Tudal Winery
963-3947 • 1015 Big Tree Road
Open daily for tours and tasting by appt.

Twomey Cellars
942-2489 • 1183 Dunaweal Lane
Mon-Sat 10-5, Sun 11-5. Merlot, sauvignon blanc and pinot noir wines.

Upvalley Vintners
942-1004 • 1371 Lincoln Ave.
Open 7 days a week, 11-5. Kenefick,

Zacherle, Barlow & Toffanelli wines.

Venge Vineyards
942-9100 • 4708 Silverado Trail
By appointment only.

Vermeil Wines /OnthEdge Winery
341-3054 • 1255 Lincoln Ave.
NFL coach and Calistoga native Dick Vermeil's tasting room is open daily.

Vineyard 511
511 Kortum Canyon Road
Not open to the public

von Strasser Winery
942-0930 • 1510 Diamond Mtn Road
Daily 10:30 to 4:30, call for reservations.

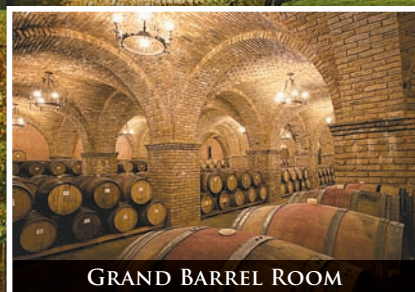
Wallis Family Estate
Not open to the public.
www.wallisestate.com

Work Vineyard
942-0251 • www.workvineyard.com
By appointment, call or e-mail.

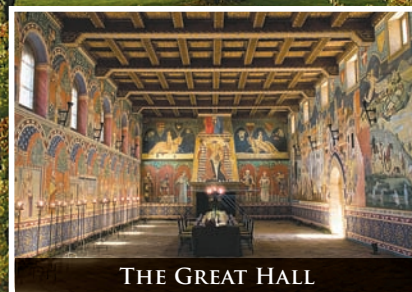
Zahtila Vineyards
Laura Michael Wines
942-9251 • 2259 Lake County Hwy
Daily 10-5. Producing premier vintages of zinfandel and cabernet sauvignon.

Castello di Amorosa

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