

sonoma magazine

Spend A Perfect Wine Weekend in the Russian River Valley

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Maci Martell | October 15, 2025



West county has a distinct feel all its own. Historically known as a “hippie” enclave, the region is better known today as a creative hub for artists, musicians, makers, chefs, and winemakers. It’s also famous for the beautiful Russian River Valley wine region, which produces legendary Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays.

Taste

Auteur Wines

The winery's new Russian River tasting room is a stunner. Set near Forestville, the contemporary space takes full advantage of its hillside setting, with floor-to-ceiling windows and a sheltered terrace for admiring the vineyard and redwood views. The design is as inviting as it is awe-inspiring.

"When the architect asked me how I wanted the new tasting room to feel, I told him 'a warm embrace,'" says Laura Juhasz, who co-owns the winery with her winemaker husband, Kenneth, and two other couples who are investment partners. "We don't want people to feel intimidated here. Wine is supposed to calm your heart, calm your mind, and connect you to others."

Auteur's lineup of minimalist wines highlights expressive single-vineyard and appellation-specific Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. If you love a mystery, book the "Be Here Now" tasting — coming soon — an exploration of wines presented without any information about their background. Reservations recommended. *10520 Wohler Road, Healdsburg. 707-766-0222, auteurwines.com*



At

Auteur Wines in Healdsburg. (Eileen Roche / Sonoma Magazine)



The tasting barn at Horse & Plow in Sebastopol. (Scott Hampton)

Horse & Plow

This small, family-owned winery just outside Sebastopol is known for its natural wines and bright ciders made from organic apples. The setting is wonderfully bucolic, with a sweet barn for indoor tastings and a spacious outdoor area set amid shady oaks, apple trees, and a bountiful vegetable garden. Choose from offerings by the flight, glass, or bottle, then settle in with a cheese or charcuterie plate and feel the stresses of everyday life melt away. On Sundays, there's live music from 2-4 p.m. Reservations recommended. 1272

Gravenstein Hwy. N., Sebastopol. 707-827-3486, horseandplow.com

Ryme Cellars

Rustic Ryme Cellars is an off-the-beaten-path haven behind Forestville's main drag. Taste minimal-intervention wines made from varieties like Aglianico. Reservations required. 6450

First St., Forestville. 707-820-8121, rymecellars.com



People

toast Ryme rosé at Ryme Cellars in Forestville. (Ryme Cellars)

Porter-Bass Vineyard & Winery

At Porter-Bass Vineyard & Winery, set on a biodynamic vineyard estate surrounded by redwood and fir forests, sample cool-climate Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Zinfandel under a walnut tree in front of the owners' home. Reservations required. 11750 Mays Canyon Road, Guerneville. 707-869-1475, porter-bass.com

Joseph Swan Vineyards

O.G. Joseph Swan Vineyards is known for its beautifully balanced old vine Zinfandel and Pinot Noir, along with a cool lineup of wines like Tannat, Valdiguie, and skin-contact whites. Tastings happen at an outdoor table overlooking the estate vineyard or among the barrels. 2916 Laguna Road, Forestville. 707-573-3747, swanwinery.com

Dine



Dishes from Wild Poppy Cafe in Sebastopol, Friday, May 3, 2024. (John Burgess/The Press Democrat)



If you're heading out to the coast, Sebastopol's Wild Poppy Cafe offers a creekside, dog-friendly patio with music for brunch on the weekends. (John Burgess/The Press Democrat)

Wild Poppy Cafe & Market

This [roadside café is a hidden gem](#) for breakfast, brunch, and lunch. The creekside patio is the place to be, with its weathered wooden tables and relaxed ambiance. The frequently refreshed menu emphasizes organic, biodynamic, and regeneratively farmed ingredients grown locally — with lots of exciting vegetarian and vegan options. 9890 Bodega Hwy., Sebastopol. 707-503-6332, thewildpoppycafe.com

Bazaar Sonoma

What happens when a veteran of Healdsburg's SingleThread opens a Chinese restaurant in Forestville? Something both unexpected and delicious. Known locally as BaSo, this compact café serves [boldly flavored traditional fare](#) without falling into the all-too-common trap of Americanization. The pork dumplings are divine, and don't skip the sizzling seasonal fish. 6566 Front St., Forestville. 707-614-8056, bazaar-sonoma.com

Editor's note: A [Sept. 22 fire gutted Bazaar Sonoma](#), leaving the Forestville restaurant temporarily closed. However, the team is planning several local pop-ups as The Matriarch. Learn more and find the pop-up schedule at bazaar-sonoma.com.



Black

Cod with soy sauce, ginger, greens and a hot infused oil table pour from Bazaar Sonoma, Oct. 17, 2024, in Forestville. (John Burgess / The Press Democrat)



Nam Khao Tod, Lao-Thai Crispy Rice Salad with the Pineapple Express cocktail with a sprig of Thai basil Thursday, Sept. 19, 2024, from Underwood Bar and Bistro in Graton. (John Burgess / The Press Democrat)

Underwood Bar & Bistro

In blink-and-you'll-miss-it Graton, this neighborhood favorite combines Paris bistro ambiance with — surprise! — flavorful Thai-inspired dishes. For 25 years, [Underwood](#) has been the place to spot local winemakers stopping in for a post-harvest beer paired with everything from steak frites and French onion soup to Thai lettuce cups. 9113 Graton Road, Graton. 707-823-7023, underwoodgraton.com

Explore

Before heading home, hit the Sunday **Sebastopol Farmers Market** and soak up the community vibe while stocking up on farm-fresh produce. 6908 Weeks Way, Sebastopol. 707-861-1147, sebastopolfarmersmarket.org



Bobby Murphy of Singing Frogs Farm mans the farm's booth Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024, at the Sebastopol Farmers Market. (Madison Smalstig)



Ziplining through the redwoods at Sonoma Canopy Tours in Occidental. (Emily Blake / Sonoma County Tourism)

Zipline through the redwoods on a **Night Flight zipline tour** and wonder at the stars from tree-top platforms. *Sonoma Canopy Tours*, 6250 Bohemian Hwy., Occidental. 888-494-7868, sonomacanopytours.com

Insider Tip

Book an orchard hike

Sample a delicious array of artisan olive oils, vinegars, and apple products at **Gold Ridge Organic Farms**. 3387 Canfield Road, Sebastopol. 707-823-3110, goldridgeorganicfarms.com



Gold Ridge Organic Farms owner Brooke Hazen focuses on antique heirloom apples on the Sebastopol property. Photo taken Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023. (John Burgess / The Press Democrat)



Fern

Bar in Sebastopol serves the “Euphoria,” a fruit forward nonalcoholic gin “free-spirited cocktail.” (Fern Bar)

Grab a post-dinner drink

Lively, plant-filled **Fern Bar** at The Barlow is open until 10 p.m. on weekends. 6780 Depot St., Suite 120, Sebastopol. 707-861-9603, fernbar.com