

San Francisco Chronicle

Best wineries in Sonoma County

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Freeman Vineyard & Winery

1300 Montgomery Road, Sebastopol





Sonoma County is a land of plenty. From its rugged coastline to its sun-drenched valleys, this North Bay region produces some of the best vegetables, fruits and cheeses that California can offer — and its most famous product, of course, is wine.

The 2025 edition of our Top Sonoma County Wineries guide highlights the full range of Sonoma County's bounty, with a mix of fun downtown tasting rooms and idyllic vineyard estates, serving everything from crisp Champagne-method sparkling wine to bold Cabernet Sauvignon. New additions to the list include [Auteur](#), which opened a striking tasting pavilion in the Russian River Valley in April; Dos' Bar, a natural wine collective whose Sonoma tasting room is modeled on a Wild West saloon; and Freeman, where visitors taste cool-climate wines in pleasantly cool caves.

Most wineries require reservations these days, so plan accordingly. For more winery recommendations, check out our [Top 25 Bay Area Wineries](#) guide and our [Top Napa Valley Wineries](#) guide.

Winery features

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- A. Rafanelli Winery

A longtime secret for in-the-know wine connoisseurs.

- Auteur Wines Healdsburg

A showstopper tasting pavilion in the Russian River Valley.

- Auteur Wines Sonoma

A cozy bungalow in downtown Sonoma.

- Banshee Wines

A former downtown Healdsburg hit now has a dramatic winery in Alexander Valley.

- Bedrock Wine Co.

Wines that look to California history.

- Dos' Bar

A collective tasting room for several small natural wine and cider producers.

- Extradimensional Wine Co. Yeah!

The second act from a buzzy, unconventional winemaker.

- Flowers Vineyards

Polished Sonoma Coast wines, lavish gardens and picture-perfect cabanas.

- Freeman Vineyard & Winery

Restrained Pinot Noir tastings in a cave.

- Hanzell Vineyards

The place to taste one of California's greatest-ever Chardonnays.

- Idlewild Wines

Downtown Healdsburg's destination for Piedmont-inspired wines.

- Iron Horse Vineyards

Relaxed tastings of sparkling wine with achingly scenic views.

- J. Rochioli Vineyards & Winery

A brisk, affordable flight of Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.

- Joseph Swan Vineyards

Classic, old-school Russian River wines in a blissfully unfussy setting.

- Kanzler Vineyards

Private, tranquil tastings in the Sebastopol Hills.

- Martinelli Winery

A beloved family winery that excels with old-vine Zinfandel and coastal Pinot Noir.

- Merry Edwards Winery

A Russian River Valley stalwart for Pinot Noir.

- Nalle Winery

Casual, vineyard-side tastings of old-vine Zinfandel.

- Porter Creek Vineyards

A family-run winery with homespun charm in the Russian River Valley.

- Preston Farm & Winery

An idyllic, secluded farm with understated wines.

- Reeve Wines

An elegant, vineyard-adjacent tasting terrace in Healdsburg's Dry Creek Valley.

- Ryme Cellars

This Forestville hideaway is actress Elizabeth Olsen's favorite tasting room.

- Trattore Farms

Rhone-style wines and stunning Dry Creek Valley views.

- Unti Vineyards

One-of-a-kind Mediterranean wines in a laid-back Healdsburg barn.



Ramin Rahimian/For the S.F. Chronicle

A. Rafanelli Winery has remained wonderfully unchanged by time. Many of its rugged, robust red wines have been fermented in the same large oak vessels for half a century. The family still refers to one of the areas in its 100-year-old cellar as the “donkey room,” because that’s where they used to keep the donkeys. And even as the rest of Wine Country has implemented ever-fancier, ever-pricier tasting experiences, Rafanelli hosts visitors the way it always has, among the barrels in this working winery. (Some tastings also take place in the outdoor gardens now.) Winemaker Shelly Rafanelli hews to the traditional methods that her father, the previous winemaker, followed, resulting in Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon that are structured and rich while remaining bright and energetic. The bottlings have a loyal following, and for decades most of the winery’s production has gone directly to its wine club, which they call the A List. If you’re hankering for a vineyard view, there’s a great one here.

Phone: 707-433-1385

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$25



Scott Strazzante/S.F. Chronicle



Sarahbeth Maney/For the S.F. Chronicle

Kenneth and Laura Juhasz have hosted tastings for their winery, Auteur, out of a cozy bungalow in downtown Sonoma since 2012. That's still a delightful place to visit, but their [brand-new estate](#) in Healdsburg is the real showstopper. Open since April 2025 on a hillside that was once a hops ranch, the glass-walled tasting pavilion looks out over a wide expanse of Russian River Valley vineyards. Auteur produces a long list of wines, mostly Pinot Noir and Chardonnay made in a fruity but balanced style, including many single-vineyard bottlings from pedigreed sites like Savoy, Ferrington and Green Acres. A former cheesemaker from Wisconsin, Laura Juhasz assembles way-above-average cheese boards here. For any wine lovers eager to test their skills, the winery now has a blind tasting option (\$40), involving four wines whose identity will not be revealed until the end.

Phone: 707-938-9211

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$40



Lea Suzuki/S.F. Chronicle

After running a casual tasting room in downtown Healdsburg for a decade, Banshee decamped to a grand estate in Alexander Valley in late 2023. The new tasting room features dramatic vineyard views from both the outdoor deck and the glass-walled interior. It's definitely a makeover for Banshee, which started out in 2009 as an affordable Pinot Noir brand, then sold to conglomerate [Foley Family Wines](#) in 2018. (Another of the company's wineries, Foley Sonoma, previously occupied the winery that Banshee just moved into.) The standard tasting flight here includes Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and three single-vineyard Pinot Noirs; all are well made in an exuberant, fruit-forward style.

Phone: 707-395-0915

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$40



Salgu Wissmath/S.F. Chronicle

Anyone spending a weekend in Sonoma should make a point of visiting Bedrock Wine Co.'s tasting room, hidden at the end of a walkway just off the downtown square. Known as a [Zinfandel house](#), Bedrock produces some of the best versions of this hearty red wine in California, though visitors here will see that the winery produces a range of wines beyond Zin. Crystalline, Champagne-method sparkling wine, minerally [Riesling](#) and rugged, savory Syrah are all on offer. The unifying thread across all the wines is a focus on older vineyards: In many cases, the grapevines that produce these wines were planted in the 1800s. The tasting room itself, located in a restored Civil War-era home known as the Gen. Joseph Hooker House, reflects this theme. Most tastings occur in the house's outdoor brick patio, where employees guide visitors through leisurely flights, pouring wines one by one into light-as-a-feather Zalto glasses.

Phone: 707-343-1478

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$45



Gabrielle Lurie/S.F. Chronicle

[Natural wine bars](#) abound in Oakland and San Francisco, but they are decidedly rare in Wine Country. That's one of several reasons why Dos' Bar, a [collective tasting room](#) of eight wine and cider producers, stands out. The downtown Sonoma spot is modeled on an old Wild West saloon, with simple wooden tables and chairs. There's frequent live music and food popups. Although all of the producers here — wineries Etteila, Caleb Leisure, Fres.co, Marioni, North American Press, Las Vivas and Isa, plus cidery Hoss — identify as natural, their wines vary widely in style, from Caleb Leisure's [Georgian-inspired pet-nat](#) to North American Press' co-ferment of wild apples with [hybrid grapes](#) to Fres.co's minty Cabernet Sauvignon. Customers can order by the glass (starting at \$14) or bottle (starting at \$25), customize a flight or book ahead for a private tasting (\$35-\$50) with individual winemakers.

Phone: 707-933-6999

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$14



Erik Castro/For the S.F. Chronicle

Hardy Wallace and Kate Graham started this eclectic wine brand — exclamation point included — after [shutting down](#) their previous one, Dirty & Rowdy Wine Co., which had earned a strong following for its Mourvedres. The new project's cozy, colorful tasting room opened in downtown Sonoma in 2023. Instead of the single-vineyard, single-variety wines that were Dirty & Rowdy's specialty, Extradimensional trades mostly in multi-grape and multi-region blends, which Wallace says gives him more winemaking flexibility in the face of California's increasingly erratic weather patterns. Stop in for a casual tasting, which might include the ethereal Indie Bookstore (mostly Zinfandel) and the floral, silky Mind Left Body (mostly Mourvedre). Walk-ins are allowed, space permitting, though reservations are encouraged. A tasting flight here would make for a great aperitif before having dinner at nearby restaurant [Valley](#).

Phone: 707-682-9324

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$45



Santiago Mejia/S.F. Chronicle

The House of Flowers is practically begging to be photographed, with its abundant greenery and cushion-filled cabana seating areas that wouldn't look out of place beside a fancy hotel rooftop pool. Although Flowers has been producing wine since 1991, it didn't open a tasting room until 2019, and it made for a swanky addition to Healdsburg's crowded, winery-filled Westside Road corridor. The grapes for the Flowers wines are not grown here, however; they come from vineyards much farther west, [closer to the Pacific Ocean](#), a cool, fog-shrouded area that's known for producing elegant, acid-driven Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Tastings here feel languorous, ideal for lingering with friends over a couple of hours. Little snacks — chilled soup shooters, gougeres, crostini and the like — are served alongside the glasses.

Phone: 707-723-4800

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$75



Santiago Mejia/S.F. Chronicle

Visitors would be wise to bring layers to Freeman: Tastings here take place in the caves, prized for wine aging precisely because of their naturally cool temperatures. At one of two standing bars inside the cave, you'll taste a range of restrained, acid-forward wines — mostly Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, with some sparkling wine and Riesling thrown in on certain days — made by winemaker Akiko Freeman and associate winemaker Eiji Daniel Akaboshi. Wine club members who have the foresight to bring a picnic can enjoy it under the redwoods outside, surrounded by the winery's Gloria Estate vineyard.

Phone: 707-823-6937

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$40



Santiago Mejia/S.F. Chronicle

Sonoma Valley's Hanzell played a historically significant role in the rise of California Chardonnay: It was here, in the 1950s, that winery founder James Zellerbach (the onetime U.S. ambassador to Italy) introduced temperature-controlled fermentation tanks, which proved revolutionary in enabling the creation of a crisp, clean white wine. Hanzell's Chardonnay became a paragon of that style — restrained, acid-driven, never overblown — and remains so to this day. The visitor experience here changed significantly in 2024, when Hanzell converted its original winery into a museum. Now, all visitors will go on a tour that includes the museum, the modern winery and the organic vineyards, concluding with a tasting of four wines. It's an in-depth, educational session that will taste delicious to anyone interested in California wine history.

Phone: 707-996-3860

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$90

Idlewild, which produces wines inspired by northern Italy's Piedmont region, has long been one of downtown Healdsburg's standout tasting rooms, where wines like the floral white

Arneis and the light red Grignolino are poured alongside a top-notch selection of Italian cheese and meat. Even after Idlewild founder Sam Bilbro [sold the business](#) to former top Google executive David Drummond in June 2024, the tasting room remains as charming as ever. Come for a flight of five excellent Italian-style wines in either the stylish indoor bar or in the parklet outside. Cheese and charcuterie boards are a dime a dozen at wineries, but the one on offer here is truly memorable. Drummond also launched a new sister winery nearby on Westside Road, Overshine Wine Co., where Bilbro is in charge of winemaking. It's worth a visit too.

Phone: 707-385-9410

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$30

9786 Ross Station Road, Sebastopol

On certain days, when the weather is especially dazzling, being at Iron Horse can feel so wonderful that you might wonder if you're dreaming. Down a dirt road in Sebastopol, in an appellation known as Green Valley, this outdoor tasting bar in a redwood barn overlooks dramatic, rolling hills of vineyards. All guests have access to that prime vista from the outdoor areas where they taste, standing around wine barrels. The stars of the lineup here are the Champagne-method sparkling wines, and they range from slightly sweeter styles (like the Russian Cuvee, which is still dry enough to be classified as brut) to more bracing, austere styles like the Ocean Reserve. Rounding out the portfolio are still versions of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, but really, the scene here is best enjoyed with a flute of bubbles in hand.

Phone: 707-887-1507

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$35

In 1968, the [Rochioli family](#) was one of the first in the Russian River Valley to plant Pinot Noir, which has since become the region's specialty. Their vineyard is still considered one of the finest sites for the grape in the valley. Just a 10-minute drive from downtown Healdsburg, the Westside Road winery offers an easygoing tasting experience that's inexpensive and relatively quick. Most visitors sit on the outdoor patio, overlooking Rochioli's estate vineyards. The four-wine flight changes throughout the year, typically consisting of [Sauvignon Blanc](#), Chardonnay, rosé and a red wine — sometimes (but not always) one of Rochioli's vaunted Pinot Noirs.

Phone: 707-433-2305

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$25

There's nothing fancy here. Joseph Swan is as old-school as it gets in Sonoma County, and anyone who's grown tired of formal, overpriced tasting rooms will find Joseph Swan to be a breath of fresh air. An exceedingly fair \$30 fee gets you a flight of six wines, which might include the neon-magenta Syrah rosé, a side-by-side tasting of Grenache Blancs (one made traditionally, the other fashioned as an orange wine), a quaffable, light-bodied [Valdiguie](#) and a comparison of single-vineyard Pinot Noirs made in an elegant, finessed style. You'll taste them while sitting on an outdoor patio overlooking Joseph Swan's sloping Russian River Vineyards. If you don't get to taste a Joseph Swan Zinfandel, it's worth buying a bottle to take home; the winery has always been one of the standout producers of balanced Sonoma County Zin. Don't even try making a reservation here: The winery no longer accepts them, so feel free to walk in.

Phone: 707-573-3747

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$30

The tasting house at Kanzler Vineyards feels secluded and tranquil. When you visit, you'll be the only party here, and the enormous windows may make you feel as if you're nestled in the middle of the vineyard itself. The Kanzler family began growing grapes in the Sebastopol Hills in the early 1990s and started making its own wine in 2004, but didn't open a tasting room for 20 years. The space is modern and earthy, with shimmery gold chandeliers that resemble Chardonnay flowing from a bottle. Tastings are serious, thoughtful sessions, guided by a family member, and tend to include rosé, Chardonnay and a few Pinot Noirs. Made by Alex Kanzler — a onetime [Chronicle Winemaker to Watch](#) — these are lush, concentrated, seductive Pinots.

Phone: 707-827-3874

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$75

The Martinellis are among Sonoma County's most important winemaking families historically, having grown grapes here since the 1880s. Their Russian River Valley winery — [still family-run](#) — offers a revealing snapshot of Sonoma terroir. A tasting here includes lean, earthy Pinot Noirs and Chardonnays from the family's vineyards in the rugged, coastal

Fort Ross-Seaview area, as well as the richer versions from the sunnier Russian River Valley. Martinelli Winery also produces excellent old-vine Zinfandel (though its top Zin, a bottling known as Jackass Hill, is too limited in quantity to pour at the tasting room). Opt for a tasting on the terrace, at the edge of the vineyards, which usually comes with some bite-size food pairings.

Phone: 707-525-0570

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$50

Merry Edwards has long been synonymous with a certain style of poised, generous Russian River Valley Pinot Noir, and it continues to earn that reputation even after the departure of its longtime owner and winemaker, Merry Edwards herself. Since 2019, the winery has been [owned by the French Champagne company Louis Roederer](#), but little about the tasting experience or the wines themselves has changed. (Before retiring, Edwards trained a successor, winemaker Heidi von der Mehden.) Tastings are held in an outdoor patio surrounded by fragrant fruit trees, which provide welcome shade on sunny Sebastopol days. You'll try a range of Pinot Noirs, including one from the Coopersmith Vineyard, which is just a few yards away from where you'll be sitting. Unlike many of the wineries in the area, which tend to focus their white-wine energy on Chardonnay, the real white wine star at Merry Edwards is [Sauvignon Blanc](#). Fashioned as a creamy, rich, layered wine, it's a delicious contrast to the sharp, herbal versions that are more common.

Phone: 707-823-7466

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$45

When jammy, high-alcohol Zinfandel was all the rage, Nalle Winery stayed true to a restrained style of this grape variety. The Nalle Zins — including from its nearly 100-year-old estate vineyard — are still among the most food-friendly examples available. While tastings at this understated winery were indoors pre-pandemic, they've now migrated to the back patio, where visitors can relax at individual tables and take in the vineyard views. You'll usually be attended by a member of the Nalle family, and you may notice that some regulars tend to show up with picnic lunches in hand. Take note the "living roof," a garden six feet deep with soil on top of the winery that keeps the building naturally cool. As at many Sonoma County wineries, there's also bocce.

Phone: 707-433-1040

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$35

Being at Porter Creek, you may get the feeling that you're at somebody's home — and you are. The Davis family, which owns this estate winery, lives on-site (though the cozy wooden shack where tastings are held isn't their actual residence). Vintner Alex Davis, whose father founded Porter Creek in the 1970s, makes wines here that feel untouched by time: restrained Pinot Noir, sunny Chardonnay, balanced Zinfandel. The addition of outdoor seating options gives some visitors the chance to take in views of the property's gentle, rolling hills of vineyards. Porter Creek's Viognier is a fine example of a white grape that's seldom seen in this part of Sonoma County, full of tropical-fruit flavors like mango. And don't overlook the spicy Carignan, one of the few wines not grown at Porter Creek's estate property.

Phone: 707-433-6321

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$30

9282 W. Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg

Preston is a farm in the true sense of the word, growing vegetables and raising animals alongside organic grapevines at its beautiful 125-acre property in Healdsburg's Dry Creek Valley. If you need proof, just wander into the farm store next to the tasting room, where Preston sells its fruit, vegetables and olive oils (you can even sign up for a CSA subscription). It's really worth driving down the winding dirt road to Preston for the wines, though, which are subtle, well made and consistently underrated. Customers sit at picnic tables outdoors and are served a succession of tastes, from the yuzu-forward Sauvignon Blanc to the ultra-light-bodied Cinsault to the brambly Zinfandel. They save the best for last: two Rhone-style wines named for the owners, Lou and Susan Preston. The L Preston is a peppery, spicy blend of Syrah, Mourvedre and Grenache, while the Madam Preston is a honeyed, intensely floral cuvee of Roussanne, Marsanne and Grenache Blanc. Savor them all while taking in the views, and see how many of the roaming winery cats you can spot — there are 12 of them.

Phone: 707-433-3372

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$35

Reeve Wines channels such a California-cool vibe that it would be worth visiting for the Southwestern-style decor and scenery alone. But there's an even more compelling reason to visit, which is that the wines are distinctive and exciting. Visitors sit at tables outdoors and are treated to table service, with an employee pouring wines one by one at a leisurely pace. It's a nice place to pass a late morning or afternoon, on this stone terrace overlooking grapevines, shaded by live oak trees in a secluded-feeling corner of Dry Creek Valley. The flight of wines might include one of Reeve's single-vineyard Rieslings, Sonoma Coast Chardonnay and some gorgeous Pinot Noirs from [Anderson Valley](#). A snack is included in the tasting fee; on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, that snack is a pizza made in Reeve's wood-fired oven.

Phone: 707-235-6345

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$50

Ryme's tasting room is cozy, outfitted with decorative branches and heavy barn doors, and it always has warm, generous service. It's hidden in a building complex off a dusty back road in Forestville, in an evocative setting to try these soulful wines. The owners and winemakers, wife-husband team Megan and Ryan Glaab, offer both the classic — delicate, floral Carneros Pinot Noir; citrusy Chardonnay from the Russian River Valley — and the unconventional, with orange wines and co-fermentations of white and red grapes. They've got a penchant for Italian-style bottlings, and everyone who visits the tasting room should be sure to try the red wine and the rosé that Ryme makes from the Aglianico grape, a tannic, meaty-tasting southern Italian variety. Another favorite is the "Hers" Vermentino, made in a zippy, fresh style that showcases the grape's characteristic salinity and crunchy fruit flavors — a counterpoint to the "His" Vermentino, a toothsome, bronze-colored wine made with skin contact.

Phone: 707-820-8121

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$35

This under-the-radar winery, whose bottles are scarcely sold outside of the tasting room, boasts what are surely some of the most scenic views in northern Sonoma County. A large patio extending out from the hillside winery looks over all of Dry Creek Valley and the ridgelines beyond. The wines are mostly inspired by France's Rhone Valley, with uncommonly crisp versions of the whites Roussanne and Viognier, and savory reds like Syrah and Counoise (the latter two from the notable Alder Springs Vineyard in Mendocino

County). Trattore also makes its own vinegars and olive oils, including oils flavored with basil, Meyer lemon and other ingredients; most wine tastings come with an olive oil sampler. There's a kitchen here, too; order panini (\$20) if you're hungry for lunch.

Phone: 707-431-7200

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$30

There's no winery in Sonoma County quite like Unti, where you'll find Italian-style wines like Aglianico and Vermentino alongside more familiar-to-Sonoma options like Zinfandel and Grenache. It's all part of the Unti family's multigenerational project of growing grapes that thrive in places near the Mediterranean Sea, from Italy to France to Croatia. The casual tasting appointments here take place in the laid-back tasting barn, inviting visitors to choose six wines from a long list of options while a staff member — sometimes winemaker Mick Unti himself — provides each one's backstory. Some high points of the menu include the minerally Fiano, the crisp Vermentino and the cherry-laced Sangiovese. It will feel hard to choose just six, but you really can't go wrong here.

Phone: 707-433-5590

[Website](#)

Tasting fee: \$25

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