

The Coolest Tasting in Napa?

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I have been to a lot of events, wine retrospectives and pairings both here and abroad. Some of the wines are usually impressive and part of the company, that hasn't had that much to drink, is good. However it's rare to find a completely unique, and accessible tasting, particularly in Napa.



I recently went to the [Stags Leap District Winegrowers Association's](#) annual Vineyard to Vintner wine tasting along the Silverado trail. The group's 16 producers are celebrating their 20th anniversary and it is always exciting to look at one region in detail. This was the ninth year this great event has been held.

I wish I could say I have a better understanding of the unique flavor profile of this district, which would be interesting but isn't what this tasting is about, however it was among the most fun and laid back I have experienced in Napa in years. Some of my new favorites are the [Stags' Leap Winery](#) rosé and the [Shafer](#) Cabernets.



Enjoying the afternoon at Cliff Lede with marking man extraordinaire Paul Burditch.

I was also incredibly fairly priced, something many producers seem to forget the importance of these days. An afternoon of open houses, tasting reserve wines with lovely snacks and access to winemakers cost \$135. When you think that you could pay that for a couple of reserve tastings at a few noted wineries, and how much more fun this is, you see the value of it. We enjoyed the sunshine and ate way too much brick-oven pizza, fabulous lamb meatballs and sliders. The event kicked off with a morning seminar presented by the district's founders and a tasting of wines going back to 1979.

We met a posse of couples from Montgomery Alabama who were having a blast in Napa on their first trip. They discovered the trip by accident, lucky them, and were enjoying a lovely glass of [Cliff Lede](#) Sauvignon Blanc with us on the sublime patio in the late afternoon sun.

This tasting also offering unparalleled access to many wineries that are only open by appointment-from the elegant Stags' Leap to [Ilsley](#), where their grandchildren and friends were serving cookies. It provides a look back at Napa reminiscent of the simple and laid back days, something akin to how an emerging wine region like [Walla Walla](#) in Eastern Washington is now.

The evening was capped off by an elegant dinner at [Clos du Val](#), with a great selection of older wines. For passionate wine drinkers, super low-key events like this one genuinely offer an inside look at the simple culinary, personal and food joys of a now very fancy place called Napa.

Cheers,

Liza the Wine Chick

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