



SCOTTSDALE / LOS ANGELES / LAS VEGAS

YOUR GUIDE TO THE PURSUIT OF THE GOOD LIFE IN THE **SUN.SEA.ST**

# item

THE ICONIC  
*Mr. Chow*

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\$ 4.95





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# Eating Napa

Just a stone's throw from the Sun.Sea.Strip lies one of the world's most captivating culinary capitals. This winter, head up north and treat yourself to some of the Napa Valley's famous fare.

Story by CAROLE DIXON

**N**orthern California's local wine country has been making waves on the culinary map since local pioneer Chef Philippe Jeanty first hit the Napa radar with *Domaine Chandon* in the 1980s, up to present day with Chef Thomas Keller's multiple venues in Yountville. With dozens of world-class restaurants just off the vine-covered backroads and highways, gourmards travel here year-round for fine dining and stay in five-star accommodations with spa treatments. The allure is just as seductive now for visitors as sipping and swirling the award-winning wines during the fall harvest and crush season.

Yountville, or Kellerville as some locals call it, is the crowning jewel of

the region and home of Keller's three-Michelin starred *The French Laundry*, as well as his *Bouchon* bistro and bakery and the new family-style *Ad Hoc*. Plans are also underway for Keller to open a burger and bottle (as in wine) bar. While Keller may have seemingly taken over the town, don't overlook other local talent like Chef Richard Reddington at *Redd*, Chef Bob Hurley at *Hurley's Restaurant & Bar* or Jeanty's *Bistro Jeanty*. You can easily walk the town's main street and taste your way through some of best food and wines available within this one-mile radius.

Check local calendar listings with the *Yountville Chamber of Commerce* as year-round foodie events abound, such as the *Mustard Festival* each spring,





**Hot Tip:** Before you set out for the grand tasting tour, hire a limo driver from one of the many local companies. You'll see more of the countryside and be able to quaff more splendid wines guilt-free since you won't be driving. When it's time to bid a fond farewell, fly home on a private jet from Napa County or Angwin airports and avoid the crowded highway into San Francisco or Oakland.

**Stay:** Beautiful Places will help choose your dream home in Napa even if it is only for a weekend.

**Spa:** The glorious grape is featured at both Calistoga Ranch's Bathhouse and the spa at Auberge du Soleil in the vein of grape seed crush foot therapy or wine pairing and a massage simultaneously.

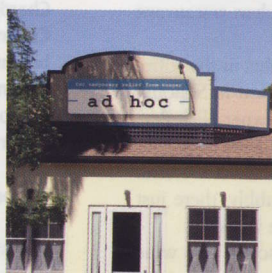
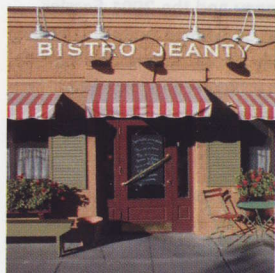
**Wine:** Mix, bottle and label your own vintage at Cliff Lede Vineyards in Yountville or Bennett Lane in Calistoga.

**Dine:** Cyrus Restaurant and don't be shy when the caviar cart rolls by.

**Don't miss:** Woodhouse Chocolates in St. Helena.

**New & Noteworthy:** Go Fish restaurant in St. Helena by the owners of nearby Mustards Grill.

Left: The French Laundry  
Below, left to right: Bistro Jeanty, Ad Hoc, Redd, Bouchon Bakery (interior), Bouchon Bakery (exterior)



turning Washington Street into an outdoor food-and-wine-grazing extravaganza. Stay at the Villagio Inn & Spa to indulge in a crushed Carneros grape seed body exfoliation or at charming Poetry Inn on the grounds of the Cliff Lede Vineyard.

Amid the secluded chic guest cottages of Napa Valley institution Meadowood, Executive Chef Vincent Nattress, Restaurant Chef Joseph Humphrey and Pastry Chef Courtney Fouts round out the creative culinary trio in the newly revamped The Restaurant. A sublime seven-course meal showcases the local cuisine using ingredients from the Meadowood grounds sourced from beehives, fruit orchards, olive groves and sustainable farmed meats and

game billed as "nearby waters" and "local gardens, pastures and ranches." Stand-outs include pink snapper crudo and red wattle pork belly. End your meal with artisan cheeses from Goat's Leap Dairy in St. Helena and Cowgirl Creamery from Tomales Bay. The lengthy wine list features high-end area vintages from Harlan Estate, Screaming Eagle and Opus One. At the 12-seat Vintner's Table, a different local winemaker hosts an evening tasting and discussion each week.

The Stags Leap District is set amid lush, vine-covered rolling hills on the Silverado Trail. This region produces some of the most diverse, full-bodied Cabernet Sauvignons in the world—providing the perfect backdrop for





Meadowood



Villagio Jan & Spa



Woodhouse Chocolates



Pine Ridge Winery

## California's Other Wine Countries

**Carmel Valley** – Cozy **Bernardus Lodge's** award-winning in-house wines and **Chef Cal Stamenov's** famous annual truffle event in December are bringing attention to Carmel. The Bernardus tasting room is just down the road from the vine-covered entryway on the main grounds. After sampling the **Estate Marinus** blend or the Sauvignon Blanc indulge with your partner in a warm grape seed oil massage for two in the spa's vineyard room.

**Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties** – You've all seen the movie and many have taken the **Sideways Tour** in the Santa Ynez hills, but now the touristy crowds are not so appealing. Head further north to the Central California Coast, a growing grape region sandwiched between San Luis Obispo, Paso Robles and reaching up to Monterey. Try one of the award-winning wineries—and outsider secrets—like **Tolosa**. Their estate vintages include no-oak Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, which are both worth taking home.

**Malibu** – Probably most known for *Baywatch* and astronomical real estate prices, there are now wineries in those hills by the famous shores. Our favorites are the **2003 Saddlerock Chardonnay** and the **2001 Semler Cabernet Sauvignon** under the **Malibu Family Wines** banner. On the PCH, **Rosenthal** has recently opened a tasting room where you can sample their Cabernet and Merlot by the sea.

**Beyond Temecula** – Just a short drive north of downtown San Diego, this sleepy in-land bedroom community now boasts some pretty good wine labels. Check out **Bernardo Winery** and the nearby **Rancho Bernardo Inn**. On-site **El Bizcocho** restaurant showcases some diverse wine pairing dinners featuring their 1,600-label wine list rivaling anything in Europe. Their 27-year-old chef de cuisine, **Gavin Kaysen**, is the U.S. representative for the *Bocuse d'Or*, the world's most prestigious culinary competition in France.

a food and wine lover's outing. From Clos Du Val, Chimney Rock, Regusci, Shafer and the private wine caves of Baldacci Family Vineyards you can easily spend a day tasting into the twilight. If you start feeling a bit peckish, stop for a cooking demonstration at Pine Ridge Winery with the talented Chef Eric C. Maczko, who used to work for Thomas Keller. His braised beef short ribs fall off the bone and marry perfectly with their 2002 Cab. If you're lucky, the tour might include a rare barrel tasting amid the fermentation tanks. For dessert, pop into Frank Family Vineyards champagne tasting room, followed up with a visit to Woodhouse Chocolates in St. Helena, who are making some of the most mouth-meltingly original sweet creations in the country.

A few other top stops to sharpen your culinary skills include Copia: The American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts, which offers cooking classes, tastings, lectures and tours amid the gardens and galleries, as well as Signorello Vineyards, which has recently added a new program focusing on food and wine pairings in their incredible kitchen which opens up to the tasting room. Continuing the gourmand valley trend is Chef Charlie Palmer, another early pioneer to the

area, who is expanding with a new conference venue to house an outpost of the esteemed Relish Culinary School, adjacent to his Dry Creek Kitchen restaurant in the Hotel Healdsburg.

Perhaps one of the top gourmet delights in the entire region is at Healdsburg's Cyrus Restaurant in Sonoma wine country. Chef Douglas Keane and owner Nick Peyton have been generating positive buzz with their rolling caviar cart featuring Iranian or Black River Oscetra. Topped off with a glass (or two) of bubbly, there just aren't enough indulgences like this in the world.

For the ultimate private estate soiree or wine country villa rental, Beautiful Places can find you an incredible property to stay in and they can arrange specialized wine tasting tours, picnics or have a top local chef come and cook gourmet treats for you. Invite several friends and organize a cooking class or a tour of hidden boutique wineries. If Pinot Noirs are your favorite, they will customize a trip focusing on the best the valley has to offer. After a long day out mingling with vintners, head back to your lush accommodations and have a wine-inspired spa treatment or call their private concierge service for whatever you might be in the mood for. □