

Escape to the wine country for these late April events



The Villa at Sunstone Winery in Santa Ynez, site of the Bounty of the Valley, a benefit for the Family School in Los Olivos on April 26. (Photographer: Jim Bartsch)

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Who can stay inside on these balmy spring days? It may not be warm enough for the beach yet, but this is perfect weather for a wine country jaunt. Throw a bag in the car and head out for one of these four wine events coming up before the end of the month.

Paso Robles is the site of the second annual **CABs of Distinction** festival April 25-26. Friday's calendar is filled with winery visits and winemaker dinners. Eberle Winery, for example, will be barbecuing tri-tip and pouring current vintages (complimentary). Halter Ranch winemaker Kevin Sass is giving a seminar on oak (\$65) and Justin Vineyards has planned a tour, tasting and lunch (\$30). The big gala is on Saturday at River Oaks Hot Springs in Paso Robles with 32 wineries (four of them *garagistes*) pouring their wines with cheese and charcuterie (\$90).

Local restaurants will be catering lunch. And to rev up the festivities, there will be live music and a barrel-making demonstration. Tickets for the CABs of Distinction Gala and other events can be purchased at www.pasoroblescab.com.

For something much closer to home, check out [Bounty of the Valley](#) on April 26 from 5 to 10 p.m. at [the Villa at Sunstone Winery](#) in Santa Ynez. Not normally open to the public, the Villa is a romantic confection built from reclaimed materials from Burgundy and Normandy. The event includes (of course) local wines and a slider competition pitting local chefs and winemakers against each other, plus live music from the Molly Ringwald Project. Admission also includes a spread of charcuterie and wood-fired pizza. Tickets are \$75 and go to raise money for The Family School in Los Olivos so you can bet lots of winemakers will be in attendance. All proceeds from the event benefit The Family School. Tickets can be purchased online at [The Family School](#).

The 2nd annual [Sierra Pelona Valley Vintners Wine & Jazz Festival](#) is practically next door in Agua Dulce, 45 minutes north of downtown Los Angeles. That takes place Saturday, April 26, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at [Reyes Winery](#). The winemakers in this relatively undiscovered wine country are generous enough to open up their tasting to local breweries and spirits producers, too. Food will be provided by Le Chêne French cuisine in Santa Clarita and Glendale's Porto Bakery among others. Musicians lined up for the jazz portion of the event include Quattro (2013 Latin Jazz Grammy nominee for best new artist), vocalist Lauren Koval and keyboardist Paul McDonald, Brazilian guitarist Jon Stephen, and Still Moving Project. A portion of the proceeds will benefit College of the Canyons, the Institute for the Culinary Arts, scheduled to open fall 2014. For more information on the 2014 Festival, and a up-to-date list of participants and events, visit the [SPVVA website](#).

If you're up to driving further north, in Napa Valley, the Stag's Leap District will be holding their annual "[Vineyard to Vintner](#)" celebration that same weekend. Of course, as with any wine festival worth its vino, there will be wine dinners and, in this case, visits to any of the 19 Stags Leap District Winegrower member wineries on Saturday (some are not normally open to the public). A grand finale brunch will be held at [Silverado Vineyards](#) on Sunday with Meadowood Restaurant cooking. On Friday, choose from four wine dinners cooked by four chefs at four different estates. Prices range from \$175 for a single day pass up to \$725 for the full three days. Big spenders, check out the Signature Weekend for Two for \$2,995. To buy tickets, [visit the website](#).

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