

Smart meetings

The Intelligent Way to Plan

September 2013 • \$5.00

Congratulations!

Fairmont Dallas

Best City Hotel



Partnerships & Pairings

Collaboration raises the bar in **Napa & Sonoma** counties

By Holly Woolard





There's competition, make no mistake about that. But Napa and Sonoma counties and the players in their flourishing wine, hospitality and travel industries also fervently believe in teamwork. There are partnerships at every turn throughout northern California's wine country, from luxurious hotels teaming up with vintners for private tastings to Michelin-starred restaurants relying on local farms to help them create the freshest seasonal dishes possible.

According to Allison Simpson, senior vice president of marketing for **Visit Napa Valley**, there has been a spirit of collaboration for more than 50 years fueled by the **Napa Valley Vintners** trade association, which boasts 450 members. Besides providing support among winemakers and growers, the vintners association has raised more than \$100 million for local organizations through its annual auction. The vintners and Visit Napa Valley also used their collective influence to become the official wine region for the 2013 America's Cup in San Francisco.

"The Napa Valley Vintners have done a remarkable job sharing the Napa Valley wine story in harmony with one another," Simpson says. "For us to have them as a partner is huge."

Hospitality de los Carneros unites wineries located in the famous Carneros appellation, which traverses Napa and Sonoma counties. The association was established in 2000 to educate the public about the Carneros region and has grown to 34 wineries. Annual events fund endowments at Napa Valley College and Santa Rosa Junior College for students pursuing wine-related careers.

It would be understandable if Napa and Sonoma counties were at war for their fair share of tourism and the meetings and events market. But northern California's renowned wine-producing regions seemingly understand and embrace the value of partnerships.

"I love it that we are so close to Napa," says Wendy Petersen, executive director of the **Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau**. "We complement each other so well."



Left: V Wine Cellar at Vintage Estate, Yountville; right: Solage Calistoga

"We set our sights to be a remarkably different hotel," says Jim Treadway, general manager.

Hotel Yountville is the first property many guests see when arriving in town from Highway 29. This boutique hotel is both contemporary and elegant, complementing a downtown replete with luxury. It has 80 guest rooms and a 4,000-square-foot spa onsite. There's complimentary wine tasting by local vintners on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

CALISTOGA & ST. HELENA

Just the name Calistoga evokes pampering and relaxation. Considering its natural hot springs have been promoted as a tourist destination since 1862, Calistoga has history and the natural resources to merit its status as a wellness mecca. "Calistoga is at the heart of the therapeutic/spa movement," Simpson says. "It was there before wine was important."

Solage Calistoga not only has a top-ranked spa, but also features Michelin-starred restaurant Solbar. This luxurious 22-acre property offers 89 guest studios and more than 15,000 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor function space. Solage has taken the wellness torch and run with it. The resort has a fleet of comfy bikes and all guests get their own upon check-in; the five-minute ride to town is encouraged. The adult pool stretches 130 feet, which offers extra length for lap swimmers. Putting its own twist on the mud bath, Spa Solage offers the Mudslide treatment; a mud bar allows guests to create their own body mask.

Calistoga Ranch is well suited to executive retreats and VIP gatherings. Unlike Solage, which is a place to see and be seen, the ranch is a secret enclave of 50 elegantly appointed guest suites with outdoor living rooms. San Francisco chef Gary Danko lives on the property and is available to create meals for your group. A large onsite farm is a valuable resource for creating fresh dishes.

Auberge Resorts has become quite the influencer in the area as owner of Solage, Calistoga Ranch and

Auberge du Soleil. Ranked the No. 1 hotel brand by business travelers surveyed by *Condé Nast Traveler*, Auberge has helped define Napa Valley luxury lodging, matching the excellence exuded by the region's wine and food industries.

Meadowood Napa Valley in St. Helena is home to a three-star Michelin restaurant overseen by chef Christopher Kostow, who was named among *Food & Wine* magazine's Best New Chefs in 2009. Meadowood offers 99 guest rooms, 3,711 sq. ft. of indoor meeting space and 16,475 sq. ft. of outdoor space.

Groups can take advantage of lots of activities, including tennis, swimming, croquet, golf and hiking on the resort's 4.5 miles of trails that explore the 250-acre grounds.

For another Michelin-starred dining experience, visit **Terra Restaurant** in the very walkable downtown area of St. Helena.

SANTA ROSA BASE CAMP

According to the Santa Rosa Convention & Visitors Bureau website, the county seat of Sonoma County is where "everything comes together: wine country and farm country, redwood forests and rivers, lakes and ocean." The playgrounds surrounding the largest city in both Sonoma and Napa counties create a bevy of offsite options to go along with enough lodging to support most small to medium-size meetings. Head west to the ocean, southeast to Sonoma Valley, northeast to Calistoga and straight down Highway 101 to San Francisco.

A great base camp for meetings is the 155-room **Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel & Spa**, which offers 40,000 sq. ft. of versatile indoor and outdoor function space and is home to the largest banquet room in Sonoma County at 6,944 sq. ft. It's located within 20 minutes of 200 wineries, including the Russian River Valley that produces award-winning Pinot noir and chardonnay thanks to its cool climate. The 138-room **Courtyard Santa Rosa** is ideal as an overflow hotel since it's across the street from the Hyatt. Its lobby was renovated earlier this year and room upgrades are slated to begin soon.

The historic 170-room **Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa** has 13,000 sq. ft. of meeting space spread out among 15 rooms. It has served as host and headquarters for a variety of events, including the ArtsSonoma Festival, annual Tattoos and Blues Event and Amgen Tour of California cycling race.

Hilton Sonoma Wine Country boasts 250 guest rooms, the most in Santa Rosa. There's more than 8,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including a 2,950-square-foot banquet room. The luxurious AAA Four Diamond **Vintners Inn** has 44 rooms and a separate event center, with 16,244 sq. ft. of meeting space and lots of outdoor space, patios and lawn areas.

Just south of Santa Rosa is Rohnert Park, where the \$800 million **Graton Resort & Casino** is scheduled to open in November. The Las Vegas-style casino will feature 3,000 slot machines, restaurants and a resort. Phase two of the project is the development of a six-story, 200-room hotel. The site of the casino and resort is a 66-acre plot owned by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. The **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Sonoma Wine Country** is a few blocks away from the casino site. The 245-room hotel features 48,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, including 30,000 sq. ft. outdoors, and is next to two 18-hole golf courses.



NAPA VALLEY		
	ROOMS/MEETING SPACE	WHAT'S DISTINCTIVE
Andaz Napa	141 rms/2,600 sq. ft.	Centrally located downtown Napa boutique with contemporary design; event terrace and indoor meeting space; community table in restaurant.
Auberge du Soleil	52 rms/4,785 sq. ft.	Located on a 33-acre slope off the Silverado Trail in Rutherford; Michelin-starred restaurant serves Mediterranean-influenced cuisine.
Calistoga Ranch	50 rms/7,000 sq. ft.	Guest suites are spaced out around the property for ultimate privacy; spa tents are located along the creek that traverses the property; farm now has chickens.
Embassy Suites Napa	205 rms/10,000 sq. ft.	Distinctive all-suite Mediterranean structure with central courtyard and millpond with resident swans; attractive meeting areas.
Harvest Inn	74 rms/13,550 sq. ft.	Peaceful estate atmosphere in St. Helena; AAA Four Diamond service; guest rooms have individual personality; meeting space ideal for executive meetings.
Meadowood Napa Valley	99 rms/20,000+ sq. ft.	This luxury retreat in St. Helena features an onsite three-star Michelin restaurant, 9-hole golf course, tennis courts and 4.5 miles of hiking trails.
Napa Valley Marriott Hotel & Spa	275 rms/12,000 sq. ft.	Contemporary low-rise complex with traditional meeting space and impressive outdoor patio and spa facility in city of Napa; chef's garden onsite.
Silverado Resort and Spa	390 rms/15,000 sq. ft.	Expansive Napa golf and spa resort with 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units; 1 large pool among 10 total onsite; 2 championship golf courses; 13 tennis courts.
Solage Calistoga	89 rms/15,000 sq. ft.	Complimentary bikes for all guests; onsite spa features mud bar to create personalized body mask; Solbar is a Michelin-starred restaurant.
The Meritage Resort & Spa	502 rms/50,000 sq. ft.	Napa's largest hotel also has the most meeting space and largest ballrooms; dramatic cave-like spa built below vineyards; new event terrace.
The Westin Verasa Napa	180 rms/12,000 sq. ft.	Sleek modern resort near Oxbow Market within walking distance of downtown attractions; pool and dining options are impressive.
Villagio Inn & Spa	138 rms/30,000 sq. ft.	Part of the Vintage Estate property in downtown Yountville; renowned spa features Lemon Juniper product line; buffet in the morning, tea in the afternoon.
Vintage Inn	92 rms/30,000 sq. ft.	Deluxe comfortable inn and spa located in pedestrian-friendly Yountville; extensive indoor and outdoor function spaces; most guest rooms have patios.
SONOMA COUNTY		
Bodega Bay Lodge	83 rms/2,890 sq. ft.	Set in picturesque coastal landscape; only AAA Four Diamond hotel on Sonoma Coast; onsite Duck Club Restaurant; meeting space has ocean views.
Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn & Spa	226 rms/12,000 sq. ft.	Grande dame of the valley in Boyes Hot Springs; plush rooms and public areas; famous 40,000-square-foot spa; elegant meeting space.
Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa	170 rms/13,000 sq. ft.	Classic resort in Santa Rosa that maintains its 1950s roots, but with modern amenities; 15 meeting and event spaces, including pool patio.
Fountaingrove Inn, Hotel & Conference Center	124 rms/7,050 sq. ft.	Santa Rosa location; contemporary resort feel; guests can access Ted Robinson Sr.-designed golf course; natural lighting in meeting space.
Hilton Sonoma Wine Country	250 rms/8,000 sq. ft.	Casual luxury resort in Santa Rosa with state-of-the-art meeting rooms; spacious contemporary public areas with traditional furnishings; near downtown.
Hotel Healdsburg	55 rms/5,450 sq. ft.	Highly regarded boutique in charming town square; 5 intimate event and meeting spaces for up to 200 attendees; spa nearby.
Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel & Spa	155 rms/40,000 sq. ft.	Located centrally in Santa Rosa and only 20 minutes to more than 200 wineries; conference center, as well as more than 20,000 sq. ft. of garden.
MacArthur Place Hotel & Spa	64 rms/5,000 sq. ft.	Located in the town of Sonoma; century-old, 5,000-square-foot barn is great for receptions; more than 40 treatments at onsite spa; Saddles restaurant onsite.
The Lodge at Sonoma Renaissance Resort & Spa	182 rms/11,000 sq. ft.	AAA Four Diamond property in Sonoma with 17 meeting rooms, including the 3,080-square-foot Sonoma Ballroom; indoor and outdoor venue options.
Timber Cove Inn	50 rms/940 sq. ft.	Situated on dramatic Pacific coastline in Jenner near hiking trails; onsite restaurant and access to sea kayaking and other outdoor activities.
Vintners Inn	44 rms/16,244 sq. ft.	Quintessential AAA Four Diamond country property in Santa Rosa; spacious rooms and suites; event catering by award-winning John Ash & Co. restaurant.