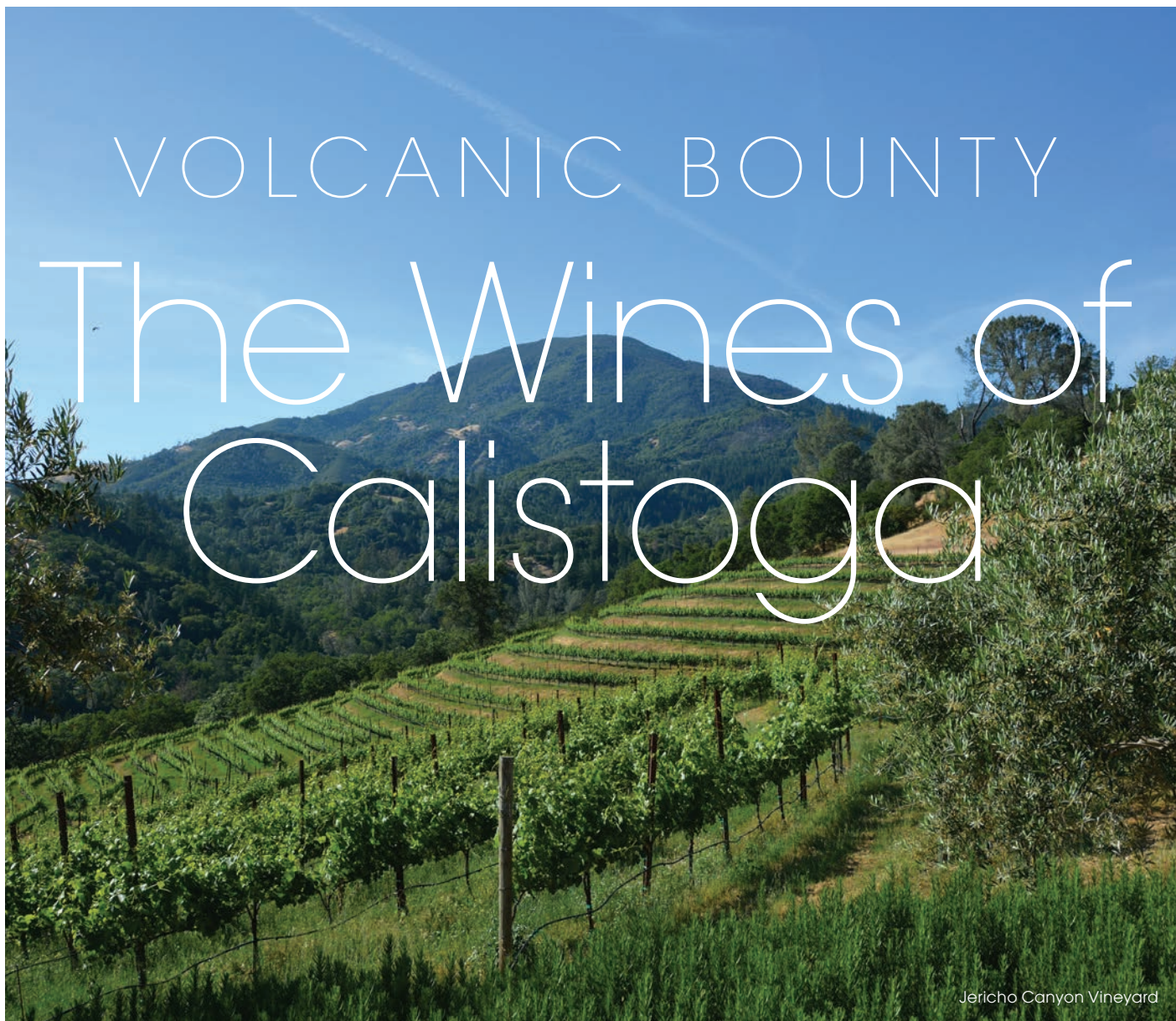


# VOLCANIC BOUNTY

# The Wines of

# Calistoga



Jericho Canyon Vineyard



Chateau Montelena Winery



Tom Eddy's Cave

BY JOANN ACTIS-GRANDE

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP: COURTESY OF JERICHO CANYON VINEYARD; BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY; RIGHT: JOANN ACTIS-GRANDE



## A trip 75 miles north of San Francisco is a journey

back in time to a quaint western-style town, where wine barrels have replaced hitching posts. The town is Calistoga, a wine region situated in the northern tip of Napa Valley, California, one of the most famous wine regions in the world, where grapes and wines have been produced for more than 150 years.

Getting there is fun and informative. As you cruise up Highway 29, you'll pass legendary wineries such as Robert Mondavi, Grgich Hills, Krug, Louis Martini, and Sterling, just to name a few. When you see the Culinary Institute of America (formally Christian Brothers Winery), where countless wine professionals graduate from the school's Rudd Center for Professional Wine Studies, you're almost there.

The Wappo Indians were the original settlers in Napa Valley. They chose Calistoga as their home for its abundance of natural resources, many of them used for healing remedies. When Mount Konocti, a volcano located 20 miles from Calistoga, erupted over 10,000 years ago, volcanic ash was left all around. The eruption also caused a geyser, which hits the hot magma. The heated water resurfaces, rising through old sea beds and picking up rich mineral and salt traces known as mineral baths.

Hot springs and mineral baths were Calistoga's original claim to fame, but in the late 1960s the area became a noteworthy wine region, due to its terroir of various volcanic soil types that produce unique wines. Growth has been slow but steady. In 1990 there were 13 wineries in Calistoga; today there are over five dozen.

In December 2009, Calistoga became an American Viticultural Area (known as an AVA or Appellation), meaning 85 percent of the grapes used are only grown by vineyards in the region. Today, there are 17 Appellations in Napa Valley with over 400 wineries; 60 are located in Calistoga, but not all make Calistoga AVA wine.

Calistoga has the highest peak temperatures of any AVA in Napa Valley; warm days and cool nights with just enough fog to create ideal conditions for producing a wide array of grape varieties. The daytime climate is perfect for producing rich, bold reds. The cool evenings allow sugar levels to drop, providing a good balance of acidity, and a longer growing season permits the grapes to ripen

to their fullest potential. Cabernet sauvignon is the most widely planted grape variety. The other popular varieties are cabernet franc, merlot, petite syrah, petit verdot, sauvignon blanc, and zinfandel.

Calistoga is a prime destination for visitors to learn about grapes and winemaking, and taste many excellent wines in a peaceful, relaxed, and healthy environment. For information on accommodations, dining, and non-wine activities, see "Destination Taste: Calistoga" on page 126.

## NOTABLE CALISTOGA WINERIES

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### Chateau Montelena Winery

*montelena.com*

Pioneer Jim Barrett began his winery in the early 1970s and produced the award-winning 1973 Montelena Chardonnay submitted to the famous 1976 Paris Tasting that helped place Napa Valley on the map as a world-class wine region. The winery is located in a beautiful stone chateau built in 1888 originally intended as a barrel aging building. Today the winery is run by Jim's son, Bo Barrett, and continues to produce outstanding estate wines, including chardonnay, cabernet sauvignon, zinfandel, and Potter Valley Riesling.



### Jack Brooks Vineyard

[jbvineyard.com](http://jbvineyard.com)

Larry and Eileen Arnoff traveled the world tasting wines, including visits to Napa Valley, before deciding to buy land and plant a vineyard. In 2000 they found a small site on a rocky hillside located in the Calistoga AVA that was right for them. Their focus is cabernet sauvignon and they chose to plant specific clones of the grape. The vineyard is dry farmed, producing less fruit than vineyards that are watered. These wines tend to be lower in alcohol, bringing out more of the fruit flavors that result in an elegant cab with good acidity that's easy to enjoy with food.

### Jericho Canyon Vineyard

[jerichocanyonvineyard.com](http://jerichocanyonvineyard.com)

Embraced by the power of the Palisades and Mount St. Helena, this family owned and operated sustainable winery produces Bordeaux-based wines from their own vineyards planted on steep, rugged, terraced hillsides. Marla and Dale Bleecher completed a lovely state-of-the-art redwood building in 2006 that opens to a 6,000-square-foot cave where their son Nicholas handcrafts wines that are full bodied, well balanced, and complex. In addition to making double gold awarded cabernet sauvignon, they also produce an estate rosé and sauvignon blanc.

## SIPPING CALISTOGA

Tasting wines in the region they are produced makes the experience more meaningful, especially when you visit the winery and meet the people behind the label. Advance planning will guarantee time at the wineries you choose, as some require appointments. Check winery websites for details.

The Calistoga Shuttle ([ridethevine.com](http://ridethevine.com)) is an easy and safe (no worries about designating a driver!) way to visit wineries, available to anyone staying within the city boundaries of Calistoga. Many properties include a pass with accommodations.

Organized tours are a great option for visiting multiple wineries. We recommend the following companies, which also can coordinate a meal with the tour.

**Platypus Wine Tours** [platypustours.com](http://platypustours.com)

**Beau Wine Tours** [beauwinetours.com](http://beauwinetours.com)

**Napa Terroir Wine Tours** [napaterroirwinetours.com](http://napaterroirwinetours.com)

**Wine Me Away** [winemeaway.com](http://winemeaway.com)



Plan your visit around a wine happening. Throughout the year, Calistoga hosts amazing events, offering the opportunity to taste multiple Calistoga AVA wines while enjoying all the area has to offer. Check out [visitcalistoga.com/events](http://visitcalistoga.com/events) for a complete schedule. Following are three highlights:

### Calistoga Food & Wine Event, April

[calistogafoodandwine.com](http://calistogafoodandwine.com)

The three-day weekend features a series of exclusive wine tastings and festive dining experiences showcasing the talents of world-renowned local and global chefs and award-winning wineries at hotspots throughout Calistoga.

### Calistoga Wine Experience, September

[calistogawinegrowers.com](http://calistogawinegrowers.com)

The Calistoga Wine Growers sponsor this opportunity to taste several dozen wines in one afternoon at Pioneer Park. Some 40 Calistoga AVA wineries will be pouring, and you'll have the opportunity to meet the owners and winemakers.

### Harvest Table, September

[visitcalistoga.com/calistoga-harvest-table](http://visitcalistoga.com/calistoga-harvest-table)

Held the day after the Wine Experience, in celebration of a plentiful harvest season. Over a dozen Calistoga restaurants and wineries welcome diners to 1,000 feet of tables set in the center of the city's picturesque downtown. Dinner begins with a toast led by a local luminary. Get on the mailing list as tickets for this popular event sell out quickly.

**Summers Estate Wines**

[summerswinery.com](http://summerswinery.com)

Creating red wine from grapes grown on small acreages in both Napa Valley and Knights Valley is the passion of Beth and Jim Summers. With their first vineyards in Knights Valley producing award-winning merlot, they looked towards Calistoga for a winery, tasting room, entertainment center, bocce ball court, and picnic area. Their 22-plus acres of vines include cabernet sauvignon, zinfandel, and charbono—they are one of the few sources for this grape in California. The Estate Charbono grown on Villa Andriana Vineyard is their signature wine.

**Tom Eddy Winery**

[tommeddywinery.com](http://tommeddywinery.com)

A breathtaking ranch situated at 1,000 feet in elevation in the northern most part of Napa County (with sections in Sonoma) that was once an olive grove has been the home of Tom and Kerry Eddy since 1999. Today, in a beautiful state-of-the art winery and cave (completed in 2015), you can taste one of the region's finest cabernet sauvignons made from their own premier mountain fruit. You can also taste pinot noir from Manchester Ridge and sauvignon blanc from TENZ—their New Zealand project. Tom has been making great wines for decades (he was once a winemaker at Christian Brothers) and this year celebrates his 43rd harvest in California.

**T-Vine Winery**

[tvinewinery.com](http://tvinewinery.com)

Just before entering downtown Calistoga you will see a winery with its logo in the shape of an old vine—the “T” in T-Vine represents a trinity symbolizing the body, mind, and spirit. This modern winery and tasting room offers only red wines that are made from small lots of unique grape varietals, sourced from third- and fourth-generation growers, producing big, juicy, bold wines. They are known for wines from Rhone varietals and were the first winery to produce Grenache in Napa Valley. **1**



T-Vine Winery

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF T-VINE WINERY

*Great food... casual...  
fresh seafood & lobster...  
friendly... five-star service...  
excellent service...  
full bar... nearby...  
long wine list...  
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daily specials...  
popular with locals & folks  
from away...  
in-house pastry chef...  
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