

# *Sipping*

# SANTA BARBARA

## RECOMMENDED WINES AND PRODUCERS



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**A PREVIEW OF**

*Sipping*  
**Santa Barbara**

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**RECOMMENDED WINES AND PRODUCERS**

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Author: Charine Tan and Dr Matthew Horkey

Title: Sipping Santa Barbara: Recommended Wines and Producers

ISBN: 978-981-11-3610-8

Category: Wine & Spirit, Travel/Special Interest

1st edition, 2017

Book cover features the images by sborisov and Gustavo Frazao — bigstockphoto.com

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# ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is meant to be a practical guide, designed for people who enjoy wine either casually or with great curiosity and vigor. The most common problem encountered by wine lovers when visiting a new region is how to spend their limited amount of time sifting through all the wines and producers. This is why we've created this book, which will provide you the information to maximize your time in Santa Barbara County.

This book is also meant to be an introduction to the wines of Santa Barbara County based on our firsthand experience and it is by no means exhaustive. At the time of our trip, there were over 200 wineries in Santa Barbara County and we did not have sufficient time and resources to cover all of them, but try we did. Through this book, you will be armed with information to get you started on exploring the wines in Santa Barbara and identify the types of wines that you might enjoy. From there, you'll be able to branch out on your own and create your personal wine adventure.







# TIPS FOR YOUR VISIT

- 📍 Visiting a wine region for the first time is exciting but can also be a daunting experience. It can be challenging to remember and make sense of the appellations, geographical characteristics, soil types, and climate differences. For a start, we recommend that you take note of or ask the staff about the vintage of the wine, the grape variety/varieties used in the wine that you like, and the location that the grapes are sourced. These three factors form the “holy trinity” that will determine the taste and the style of a wine to a large extent. It would also help you to understand what you like and why you like what you like.
- 📍 Take note of the winemaker’s name as well. The winemaking community is relatively small in the county and you’ll soon learn that the same winemaker may be making wine for Winery A a few years ago but has since moved on to Winery B, or is consulting three or four different wineries in the county simultaneously. Sometimes, you might end up liking the signature style of a winery and sometimes you might be partial to the craft of a specific winemaker.
- 📍 Be open-minded and ready to delve into the diversity of the region, even if you prefer a specific style of wine or a specific variety prior to your trip. Try to taste wines from each of the AVA in order to get a sense of each place and its microclimate. Santa Barbara County offers both novices and aficionados the opportunity to learn something new.





- 📍 Please note that the information – including opening hours, contact details, and prices – provided in this book is believed to be accurate at the time of writing and are subject to changes. To stay informed of any possible changes, we highly recommend that you either call the establishment or visit its website prior to your visit.
- 📍 The towns within the county are relatively close in driving distance. For example, from the city of Santa Barbara, it is about a 45-minute drive to Buellton along Highway 101 and to Santa Ynez via 154. Once you're in the county, expect to spend 10 to 45 minutes driving from one town to another.
- 📍 Do plan ahead and map out a route. Santa Barbara County is a big area but some tasting rooms may be just a few meters apart. There are several towns in the county that have clusters of tasting rooms. With advanced planning and scheduled appointments, you can expect to visit three to six producers in a single day.
- 📍 In Santa Barbara County, you'll spend most of the time visiting tasting rooms as opposed to wineries; most of the wineries are not open to the public. Some wineries have their own tasting rooms while others use wine bars and shops to showcase their wines. Most of the tasting sessions are priced between \$10 to \$20 per person. Sometimes, there's also the option of trying library wines, which would then add to the cost.
- 📍 If time and budget permit, it's always wise to opt for the most comprehensive and premium tasting option on the menu. Due to small production volume, most of the wines in Santa Barbara County are not exported out of the region and sometimes are sold exclusively through mailing lists. This means that your best chance to try those wines is when you visit the wineries or tasting rooms.





- 📍 Most of the tasting rooms are run by the staff and it's not common that the proprietors or winemakers are present. As such, for the hardcore wine geeks, it might be difficult to obtain technical answers. However, the staff are always happy to help you get in touch with the right people and have your questions answered.
- 📍 Make sure you have a designated driver. Chances are you will end up tasting more wine than you expect and those few sips can really add up.







# AN INTRODUCTION TO SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Located on the southern end of the Central Coast appellation, Santa Barbara County is about an hour and a half drive northwest of Los Angeles, California. Although it is merely 90 miles away from the second largest city in America, Santa Barbara County feels like another world. The county seat is the city of Santa Barbara, which has the beautiful beach flanking on one side and the rugged Santa Ynez Mountains serving as the backdrop. Driving deeper into the heartlands of the county reveals tiny towns, rolling hills, and the occasional sight of men in cowboy boots and hats.



The history of Santa Barbara County can be traced back to five million years ago. Tectonic activity thrust up a huge part of the land and rotated it, which created a geologic anomaly compared to the rest of California. Looking at the topographic map of California, you'll see that the mountain ranges run north to south and parallel to the coastline. Because of the geologic activity, the mountain ranges in Santa Barbara are transverse and run east to west. This topographical feature creates wind tunnels that







enable cool air to flow from the Pacific Ocean into the valleys, keeping the temperatures moderate during the day and cool at night. The Pacific Ocean air also creates a morning fog that cools and protects the grapes. All in all, the county is generally characterized by cool climate, little to no rainfall especially during the harvest period, a lot of sunshine, and extremely long growing season.

These climatic and geographical features have helped Santa Barbara County to become a sublime spot for viticulture. In fact, it is one of the oldest wine-producing areas in California with the first wine grapes being planted by the missionaries in the late 1700's.

The modern commercial production as we know it today only came about in 1960, when the first commercial vineyard was planted in the Tepusquet region of Santa Maria Valley. Initially, most of the fruit produced was shipped out of the county to be vinified. Then in 1962, **Santa Barbara Winery**, the first post-prohibition commercial winery in the county was established. In 1975, **Firestone** became the first estate winery to make wine using its own locally grown grapes.

The biggest revolution happened in the early 1980's when the county became known for its independent winemakers with larger-than-life personalities. Among the first generation of winemakers that arrived in the county were Bill Wathen (**Foxen Vineyard & Winery**), Bob Lindquist (**Qupé**), Bryan Babcock (**Babcock Winery & Vineyards**), Chris Whitcraft (**Whitcraft Winery**), Jim Clendenen (**Au Bon Climat**), Richard Sanford (now **Alma Rosa Winery**), Rick Longoria (**Longoria Wines**), and Lane Tanner (now **Lumen Wines**) to name a few.





The spirit of innovation and quality permeated the county. Loads of delicious wines were coming out of Santa Barbara County that could have built the area's reputation single-handedly. Then in 2004, the critically acclaimed film *Sideways* was released. Most of *Sideways* was shot and set in Santa Barbara County. The film's popularity and the main character's affinity for Pinot Noir only added to the county's sparkling reputation.

Today, the Santa Barbara County wine industry is said to generate around \$1.7 billion of annual revenue and the industry accounts for more than 9,000 full-time jobs. There are now about 200 wineries in the region and more than 27,000 acres of vines.

Despite all the attention, Santa Barbara County remains somewhat alternative especially in comparison to the other California's wine regions. There is electricity in the air as an abundance of veteran experience and young talent keep the wine scene fresh.

## Impressions of Santa Barbara County

Santa Barbara County may be the most fascinating wine region in California. The types of wineries range from urban, to micro, boutique, and family-owned, with varying levels of output that can be as little as a few hundred cases per year to hundreds of thousands. The largest winery is **Cambria** – which belongs to the Jackson Family Wines Collection – and they produce 100% estate-bottled wines from their 1,600 acres (around 647 hectares) of sustainably farmed vineyards in Santa Maria Valley.







The relatively low cost of wine production by California standards lowers the barriers to entry for young, bootstrapping winemakers. This is most evident in the town of Lompoc where many winemakers rent warehouse space to use as winemaking facilities or tasting rooms. We'll share more on this later.

It seems like Santa Barbara County never falters in its progress, with an ever-expanding roster of young talent joining the veterans at the helm and new AVAs continue to be recognized. The whole region gives off an indie and iconoclastic feel.

Because of the excellent balance of geology, climate, soil, and water, Santa Barbara County is among the world's most versatile grape-growing regions with a wide array of microclimates. The wine grape varieties grown include Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc, Grenache, Marsanne, Mourvèdre, Merlot, Nebbiolo, Petite Sirah, Petit Verdot, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Riesling, Roussanne, Sangiovese, Sauvignon Blanc, Syrah, and Viognier.

The two varieties that are synonymous with the county are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. While there are excellent, world-class examples of wines made from these two varieties, Santa Barbara County isn't just about that. Rhône varieties have taken hold of the land and the climate here may be the best place in California for growing Syrah. A number of the wineries that we've visited make a varietal wine from Mourvèdre grapes, but the demand is so high that it's a challenge to keep it in stock. The warmer area of Happy Canyon is a proving ground that Bordeaux varieties can flourish in the county. We've tasted a few excellent Bordeaux-style red blends, single-varietal Cabernet Sauvignons, and Sauvignon Blanc-based wines.





A lot of experiments happen in the wineries; sometimes, the grape-growing conditions in Santa Barbara County are so ideal that the question becomes what is being done with the grapes. That is not to imply that the winemakers employ newfangled winemaking techniques. In fact, the “make wine in the vineyard and not in the winery”, minimal-intervention approach is widely celebrated here. Carbonic maceration, whole bunch fermentation, and blending are a few methods that winemakers use to differentiate their wines and to bring out the most authentic expression of the varieties and vineyard expressions. While not pervasive, screwcap enclosure is also widely accepted here.

The baseline of wine quality is high across the board and there's at least one outstanding wine to be found at every winery. This is good news for the visitors as there is no need to search for the best producers but instead, the focus can be shifted to personal preference in wine. Whatever your preference may be, Santa Barbara County can deliver on it.







# REGION LAYOUT

At 3,729 square miles in size, Santa Barbara County offers unique topography and climatic diversity that give birth to six official and federally sanctioned AVAs (American Viticultural Areas): Ballard Canyon, Happy Canyon, Los Olivos District, Santa Maria Valley, Sta. Rita Hills, and Santa Ynez Valley, plus one pending AVA in Alisos Canyon. The distance between the grape-growing area and the cooling effects of the Pacific Ocean is a key factor that shapes the characteristics of each AVA. The western areas are cooler, while the eastern reaches are warmer. The Santa Maria Valley lies to the north and the Santa Ynez Valley is further south. The grapes also show considerable vineyard-to-vineyard variation within each AVA.

## Santa Maria Valley AVA

Established in 1981, this is the northernmost and oldest AVA of the region. It sees direct access to the cool ocean breezes but it does not have the topography to create a natural wind tunnel like Sta. Rita Hills. The famous Bien Nacido Vineyards lies within this valley. There are several varieties grown here but the flagships are Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Syrah. The Pinot Noir here can taste vastly different from the ones in Sta. Rita Hills. Antonio Galloni of Vinous writes, "At their best, Santa Maria wines easily compete with the very finest anywhere in the United States." We really enjoy the wines from this AVA as we find them to have nice acidic backbone, high drinkability, and yet not shy on complexity. Chardonnay from this appellation can range from lean





with crisp acidity to full-bodied with floral tone. The Pinot Noir from this AVA is noted for its slightly spicy and earthy characteristics.

## **Santa Ynez Valley AVA**

Another long east-west corridor with varying temperature. The west side of the valley is cooler as it is closer to the Pacific breeze while the east side and further inland are significantly warmer. The diversity in climates within this AVA allows the growing of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and varieties of Bordeaux and Rhône such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Grenache, Marsanne, Mourvèdre, Roussanne, and Syrah. This AVA has the largest concentration of wineries and the grape varieties grown here are also the most varied. Please note that four other AVAs are nestled within this AVA, and they are Sta. Rita Hills, Happy Canyon, Ballard Canyon, and Los Olivos District.

## **Sta. Rita Hills AVA**

Created in 2001, this AVA was known as Santa Rita Hills up until 2006. The name was changed to Sta. Rita Hills because a Chilean wine producer called Viña Santa Rita objected to the initial spelling. This is the westernmost AVA and it has direct access to the cool ocean breeze. The hills act as narrow corridors and the breeze shoots through them, creating a very cool climate here. About 65% of the vines here are Pinot Noir and a good portion is Chardonnay. Other grapes that are grown here include Syrah, Grenache, Pinot Blanc, and Pinot Gris. This is an optimal place to grow Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The vineyard sites in Sta. Rita Hills make a huge difference in the flavor







profiles of these grapes. In Chardonnay, expect to find mineral, smoke, or flint characteristic. For Pinot Noir wines, the majority are rich and concentrated with red fruit accent. There tends to be more stem inclusion used in the vinification of Pinot Noir here which can lend interesting flavors and tannins to the wines. Pinot Noir, especially the single-vineyard, that bears this appellation is said to perform better after five years of barrel and bottle aging. People who are used to European-style Pinot Noirs might be perplexed when they taste the ones from Sta. Rita Hills.



*La Encantada is the westernmost vineyard in the Sta. Rita Hills AVA. Photo by Lutum Wines.*

## Happy Canyon AVA

This is the most inland AVA and because of that, it is significantly warmer than the other AVAs. It is at the far eastern edge of the Santa Ynez Valley AVA and has shown promise with Bordeaux varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Sauvignon Blanc. The wines from this AVA can be





exciting, especially the Cabernet Sauvignon blends which tend to express ripe fruit notes without being overbearing.

## **Ballard Canyon AVA**

This is the smallest AVA of the region and is situated near the town of Buellton. This area is known for producing Rhône-style wines. More than half of the plantings here are Syrah. We enjoy the reds from this area and find them to be aromatic, fruit-forward, rich, slightly earthy, and with approachable tannins.

## **Los Olivos District AVA**

This is the newest AVA of the county and it is a relatively small area. It sits within a triangle created by the towns of Solvang, Santa Ynez, and Los Olivos. From a geological perspective, it is fairly uniform and produces a handful of interesting wines from Bordeaux and Rhône varieties. Italian and Spanish varieties can also be found here. We don't see many wines bearing this AVA and that's understandably so since the AVA was established only in January 2016.







# LOMPOC WINE TRAIL

Lompoc is a small town in the western part of Santa Barbara County. The town is laid out in a grid pattern and the architecture is quaintly dated. It feels as if the inhabitants are completely unaware of the wine scene that is thriving on their doorstep. Finding local wines at the neighborhood supermarkets is difficult and the best place to purchase wine is at the Lompoc Wine Ghetto.

Lompoc Wine Ghetto is several blocks behind Home Depot where CA-1 and CA-246 meet. There are over 20 tasting rooms in the Wine Ghetto, which was founded by Rick Longoria. In 1998, due to financial reasons, Longoria decided to build his winery into a warehouse located at the present-day Wine Ghetto. Other young winemakers followed suit. And from there, the rows of wineries were developed into today's four-block industrial park on the southeast side of town.

The drab facade belies the interior and the actual tasting experience. Inside the warehouses, the tasting rooms are packed with energy. Decorations are often kept to a minimum; the environment is fun and inviting with a touch of individualistic personality. As a case in point, the tasting room of **Palmina** looks and feels like a friendly neighborhood bar. A couple of the wineries, including the big names like **Brewer-Clifton** and **Longoria**, are no longer in the main warehouse part of the Wine Ghetto but a few blocks west of town.

Take your time to walk from tasting room to tasting room, and do ask the locals for recommendations. Don't be afraid to be spontaneous; we chanced upon a number of excellent wines because of sheer coincidence and recommendation. Most facilities here are lean and production volumes are comparatively low. A lot of the wines are limited and with high critic scores to boot. There's a good chance you will meet a few winemakers here. This is the





best place for visitors to have a firsthand look at winemaking and understand the tapestry of experience and innovation happening in Santa Barbara County.

Please note that most of the tasting rooms are open only on weekends and opening hours are usually from 11AM or 12PM to 4PM or 5PM. Some tasting rooms may be closed without prior notice.

The **Taste of Sta. Rita Hills** is an interesting wine bar in the Wine Ghetto. It offers a wide selection of wines by the glass and most of these wines are from elusive wineries that either don't have a tasting room or are hard to make an appointment with. There are a few budget hotels in town but most visitors would opt to stay somewhere else. For food, there are many hole-in-the-wall Mexican eateries throughout the town, including our favorite **Floriano's Mexican Food**, which is a few blocks away from the Wine Ghetto. **La Botte** and **Scratch Kitchen** are two options if you're looking for an upscale yet still casual experience. Lastly, if you are craving an old-fashioned, greasy spoon café, be sure to check out **American Host**, which is widely popular among the locals. We enjoyed having breakfast there.







# STA. RITA HILLS WINE TRAIL

These wineries are located along the two corridors between Lompoc and Buellton. There are two roads that transverse the hills. The southern corridor is accessed via the Santa Rosa Road while the northern corridor has CA-246 running through it. We recommend driving through the hills at sunset, with the windows down, and the music blasting.



*Vineyards in Sta. Rita Hills.*





# SANTA BARBARA URBAN WINE TRAIL



*Photo by Mark Weber. Courtesy of Visit Santa Barbara.*

The town of Santa Barbara, also known as “The American Riviera”, is the county seat of Santa Barbara County. Tucked between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, the town boasts many stunning natural and man-made attractions – from the Spanish colonial architecture, to pristine beaches, vibrant gastronomy scene, trendy boutiques, and intriguing galleries. With the proximity to Los Angeles, fair weather, golden beaches in the front, steep Santa Ynez Mountains in the rear, neatly laid-out streets, and multiple trails of wine adventure in town, it is no wonder that Santa Barbara makes a compelling destination for many people.





There are 28 (this number tends to fluctuate) wine tasting rooms located in three parts of town: the downtown, east side, and The Funk Zone. The largest concentration is in The Funk Zone. Located near the water, it is a refurbished area made up of several blocks of converted warehouses and buildings.

Also in The Funk Zone is **Santa Barbara Wine Collective**, which acts as a tasting room for several wineries, including **Babcock**, **Ca'Del Grevino**, **Fess Parker**, **Notary Public**, and **The Paring**. Ernst Storm is the proprietor and winemaker of Notary Public and **Storm** wineries. He produces highly sought-after Pinot Noir and Sauvignon Blanc under the label Storm, and explores the warmer sites of Santa Ynez Valley through Notary Public, with a focus on Cabernet Sauvignon and Chenin Blanc. At **Santa Barbara Wine Collective**, visitors get to explore the portfolio of various wine producers and AVAs. Being able to taste different wines and different AVAs side by side is a great opportunity to get a sense of Santa Barbara County as a wine region. While tasting at **Santa Barbara Wine Collective**, you can also fill yourself up with freshly baked goods from **Helena Avenue Bakery**, which shares space with the Collective.

Another wine bar to take note is **Les Marchands**, where parts of the film *Somm: Into The Bottle* were shot. At Les Marchands, you'll be spoilt for choices with not only wines from Santa Barbara County, but also international selection. But why go international when you can find limited-production wines by local heavyweights like **Chanin** and **Tyler**?

There are plenty of restaurants and eateries in town, which makes for an exciting pit stop for lunch or dinner. Right next to Les Marchands is **The Lark**, one of the hottest restaurants in town. If you're in the mood for beans, corn, and guacamole, take a walk to **Mony's Mexican Food** or **Lilly's Tacos**. Craving wood-fired pizza? Check out **Lucky Penny**. Looking for a taste of Spain? Head to **Loquita**. Wondering what cicchetti is all about? **Convivo** has you covered. Can't decide what you want? **Santa Barbara Public Market** can sort you out.



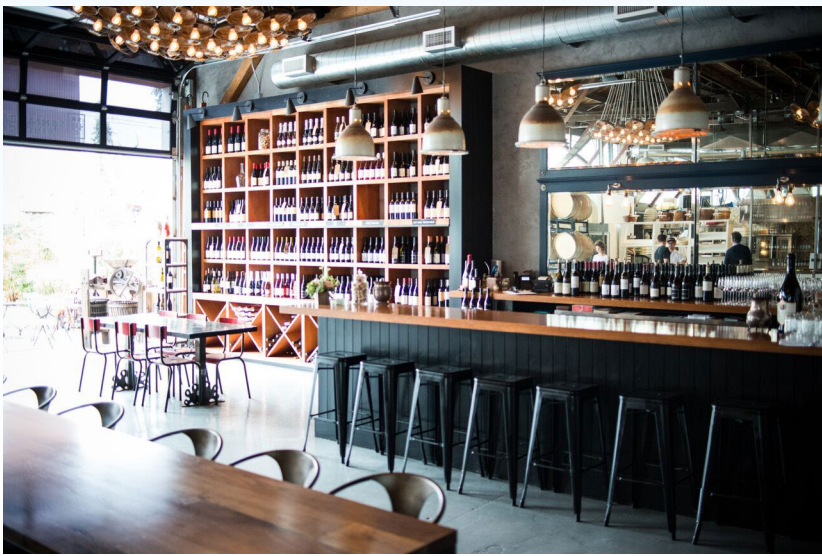


The second biggest concentration of tasting rooms is in downtown Santa Barbara; there are seven tasting rooms that are walking distance from each other. Five of the seven tasting rooms, including the illustrious **Au Bon Climat**, are in the same block. In the rare event that you get tired of drinking wine, The **Santa Barbara Brewing Company** is located downtown on State Street.

A handful of tasting rooms, including **Jaffurs Wine Cellars** and **Whitcraft Winery**, are spread out on the east side of the town. The east side is also home to a famous Mexican restaurant named **Los Agaves**.

If you are planning to taste through most of or all the wineries, then the Santa Barbara Urban Wine Trail Membership Card is what you need. The membership includes a one-time complimentary tasting at each winery listed in the trail. You'll also receive a 10% single purchase discount on the day of your tasting. More information on Santa Barbara Urban Wine Trail, including maps, is available on <http://www.urbanwinetrailsb.com>.

Keep in mind that most of the tasting rooms are open from 11AM to 5M or 12PM to 6PM. For your last visit, you should arrive at the tasting room at least half an hour before closing time.



*Santa Barbara Wine Collective. Photo by Rob Stark.*







# SANTA MARIA WINE TRAIL

The city of Santa Maria is the biggest city in the county. However, it does not have a large concentration of tasting rooms like the other three towns mentioned earlier in the book. There are only a handful of wineries represented in town, including the highly recommended **Ca'Del Grevino**. The advantage of staying here is its proximity to the Bien Nacido Vineyards and Foxen Canyon Road.

The countryside of the Santa Maria Valley AVA is incredibly striking. During the early evening, the light hits the rolling hills and turns them into golden, glowing crowns above endless rows of vines. Driving here is a real treat; the motorways are winding two-lane roads that weave through open brush land, abandoned oil wells, and – of course – stunning vineyards. By the end of the day, you'll feel like you deserve a palate massage from an exquisite Pinot Noir.

Santa Maria has a selection of hotels, restaurants, and wine shops available. More information can be found on <http://santamariawines.com>.

Please note: this wine trail is also known as the "Foxen Canyon Wine Trail".



*The tasting room of Zaca Mesa Winery & Vineyards.*





# BUELLTON WINE TRAIL

If you like the film *Sideways* a quarter as much our co-author Matthew Horkey does, then this is the town you don't want to miss. In the film, Jack and Miles stay at the fictional Windmill Hotel, the inspiration behind the actual *Sideways* Inn in Buellton; we did not stay there. Buellton is yet another small town conveniently located in the center of the county and in the middle of Santa Ynez Valley, just off Highway 101 between the Sta. Rita Hills AVA and Santa Ynez Valley AVA. This town has many lodging options, including economical accommodation and a Marriott Hotel.

While Buellton doesn't have the sheer volume of tasting options like nearby Los Olivos, there are still a handful of producers that are worth seeking out. The visit that we appreciated the most here was **Alma Rosa**, Richard Sanford's new brainchild. Richard disconnected from his original namesake project, Sanford Winery, and started Alma Rosa in 2005.

Buellton offers a good range of food options, making it an ideal stop for lunch or dinner even if you are not staying here. The star of the restaurant scene is **The Hitching Post II**, which is heavily featured in *Sideways* too. The restaurant is known to dish out an excellent off-menu burger in limited quantities on the evenings of Monday through Wednesday. The only place to get the burger is at the restaurant's bar section and it does not take reservations, so try to get in as early as possible; dinner starts at 5PM. The restaurant also offers its own brand of wines under the name of **Hartley Ostini Hitching Post**. The lineup includes several soulful Pinot Noirs.







A newer establishment called **Industrial Eats** is on its way to securing the spotlight. The appeal is justified on many fronts: free corkage; an inviting open concept kitchen; everything is cooked in a wood-fired oven, and plenty of off-menu items. Its Beef Tongue Pastrami Sandwich might just be one of the best sandwiches in the world. Many people in the wine industry recommended this place to us and we enjoyed it so much that we ate here for several consecutive days.



*The Hitching Post II Restaurant & Winery. Photo by Jeremy Ball.*







# SANTA YNEZ WINE TRAIL

The town of Santa Ynez is at the heart of the AVA that bears the same name. There are only a few tasting rooms in town but there are many estates in the surrounding area. Most of the tasting rooms here are located within the estate properties, so you'll be able to have a look at the wineries and vineyards during your visits. Our first view of the area was when we drove up CA-154 from the town of Santa Barbara. We arrived at sunset, greeted by the incredible sight of golden hills wrapped around old creek beds, horse ranches, and green vineyards.



*Photo by Beckmen Vineyards.*





# SOLVANG WINE TRAIL

Known as the “Danish Capital of America”, Solvang is a Danish-style town in Santa Ynez Valley. The town was founded in 1911 by a group of Danes who wanted to escape the Midwestern winters and found solace in this part of American West. There are plenty of hotels, bakeries, restaurants, as well as a handful of tasting rooms in the very compact downtown area.



*Photo by Suzuki Hironobu, CC BY-SA 3.0.*





# WINE RECOMMENDATIONS



## **Alma Rosa, Pinot Blanc, La Encantada Vineyard, 2013**

Appellation: Sta. Rita Hills

Price: \$28

Aged for nine months in used oak. Filtered but not fined. This has an intense floral aroma and persistent salinity. Flavors of white peach, honeydew, banana, honeysuckle, and citrus fruit. It has good weight in the mouth and the acidity rounds up this stunningly nervy wine.



## **Ampelos, Grenache, Delta, 2012**

Appellation: Sta. Rita Hills

Price: \$37

Made from the fruit of the Ampelos Vineyard, which is sustainability-in-practice, organic and biodynamic certified. The grapes get extended hang time due to the coastal climate. Fermented with native yeast, the wine spent 33 months in 35% new French and American oak, and then bottled without fining and filtration. The purity of red fruit jumps right out without fanfare, but not in an overblown manner. There aren't layers of complexity to ruminate over but the texture and lingering spicy, earthy notes can win the hearts of many wine lovers.







## **Stolpman, Roussanne, 2014**

Appellation: Ballard Canyon

Price: \$28

A blend of 88% Roussanne and 12% Chardonnay. Fermented and rested in new 500-liter barrels. Bottled without filtration. This wine shows off the oily, elegant weight of Roussanne and the acidic perkiness of Chardonnay. Modestly aromatic with flavors of sweet cedar, ripe apple, melon, hydrangea, and a mineral backbone. It's drinking well now but has a few years of aging potential.



## **Tercero, The Climb, 2010**

Appellation: Mixed

Price: \$40

A blend of 67% Syrah and 33% Petite Sirah. It is styled after a wine from Napa Valley (Shafer Relentless) that Larry Schaffer, the proprietor and winemaker at Tercero, adores. The meatiness of Syrah comes through on the palate. The wine is already showing aged notes like tomato leaf and V8 juice, on top of the red and dark fruit flavors that remain bright and balanced by good acidity. The finish has a mineral characteristic and a touch of black peppercorn. Spicy, savory, fruity, and juicy. This is a rich and delicious wine.





# END OF PREVIEW

Thank you for downloading this complimentary preview of *Sipping Santa Barbara: Recommended Wines and Producers*. The electronic book will be released in June 2017 on our website, Amazon, and selected partners. The book contains:

## **An Introduction to Santa Barbara County**

The introduction will include the history, region layout, climatic and geographical features, wine grape varieties planted, and the who's who.

## **Impressions of Wineries**

A summary of more than 50 top wineries, house styles, and contact details.

## **Excellent Restaurants and Wine Bars**

Over 20 recommendations on where to eat and drink.

## **Wine Recommendations**

Specific producers and wines to try, along with tasting notes.

If you enjoy reading this preview, we encourage you to check out our website and follow our social media profiles for the latest updates on the book.







# Let's Connect

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YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/exoticwinetravel>

Check out

<http://exoticwinetravel.com/sipping-santa-barbara-recommended-wines-producers>

for our latest updates on the wines of Santa Barbara County.





# ABOUT US

## Exotic Wine Travel

While traveling through the wine regions of the world, Dr Matthew Horkey and Charine Tan experienced many obstacles during the preparations and actual trips, which compelled them to turn their love for wine into a creative force for good.

In 2015, they established the brand Exotic Wine Travel, with the objectives to promote wine culture, wine tourism, lesser-known wine regions, and unique wines. Through social media updates, events, writing, and speaking, the duo shares pertinent information about traveling in various wine destinations, introduce wine lovers to the best of what each region has to offer, and provide anecdotal insight into each region's peculiarity.

Having traveled to more than 35 countries individually and explored over 50 wine regions together, they bring an empathetic and astute “prosumer” lens to wine communications. They are also WSET Advanced certified.







## Dr Matthew Horkey

I didn't grow up drinking wine. Growing up on a produce farm in a town of 2,500 people in southern Michigan, wine had zero influence in my life. My parents kept no alcohol in the house. As my curiosity took over, drinking consisted of the cheapest beer my friends and I could get our hands on.

My college days went by relatively alcohol-free until my last year at Michigan State University when a friend and I went to see the film *Sideways* by Alexander Paine. The way that Paul Giamatti's character was obsessed with wine fascinated me. That curiosity followed me to graduate school, where I tried to learn as much about wine as possible.

A backpacking trip through Europe in the middle of graduate school opened my eyes to what wine could and should be. In Lucca, a walled city in Tuscany, I was blown away by the cheap and simple *Vino da Tavola Rosso* (red table wine). I remember sticking my nose deep into the carafe and taking in a world of wine I had never experienced before.

Moving abroad to Singapore, my real wine education began. After meeting Charine, her interest in the finer things in life deeply influenced me. We were soon at wine-pairing dinners every week, meeting and buying from wine importers, and joining Champagne clubs. That interest motivated us through the years and in 2015, we both quit our jobs to travel around the world in search of heaven in a glass.





## Charine Tan

My interest in wine (and food) began at a very young age, kindled by a mix of curiosity and appetite. Contrary to Matthew's experience, I grew up with alcohol. It was around me, inside me, sometimes even (spilled) on me. From beer to whiskey, brandy, and wine, they were common beverages on any day and celebratory figures at festive gatherings. However, as was the case for Matthew, the wines I had at my younger age were of quaffing standard – such as the sugary, “easy to drink” Merlot and overly oaked, vanilla bomb of a Cabernet Sauvignon.

My first serious fascination with wine developed when I was 18, after tasting a village Burgundy that was paired harmoniously with a series of French dishes. Unlike any of the wines I had tasted in my earlier childhood – which often fell over the tongue like soiled fabrics – the Pinot Noir was delicate, fruity, folded in a leathery aroma. From then on, I started having preferences and opinions about wine, most of which were never expressed as – like most people – I was still intimidated by the complex subject of wine.

Over the past years, I've acquired an adventurous attitude towards wine. Tasting wine from lesser-known regions always excites me the most because every obscure wine has the potential to be “the best date of my life”. Beyond just the sensory merits, focusing on lesser-known wines means I get to constantly learn something new. Talking about wine and its intrinsic stories is a fun way to engage other people and bring them along for the ride. Wine has become my way of exploring and interpreting the world. What makes wine travel so exhilarating is that it provides a port of entry into diverse topics such as geography, history, philosophy, religion, science, and sociology.

