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## 3 great Napa wine tasting stops — plus lunch at Oxbow Market



A cozy tasting nook awaits visitors at Eleven Eleven Wines in Napa. (Photo courtesy Jon Orlin)

By **MARY ORLIN** | Bay Area News Group

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owners from unexpected worlds. Here's our itinerary for a perfect Napa Valley day, complete with a stop at Oxbow market for wine country noshes.

## Eleven Eleven Wines

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When Ellie Anest and Aurelien Roulin met on a flight from Paris to San Francisco, it was friendship at first sight. The serendipitous encounter led to Eleven Eleven Wines, born out of their shared passion for design, agriculture and wine. When Roulin — a trained aerial performer — stumbled upon a house fixer-upper project, surrounded by Napa Valley vineyards, their fate was sealed. Roulin's friend, winemaker Kirk Venge, nudged them to produce their own wine, telling them this would be his 11th label.

**The vibe:** At this winery, it's always 11:11 — representing a moment in time — from the clock on the green-gray barn exterior to the multitude of timepieces in the tasting room. The winery is surrounded by new estate vineyards, where cabernet sauvignon, cabernet franc and petit verdot vines are just getting going. Visit, and you're greeted with a glass of syrah rosé, then escorted to an intimate seating area, where a wine educator will guide you through five wines.

Everything here has a story, from the round copper bar lined with wine bottles, designed by Roulin, to the \$25 upright piano he scored at a junk yard. The red silks crisscrossing the ceiling, and secured by wine staves, represent Roulin's aerial art.

**The sips:** Venge's crisp 2014 Estate Rosé (\$28) is full of refreshing strawberry and watermelon notes. His 2013 Russian River Valley Pinot Noir (\$65) is earthy, with black cherry fruit and clove spice, a cabernet drinker's pinot.

**Details:** One-hour tasting (\$25) or wine and cheese pairing (\$45) by appointment. 620 Trancas Street, Napa; [www.elevenelevewines.com](http://www.elevenelevewines.com)

## Oxbow Public Market

Head to Napa's premier food hall next for nourishment — Gott's Roadside burgers, Cate & Co. gluten-free sandwiches, Hog Island Oyster Company fare on the half shell, Eiko's Fish Market sushi and more.



Make a stop on your wine country jaunt at Napa's Oxbow Public Market for C Casa's shrimp tacos and shaved cabbage and apple salad, Fatted Calf's salumi and meatball sandwiches plus grain salad, along with local Napa Smith beer and C Casa's lemonade. (Photo courtesy Jon Orlin)

**The dish:** Make a beeline for Fatted Calf, where house-made charcuterie, pate and roast porchetta are the stars. A juicy, tender veal, pork and ricotta meatball sandwich (\$10) or salami and mortadella (\$10), with fresh fennel, arugula and olive tapenade, makes for a filling, delicious meal.

For something on the lighter side, try C Casa's garlic citrus prawn tacos (\$8) and crunchy, tangy cabbage and Fuji apple salad (\$5). Grab a seat on the back patio, overlooking the Napa River, sip C Casa's fresh squeezed lemonade (\$3.25) or quaff Napa Smith's refreshing Pale Ale beer (\$5), and refuel for the rest of the day's adventure. Don't leave without one or two decadent Italian chocolate or hazelnut cream puffs (about \$1.50 each) from Ca' Momi Enoteca.

**Details:** Open daily. 610 and 644 First St., Napa; [www.oxbowpublicmarket.com](http://www.oxbowpublicmarket.com)

## Goosecross Cellars

When Coors beer heir Christi Coors Ficeli first saw Yountville's Goosecross Cellars, it wasn't the type of winery she was looking to buy. The small, family-owned property needed some TLC, and the brand felt somewhat forgotten, despite its wine club. But once Coors Ficeli saw the vineyard views, "I had to have it," she says. With other Coors family members, she bought the winery and 9-acre State Lane vineyard in 2013, and went to work. They built a new tasting room and winery, and brought in veteran winemaker Bill Nancarrow (Duckhorn, Paraduxx) to coax the best out of the estate cabernet sauvignon, merlot, cabernet franc and petit verdot grapes.



The view from inside St. Helena's new Goosecross Cellars winery overlooks the patio and estate vineyards. (Courtesy Jon Orlin)

**The vibe:** Surrounded by vineyards, the new pastoral gray barns blend seamlessly into the landscape. One barn serves as the tasting room, which opened in October, with an eye-catching bar with a crushed granite facade. It's easy to linger on the expansive patio, watching birds soar over the vineyards.

**The sips:** Goosecross makes a floral and citrusy 2013 Sauvignon Blanc (\$28). But this being Napa, cab is king, and it's easy to love the richly layered, earthy and bold 2012 Howell Mountain Cabernet (\$85), lush with tobacco leaf and a burnt caramel finish. But our favorite was the luscious and fruity 2012 State Lane Estate Cabernet Franc (\$59).

**Details:** Tasting (\$25) by appointment. 1119 State Lane, Yountville; [goosecross.com](http://goosecross.com)

## Sinegal Estate

Get ready for the quintessential wine country experience here. David Sinegal holds the key to this sprawling 30-acre estate with organic vineyards, gardens and a lake. The son of Costco founder Jim Sinegal, David ran the emporium's wine, beer and spirits operation. The pair had long dreamed of owning a winery when, in 2013, they came upon St. Helena's historic Inglewood Estate, where the riesling and pinot vines date back to the 19th century. The key to the original 1881 Victorian house is now Sinegal Estate's logo.





At Sinegal Estate in St. Helena, you can stroll the grounds and sip wine by the lake. (Photo courtesy Eddie Trask)

Winemaking here is based on a 1,403-step road map developed by David Sinegal, winemaker Tony Biagi and viticulturist Jim Barbour. The winery produces a mere 1,200 cases annually and is only on its second vintage, but Sinegal's goal is to create high-quality Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon at a price point — \$90-\$195 — lower than many valley cult cabernets.

**The vibe:** You're stepping back in time at this winery in the shadows of the Mayacamas mountain range. Yet the winery, with its high-tech winemaking equipment and contemporary art, has a modern flair. Tastings here are an intimate, unhurried affair, so wander through the gardens, soak up the views, or sip wine lakeside.

**The sips:** The crisp and lively 2014 Sauvignon Blanc (\$45), is aromatic, floral and citrusy, with a lingering creamy finish. The 2013 Estate Cabernet Sauvignon (\$90) drinks like a much more expensive Napa cab, complex with rich, dense blackberry and black plum fruit, with velvety soft tannins.

**Details:** Tastings (\$75 and up) by appointment. 2125 Inglewood Ave., St. Helena; [www.sinegalestate.com](http://www.sinegalestate.com).

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**Mary Orlin** Mary Orlin is the wine and food writer for the Bay Area News Group and a James Beard Award and Emmy award-winning journalist, Certified Sommelier and WSET Advanced certified wine professional and frequent wine judge. Prior to joining the newspaper group in 2014, Mary contributed to local and national wine publications, and produced the wine TV show "In Wine Country" on NBC for nine seasons. Mary's journalism career began at CNN in Atlanta. She enjoys cooking and traveling throughout the world's great wine regions.

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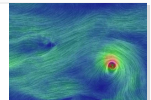
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