

Your guide to food, wine and fun north of the Golden Gate

Whether you're a tasting virgin or a *Sideways* sipper, California's wine country never gets tired. In honor of the fall harvest, we've tackled its famous winemaking rivals, Napa and Sonoma, and mapped top spots to sip, savor and stay so you can quaff your way through the best of both worlds.

— Mona Buehler

NAPA

SIP

For a regal start to your wine country jaunt, breathtaking **Castello di Amorosa** will set a romantic tone. Named by *Food & Wine* magazine as Napa's most beautiful wine-tasting room, this fablelike 14th-century castle and winery offers daily tours, including a horse-drawn carriage vineyard tour on Saturdays. Calistoga's **Chateau Montelena** famously beat the French at the "Judgment of Paris" blind tasting. At **Mumm, Peju** and **St. Supéry**, the knowledgeable staff will uncork more than a few vino facts for you.

SAVOR

Promising whimsical dishes such as sweet butter poached Maine lobster mitts, a visit to chef Thomas Keller's **French Laundry** should be on every epicure's bucket list. If you're not one of the lucky few to snag a table, down the street you'll find more Keller delights at sister restaurant **Bouchon**.

There's no omnivore dilemma at Napa favorites **Mustard's Grill** and **Brix**, known for innovative farm-to-table dishes. For dinner with a view, look no further than **Auberge du Soleil**, where you can dine alfresco and take in sweeping Rutherford vines. And in downtown Napa, prized booths and a chef's table at **La Toque** allow you to steal glances into the kitchen.

For budget bites, grab a seat at the **Wine Spectator Greystone Restaurant** at



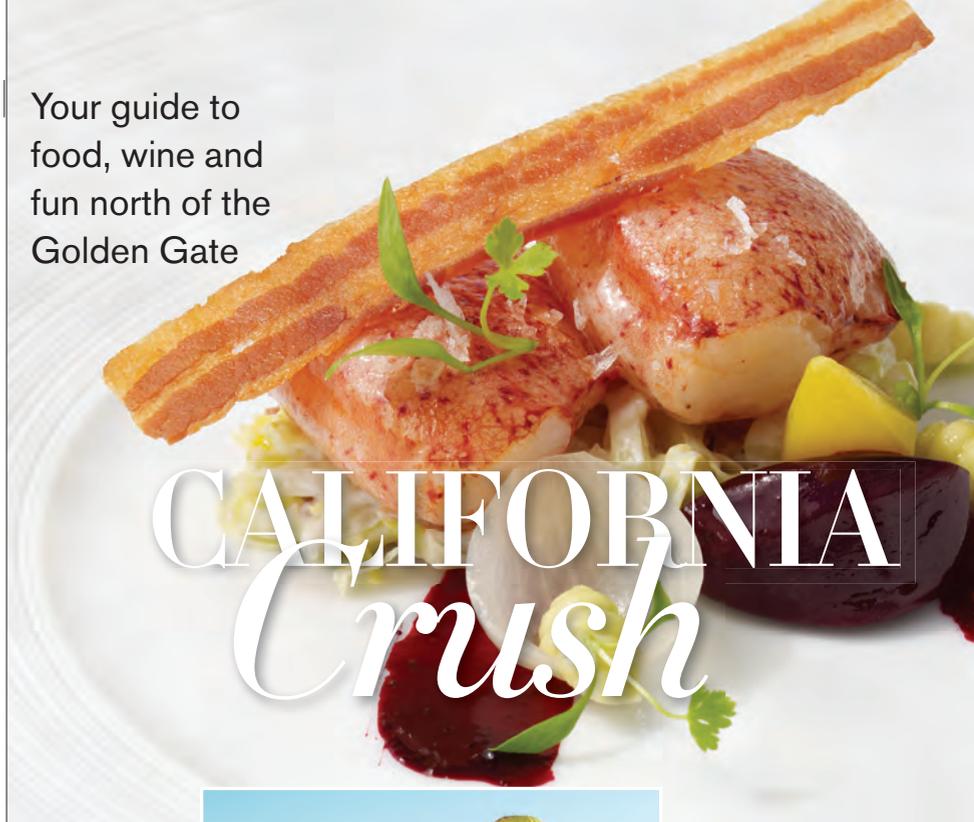
Poised and polished Diane Lockhart (The Good Wife) would fit right into Napa Valley's legendary swanky atmosphere—who doesn't want a little glam with their gamay?



Right: Hot air ballooning over vineyards.
Below: Castello di Amorosa.



CALIFORNIA *Crush*



STAY

In the heart of Yountville, the **Villagio Inn and Spa** features 112 luxurious

rooms, an award-winning spa, shopping at V Marketplace and pet-friendly options at sister property **The Vintage Inn**. Celebrities such as Natalie Portman love secluded **Calistoga Ranch** with 48 ultraprivate free-standing cottages, nestled in the Napa canyon on 157 lush acres. villagio.com, calistogaranch.com

EDITOR'S PICK

NAPA WINE TRAIN

Dine on gourmet cuisine, tour wineries and take in vineyard views from aboard this charming antique choo-choo. From \$89, winetrain.com



UP AND AWAY BALLOONING



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Sweet butter poached Maine lobster mitts from French Laundry



Left: Sebastiani tasting room.
Below: Seared halibut at Carneros Bistro Wine Bar.



SONOMA

SIP

Swirl varietals such as primitivo, and shop a Tuscan-style marketplace at **Viansa**. Across the street, **Cline Cellars** offers picturesque photo ops among its garden ponds and **Gloria Ferrer**, handcrafted sparkling wines. Tucked among the shops in historic downtown you'll find one of the oldest wineries in Sonoma—**Sebastiani**, famous for being

the only local to survive Prohibition. Head north into the Russian River Valley for smaller vineyards **Copain** and **Russian Hill Estate**, known for pinot noir.

SAVOR

Downtown Sonoma tempts with reinvented French favorites at **The Girl and the Fig**. If wielding a chef's knife tickles your taste buds, at **Ramekins Culinary School** you can cook under the guidance of professional chefs. **El Dorado Kitchen** delivers fresh California cuisine and a beautiful brunch. Chef Steve Litke concocts entirely seasonal and farm-driven fare such as blood orange and star anise-braised pork shank at Michelin-starred **The Farmhouse Inn and Restaurant**.

STAY

Convenient to downtown, **The Lodge at Sonoma** boasts 182 deluxe rooms, heated pool, vegan-friendly spa and foodie favorite **Carneros Bistro Wine Bar**, serving late-night victuals until 1 a.m. **The Farmhouse Inn** combines upscale bed-and-breakfast charm with cozy rustic touches—from converted barn rooms to outdoor fire pits and s'more ingredients on hand. thelodgeatsonoma.com, farmhouseinn.com



Zip down Highway 121 and through the Mayacamas mountain range, and you'll discover a more laid-back, European-inspired wine scene chill enough for Patrick Jane (*The Mentalist*).



Cline Cellars offers picturesque photo ops among its garden ponds.

Blood Orange and Star Anise-Braised Pork Shank

By chef Steve Litke,
The Farmhouse Inn and Restaurant



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 small onions, diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 small carrots, diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 stalks celery, diced into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1/2 pound pancetta, diced fine
- 5 star anise, whole
- 1/2 bottle red zinfandel or good red wine
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 4 pork shanks, preferably organic
- 1 teaspoon ground fennel
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 5 blood oranges, peeled and sliced into 1-inch slices

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 300° F. Heat olive oil in a large skillet, sauté vegetables and pancetta until soft. Add star anise and sauté for 5 more minutes. Add wine and stock and bring to a boil.
2. Season shanks with ground fennel, salt and pepper. Heat canola oil in a large roasting pan. Brown shanks on all sides. Add stock mixture to cover, cover tightly with foil and place in oven. Roast for three hours or until tender; cool in sauce overnight.
3. Remove shanks from sauce. Bring sauce to a boil, remove from heat and strain solids. Pour sauce over shanks and reheat at 400° F for about 25 minutes, basting often.
4. Serve shanks with sauce and scatter with blood orange segments.