

Organic authority

5 Chic and Sustainable Reasons to Visit Wine Country's Dry Creek Valley

By Donna Sozio, June 8, 2016



Authentic, gorgeous, and utterly charming, there's some kind of magic happening in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley that makes everything rosy, or should I say Rosé.

You'll fall in love with Dry Creek Valley from the moment you land in Santa Rosa. Flying low over white farmhouses and vineyards, something inside clues you in that you're about to have a truly wonderful experience. Whether you're looking for small, family-owned, sustainable or organic wineries, rolling country estates, exceptional wine country cuisine, or adorable historic towns – Dry Creek Valley is it.

Here are 5 amazing reasons why you want to spend your weekend in Dry Creek Valley.

1. Real Farm-to-Table Restaurants



“**Farm-to-table**” has become such a trend, but it's the real deal in Dry Creek Valley. At **John Ash & Co.**, you can actually see the garden from your table while you're dining—which is all part of its romantic charm. Executive Chef Thomas Schmidt takes great pride in his culinary garden and is always cooking up new ways to turn what conventional restaurants would consider waste (like vegetable tops) into culinary masterpieces of new flavor.

Chalkboard's Executive Chef Shane McAnelly serves up innovative seasonal “technique driven” small plates that are sourced from their three-acre vegetable and herb garden at Chalk Hill Estate Vineyards. Even the cocktail

menu is seasonal and garden-driven. The flavor and freshness comes through in every unique dish that sings off the plate.

Heralded as farm-to-fork modern country cuisine, **BarnDiva** isn't just a restaurant but its own experiential BarnDiva Land where you're invited to "eat the view" and enjoy upscale whimsy in its restaurant, gallery, or cocktail lounge. They say it best, "There are many noble reasons to serve sustainably sourced food, but the best reason remains the simplest. It tastes better."

Indeed, a chef's best friend is their gardener.

2. Sonoma County's 100% Sustainable Promise



In 2015, Sonoma County made a bold commitment to become the first 100 percent sustainable wine-growing region in the U.S., that includes partnerships with the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA), Fish Friendly Farming, and Sustainable in Practice (SIP). Dedicated to protecting its 100 year-old heritage vineyards, Dry Creek Valley supports Sonoma County's sustainability commitment.

One of the leaders, **Ferrari Carano Vineyards and Winery**, is a fine example of how stunning and sustainable go hand in hand. Just last year all 1,900 acres became California Certified Sustainable Vineyards. This only adds to the appeal of its famed Fume Blanc and Pinot Noir, which is harvested and sorted by hand. Almost as famous as its wine is the

vineyard garden, which Rhonda Carano meticulously created. When not enjoying a glass of vino on the estate's balcony overlooking the vineyards, visit the five-acre garden in front of the estate winery. Either way, you'll drink in the view.

Fritz Underground Winery takes a different approach to sustainability that involves, well gravity. In 1979, its namesake Mr. Jay Arthur Fritz had the vision to purchase land and grow grapes on a hill that was not only spring fed but could also use gravity (it's free after all) to save on costs to produce elegant and incredibly drinkable Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Sauvignon Blanc wines.

3. Vintners Inn



Elegant, sophisticated and inspirational, **Vintners Inn** is a stunning example how sustainability and wine country luxury weave seamlessly together. It all starts with its Green Philosophy for creative sustainable solutions that not only saves resources and money but also elevates the guest experience. California Green Certified, the 92-acre vineyard and hotel property is an oasis of living walls, edible gardens, marble fountains, and sustainable vineyards. Rooms feel like a second home with sweeping balcony views of the vineyard, vaulted ceilings and a cozy fireplace. There's even a jogging trail around the vineyards and wine tasting in the afternoon.

4. Organic and Biodynamic Wineries

Goats and chickens are a hot topic on [biodynamic vineyards](#). In fact, they might be one of the first things you see. Such is the case at [Truett-Hurst Winery](#). Its 26 acres are farmed using biodynamics and border a creek where you can watch coho salmon spawn whilst enjoying one of the delicious Zinfandels and Petite Sirahs. The grounds surrounding the tasting room are meant for sipping and lounging. Make sure to reserve one of the red picnic areas by the river. Heaven.

Biodynamic [DaVero Farm and Winery](#)'s motto is "Grow what belongs here. Be Patient." Well, patience pays because the grapes DaVero grows make for delicious wine. While most of Dry Creek Valley produces French grapes, DaVero opted for Italian varietals like Sagrantino, Dolcetto, Primitivo and Vermintino.

[Quivira](#) produces lovely small-lot Rosé and a Rhône-inspired blend of Roussanne and Viognier. The winery specifically chose these grapes because they were perfectly matched to the soil for optimal growing conditions. [Preston](#) often sells out of wine club favorites like its Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, and Grenache Blanc, so make sure to pick some up at the charming tasting room. That and the freshly baked country sourdough bread.

[Martorana Family Winery](#) is California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) and was awarded the prestigious Wildlife Stewardship Award from the Associate of Fish & Wildlife Agencies. The first ever given to a winery. The tasting room is famous for its living roof with a bench on top to contemplate the view and the phrase "in vino veritas".

Visionary [Ridge Vineyards](#) has been around since 1885. From its modern tasting room made out of straw bales to being the largest grower of organic grapes in Sonoma country, Ridge is passionate about make the best wine from the purest grapes from harvest all the way through production. Its wine is quite historical – having shook up the wine world at the Judgement of Paris in in 1976 with its Monte Bello. And doing it again in 2006.

5. Healdsburg



If you're a sucker for chic historic towns with loads of charm, you'll love Healdsburg. Perfectly restored with a charming Main Street, Healdsburg is full of surprises like the [Grape Leaf Inn's](#) downstairs speakeasy. You enter from a bookcase that opens up from the wall to reveal a hidden staircase. Filled with casual but upscale coffee shops, tasting rooms, restaurants and shops, meandering through town is delight. If only you could take a glass a wine with you on your walk.

So, drink up! Enjoy Dry Creek Valley's sustainable, organic and biodynamic elegant wines. Raise your glass and toast the vision, innovation and commitment of these individuals, restaurants, wineries and hotels that help preserve the charm and pristine nature of Dry Creek Valley for generations to come.

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