

26 Reasons Why Santa Rosa is the Hidden Gem of Sonoma County

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Santa Rosa, the urban center of Sonoma County, may not be the first item on Wine Country itineraries but, to the savvy visitor, this sometimes gritty North Coast city offers more than meets the eye (and it was recently ranked one of the best places to live in the United States).

A new Santa Rosa is emerging as crafty types are injecting a hefty dose of hip into the local community. This is the kind of place where natural bounty serves as a muse for utopian dreams, where sleepy residential streets hide ambitious farm-to-table kitchens, abandoned buildings are resurrected as art galleries, and the corner coffeeshop turns nightlife hot spot with craft-beers on tap, all to the rhythm of Americana and bluegrass beats. Best of all, Santa Rosa can easily be explored by bike or by foot.

Here's how to experience (some of) the best Santa Rosa has to offer:

A FUNKY – OR FANCY – FARM-TO-TABLE FINALE

For a fancy alternative, plug John Ash & Co into your GPS and head a few miles up the road from downtown Santa Rosa. This deluxe dining destination, a.k.a. the “cradle of California cuisine,” stays true to tradition with fresh farm-to-table food mostly sourced from onsite culinary gardens. The restaurant was recently awarded “Best Romantic Meal in Sonoma County” in The Press Democrat’s “Best of Sonoma County 2016” competition – and with good reason. Twinkling lights set the mood nightly over an all-season patio with vineyard views; an award-winning wine list offers an exclusive tour of Sonoma wineries, and Executive Chef Tom Schmidt’s food covers everyone’s favorites in a way that wows.



John Ash & Co. restaurant.



Patio dining at John Ash & Co. (Photo courtesy of Vintners Inn)

<http://www.sonomamaq.com/things-to-do-in-santa-rosa/>