



Home Ranch event at Bogle Family Vineyards in Clarksburg

California Wineries Make a Splash

Ignite thoughtful conversation among attendees with events at vineyards across the state **BY NATALIE COMPAGNO**

» CALIFORNIA is the world's fourth-largest wine producer behind only Italy, Spain, and France. From the vineyards of Sonoma County to Temecula's wine country in SoCal, planners have an almost endless array of venues to choose from and vino-centered activities to add to the event itinerary.

So, how do you choose which ones for hosting events? As tastes evolve, it becomes about more than just the quality of the wine—it is also about the overall ambience and experiences that are paired with the flights. These wineries deliver delicious sips and swirls along with elevated team-building opportunities.

VINO UP NORTH

Gather attendees at Pennyroyal Farm in Mendocino County for a private tour of the farm and farm animals and to chat with the cheesemaker, followed by an alfresco reception and tasting overlooking the vineyard. Event-goers can sample delicious cheeses paired with award-winning sauvignon blanc. The cheeses are named using the local language Boontling, the delightfully strange jargon invented in Boonville in the 1890s and spoken by only about 100 people today.

Sonoma County is Northern California's largest wine producer, yet its varied terroir, old vines, and intimate mom-

and-pop producers set the area apart. That's Sonoma's "signature feeling," according to Kurt Shaver, group business development executive for Sonoma County Tourism. "You can visit brand-new or 100-plus-year-old vines planted by Italian immigrants," he says.

Meeting planners will impress groups at Sonoma-Cutrer Vineyards' perfectly manicured, internationally sanctioned croquet lawns, which set the stage for a stimulating afternoon of friendly competition. After the game, attendees can indulge in a culinary journey featuring wine and food pairings that showcase the winery's award-winning vintages alongside carefully crafted seasonal dishes.

A bit more inland in Napa Valley, V. Sattui Winery in St. Helena blends European glamour with Napa's inimitable style. Hosting events for up to 500 people, the winery offers an extensive menu of options—from traditional tastings to bespoke team-building activities like blending classes and grape stomps. Stefano Masanti, the in-house Michelin-starred chef at V. Sattui, delivers divine dining to guests, whether the meal is pizza served under the oak trees or a multi-course, sit-down dinner in the cellar.

Just outside the state's capital of Sacramento in Clarksburg, Bogle Family Vineyards is more than just a household name for wonderful wine. Jody Bogle, vice president of consumer relations, notes: "We use our wine to enhance our group experiences, finding ways that dovetail our core family values with the organizations we partner with." Bogle Adventures vary from wine cruises abroad to oyster farm field trips to essential oil making on a flower farm, all with themes around education and sustainability. Back at the ranch, the Home Ranch in Clarksburg has newly renovated outdoor spaces to host seminars, movie nights, and more.

El Dorado County, stretching east from Sacramento to Lake Tahoe, is one of the oldest wine regions in the state. The Boeger Winery estate was homesteaded as far back as the Gold Rush of 1849.

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Cheese plate and wine at Pennyroyal Farm in Mendocino County

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Constructed in 1872 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the cellar is a cozy spot that can accommodate up to 20 guests. Gold Hill Winery has indoor and outdoor facilities to meet the needs of large groups. Its banquet hall has a 1,500-square-foot deck overlooking American River Canyon and Mount Murphy for indoor and outdoor experiences.

To the south and highlighting the global appeal of Monterey County music, Folktale Winery & Vineyards offers customizable options to enjoy live music with a backdrop of the lush Carmel Valley. Smaller groups can book out a block of seats or tables during Folktale’s “Live In The Vines” summer series, featuring various artists. Larger groups and C-suite celebrations can reserve its private stage to book a local or national act with full access to the property.

SoCal SIPS

Down in Paso Robles, Cass Winery rolls out the wine-colored carpet for groups. Enroll in memorable offerings to enrich your team’s experience, such as paint-and-sip classes, world winemaking, and even sensory sommelier studies. Also at Cass Winery, Geneseo Inn is an on-property luxury boutique hotel created from upcycled shipping containers.

Groups can take a motorcycle sidecar tour around the vineyards or relax with private yoga or massage services.

With some 10 million inhabitants, Los Angeles County is the most populous in the country. Yet high above Malibu on Mulholland Highway, groups can truly get away from it all at notably scenic wineries. Cielo Farms hosts up to 200 guests for private events, while smaller groups can go on a picnic at The Trail Tasting with live music, five distinct tastings, and perhaps LA’s most sought-after amenity: complimentary valet parking.

Enjoy the same spectacular views just down the street with Malibu Wine Hikes at Saddlerock Ranch. The wide range of group experiences runs from learning about the local fauna and visiting ancient Chumash cave paintings on the nature tour, to adventure rides in 4x4 vehicles, to feeling Zen with a trip down to the beach in a vintage Volkswagen bus.

Old Town Ranch is located on the De Portola Wine Trail in Temecula’s wine county near dozens of wineries, hot air balloon rides, and more. Groups can “glamp” (camp with upscale, modern amenities) in one of six handcrafted Conestoga wagons for a pioneer experience without sacrificing the comforts of home. The property also features a fire pit, bocce ball court,

and options for catering. For that 1850s feel, attendees can go for a horseback ride followed by a wine tasting. Neighboring CRC Ranch saddles the horses, and Robert Renzoni Vineyards pours the wine.

As Brandie Newman, co-owner of Old Town Ranch and co-founder of Newman Hospitality Group (of which the ranch is a part of) points out, “Old Town Ranch provides guests with an unforgettable experience. Located right in the heart of wine country, guests are able to bring their own horses or take guided horseback tours to the wineries. After a long day out, guests can relax under the stars and enjoy wine around the large fire pit.” That’s the lure of the wild, wild West! **m+e**

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