



WEEKENDING

There's No Off-Season in Wine Country

Locals know the best time to enjoy Napa and Sonoma: after all the tourists are gone. Here, eight places to stay.

BY JEANNE COOPER

AFTER THE CRUSH of fall grapes and summer visitors, wine country winds down for locals—and becomes the perfect place for a winter break. Oenophiles can meet famed and often reclusive vintners, who regularly pop into the tasting rooms to chat. And foodies can find tables at high season's hard-to-book restaurants. Here's how to hit the vineyards this holiday season.



Clockwise from left: The great room at the Estate Yountville's 3,975-square-foot Villa at the Estate; a renovated Carrara marble bathroom at Hotel Villagio; the 1886 original exterior of Francis House in Calistoga belies the contemporary luxury within.



NAPA VALLEY

Forget those bed-and-breakfast clichés of chintz and cookies. **Francis House** in Calistoga reflects a three-year labor of love by San Francisco interior designer Dina Dwyer and real estate developer Richard Dwyer to restore an 1886 landmark—and add a welcome gloss of contemporary luxury. The five guest rooms (from \$495) in the three-story, French Second Empire stone mansion feature Matouk linens and TCL Roku smart TVs, while the gardens host a pool, an infrared sauna, and a salt room. The elegant breakfast highlights local ingredients, with notable Napa vintages served during weekend wine tastings. 1403 Myrtle St., Calistoga, 707-341-3536

The 22-acre Estate Yountville has long been a springboard for exploring nearby Michelin-starred restaurants and viticulture, thanks to **Hotel Villagio**, recently transformed into a sleek urban inn, and **Vintage House**, updated in farmhouse-chic style (from \$355). Now it offers the luxurious **Villa at the Estate**, a five-bedroom, 3,975-square-foot residence (from \$3,400) with 20-foot ceilings, a pool, a hot tub, and indoor and outdoor dining for 12. Two of the five bedrooms, each with a Carrara marble bathroom, sport a hand-stitched Hästens king bed. The chef's kitchen includes an Officine Gullo refrigerator and a La Cornue oven; the Villa's concierge can arrange an onsite chef. 6481 Washington St., Yountville, 800-351-1133

Across from Meritage Resort & Spa, its sister property on Napa's outskirts, **Vista Collina Resort** features not only 145 casual-elegant rooms (from \$179) with Frette linens and a wine-inspired palette, but also a microcosm of the CIA at Copia culinary compound downtown. The Village boasts nine tasting rooms for wineries and craft breweries and a locally sourced artisanal grocery, stocked with fresh bread from executive chef Vincent Lesage, formerly of Bacara; it will begin offering cooking classes in an exhibition kitchen next year. Guests in the 39 suites with kitchens can prepare Lesage's recipes using Hestan Cue's video guide for their Bluetooth-connected pans and induction burners. 850 Bordeaux Way, Napa, 888-965-7090