

THE STAY

By Justin Goldman



This Old House

A restored historic hotel shows that French influence is welcome in California wine country

The wine regions of California and France have been rivals since at least 1976, when Napa wines beat their Old World counterparts in the famous Judgment of Paris tasting. But visitors to Napa Valley can now get the feeling of Bordeaux in the Golden State, thanks to the opening of Francis House.

The five-room, adults-only hotel occupies a gorgeous 1886 French Second Empire limestone chateau—the only such

structure in Napa Valley—that's listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally the home of James H. Francis, who owned a local store, ranches, and a silver mine, the building served as Calistoga's hospital for decades before falling into disrepair. It was abandoned for more than 50 years, but in 2015, a San Francisco-based couple, Richard and Dina Dwyer, bought the property and began a thorough restoration. The hotel

opened last October, and it's now one of wine country's most intimate inns. Every detail is meticulously crafted: the stone fountains, the heated pool, the farm-fresh breakfast, the Martin guitar propped up in the living room, the antique writing desks in the guest rooms. Indeed, the only thing that's rough about the place is the exposed original stone walls. Sorry, France: It looks as if California also takes top honors when it comes to chateaus.

THE VINTAGE



Benovia's D-Day Wine

Seventy-five years ago, Allied soldiers landed in Normandy, and this month, California's Benovia Winery is honoring the anniversary of D-Day with its own landing—and a commemorative beverage. Winery

co-owner Joe Anderson, whose uncle flew B-29 bombers, is flying his 1942 C-53 troop carrier, *The Spirit of Benovia*, to Normandy in formation with dozens of other World War II-era aircraft. Concurrently, the Santa Rosa winery has produced a special-edition

pinot noir, Liberation. The wine was first released last year, but sold out almost immediately, so Benovia put out a second vintage this spring. It's delicious but, sadly, not delivered by parachute. *\$70 per bottle or \$275 for a three-bottle gift pack, benoviawinery.com* —JG

Michael Hossett (Francis House);
Courtesy Benovia Winery (wine)