

Fodor's Travel

# NAPA & SONOMA



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**Crocker & Starr**

**WINERY/DISTILLERY** | Wines that express “power and elegance” and “a deep sense of place”—in the latter case well-draining valley-floor St. Helena AVA vineyards west of the Napa River—are the goals of this winery jointly owned by Charlie Crocker and winemaker Pam Starr. Cabernet Sauvignon is the main event, but Starr also crafts Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Franc, and Malbec, along with the Bridesmaid series Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Franc—dominant red blend. You can have a quick tasting on the porch of a century-old farmhouse, but to learn more about Crocker & Starr and its historic property, farmed prior to Prohibition by the Dowdell family, consider the experience that includes a brief foray into the vineyards and a peek at the winery, or with one those activities plus a wine-and-food pairing. ☎ 700 Dowdell La. ↗ ¼-mile east of Hwy. 29 ☎ 707/967-9111 🌐 [www.crockerstarr.com](http://www.crockerstarr.com) 🍷 Tastings from \$35.

**Culinary Institute of America at Greystone**

**COLLEGE** | The West Coast headquarters of the country's leading school for chefs is in the 1889 Greystone Cellars, an imposing building once the world's largest stone winery. On the ground floor you can check out the quirky Corkscrew Museum and browse the Spice Islands Marketplace store, stocked with gleaming gadgets and many cookbooks. The Bakery Café by illy serves soups, salads, sandwiches, and baked goods. One-day and multiday cooking and beverage classes often take place. Students run the Gatehouse Restaurant, which serves dinner except during semester breaks. ☎ 2555 Main St./Hwy. 29 ☎ 707/967-1100 🌐 [www.ciachef.edu/california](http://www.ciachef.edu/california) 🍷 Museum free, tour \$10; class prices vary.

**Duckhorn Vineyards**

**WINERY/DISTILLERY** | Merlot's moment in the spotlight might have passed, but you wouldn't know it at Duckhorn, whose

Three Palms Merlot was crowned wine of the year by *Wine Spectator* magazine in 2017. You can taste Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and other wines in the airy, high-ceilinged tasting room; you'll be seated at a table and served by staffers who make the rounds to pour. In good weather, you might do your sipping on a fetching wraparound porch overlooking carefully tended vines. “Elevated” experiences include a tasting of estate and single-vineyard wines offered twice daily, as well as a once-a-day (except Saturday) private hosted tasting. All tastings are by appointment. ☎ 1000 Lodi La. ↗ At Silverado Trail N ☎ 707/963-7108 🌐 [www.duckhorn.com](http://www.duckhorn.com) 🍷 Tastings from \$40.

**Ehlers Estate**

**WINERY/DISTILLERY** | New and old blend seamlessly at this winery whose 1886 tasting room's contemporary furnishings and changing artworks benefit from the gravitas and sense of history the original stone walls and exposed redwood beams impart. The wine-making team crafts complex Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux-style wines from 100% organically and biodynamically farmed estate grapes. Seated, appointment-only tastings focus on the growing practices and the winery's fascinating history, including Prohibition hijinks and the property's late-20th-century revival by a dynamic French couple. ■ **TIP** → Croissants are served at the **Start Your Day** tasting, which commences at 9:30 am. ☎ 3222 Ehlers La. ↗ At Hwy. 29 ☎ 707/963-5972 🌐 [www.ehlersestate.com](http://www.ehlersestate.com) 🍷 Tastings from \$35.

**Hall St. Helena**

**WINERY/DISTILLERY** | The Cabernet Sauvignons produced here are works of art and the latest in organic-farming science and wine-making technology. A glass-walled tasting room allows guests to see in action some of the high-tech equipment winemaker Steve Leveque employs to craft wines that also include Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Sauvignon Blanc.

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Napa Valley  
ST. HELENA