

71 Miles

Northern California edition

The definitive guide to weekend trips around major cities.

Napa Valley Wineries

by John A. Vlahides, Executive Editor 10:11 PM August 02, 2007

"Cab is king in Napa. The American equivalent of bordeaux, cabernet sauvignon thrives in Napa's long, hot summers. Other varietals, such as sangiovese and cabernet franc, also do well here, but they don't fetch the same high price in the marketplace, and they have none of the mystique and lore of cabernet: cash and cachet go hand in hand in Napa.

If you like big, complex wines that linger l-o-n-g on the palette, you'll love Napa. Over 230 wineries sit side by side in the 30-mile-long valley, but many require you make an appointment. If you have a favorite label, call ahead before you drop by. Don't wait till the last minute! Book as long in advance as you can; three to four weeks is ideal. ...

... For single-vineyard, single-varietal tastings (aka terroir tastings), you won't find better than at Nickel and Nickel. Offshoot of the famous Far Niente, this is some of the best cabernet in the valley. And the winery occupies a beautifully preserved 1884 farmhouse and red wooden barn that provide a lovely slice of Americana. The catch: tastings are only available as part of a \$40 tour (call well ahead). Yes, it's expensive, but if you're really into cabs and have the money to spend building a proper cellar, you'll be glad you ponied up. Bottles cost \$40 to \$135, tour and tasting \$40 (reservations mandatory)."