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Day Trippin'

By Fran Miller



Evening setting at Theorem Vineyards Photo Fran Miller

It's natural to think of the Napa Valley as one place. But the 30 north to south miles that comprise this verdant valley feature distinct towns. There's Yountville with its chic tasting rooms, Rutherford with its concentration of cabernet producers, and St. Helena with its quaint downtown shopping district. And to the north, Calistoga encourages its guests to slow down a bit and unwind. The small town's official motto is "Relax, you're in Calistoga," a directive easily followed, thanks to its famous mud baths and gracious inns that promote a laid back vibe.

It was California's first millionaire, Sam Brannan, who in the late 1800s first envisioned the area as a healthful gathering spot for the rich and famous. Main Street featured resorts, inns, and hot springs catering to visitors from the big city. Remarkably, the focus currently remains the same. Many of the original buildings along historic Lincoln Avenue continue to house popular inns and eateries, such as the centrally located

Mount View Hotel & Spa and neighboring restaurant Veraison. Featuring intricate art deco interiors and an on-site spa where guests can indulge in blissfully relaxing CBD oil massages, Mount View also hides in its backyard a large pool, heated mineral whirlpool, and chaise lounge-filled patio. Enjoy complimentary wine tasting in the evening and delicious pastries and pour-over coffee each morning. Bonus: Mount View donates 50 percent of its profits to charitable organizations serving children and the environment.

A Mount View stay places you in the center of Calistoga - a town best explored on bike. Rent your high-end ride from Calistoga Bike Shop and tour the tree-shaded neighborhood streets or hit the open trail toward varied Calistoga wineries. Schedule their Cool Wine Tour and Calistoga Bike Shop will book up to three tastings for you and your group as well as pick up any wine purchases you make, having them ready by 5 p.m. back at the bike shop. Or simply walk out the Mount View door to unique wine tasting venues such as LOLA (currently by appointment only, but soon to open to walk-ins), whose brick cottage and flower-bedecked patio serve as its whimsical tasting room. At LOLA, vintner Seth Cripe makes authentic, hand-crafted and affordable varietals that are favored by both aficionados and novices.

For high-end cabernets, venture beyond the town center and up Petrified Forest Road to Theorem (by appointment only), a spectacular property where Kisha and Jason Itkin have preserved and replanted their Diamond Mountain vineyard. Their flagship Voir Dire and Hawk's Prey Diamond Mountain Estate cabernets are testaments to their vineyard's vitality. Enjoy these unbelievably tasty wines while surveying spectacular views of Mount St. Helena.

Back in town, tour Lincoln Avenue's many shops and art galleries - in particular check-out Yager Galerie; artist Ira Yeager's colorful paintings are favored by many a Napa Valley vintner. For dinner, head to Veraison where the cocktails are handcrafted, the wine selection is plentiful (natch), and the locally sourced bounty of wine country is represented in each delicious dish. Don't miss the seared artichoke and the avocado toast. Flanking the other side of Mount View Inn is Johnny's - featuring a vibrant bar scene. It's the perfect spot to watch the game with other fans, both locals and tourists.

Info:

Mountviewhotel.com

VeraisonCalistoga.com

TheoremVineyards.com

Lolawines.com

Calistogabikeshop.com



Mount View Hotel pool Photo provided



Mount View Hotel Photo provided



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