

A GUIDE TO DINING

EATING

L O S A N G E L E S

EATaway

Upcountry, Downtown,
(and *Sideways*) in SB

Govindication

at Table 8

Meal Hunter

The Great Pie Chase

Food (Network) for Thought

Giada De Laurentiis

Luscious Layers

The Art of Cake

The "E" List

Our Dining Directory

Neighborhood Guides

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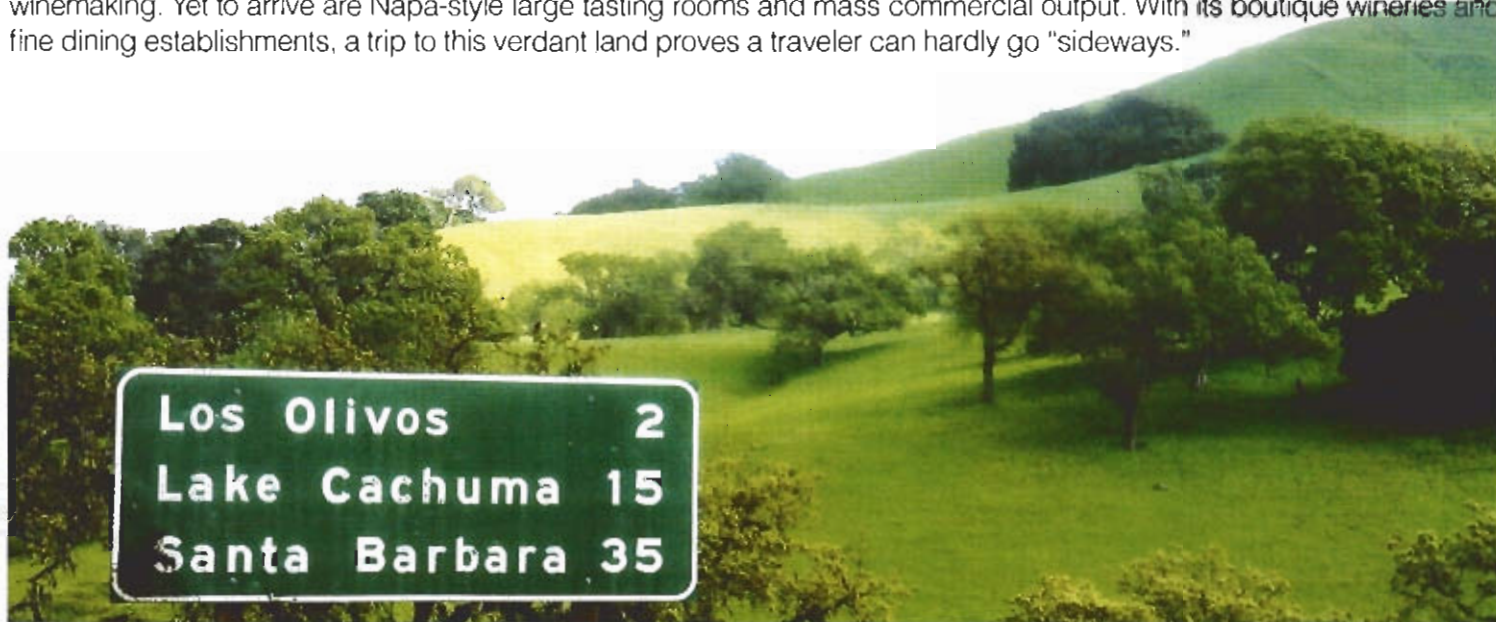
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EATaway

taste the terroir: santa barbara wine country

Los Angeles wine-world insiders and those who know their ABCs—as in wine guru Jim Clendenen's Au Bon Climat label—cherish the unique area just seventy miles north of LA as a destination featuring both rustic beauty and world-class wines.

It is easy to share a love for Pinot Noir and the rich, concentrated Syrahs found in the Santa Rita Hills, the area's newest appellation. In contrast to Napa, SBC, as Santa Barbara County is called, is dedicated to small-lot, handcrafted winemaking. Yet to arrive are Napa-style large tasting rooms and mass commercial output. With its boutique wineries and fine dining establishments, a trip to this verdant land proves a traveler can hardly go "sideways."



Good Day, Sunshine

Enjoying a glass of **Sanford Winery's** crisp and floral Sauvignon Blanc on the porch of its original adobe tasting room is an incomparable way to spend a Saturday afternoon. Chris Burroughs, tasting room manager, is irrepressibly modest about the stir created by his cameo appearance in last year's indie cult hit. More importantly, however, is his knowledge of winemaker Bruno d'Alfonso's pristine whites and seductive reds. If the views of yellow mustard and wild lupine are not enough, a splash of Pinot Noir from Sanford's new "La Rinconada" vineyard will wash away thoughts of urban life.



Sanford Winery, 7250 Santa Rosa Road (Buellton), 805.688.3300 or www.sanfordwinery.com. Daily 11am-4pm.



The News is in the Vineyard

At prestigious **Melville Vineyard and Winery**, winemaker Greg Brewer employs rigorous discipline, both in the vineyard and the barrel (or steel tank, as the case may be). The tasting room is one of the area's loveliest with 180° views of the vineyards and the Santa Rita Hills. Brewer, one-half of the Brewer-Clifton team known for Burgundian-style whites that enjoy almost cult status, is equally handy at producing Melville's exclusive small-lot red

wines, such as Carrie's Vineyard Pinot and its elegant cold-climate Donna's Syrah. The rising star, however, is Brewer's cold-fermented, tank-aged Inox Chardonnay which evokes unexpected urbanity in this cowboy setting.

Melville Vineyard and Winery, 5185 East Highway 246 (Lompoc), 805.735.7030 or www.melvillewinery.com. Daily 11am-4pm.

Lunch under the Trees

No wine country weekend would be complete without a picnic among the vines. For lunch *en plein air*, the serene gazebo overlooking **Foley Estates** vineyards and tasting room makes a perfect setting after a stop at **Panino** in Los Olivos for such take-out grub as an English Stilton and Asian pear sandwich, a goat cheese and roasted pepper salad, or a seasonal harvest salad. A hidden gem is the deli section at **El Rancho Market** on Route 246, where the locals pop in as much for impromptu socializing as for the fish cakes with dill sauce, potato salads, and chef Tim Neenan's sweet tomato "gringo" salsa.

Foley Estates Vineyard & Winery, 1711 Alamo Pintado Road (Solvang), 805.688.8554 or www.foleywines.com. Daily 10am-5pm. Panino, 2900 Grand Street (Los Olivos), 805.688.9304. Daily 9am-5pm. El Rancho Market, 2886 Old Mission Drive (Solvang), 805.688.4300 or www.elranchomarket.com. Daily 10am-5pm.

In the Village

Los Olivos is a charming T-shaped town of two streets, with award-winning Patrick's Side-Street Café on, yes, a side street, and Fess Parker's Wine Country Inn and Vineyard Dining Room across from Jedlicki's western store. The rest of the town's commercial space is filled up with galleries and tasting rooms. Perhaps the nicest is **Richard Longoria Wines**, a small gallery with an Italian garden. Stroll outside where Rick and Diana's two beautiful cats will vie for a sip of Longoria's

signature Blues Cuvée. Rick was among the small team of top winemakers to chart the boundaries of Santa Rita Hills and to obtain recognition for its uniquely superb growing conditions for rich, concentrated Pinot Noir and full-bodied Chardonnay. In this intimate tasting room, like others in the area, you are apt to find yourself in spellbinding conversation with the winemaker himself. And the original posters for his Cuvée labels, which Longoria commissioned from California artists, are a definite must-see.

Richard Longoria Wines, 2935 Grand Avenue (Los Olivos), 866.RLWINES or www.longoriawine.com. Mon, Wed, Thu 12 noon-4:30pm; Fri-Sun 11am-4:30pm.

Dining Out

Buellton, an up-and-coming culinary destination, has been attracting energetic young chefs known for fresh and original cuisine. At most of the town's restaurants, you'll find smashing wine lists that offer a chance to sample the area's small-release stars. **Brothers Restaurant at Mattei's Tavern**, a historic stagecoach stop on the edge of Los Olivos, serves ruby-hued Iowa pork chops with smoked bacon and sage over polenta that keeps travelers coming back. Best of all, everything from the fish to the filet with Stilton-port wine sauce is paired with wines worthy of a Pinotophile's interest. The list of Syrah is equally star-studded with established industry players like Qupé, Stolpman, and breakaway

new kids like Carhartt, Arcadian, and Kenneth-Crawford. At **Patrick's Side Street Café**, an engaging place for lunch, the chef's delicate fillet of sand dabs, boneless trout, and Bavarian-style pork schnitzel pair well with a Taz Pinot Gris, Consilience Roussanne, or the peppery yet silky Curran Syrah. Local excitement is focused on chef Budi Kazali's French-Indonesian cuisine at the **Ballard Inn Restaurant**. The soft-shell crab and



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BASE CAMP

Downtown Santa Barbara is a palm-studded seaside hamlet framed by the Santa Ynez mountains and the sea, with the Channel Islands suggesting a far-off fantasy. From delightfully overpriced boutiques to art galleries hidden in arcades decorated with centuries-old Spanish tiles, a late-afternoon stroll down State Street makes you feel like you're on vacation. To cap off a special day of wine tasting in the SBC, check out these local culinary finds.

31 West

Downtown Santa Barbara's regal boutique Hotel Andalucia sports a new crown jewel: 31 West. This comfortable, intimate spot boasts the cooking of Tra Vigne alum Michael Reardon. The new American cuisine in this elegant Spanish hacienda features produce and seafood that can't be beat—think beautiful spiny lobsters and emerald green lettuce.

31 W. Carrillo St., 805.884.0300. www.andaluciasb.com

Quantum

A bit more hip than buttoned up stalwarts like Citronelle or Wine Cask is newcomer, Quantum. Like the A.O.C. of Santa Barbara, Cynthia Miranda's casual small-plates spot is sophisticated and stylish. Awash in simple cool tones, Quantum lays claim to the crown for innovative dining on the Central Coast. Don't miss the deep fried chocolate-stuffed bananas as a finale to the tender Kurobuta pork medallions.

201 W. Carrillo St., 805.884.0885. www.mondialsantabarbara.com

Sevilla

Food and Wine Best New Chef of 2001, E. Michael Reidt pumps up the Santa Barbara culinary scene with his French-Brazilian fare that is as exciting as Carnivale. Just opened, the historic Casa de Sevilla has transformed into an urban oasis, complete with open barbecue pit, Mexican tiles, and a charming patio. If you've grown tired of Pinot for the day, a lime-kissed caipirinha might just hit the spot.

428 Anacapa St., 805.564.8446. www.restaurantsevilla.com

- Alison Clare Steingold

cucumber salad with chili aioli or crispy frogs' legs are reason enough for the winemaker crowd to flock to this romantic, softly lit room.

Brothers Restaurant at Mattei Tavern, 2350 Railway Avenue (Los Olivos), 805.688.4820. D Daily. Patrick's Side Street Café, 2375 Alamo Pintado Road (Los Olivos), 805.686.4004 or www.patrickssidestreetcafe.com. L Tue-Sun; D Wed-Sun. Ballard Inn, 2436 Baseline Avenue (Ballard), 805.688.7770 or www.ballardinn.com. D Wed-Sun.

The Local Influence

Speaking of buzz, a Sunday morning visit to Bob Senn's **Los Olivos Wine and Spirits Emporium** is a convivial, high-energy way to get the low-down on the area's next "cult" wines. The tasting room is a saloon-style affair set back along the entrance to Los Olivos. While what's au courant is as likely to change as fast as a hot Friday night dance club, Bob's current raves include: Labyrinth Pinot Noir from Bien Nacido and Fruit by Arika Hill (a New Zealand winemaker known for teaming with Lane Tanner).

Los Olivos Wine and Spirits Emporium, 2351 Grand Avenue (Los Olivos), 805.688.4409 or www.sbwinest.com. Daily 11am-6pm.

The Last Glass

Before heading south on the 101 Freeway back to LA, one will be forgiven for turning onto the small winding road to Sanford again, to spend the last few hours of the weekend there. While conducting your own private tasting, the thought may come that such simple pleasures may not last forever. But in this serene and rustic setting, it seems, even with all the attention the film has attracted to the area, it will be a long time before the Santa Barbara wine country will be anything like, well, Napa.

*editorial by kia mcinerny
photograph by gary g. kuist*

