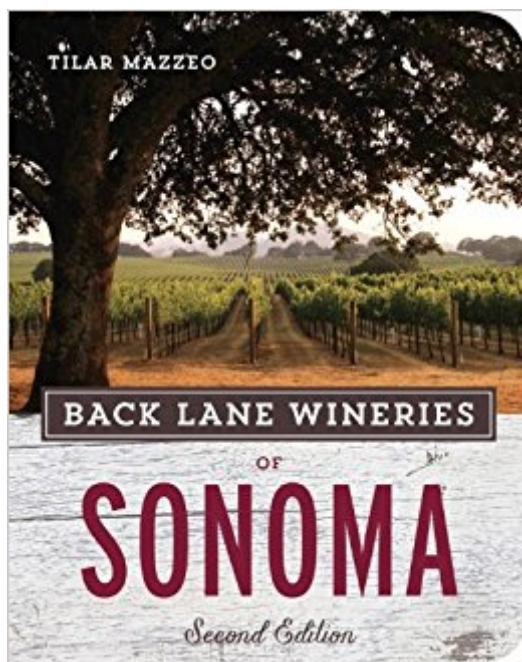


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Back Lane Wineries Of Sonoma, Second Edition



Synopsis

This updated guide to the small and "secret" back-lane wineries and tasting rooms of Sonoma profiles over 70 hard-to-find, authentic boutique estates that feature world-class, artisanal wines revered by locals and critics. Each year, tourists visit Sonoma's well-trodden wineries, many of which offer wines you can buy readily on the shelves of your local grocery store. Far more difficult to find are the picturesque, oftentimes family-run wineries handcrafting exceptional wines revered by critics and locals alike. Back Lane Wineries of Sonoma will lead you to seventy of these gems, many with only a limited production and local distribution. Updated with new wineries, restaurants, and local attractions; maps; full-color photographs; and tips on wine-tasting etiquette, wine shipping services, and itinerary planning, this guide will prepare oenophiles and beginning wine-lovers alike to relish in the laid-back atmosphere that Sonoma has to offer.

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TILAR MAZZEO is a New York Times best-selling author of books on wine, travel, French culture, and luxury, including *The Widow Clicquot*, *The Secret of Chanel No. 5*, *The Back Lane Wineries of Sonoma*, and the forthcoming *The Ritz at War: Luxury in Occupied Paris*. She is also the co-owner of the online wine business *LaLaWines.com* and professor of English at Colby College.

Introduction The wines in Sonoma County are world-class, and each year more than 7.5 million

tourists visit what locals call simply “the North Bay” the rural and still magical wine country less than an hour north of San Francisco. And everyone knows, of course, that wine tasting is a serious business. Swirl, sniff, taste. There is nothing wrong with classiness and expertise and the love of a fine wine. This is the stuff *la dolce vita* is made of. But the wine country is also, increasingly, big business. Many tasting rooms are slick retail operations run by corporate managers living somewhere a long way from Sonoma, offering wines that you can buy just as readily (and often less expensively) on the shelves of your local grocery store. Often, these are beautiful places, and I am not recommending that you pass them by entirely. A part of the California wine tasting experience is sitting on marbled Italianate terraces overlooking acres of perfectly pruned vineyards, basking in the warm sun and the intense loveliness of it all. But you don’t need a guidebook to see this part of the North Bay wine country. Highway 101 is plastered with billboards, and you would be hard-pressed to miss the big-name tasting rooms clustered around the central plazas of quaint towns like Sonoma, Healdsburg, or Glen Ellen (all worth a leisurely visit). Just as exciting and often far more difficult to spot, however, are the small, back lane wineries of Sonoma, places that the critics, industry professionals, and locals revere but few visitors ever see. These are wineries run by the same people who grow the grapes and make the wines, and they are geared toward curious travelers looking to discover what it is about Sonoma County that makes everyone who lives here swear it is paradise. This is a guide to those back lane wineries of Sonoma County. Places where you can find excellent handcrafted wines made by on-site proprietors, often with only a local or regional distribution and a limited case production. The vast majority of the wineries included in this book make fewer than ten thousand cases of wine a year, and the smallest produce only a hundred or two. The very largest make fewer than thirty-five thousand cases, and, in a county where some of the big commercial operations churn out five million cases of wine a year, this is still a small operation. Off the beaten path there are few marbled terraces or stucco palaces, but often these wineries are in the midst of striking beauty overlooking a hundred acres of a wildlife preserve, on the edge of an ancient redwood forest, or tucked along a rural side road in the middle of open fields, where the proprietors are happy to watch you settle down for a picnic with a bottle or two of wine. Best of all, in my mind, these are places where wine tasting gets down to earth. These are places where no one needs to show off how developed his or her palate is and where the winemakers welcome questions, from beginners and experts alike. Often, you will also find that these are the wineries where sustainable and organic viticulture is being pioneered. And, above all, these are wines that are likely to be a new experience, with names that you won’t find in big retail outlets back

home. Amid the back lane wineries of Sonoma, you can still make secret discoveries.

Great book for off the beaten path wineries! Some great gems! Some I had already been too. I recommend this book if you are tired of the Napa glitz and looking for something different.

An excellent guide to wineries we may not otherwise have found!

Bought this for a co-worker.

Got this for my husband and he LOVED it!!!

thanks

Well laid out and easy to use as a tour guide.

Just some intro book

Great book! Used it for a first-time trip to Sonoma County, and found some fantastic wineries and advice in it. Highly recommend it for newcomers to Wine Country!

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