Paso Robles Wineries: The Essential Guide to a Weekend in Paso Robles
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION......................................................................................................................... 3

GETTING TO PASO ROBLES .................................................................................................. 4

1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF PASO ROBLES ........................................................................... 5

2 LODGING AND ACCOMODATIONS IN PASO ROBLES ................................................... 9

   LUXURY RESORT ACCOMODATIONS ............................................................................ 9
   BED AND BREAKFAST INNS.......................................................................................... 10
   CAMPGROUNDS............................................................................................................. 11
   GUEST HOUSES............................................................................................................. 12

3 DINING IN PASO ROBLES............................................................................................... 17

4 PASO ROBLES WINE COUNTRY....................................................................................... 24

5 MORE TO DO IN PASO ROBLES..................................................................................... 32

6 EXPLORING PASO ROBLES THROUGH AGRICULTURAL TOURISM......................... 42
INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Paso Robles, California. The area is the up and coming wine Mecca of Central California. If you are looking for a great place to spend a weekend then Paso Robles, California is just for you. Paso Robles may be in the heart of wine country, but it offers so much more than the norm. There are shops, it is the home of the California Mid-State Fair, museums, great food, wonderful views, and a relaxing atmosphere with an eclectic mix of entertainment. This is a kind of destination where you can fill your days with activities or just sit back and enjoy the breathtaking views while sipping a local wine.

The Paso Robles area is located in the Coastal Mountain Range, so you are able to capture the beauty of the mountains, the ocean, and the deserts. Each season offers incredible natural beauty. The winter will bring green hills, the spring will show vivid pink and white almond blossoms, there are lush vineyards to gaze upon during the summer, and fall will offer beautiful
colors and a bounty of new wines and local harvests. All you need to do is pack a picnic, pick a road, and fall in love with the area.

GETTING TO PASO ROBLES

Paso Robles is a city within San Luis County and is a part of the California central coast. It lays half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco, along California Highway 101. It is also connected to the San Joaquin Valley to the East via Highway 46.

There are several ways to access this wine Mecca. A few of these include:

- By air – charter a plane from the Paso Robles Airport or the regional airport used is the San Luis Obispo County Airport in San Luis Obispo
- By train – use the Amtrak Coast Starlight line
- By bus – Greyhound bus service has runs that go directly to Paso Robles
- By car – perhaps flying into San Francisco area or Los Angeles, renting a car and taking a scenic ride to the area is more your style

However you choose to make the journey, you will not be disappointed. Now, let’s see what this wonderful area has to offer to the traveler looking for a new adventure or to that traveler who is looking to just get away from it all.
It can be fun knowing a bit of the history of an area that you are about to travel to. Paso Robles is full of history and can be further studied once there. However, history tells us that Paso Robles was once known as El Paso de Robles and is Spanish for “The Pass of Oaks”. The town was shortened to Paso Robles when California gained independence from Mexico.

The Native Americans and the Mission Fathers knew of Paso Robles for the hot springs that were flooding the area. During the Mission Period the Padres were so impressed with the healing powers of the hot springs that they would make annual pilgrimages from such missions as: Santa Yenez, San Luis Obispo, and San Antonio to bring their sick to bathe and drink the healing waters. As a matter of fact, it was the Franciscan priests from Mission San Miguel who constructed the first mineral baths. At the time, they did not realize what they had started because several years later many adopted the same idea.

Early on the padres at the missions imported certain grapes and grew them at the missions. The grapes were turned into sacramental wines but some exported certain brandies that were also a product of the sweet grapes. After the missions were abandoned, there were Europeans that came to the area and revived the vines and started to import other varietals that would produce other types of wine. The word seemed to have gotten out and the area became increasingly popular. The pioneer settlers were attracted to this
area and later established cattle ranches, apple orchards, almond orchards, dairy farms, and more vineyards.

Centuries later the 26,000 acres that makes up Paso Robles was purchased with a land grant for $8,000 in 1844, which was after the Gold Rush era. Two brothers by the names of Daniel and James Blackburn teamed with a partner and purchased this land; they were tired of traveling the area and thought the region was beautiful and had great potential. They donated two blocks to the city for a public park. Over several years the park was planted with regional plants like cacti and then a grandstand was built, which was enjoyed by many for years to come. James Blackburn and their partner took part of the claim and became ranchers. However, Daniel was more of a businessman and decided to create a town. After the Civil War, Daniel sold half of the town site to a Drury James, who was the uncle to the famed Jesse James.

Between the two businessmen, they had envisioned a city that would offer first class amenities to its guests. The area would offer wonderful luxuries such as:

- Sulfur bath houses from the natural springs of the area
- Stores offering a variety of goods and the latest fashions
- Hotels
- Cottages for extended stays or larger parties
- Public bath houses with hot springs of the area

The area boomed within two years. It seemed that the visions of the two men had become a reality. They didn’t realize what more it would become. The area not only boomed but also grew very prosperous. The vision that started to grow into reality grew into a popular hotspot that has been compared to Napa Valley for wine production. It is now a hip little town that
is full of culture, as reflected in the many Paso Robles wines, the oils, the food, the entertainment, and the people.

In 1864, the first El Paso de Robles Hotel was constructed and featured a hot mineral spring bathhouse. In 1891, a newer and larger hotel was constructed using technology that would insure it to be fireproof. The hotel was truly grand and offered its guests amenities like

- Seven acres of glorious gardens
- A 9 hole golf course
- Library
- Beauty salon
- Barber shop
- Various billiard and lounging rooms
- An improved hot springs plunge bath that was considered the best of its time
- 32 individual bath rooms

Not only did regular travelers to the area enjoy these fine accommodations but many a famous person made the grand hotel their home. This included people the likes of

- Ignace Paderewski – This famous piano player made this grand hotel his home for over three months. His arthritis had gotten so bad that he thought he would never perform again, but the hot mineral springs cured his arthritis. He would go on to play and then make the Paso Robles area his home.
- Jack Dempsey – The boxing champ
- President Theodore Roosevelt
- Phoebe Apperson Hearst – The mother of William Randolph Hearst
- Actors – Douglas Fairbanks, Boris Karloff, Bob Hope, and Clark Gable
• Baseball Spring Training – The Pittsburgh Pirates and the Chicago White Sox would stay at this hotel and reap the benefits of the hot spring mineral baths to soak their sore muscles after a day of hard training.

There has been a large movement towards restoring the areas that started this resort area. The townspeople of Paso Robles have done so much to restore the Victorian homes, the downtown area, and now even the original hot springs run again. Certain mission areas have been restored for tours for people to get an insight into the original founders of the area. The western heritage that was the foundation of this area is not only acknowledged but celebrated and can be seen within the architecture, museums, food, and in many more areas. It is a wonderful resort area that offers so much to its visitors.

Mother Nature has caused several set backs to the area but the people do not seem to let this get them down. They only get stronger by rallying together and building the area up. It is a tight community that welcomes visitors from all over to learn about their area.

Now that you know a bit about how this special place came to be, it's time to explore how to spend your time while there. There are many wonderful places to stay, see, and fine foods and experiences to take in, the best of which can be found here in these pages, as your essential guide to the Paso Robles weekend.
While planning your adventure in Paso Robles, it is a good idea to book a place to stay ahead of time so that you can get accommodations that will fit your needs. Why not make your lodging option a part of the whole experience? There are a variety of places to stay that will fit any style, budget, transportation needs, and interests. With a little planning you can round out your trip with a wonderful memory of where you choose to stay.

LUXURY RESORT ACCOMODATIONS

Perhaps you have an open budget for your vacation; then you should check out staying at a luxury resort. These areas have so many amenities available at your fingertips and all your senses will be filled. It is best to book ahead of time to get the best price and choice of rooms.

One resort area that stands out is the La Bellasera Hotel and Suites. The buildings are influenced by a blend of Mediterranean and Italian architecture and felt throughout the property. The oversized guest rooms are only a start of the first class accommodations. Some of the included amenities include things like:
• A custom swimming pool
• A whirlpool so you can relax your muscles after a day of touring
• A fireside cabana that will be the perfect setting for a quiet glass of wine
• Concierge services that will help you make the most of your vacation and help with any reservations that are needed
• A fully equipped athletic center so you can keep up with your workouts
• Spa treatments that will give you the ultimate relaxation experience

BED AND BREAKFAST INNS

Known for being a quaint place to stay, the choice to stay in an inn can always be rewarding. It is best to study up on the area and the inn of your choice to insure they have the necessities that you deem important. A bed and breakfast can be more costly but you usually receive top rated sleeping arrangements, beautiful surroundings, attention is paid to the finest of details, and your stay usually includes at least one meal for the price of the room. There are numerous inns to choose from in the Paso Robles area but a few that may catch your eye include:

• **JUST Inn Bed & Breakfast**

  The JUST Inn invites rest and relaxation in sumptuous style. Each of their four luxury suites: Tuscany, Provence, Sussex, and Bordeaux, are appointed in fine European tradition. Tapestry-covered furnishings, queen and king sized feather beds and
frescoed ceilings add to the charm and comfort of these private suites. A visit to the Inn is complete with a stroll in the English Gardens or a dip in the heated spa and seasonal pool.
http://www.justinwine.com/visit_just_inn_bb.php
“JUSTIN Vineyards & Winery are not to be missed and are in a class by themselves.”
  – Wine Spectator

- **Seven Quails Vineyards in Paso Robles**. They are considered very lively and quirky. The food is incredible and they offer outdoor dining. The panoramic views and art pieces leave your senses feeling full. The setting is in the country but they have all the things that may draw you to the city. They are near several quaint shops and wine tasting rooms. Upon further research, they have been known to give discounts for some quirky reasons.
  http://www.sevenquails.com

- **Venteux Vineyards in Templeton**. This luxurious inn has private suites to complement your stay. They offer a gourmet picnic breakfast or come back in the afternoon for hors d’oeuvres and Venteux wine while overlooking the picturesque grounds. They are near the downtown area for you to enjoy a fine dinner or one of many of the wine tasting rooms. http://www.venteuxvineyards.com

**CAMPGROUNDS**
Perhaps you are making Paso Robles a stop on a longer RV excursion; well this area is not without lodging for those who need such. There are a variety of campgrounds in the area and a couple of examples would be:

- **Wine Country RV Resort in Paso Robles.** This newest RV resort is surrounded by more than 85 wine tasting rooms. There are golf courses, lakes, beaches, shopping, and fine dining for you to enhance your visit to the area. The resort is family owned so you know you will get the care and attention that you are looking for to enjoy your stay. [http://www.winecountryrvresort.com](http://www.winecountryrvresort.com)

- **Lake Nacimiento.** Seventeen miles from Paso Robles will find you on a lake full of outdoor adventure with a beautiful setting for a relaxing stay. There are seasonal rates available and equipment to rent. Horseshoe pits, basketball courts, and volleyball courts are there for use at no additional cost. [http://www.nacimientoresort.com](http://www.nacimientoresort.com)

**GUEST HOUSES**

If you are intending to extend your stay or you are traveling with a larger group, then it may be wise to investigate renting one of the many guesthouses available. This would be the answer to any privacy issues and cut down on dining. These homes are complete with all the kitchen amenities, which would allow you to cook in the privacy of your own area. A couple of choices would include the following:

- **Sue Casa at Oakbrook, in Templeton** (the west side of the area). The Spanish style villa is surrounded by horse ranches and vineyards. They offer private gardens and pools for you to enjoy.
One of many interesting facts about Sue Casa is that throughout the grounds you will discover interesting and unique doors and each one of those has an interesting story regarding its history. [http://www.suecasa.com]

• **The Vintage Ranch in Paso Robles.** This 75 year old renovated farmhouse lies on 66 acres of vineyards, hills, and olive orchards. There is a group of large oak trees to admire on this vast property. The home sleeps up to eleven people and is only three miles west of downtown; being close to all the shops, dining choices, wine tasting rooms, and other things Paso Robles has to offer, it is ideally convenient. [http://www.thevintageranch.com]

• **Bella Casa in Paso Robles.** This lovely home offers sleeping arrangements for up to six people. It is a short walk to downtown which sports a cinema, dining options, wine tasting, spas, and special events that change all the time. [http://www.bellacasavacation.com]

• **Lake Nacimiento.** Offers lodges that will house 4 to 14 people or mobile homes with full maid service. Non-smoking rooms are available too. The lake is only 17 miles from Paso Robles. The lake has boats and more at your disposal. [http://www.nacimientoresort.com]

**HOTELS AND INNS**

In the Paso Robles area, you will find all the well-known hotels and motels. However, for a unique selection perhaps you should look at the *Paso Robles*
Inn. The brick-lined paths will lead you to the beautiful gardens, the refreshing swimming pool, and the relaxing spa. They offer a variety of style of rooms. A few may include:

- **Standard rooms** – Comfortable beds, seating areas, and complete bathrooms await you
- **Suites** – Some that include garden views, fireplaces, or a deluxe spa with a Jacuzzi
- **Monterey** – These rooms are non-smoking only and offer refrigerators, coffee makers, high-speed internet service, pay-per-view movie selections, and Bath & Body Works products to enhance your bathing experience

Another alternative could be the *Adelaide Inn*. This lovely inn offers a plethora of amenities that include things like:

- **Refrigerators** – This will allow you to enjoy refreshments in the comfort of your own room
- **Hair dryers and ironing needs** – This way you do not have to worry about packing these heavy items
- **Work desk** – A wonderful place to sit and write some postcards.
- **Creature comforts** – Rooms with king or queen sized beds, sofas, and recliners add to your comfort
- **Relaxation** – Heated swimming pool, whirlpool baths, and a sauna will melt your cares away
- **Golf** – There is a miniature golf course and putting green on the property for any golf lover

As you can see, there are areas to stay that will fit any budget and desire. There are many more to choose from and this is just a sampling of the types of lodging that is offered. It is always best to reserve a room ahead of time so you can insure your lodging wishes. However, if you are one to travel on
a whim then there are enough lodging choices that you could get a room when needed.

- **Hotel Cheval** Is a sophisticated and stylish 16 room luxury Inn located in downtown Paso Robles, California. Situated in California’s prized food and wine region, the intimate Hotel Cheval offers well-traveled guests an experience unlike any other in the area.

  Hotel Cheval features exceptional personalized service amidst thoughtfully designed and refined accommodations. I have personally stayed in the Hotel Cheval a few times and have to say it is one of the nicest places to stay on your trip to Paso.  
  [http://www.hotelcheval.com](http://www.hotelcheval.com)

- **Luxury Boutique Hotel in Paso Robles**
  The La Bellasera Hotel & Suites, are a luxury boutique hotel in Paso Robles, that offers the perfect symmetry of comfort and elegance. They focus on total quality in customer service, set in the tranquility of a full-service Paso Robles hotel. Influenced by a blend of Mediterranean and Italian architecture, the elegant accommodations at La Bellasera in Paso Robles capture and reflect the Central Coast area’s relaxed heritage and beauty.  
  [http://www.labellasera.com](http://www.labellasera.com)

- **Adelaide Inn** Located in the heart of Central California. Located near dozens of amazing attractions like Mission San Miguel, Paso Robles Pioneer Museum, Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio, the Adelaide Inn is the ideal vacation rental for families and couples. Whether its Wine Country, Hearst Castle, or San Luis Obispo that brings you to the area.  
  [http://www.adelaideinn.com](http://www.adelaideinn.com)
DINING IN PASO ROBLES

While touring Paso Robles and the areas that surround it, why not try one of the many wonderful restaurants the area has to offer? There is a full selection of restaurants that feature specialties like steak, French cuisine, and everything from home-style breakfasts to champagne brunches. Grab a quick Mexican snack, a slice of pizza, or a cup of specialty coffee and a yummy baked good. No matter where you choose to eat, your taste buds will be rewarded with a celebration of eclectic flavors. Chefs of the area will shop at the local farmer’s markets and vineyards to find peak products to make their dishes come alive with the tastes of the local bounty. The downtown area is very inviting to all that enter. One could find themselves dining with a renowned wine maker and the local farmer, all at the same restaurant.

Those who sit at Villa Creek will enjoy a dining experience like no other. This restaurant prides itself on being organic, local, and sustainable because they purchase their ingredients from local farmers and ranchers and they only serve meats and vegetables that are in season. The local farmers benefit from the vegetable scraps for compost, the meat scraps become pet food, and the used oil is turned into bio-diesel. Their early Californian and Mediterranean style food is inspired by the early Californian missions and prepared using a rustic style that helps maintain their sustainability. Villa Creek has a wine list with an assortment of international and local wines that will complement their menu. It is best to make reservations for this popular restaurant, so you are insured a place at the table.
**Artisan** is a restaurant in Paso Robles that serves lunch, dinner, and a Sunday brunch, which will satisfy any appetite. Their dishes are inspired by all American comfort food flavors prepared in a unique way. Their beer and wine bar sports flavors from all over the world to local and the California area. The atmosphere in the bar area is so inviting, so why not stay and enjoy a treat from their exclusive bar menu? Reservations are suggested, especially on the weekends.

A short drive to San Luis Obispo will be rewarded by a meal at **The Gardens of Avila Restaurant**. This luxurious restaurant was voted as most romantic and it is easy to see why. The intimate settings, the fireside lounge, elegant dining room, and the century-old stone patio would be the perfect area for romance. They offer a choice of menus that are time relative. There are breakfast, lunch, mid-day, bar, and small plate menus. The extensive dinner menus include:

- Chef’s Health and Wellness Menu – This heart healthy but tasty menu will satisfy those who have dietary needs.
- Wine Country Dinner Menu – This fare is truly savory and rich and will have you leaving fully satisfied.
- Chef’s Tasting Menu- Not sure what to order? The tasting menu will supply all of your tastes and will give you a sample of some of the chef’s finest.

There is, of course, a menu of wines that will complement your meal of choice. Some of the wines are from the region’s best vineyards and some are from beyond. Reservations for dinner are in order which will guarantee your seating for some of the region’s tastiest foods offered.

**The Paso Robles Inn Steakhouse** has been understandably the area’s favorite for over fifty years. They offer lunch and dinner in their indoor fireside dining room or the patio that overlooks the breathtaking gardens.
The classic steakhouse dining with a contemporary twist will leave your taste buds wanting more. The **Cattleman’s Lounge** is a great place to visit before or after dinner. They feature local talent each night or catch up on your favorite sports team on one of their four televisions. Happy hour, at the lounge, is a great way to start an evening.

Casual elegance and fine French cuisine describes the **Bistro Laurent**, in Paso Robles. The finest chefs from France invite you to the comfortable atmosphere of their restaurant as you feast upon your favorite seafood, chicken, or Angus beef dishes that are delicately prepared. Step outside to their courtyard to the beautiful grape arbor and try one of their featured wines, or even dine outdoors. The tasting menus available will help appreciate many of the master’s finest culinary collections along with the wines that best bring out the flavors of that particular dish. Before you leave the bistro, you should browse through the wine store that has a full selection of wines that you can bring home and enjoy. Reservations are required for this fine restaurant, especially on the weekends.

If you are craving some great Italian food, then you should try **Buona Tavola**. They have locations in Paso Robles and San Luis Obispo so no matter what area you find yourself in you can savor this northern Italian delight. They are open for lunch and dinner. They feature a wide choice of appetizers and handcrafted pastas. The main courses include seafood, chicken and beef prepared the way you would find in traditional northern Italy. Make sure to leave room for one of many tantalizing desserts that will tempt you, like their infamous tiramisu.

**Panolivo**, in Paso Robles, will take care of all your dining needs. They offer breakfast, lunch, and dinner fare that will delight all those who enter. If you are deciding on a picnic, then stop in for their gourmet take out menu and fill your basket with yummy treats. Reservations are recommended for dinner for their elegant dining room or outside dining area, and it is easy to
comprehend why you would need to do so. The French Mediterranean cuisine will have your tongue singing the praises. Every Friday and Saturday night Panolivo’s wait staff may suggest one of the newest tappas featured to start your dinner. However, one could make a whole meal out of the decadent desserts, pastries, or other baked goods that the restaurant is famous for. The extensive wine bar will give you a good sampling of the regional wines.

Possibly you would like a more casual setting for dinner; then you should check out the scene at The Crooked Kilt, in downtown Paso Robles. The pub prides itself on having different entertainment each night so their patrons are never bored. Sit at the bar and bite into a juicy burger or something else off the full bar menu, while watching one of four plasma televisions. Or grab a table and order some other incredible munchies off the menu while sipping one of many brews available.

Pizza is always in order for a vacation and Paso Robles has their share of places to grab your favorite pie. However, a couple of local favorites include:

- **Chubby Chandlers Pizzeria** – They have brick oven, specialty pizzas, and sandwiches that will leave you feeling satisfyingly full.
- **La Bella Pizza** – This authentic Italian pizzeria uses only the freshest ingredients for its incredible pizzas and sandwiches.

Nothing says adventure like eating at a local diner. Well *Jose’s Diner* is a truly wonderful adventure for the palate. Traditional home cooking and Mexican favorites make this a stop that is worth the trip. The down home flavor will start your day off right with a full breakfast or keep you going with a full-flavor lunch or dinner.

*Tortilla Town* is a great place to stop for a Mexican snack. You can witness the traditional handmade tortillas in the making while you wait for your
favorite fresh Mexican dish. Fresh salsa and guacamole is the way to top your taco, fajita, or burrito. The staff is fast and friendly and wants you to leave with a satisfying smile on your face.

**Odyssey World Café**, in the heart of bustling Paso Robles, started out as a dream of two tourists. The future owners of the café were visitors to the area and made a vow that they would come back and make Paso Robles their home. They started their new venture as a wine tasting room and then decided to expand to offer more to their customers. The Mediterranean and other International flavors that welcome you are as friendly as the owners.

Looking for a place to grab a sandwich or snack to go? Well, don’t overlook the **Templeton Market and Deli** in Templeton. They have a variety of snacks, sandwiches, and drinks that will overflow your picnic basket.

**Café Vio** is a nice place to sit and visit or just take in the local happenings. They serve up delicious soups and sandwiches. Sip on a cup of freshly brewed coffee from their selection or an espresso. A mug of hot herbal tea and a tasty treat from the baked good case is a great way to pair the afternoon. The café also has a large collection of beers and wines to try while cruising on the free Internet service.

Maybe your sweet tooth leads the way; well Paso Robles is not without some tempting stops. Whether you have restraint or not it can be fun to try one of these sweet stops:

- **Powell’s Sweet Shoppe** – This old-fashioned candy store will get your candy memories whirling with the largest collection of nostalgia candies. This place definitely makes you feel “like a kid in a candy store”, no matter your age. Rediscover a confection specialty or find a new favorite. Take a moment to walk the candy land and enjoy the feeling.
• **Cold Stone Creamery** – This franchise has fans from all over the world. Cold Stone combines ice cream with just about anything you can imagine. The menu can be overwhelming and you wonder how you are going to choose, but let your stomach do the choosing and you will not be disappointed.

• **Rocky Mountain Chocolate Factory** – The number one destination for chocolate lovers and those who just like to dabble. It is no wonder that you salivate as you stroll through the doors. The store offers every chocolate confection known and a few that may not be. Try a crisp apple dipped in gooey caramel or rich chocolate and then rolled in nuts or something else. Watch as the experts roll out flavors of fudge onto a marble top and cut it into pieces; and then be prepared to fall in love with the free samples. Everything can be dipped in chocolate: graham crackers, marshmallows, fruits and more. How about trying a specialty chocolate like a truffle, soft butter creams, or munch on a nutty cluster? You are bound to find something you like at this chocolate haven.

Stop into the **Old Mission Coffee House and Juice Bar** for a high quality coffee drink that starts with quality Free Trade beans. Or maybe a fresh juice or smoothie is more your style. Any choice is great with a baked goodie or coffee snack that is available.

One way to start your day of touring would be to visit the **Paso Robles Inn Coffee Shop**. This newly restored area is complete with a large circular counter and chrome bar stools covered with bright vinyl. There is a large mural that is older than 50 years that depicts early mission life. Sink your teeth into some of the savory breakfast classics or try one of the local favorites.
A trip to Paso Robles is not complete without having breakfast at The Cowgirl Café, which is located in downtown. For over twelve years the café has been serving down home cooking that is plenty in portion and taste. The waitresses are bustling by with three or four plates on their arm while serving up coffee that is hot and strong. The locals enjoy breakfast while talking the day’s business as the pots and pans are clanging in the background. Country music rounds out the experience.

This is just a small sample of eateries that will welcome you as you visit Paso Robles and the surrounding areas. You will also see that many of your favorite chain restaurants have made the area their home. Talking with the locals will give you the prime choices of eating and drinking establishments of that area. Another resource could be your lodging choice. Many are equipped with guides to help you make your selection or concierge service that will assist with reservations. The more daring traveler will walk the avenues and just choose a place on sight. This can always be a fun and adventurous way to find a new favorite spot. Food is the center of entertainment and finding a local spot, ordering some fine food and wine while you take in the flavors of the area is a great way to discover the local culture.
PASO ROBLES WINE COUNTRY

Paso Robles has an extensive history of wine making. Recorded history has it beginning in 1797 when the first grapes were introduced to Paso Robles by the Franciscan ministries at the San Miguel Archangel Missionary. Father Junipero Serra planted over 1,000 vines. He used the wine for sacramental reasons, but he made brandy to export. During the 1840’s through the 1860’s the missions were abandoned so the vines and grapes were ignored for so many years.

Pierre Hippolyte Dallidel took up where the padre left off. He revived those vines and started new ventures. During the 1870’s, more Europeans moved to the area and got in on the fertile ground of wine producing. Henry Ditmas, an Englishman, imported Zinfandel and Muscat grapes from France and Spain. He then planted such vines on his 560-acre vineyard and it was named Rancho Sausalito in Arroyo Grande.

That was a mere beginning. Paso Robles has grown extensively over the past 100 years. The area houses over 170 vineyards, some are larger than others but what they have in common is their dedication to producing some of the state’s most popular wines. The area is now becoming as popular as the Napa Valley region of Central California. Mother Nature has not always been so welcoming to the area, but each time she attacks, the area seems to get stronger and stronger. It is an experience just waiting for its next traveler to explore and to love.

Whether you are a wine aficionado or just merely curious, then the vineyards and wineries of Paso Robles have what you are looking for. There are
vineyard tours, tasting, and festivals that you can enjoy. A small sampling of those to check out would include:

- **Adelaida Cellars** – West of Paso Robles in the hills of Central California, lies the makers of some of the finest wines in the world.

- **Arroyo Robles** – The name is from the beautiful valleys that are filled with the mighty oaks. The grapes used are from premium vineyards in the area.

- **Bella Luna** – This estate is located on five acres in Templeton. The boutique winery specializes in small lot productions of ultra-premium red wine.

- **Bianchi** – The long history of wine production is evident at this location. Since 1974, Glenn and his father, Joseph, have invested in this winery and vineyard along the San Joaquin river located in the Central California Valley.

- **Calcareaus Vineyard** – These masters handcraft wines from the limestone slopes of Western Paso Robles.

- **Caparone** – These folks have spent 25 years making only red wine the old fashioned way. They produce unfiltered wine with minimal processing and store them for long barrel aging.

- **Clautiere** – This winery entices the visitor to experience a visit with some serious fun that no other winery can offer.

- **Dark Star Cellars** – Established in 1994, this winery produces over 3,000 cases of wine. They specialize in Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Zinfandel, and more.
• **Denner Vineyards** – These masters practice artisanal winemaking to handcraft their ultra-premium wines from the hillsides.

• **Eagle Castle Winery** – The exquisite wines that are fit for royalty are created in the lush surroundings of the Santa Lucia Mountains while an enchanted castle witnesses.

• **Eberle Winery** – A Paso Robles winery that offers tasting along with tours of the winery and caves.

• **Fratelli Perata Winery** – Following the history of their Italian immigrant family, this family-owned winery produces high quality wines of the Paso Robles area.

• **Hug Cellars** – A small family-owned winery that specializes in limited productions of Syrah and Pinot Noir.

• **Hunt Wine Cellars** - These premium wines are hand crafted utilizing the finest in winemaking techniques, using American and French oak barrels.

• **Justin Vineyard** – This vineyard offers breathtaking views with the incredible wines. It is located less than 10 miles from the Pacific Ocean with elevations of 1100 to 1800 feet. You have to check out the Justin Isosceles it is to die for.

• **L’Aventure** – This winery invites you to discover how and why things are done differently and the proof is in the taste of the wines.
• **Opolo Vineyards** - Their specialties include big mountain Zinfandels, classic Zinfandels, full bodies Pinot Noirs, Merlots, and Syrah.

• **Orchard Hill Vineyards** – This 51 acre vineyard is a rising star of the Californian Wine World. They continue to make wine the old fashioned way.

• **Parkfield Vineyards** – This combines the better of two worlds, shopping and wine. They are considered a unique shopping experience located in the heart of the Paso Robles wine region. They offer fine wines, fresh produce, gourmet foods, and relaxing wine tasting.

• **Rabbit Ridge Winery** – This legacy started with a schoolteacher from Southern California and a wine making home kit. The success did not happen overnight but one taste of the master’s wines will find you intrigued with the story and more importantly with the selection of wines.

• **Silver Horse Winery** - Winemaker Stephen Kroener describes his hand-crafted premium wines as, “100-percent food-friendly. As a family, we’re always looking to combine our love of food with our love of wine. As a winemaker, I want to create wines, whether they’re varietal-driven or blends, that have nice, bright notes and a well-balanced structure that’s sturdy without being overpowering.”

• **Stacked Stone Cellars** – Prudent viticulture practices and strict crop management are the basis of this estate vineyard. They produce highly concentrated and complex wines that focus on the bright fruits and cracked peppercorn flavors.
• **Victor Hugo Winery** – This is one of Paso Robles most exciting and innovative wineries. It is a small family-owned winery specializing in small handcrafted lots of wine with intense colors and flavors.

• **Zenaida Cellars** – They are the growers and producers of such favorites as Chardonnay, Zinfandels, Syrah, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Sangiovese wines and more.

With over 170 vineyards and wineries to choose from, you could make a while trip of touring and tasting what they have to offer. You can pick up your own colored brochure that features the wineries that offer tours, so you can decide which ones to explore. There are two different trails that seem popular and are highlighted on a trail map. The first is the **Highway 46 West Wine Trail**, and among other vineyards and wineries you will find these:

- Zenaida Cellars
- Castoro Cellars
- Peachy Canyon Winery
- Dark Star Cellars
- Midnight Cellars Winery
- York Mountain Winery
- Windward Vineyard

The **Highway 46 East Wine Trail** is as equally enjoyable and will bring you to several vineyards and wineries including:

- Garretson Wine Company
- Robert Hall Winery
- EOS Estate Wines
- Chumeia Vineyards
• Tobin James Cellars
• Eberle Winery

It is great to visit these places and discover what might make them different from the next. Each wine you taste will be a new taste for your tongue; each view different for your eyes, and the feeling of being a part of the action gets into your soul. Take each stop as an individual and appreciate what that vineyard or winery has to offer and not what it may not have in comparison to the others you have visited.

If you are interested in being a part of a group then book with one of the many touring companies for a bus tour of the area wineries and let them do all the driving so you can truly enjoy your wine exploration. Perhaps you would rather stay in town and not venture out to the country; there are many tasting rooms within walking distance of each other that will give you the heart of the area. Each tasting room may have a nominal fee that would include several wines within that taste. While in town you should check out these rooms:

• **Hice Cellars** – They may have a strong vegan following but they delight the mainstreamers and the wine aficionados too. They follow organic and biodynamic practices and their wines are unfiltered.

• **Silver Stone** – The wines are hip and so is the atmosphere. Sit back and enjoy a Nacido Vineyard Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, or a Sauvignon Blanc.

• **Wine Attic** – Not only are fine wines available for your tasting pleasure but how about some delicious food? The Attic offers lunch in their courtyard or you can browse the shops and pick up wines
that are only available there and nowhere else. Check out their jazz nights in the courtyard or join a winemaker’s night.

- **Midlife Crisis Winery** – This unique winery was named because of an idea that would not go away. Their philosophy is, “Life is too short not to chase your dreams.” The small-operated business is in its second year and is well received by the area.

If you are booking your visit to Paso Robles in advance, then maybe you would like to plan around one of the many seasonal festivals of the area. If you contact the Chamber of Commerce then they will be able to direct you to a list of festivals and dates so that you can plan your trip accordingly. Each festival may specialize in a particular area or crop but most are in concordance with events like:

- Winemaker’s dinners
- Food pairings
- Seminars
- Winery tours
- Special tastings

One of the most beautiful times to visit the Paso Robles area would be during the Fall Harvest. The warm days and cool nights, buzzing activity, changing colors in the vineyards, and the scents of the ripened fruit invade your senses. You can be a part of the celebration of a year’s work while the harvested fruit is ready to become a new vintage of Paso Robles wine. A harvest weekend will include wonderful activities like:

- Cooking class with food pairings
- Touring a vineyard in a vintage jeep
- Grape stomping
- Winemaker’s dinner
• Barrel sampling while amidst the cool keeping cellar
• Live music

This is only the beginning of what a tour or taste of the wineries can bring. It is an experience that should be tasted and felt to truly get a feel of the area. Even if you arrived with some wine knowledge, you will leave with a full sense of what is really involved in the winemaking process. Hopefully you will bring home several bottles of the region’s bounty and then each sip of your favorite Paso Robles wine will bring you back to your own area escapade.

With each step you take in the vineyards or wineries, you can get a sense of the history of this particular art form. Every wine and master has his or her own story to tell. The history may be different but they all seem to strive for the same excellence in the business of winemaking. There are some vineyards and wineries that are smaller to others and some of those only specialize in a particular style of production or a type of wine, but there is not one that should be discounted as a professional producer.
5
MORE TO DO IN PASO ROBLES

It seems clear that wineries and vineyards are a key point to the Paso Robles area, but in the true sense of its founders, the area offers so many other things to do. There are culturally-centered activities, shopping, museums, sports, and more to take in while visiting Paso Robles and the surrounding areas. Look out Napa, Sonoma, and Healdsburg because here is Paso Robles. What was once known as the cowboy town has rapidly grown to offer a contemporary mix. The local shops and businesses have a wonderful mix of the old and the new, which will truly provide something for everyone who travels to the region.

For the music lover or the traveler that would like to relax and take in some local sounds, the Paso Robles area has some choices for you. A few examples include:

- **Twilight Concerts** – Join the locals at the park every Friday night during the summer and you will not be disappointed. Grab a picnic basket and head on down to the city park gazebo, located at 11th Avenue and Park Street in Paso Robles. There is no admission fee to enjoy the variety of music displayed.

- **The Wine Attic** – A local hotspot for wine tasting, the Attic also offers new music venues every Wednesday. It is great to go early and enjoy some incredible food while tasting one of the several microbrews, micro root beer, or wines that make this spot so popular.
• **Castoro Cellars** – Also popular with tourists and locals alike. It is always interesting to see who may be playing at the Cellar. Good music and great wine makes for a wonderful outing.

• **Matt’s Music** – This school of music is the lead dealer in musical instruments, both mainstream and unique. The school offers concerts around the area that provide all types of music.

It almost goes without saying that one will do some shopping while vacationing in Paso Robles. The shopping district is an attraction in itself with the restored historical buildings that houses boutiques that offer products that include:

- Handmade fabrics
- Fine women’s clothing
- Locally made olive oil
- Unique gifts and home décor that uses local influences
- Antiques
- Gourmet foods and wine shops
- Hard to find musical instruments

A local landmark that does not require a day of dedication but is worth walking to is the **Clock Tower**, which is in downtown Paso Robles. However during the devastating earthquake of 2003, tragedy struck. Two women were killed when the tower’s roof slid off. The townspeople have since dedicated the landmark to those two women. It is a nice tribute to them and to the town.

How about the golf enthusiast? Some travelers couldn’t imagine missing golf time, even if they are on vacation; still others would like to try something new while on vacation. A good place to start a day of golf would be at the
**Paso Robles and Hunter Ranch Golf Course.** A few of the reasons to try this course out would be:

- It is one of two 4 star golf courses in the area
- A sense of small town charm with the appeal of world class golf
- Wine country scenery, smooth fast greens, and friendly staff make this course very appealing to all
- A stocked pro shop will provide all your golf needs and desires
- Four putting stations will help you practice this precise stroke
- Partake in one of the group lessons or book a private one
- This course is a part of the California Central Coast Golf Trail.
- A rest and some food at the Australian rustic style clubhouse will revive you after an enjoyable 18 holes

**The Links** is located in the heart of the California Coast wine country. The four tee sets at each hole will offer a challenge for all levels of golfer. The course is laid out like the Scottish Highlands for the visitor to have a wee bit of a taste of the favored golfing area.

Do not have enough time for a full 18 holes of golf, but would like to hit some balls around? Well, **River Oaks Golf Course** could be the answer to that issue. The 6-hole “player development” course is a newer concept to golf. There are three sets of tees for different angles of approach for each hole. This concept is perfect for all levels, ages, and genders that wish to play the game. You can practice your short game or get a smaller game of golf in while enjoying your vacation in the Paso Robles area.

One way to enjoy the Paso Robles area is heading outdoors. There are beaches like Morro Bay and Pismo Beach that are close by, so you can enjoy the beautiful Pacific Ocean. Another choice would be a few miles away at pristine **Lake Nacimiento**. This beautiful location has available things like:
• Horseshoes, basketball, and volleyball
• 165 miles of secluded coves
• A full service marina – This area rents ski boats, pontoon boats, peddle boats, kayaks, and canoes
• A small day use fee will be charged

There are things to do in Paso Robles if you are traveling with kids or if you are just a kid at heart. A day at The Ravine Water Park may be just what is in order. This newer park has many exciting things to do. You can:

• Tube on one of the 325 foot long flume slides
• Drift lazily on the “Kickback Kreek” for hours until you decide it is time to come off.
• Splash in the 175,000 gallon wave pool or if you are traveling with a young one, then let them enjoy the 9,000 sq. ft. kiddy pool complete with slides
• If you are daring enough then try one of the 5 story high plunges with names like Vertigo or the Kamikaze.
• Play a game of beach volleyball
• There is free parking, lockers, and showers available
• Take a break and have a snack from the concession stand

Another way to relax while visiting the Paso Robles area is to visit one of the hot springs. Hot springs are one of the natural wonders that Paso Robles was built upon and made it so popular. However, updated technology has made it possible to visit a hot spring without the smell of the minerals. A trip to the River Oaks Hot Springs Spa will bring:

• An intimate setting with a cozy fireside lobby
• Indoor and outdoor hillside therapeutic mineral tubs
• Elegant surroundings that will please the eye
• Unparalleled beauty, pampering, and relaxation
• Guests of the spa said to reach greater levels of balance and awareness
• A full spa menu with packages available to heighten your relaxing experience

**Franklin Hot Springs** is not the fancy spa like others but it offers a day of fun and relaxation in a natural setting. People are attracted to the area because of:

• A low fee is charged and sometimes the honor system is in place
• The fee includes access to a boating and fishing area
• Take your remote control boat or miniature sailboat and have a mini-adventure
• The rustic charm will make you feel grounded as you catch and release an afternoon of fishing without a needed license
• For an additional fee, kick up the excitement with a paintball session

Paso Robles is known for its wineries and vineyards, but do you know that beer and ale enthusiasts can enjoy a tour of a local brewery? **Firestone Walker Brewery** was started by a couple of locals and now their beer has been voted the best in America.

A nice way to spend an evening would be with a **Movie In A Vineyard**. Several vineyards sponsor a movie in their vineyard, complete with wine tasting, Italian food, a movie, and all of it with a beautiful starlit sky.

If you are traveling with small children, then a visit to the **Children’s Museum** will bring an afternoon of smiles and giggles. This newer museum is located in the volunteer firehouse in Paso Robles. The interactive exhibits include things like:
• A giant oak tree that they can climb through and explore
• A simulated grape stomp
• Fire equipment to try on
• A special toddler area
• Physical Science center
• Live theater with costumes to try on and act out with
• A pretend pizza kitchen so the kids can “make” their favorite food
• A puppet theater with a variety of puppets so the stories can always change
• A pretend grocery store with both English and Spanish labels
• Arts and crafts area so you and your child can create a masterpiece together

A short drive will bring you back in history. Visiting one of the old missions like, San Miguel Archangel or San Antonio de Padua will give you the sense of the beginning of the Paso Robles area. Hearst Castle was William Randolph Hearst’s dream come true. There are five different tours to reserve, so you can explore this truly enchanted place and learn the history of the castle and the man behind the dream.

If you are a history buff or if the weather is not cooperating for your outdoor plans, then try one of the wonderful museums the area has to offer. One that will tell of the history of the area would be the Pioneer Museum, which would include things like:

• History of the area
• A large collection of visual and written history
• It depicts the life of the early settlers
• Free admission but donations to keep the museum open are greatly appreciated
**The Estrella Warbird Museum** will leave you awestruck as you gaze upon the aircraft that is housed there. The museum is dedicated to the restoration and preservation of military aircraft and memorabilia. The displays and activities change all the time, which keeps it fresh and exciting.

Taking in some local art will give you a different perspective of the area. **The Paso Robles Art Association** has several meetings and demonstrations available to the public. They also have open art shows so that everyone has an opportunity to show off their artistic side.

A night of theater can always be rewarding and the Paso Robles area has many theaters to choose from with new performances all the time. It is always best to contact the theater directly to get the update schedule, but the Chamber of Commerce or your hotel will be able to direct you, as well. A few theater venues to check out would include:

- The Cal Poly Theatre in San Luis Obispo (a.k.a. SLO)
- Civic Ballet of SLO
- Pacific Repertory Opera, located in SLO
- The San Luis Obispo Symphony

Picking up a picnic basket and driving the California Coastline can be a great way to spend the day. Drive State Highway 101 to Route 1 and that will bring you along the coast and through the towns of:

- San Simeon
- Cambria
- Cayucos
- Morro Bay
Take some time in each town and enjoy their local flavors and entertainment, so you get a full understanding of the culture that has made this area so popular.

Throughout the year, the area sports a potpourri of festivals that you can partake in. The Chamber of Commerce will have a full listing of dates and themes of all the festivals. Each festival specializes in a local talent, artisans, produce, and much more. They are the perfect way to find that unique gift or take home treasure.

If you are thinking about doing something that may be out of your ordinary realm, then seriously think about having a picnic. The area restaurants have "To Go" menus so you can put your own basket together or many have pre-made specialty picnic baskets that you are able to purchase and go. There are many glorious views that deserve time for a picnic, but a few vineyards that offer picnic areas for the public and worth considering while planning would be:

- **Castor Cellars** – Their central picnic areas have tables that are surrounded by breathtaking views of their vineyards

- **Norman Vineyards** – This family owned vineyard is west of Paso Robles on the California Central Coast. Looking out over the fantastic mountains will only make the food in your basket more flavorful as all of your senses are filled with your picnic experience in wine country.

- **York Mountain Winery** – Located in Templeton at the end of a country road, this winery welcomes its visitors with mighty oaks that are thick with the local Spanish moss. They invite you to sit back under the Sycamore trees and enjoy the majestic mountain views.
• **Eberle Winery** – The friendly atmosphere greets you as you enter the estate. Explore the underground caves that cover over 16,000 square feet before you feast upon your picnic. Their deck overlooks the estate vineyard and creates the perfect scenery for your delectable meal.

• **Peachy Canyon Winery** – This family owned winery in Templeton offers sweet smelling vineyards and magnificent views as a backdrop for your picnic experience. While you are there, perhaps you would like to inquire about the private cottage they have for rent.

• **Zenaida Cellars** – Positioned in Paso Robles, which is the heart of the wine country. The winery has 1200 square feet of oak tree shaded lawns and private gardens that surround the picnic area. The beauty of wine country surrounds their guests as they sip a glass of wine and enjoy the tastes of their picnic baskets.

As you can see Paso Robles and the surrounding areas are not without activities, entertainment, or attractions. Every area has a taste of individuality but with an underlying historical presence that has weaved a common thread throughout. It is always nice to choose a diverse list of things to check out while visiting an area so you can have a rounded experience that will stay with you for years to come.
Perhaps you would like to seek a little adventure while on your journey to Paso Robles and the San Luis Obispo County. You could experience life as a family farmer, enjoy horseback riding, the inside look at wine making or olive oil making. Take a step further and pick your own lavender or olallieberries (a cross between the loganberry and the youngberry which is a cross between a blackberry and another berry like a raspberry) direct from the field.

_Work Family Guest Ranch_, in San Miguel offers a farm or ranch stay. You can immerse yourself completely in farm life or simply enjoy a trail ride or conservation program. Reservations are required for this adventure.

Education can be combined with fun by joining a class, taking in an exhibit or enjoying a walking tour. _Cal Poly Organic Farm_ is a 10-acre site located in San Luis Obispo that is managed by California Poly-Tech students and you keep reap the benefits of their education. They offer classes regarding:

- Organic fruits, vegetables, chickens, and goats
- Straw-bale building
- Native plant landscapes and more
Green Acres Lavender Farm, which is located in Atascadero, is a family owned and operated farm. They boast 10,000 lavender plants on their farm and invite you to learn about the healing properties of lavender. Experience the essential oils and learn about other products that use this fragrant herb.

Pasolivo is located in Paso Robles. It is a family owned and operated 55-acre ranch that grows over 9,000 trees with 12 olive varietals. The family would love for you to visit and check out their state of the art olive press and enjoy some of the fresh olive oil that it produces.

Jack Creek Farms in Templeton is not without things to see. The 5th generation family farm has a large country store that offers:

- Pure apple and pomegranate cider
- Fresh from the farm produce
- Jams, jellies, and baked goods

The farm also has farm animals on display, demonstration gardens, and seasonal pick your own pumpkins.

There are other outdoor activities that can be combined with each other or added on with other plans you may have in that area. A few of the discussed ranches and farms offer an assortment of these, so many can be experienced at one location. Many of these activities require reservations, so it is always best to contact your desired location first, to insure availability and times. There are things like:

- Bird Watching – Diamond Dot Ranch, Swallow Creek Ranch, or V6 Ranch and Town of Parkfield
- Cattle Drives – V6 Ranch or Work Family Guest Ranch
- ECO Tours – Rock Basin Vineyards, Swallow Creek, and V6 Ranch
• Horseback Riding and Trail Rides – V6 Ranch or Work Family Guest Ranch
• U-Pick Produce – Blue Sky Gardens, Jack Creek Farms, U-Pick Farm. The availability of produce depends upon the season.

While wine is one of the main exports of the area, olive oil is also very popular. Why not combine one of your tours to include a trip to the olive grove? There are quite a few in the area, but a couple to check out include:

• **Olea Farm Olives** – Located in Templeton this farm has a French antique tasting room for you to enjoy. Sit back and enjoy the taste of their fresh olive oil that is made from their Spanish arbequina olives. They invite you to walk through the olive groves and tour how the oil is made.

• **Tiber Canyon Ranch** – Located in San Luis Obispo. This farm specializes in Tuscan-style olives and oil. Their tasting room is actually located above the wineries of Edna Valley, which is only a short distance from their ranch location.

While visiting these farms and ranches, be sure to walk through their country stores. This is the best way to buy the freshest products and it allows you to put a face on the foods that you buy and get a sense of their origin. Some of the products that you can find are:

• Apples and other fruits
• Avocados
• Berries
• Fiber products
• Baked goods
• Organic produce and organically produced items
• Gourmet foods
- Vegetables
- Eggs
- Citrus
- Honey

If you are an animal lover or just like to admire from afar, there are plenty of animals to watch within the ranches and farms that you may visit. Some of the featured animals would include:

- Alpacas and llamas
- Cattle
- Emus
- Horses
- Poultry like chickens and roosters
- Ducks and Geese
- Rabbits

Some of the animal exhibits are hands-on while others are present for aesthetic reasons. Whatever the reason, they are always a joy to watch.

The agricultural world of the Central California area has always been bountiful, but it has boomed in the last century or so. Mother Nature has given the farmers plenty of grief but she also provides the rich soil that is the basis of their bounty. It is fantastic that travelers are allowed to not only drive by and see these areas, but are invited to become a part of the experience. The farmers of the area want you to get your hands dirty while picking the best of their crops so you can get a true satisfaction when you take that product home, wash it, prepare it, and stick you teeth into it.

* * * *
Paso Robles and the surrounding areas have a long history that starts with recognition of the healing benefits of the hot springs and the rich soil and the production of grapes that will become bountiful. After a time of abandonment, others came and saw great potential and started to make that a reality. The Paso Robles area is being compared with that of Napa Valley in the winemaking industry, but it is more than that. Paso Robles offers art, music, theater, shopping, culture, and agricultural products like no others. It has restored buildings that add to your dining and shopping experience by the glorious architecture, and still more. It would take longer than a weekend to explore all that Paso Robles and the surrounding areas have to offer, but with a little planning and decision making, a traveler could put together a weekend that is filled with as much activity or as little activity as desired. Armed now with the Essential Guide to a Weekend in Paso Robles, you can consider yourself well prepared for a weekend of a lifetime—or many!