



CALIFORNIA Paso Robles

Outsiders use the Spanish pronunciation: PASS-oh ROBE-leys; many people who grew up there say it roh-bulls. Still others just call it "Paso" which fits perfectly the laid-back atmosphere of California



wine country's newest "it" town. Located on the Central Coast off U.S. Highway 101 equidistant from San Francisco and Los Angeles, this verdant oak-dotted region was once populated by cattle and grain farms. Now vineyards dominate the landscape: 26,000 acres have been planted in grapes in an area where you'll find 170 wineries and 100 tasting rooms. Tastings can still be had for \$3 to \$10, compared to triple that in other regions in the state. Although Cabernet

Sauvignon accounts for 38 percent of the area's wine production, diverse soil and microclimates allow even cool-weather Pinot Noir grapes to grow in the otherwise warm region. Rhone varieties such as Syrah thrive, and Paso's Zinfandel is excellent.

Marc Goldberg, one of a few Pinot Noir winemakers in the area, likes to spend time in his Windward tasting room pouring his Burgundy-inspired wine for visitors (windwardvineyard.com). A few miles away at Justin Vineyards and Winery, known for its Bordeaux blends and Rhone varieties, guests can take tours of the wine caves or dine at the restaurant (justinwine.com). For more information, especially about the region's harvest festival in late October, go to pasowine.com.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS Paso Robles has a growing reputation for elegant specialty food shops. Pasolivo Olive Oil has its version of a tasting room for its award-winning oils; pasolivo.com. Meanwhile, Vivant Fine Cheese—could there be a more perfect companion to wine?—opens its tasting room this fall; vivantfinecheese.com.

Wining & Dining Duo

BH&G wine editor Richard Swearinger and wine and food expert Wini Moranville share the latest wine finds and more at their blog, BHG.com/wineblog. To join our wine club, go to bhgwineclub.com.