

Wine Country Boom

Over the past 40 years, Napa and Sonoma have transformed from tranquil country towns into bustling world-class food and wine destinations. Here's how.

BY ABBY TEGNELIA

New Hot Spots

Yountville

Eat: This small hamlet might just have the highest per-capita rate of Michelin-starred restaurants outside of France. With legendary eateries like **The French Laundry**, the cozy **Bistro Jeanty**, the refined **Redd**, and Michael Chiarello's bustling **Bottega**, there are more than a handful of sizzling spots to shake your credit card at. But after a long day of wine tasting, sometimes you just need something casual, fast, and spicy! Enter **Protéa**, a new Latin American restaurant that has droves of locals and visitors lining up around the block for savory empanadas, braised and roasted meats (including goat), and crispy plantain chips. Anita Cartagena, formerly of Yountville's Ciccio, is the chef and owner.

Sip: Since Valentine's Day, Wine Country bon vivant Jean-Charles Boisset has been romancing Yountville with his latest endeavor. At **JCB Tasting Salon and Atelier by JCB**, you can sample flights of wines while nibbling rarefied cheese and charcuterie imported from France. The expansive atelier (French for "workshop") has become *the* spot to purchase picnic supplies, complete with a picnic basket.

Stay: Tiny Yountville continues to pack in more than its fair share of overnight guests. The minimalist **Bardessono Hotel and Spa** is still the most stylish scene in town, while the handsome **Hotel Yountville** and elegant **Villagio Inn and Spa** are in high demand. So is the exclusive **Poetry Inn**, perched on a hill above the Silverado Trail, unbeatable in the price-is-no-object club.