

# San Jose Mercury News

## Hot trend alert: Napa wine lounges, instead of tasting bars

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The standard winery tasting bar is so 2012. Who wants to elbow their way in, just to taste a few \$20+ sips? In Napa and Sonoma, the term tasting room is out -- and "hospitality house" is in. Instead of bellying up to the bar, you relax in intimate living rooms and wine lounges, served by a "wine educator," in lieu of a "pourer." And you don't winery hop, you relax and stay a while. Here's just a sampling of new winery tasting experiences.

### **Silver Trident Winery, Yountville**

The Napa Valley Tasting House does double duty as a Ralph Lauren Home showroom, complete with living room, dining room and library. The American fashion designer created the cocktail cart, rugs, light fixtures and home accents here, where the wine tasting menu also serves as the furniture and accessories price list. Love that chair? It's for sale -- and they deliver. Need a deck of cards? A box of Bond carbon-fiber playing cards (\$53) is yours for the buying.

But you don't have to shop for decor to taste four Silver Trident wines (\$25), including the juicy pinot noir rosé, which we'd buy just for the elegant curvy bottle, or the cherrylicious pinot noir. Details: Open daily at 6495 Washington St., Yountville; [www.silvertridentwinery.com](http://www.silvertridentwinery.com).

### **B Cellars, Oakville**

This winery recently relocated from Calistoga to Oakville, where visitors can enjoy a chef's garden, wine cave and modern tasting experience. A wood-fired oven holds court in the Hospitality House, and sofas, chairs and tables -- inside and outdoors -- provide comfortable, inviting places to taste. No need to get up once you've settled in. Wine educators bring sips to you, with delicious bites paired with winemaker Kirk Venge's lush and fruity white or powerful, rich red blends. Details: Open daily, reservations required for tours and tastings (\$35-\$125). 703 Oakville Cross Road, Oakville; [www.bcellars.com](http://www.bcellars.com).

### **Cairdean Vineyards & Winery, St. Helena**

This new winery occupies the former St. Helena Prime Outlets site north of St. Helena. Now the Farmer & the Fox restaurant, Butterscots Bakery, Redolent Mercantile and Cairdean's tasting room surround an icy-blue tiered fountain that looks like a cake. OK, so they didn't get rid of the tasting bar, but there's a hip, groovy vibe and plenty of comfy lounge seating, where servers bring pours of a luscious roussanne and viognier blend and fruity merlot to you. Details: Open daily for Signature Tastings (\$25) at 3111 St. Helena Highway, St. Helena; [www.cairdeanestate.com](http://www.cairdeanestate.com).

### **MacRostie Winery and Vineyards, Healdsburg**

Sip wine in the winery's new Estate House, where the patios overlook 13 acres of pinot noir vines, and the indoor lounge, with its soaring wood ceilings, concrete floors and modern industrial decor, boasts views from every angle. Try the Estate House Tasting (\$20-\$25), with MacRostie's exceptional Russian River and Sonoma Coast chardonnay and pinot noir wines, or the Elevated Tour & Tasting (\$55) of single-vineyard wines paired with savory bites. Details: Open daily, reservations recommended. 4605 Westside Road, Healdsburg; [www.macrostiewinery.com](http://www.macrostiewinery.com).

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