



Top Dry Creek and Alexander Valley Wineries

Where to Find the Best Healdsburg Area Wineries for Visitors



[By Betsy Malloy](#)
[California Travel Expert](#)



MacRostie Estate House Tasting Room. Courtesy of MacRostie Vineyard and Kathryn MacDonald

This article focuses on the best wineries and tasting rooms in the Dry Creek and Alexander Valley areas around Healdsburg, California - from a tourist's perspective.

You'll find plenty of wineries to choose from in the official wine growing "appellations" called Dry Creek and Alexander Valley. The Dry Creek area is west of US Hwy 101 only 15 miles long and about 2 miles wide. It's best known for Zinfandel wines. On the other side of the highway is the Alexander Valley, dominated by Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon with respectable amounts of Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc and old vine Zinfandel.

Word is getting out about how great these places are and I'd suggest making a reservation if they offer them, especially if you want to take a winery tour.

Best Dry Creek and Alexander Valley Wineries: Tasting Rooms and Tours

At some winery tasting rooms, you're lucky to get enough attention to have your glass filled. By contrast, these top places offer a chance to relax in beautiful surroundings and get personal attention.

A note to help you keep from getting lost: West Dry Creek Road isn't just the west end of Dry Creek Road, but a separate route that runs parallel to it. Pay attention to addresses and you can avoid getting as confused as we were the first time we visited.

If you're new to wine tasting, [these tips can help you get the most out of your day](#).

It was a tough job, but I did it just for you. These wineries not only make great wines but most of all, they're really fun to visit and offer something besides the usual stand-at-the-bar and sip experience.

I have visited these wineries in person (sometimes more than once) and I recommend them to all my friends (including you). They're listed starting with my personal favorites.

- [Jordan Winery](#) is always on the tip of my tongue when I talk about places I like to go. They make just two kinds of wine: Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon and both are outstanding. Even more special is their guided tour that takes you through their gorgeous property. They also have some of the best wine club parties around.
- [MacRostie Winery](#): Wine aficionados have known about MacRostie since they had to seek them out in a warehouse. Now, they have possibly the most beautiful wine tasting room in all of California. And the friendliest, most attentive staff, too. In fact, they're so friendly that you can't get to their front door before they greet you and offer a glass of Chardonnay. The wines are great and they offer some interesting tasting flights that allow side-by-side comparisons. With several comfortable seating areas, they can accommodate quite a few guests without feeling crowded. As word gets out, they're going to be in demand, so I recommend making reservations ahead of time.
- [Francis Ford Coppola Winery](#) has some great wines to taste and they're ones I drink at home from time to time. But the things that make this winery really special are Coppola's private movie memorabilia collection, a restaurant and a lovely outdoor swimming pool where you can lounge for a while.
- [Ridge Vineyards Lytton Springs](#) is renowned for the quality of their wine, including the Cabernet Sauvignon that put them on everyone's radar at the famous Judgement of Paris wine tasting. On the weekend, an advance reservation for wine tasting is a good idea. But don't just stop in for a sip. Instead, sign up for their Estate Tour and Tasting. It's one of the best, most down-to-earth and easy to understand winery tours I've ever taken.

Just to round this list out, these are a couple of well-rated Healdsburg wineries that I haven't had a chance to visit yet:

- [Bella Winery](#) specializes in old vine Zinfandels and offers tastings in their cave, but the really fun thing here is the Ultimate vineyard tour, which takes you through the vineyards in a World War II military vehicle. They're located on West Dry Creek

- [Bubble Room at J Vineyards](#) is a step up from the traditional tasting room at this sparkling winemaker located a few miles south of Healdsburg, with wine and food pairings and tasting of library and small-production wines.

Wineries With Free Tasting

Free tasting is much easier to find in the Healdsburg area than in Sonoma Valley or Napa. In fact, the area has too many wineries offering free tasting for us to list here. You can find some of them by browsing through [this listing](#).

Picnic Foods

If you're looking for something to take to a winery for a picnic, the [Jimtown Store](#) on CA Hwy 128 serves sandwiches and sells other food items, including their own brand of olive and fig spreads. They also stock a fun assortment of very old-fashioned toys - and they might even have some Mexican jumping beans for sale.

The [Dry Creek General Store](#) on Dry Creek Road also serves a selection of items that make great picnic fare.

If you plan to have a picnic at a winery, don't be THAT guy who takes and never gives. Instead, buy a bottle of wine from them.

Make a Weekend of It

If you want to make more than just a day trip out of your Healdsburg wine-tasting trip, [use these tips to plan a weekend getaway](#).

http://gocalifornia.about.com/od/canapasono/a/healdsburg_wineries.htm