



San Luis Obispo  
Sincerely, California.

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## The wine country of San Luis Obispo

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Calif. — Known as “the Vineyards of Eden,” the wineries of South San Luis Obispo County are respected around the globe for their world-class wines. Vineyards carpet the hills and hollows of the Edna Valley and the Arroyo Grande Valley—each a designated American Viticultural Area—as well as the Avila Valley and Nipomo.

European settlers learned early that the climate and soil around San Luis Obispo are ideal for growing wine grapes. Back in the days of the Spanish missions, Franciscan padres planted vineyards to make wine for sacramental purposes. Local people have been producing wine commercially for about 100 years, but it is only in the past decade that SLO’s wine region has blossomed.

Of San Luis Obispo County’s many wineries (there are about 30,000 acres of vineyards and close to 100 wineries), two dozen lie in the AVAs just south of SLO city. The cool climate and marine sediment in the soil of Edna Valley nurture superior Chardonnay and are ideally suited to Pinot Noir, Syrah, Grenache and white Rhone varietals such as Roussanne and Viognier.

Wine lovers can drive serene back roads through rolling countryside to discover the treasures of San Luis Obispo wine country. A tour of the highlights

starts at Saucelito Canyon Vineyard, the oldest producing vineyard in the county. Dry-farmed vines planted in 1879 yield the grapes that go into the vineyard's remarkable Zinfandel, late-harvest Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon.

In a tasting room with 180-degree ocean and valley views, Laetitia Vineyard & Winery pours estate-grown Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Zinfandel and Merlot. Laetitia also makes one of SLO wine country's few sparkling wines, a noteworthy and popular offering. Next on the sipping tour is the big tasting room at Talley Vineyards/Bishop's Peak, which specializes in estate-grown Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Northwest of Talley is Domaine Alfred, a vineyard-designated winery. Using traditional wine-making techniques, the winery transforms Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah grapes into critically acclaimed wine.

Just down the road is Kynsi Winery, a family operation in a restored dairy. Here Don and Gwen Othman carefully create Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and blends that exhibit exceptional richness and depth. Claiborne & Churchill, west of Kynsi, departs from the Edna Valley norm to produce crisp, dry Alsatian-style wines—Riesling and Gewürztraminer—in addition to Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The winery occupies a straw-bale building that provides ideal conditions for wine storage.

At Edna Valley Vineyard, a pioneering winery best known for its estate-grown Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, the tasting room's 30-foot cherrywood bar is backed by huge windows. The view, over the vineyards to a range of volcanic peaks, is sublime. For a break from wine-tasting, shop the winery's extensive selection of wine-related gifts, books and fancy foods, then have a picnic amid lush landscaping.

The next stop is Wolff Vineyards, an ecologically friendly producer that employs traditional Burgundian methods to create Syrah, Petit Syrah, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. A short hop to the north stands the meticulously refurbished turn-of-the-20th century Independence School House, home to Baileyana. Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Syrah and Sauvignon Blanc are the name of the game here.

Last of the highlights is the state-of-the-art Tolosa Winery complex. In a sleek tasting room overlooking the fermentation tanks and barrel room, Tolosa pours Chardonnay, Syrah and Pinot Noir. Opened in 2004, the facilities are a harbinger

of the future for San Luis Obispo wine country, which continues to boom in sales and critical recognition.

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For more information about events, attractions and visitor services in San Luis Obispo, phone the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce at 805-781-2777 or visit the Chamber's website at [www.VisitSLO.com](http://www.VisitSLO.com).