

Worth the Trip: Dry Creek April: Prelude to Passport

The late-April affair arrives with an anticipation-filled opener.

by Alysia Gray Painter, January 29, 2016

Posted on NBC Bay Area

PASSPORT WEEKENDS...

around the Golden State are such a staple, nowadays, that one expects to see them on the calendar, just like a vino fan looks forward to the yearly harvest party and the holiday open house. For a region to not have some sort of passport weekend, which gives visitors a chance to not only try some new places but sip rarer wines and chat up the winemakers, is pretty unusual.



What's also unusual, though, on the passport front? A Friday event that

stirs up the excitement for the two days to come. We'd never cast an eye on the standard passport weekend format as it exists, the Saturday-into-Sunday schedule, but adding a Friday on is a pretty festive choice. It's a choice made by Dry Creek Valley, in Sonoma County, and the "Passport to Prelude" will have its inaugural roll in 2016. That's on Friday, April 22, so, yep, the passport weekend itself is on Saturday, April 23 and Sunday, April 24. So you probably know what a passport weekend will be all about, what with the visiting of vineyards and the sipping of reserves and the noshing on tidbits. But what does an anticipatory "Passport Eve" hold in the way of visitor-fun doings?

YOU CAN JOIN IN... with a "vineyard tour lunch or winemaker dinner" on that day, allowing you to go a bit deeper before the weekend has even begun. The prelude is all about furthering your wine knowledge, either by getting acquainted with the people who make your favorite wine or upping your general knowledge of how the grape gets into the glass. The lunches are set for a variety of spots around the valley, including Cast Wines and DaVero, while the dinners are landing at Capo Creek Ranch and Simoncini Vineyards, among others. After your lunch and/or dinner is complete, you have the whole passport-y weekend to look forward to, with, perhaps, another stop at the place you spent part of Friday. Add to all of this the exquisite April-ness of Dry Creek Valley, with everything in early bud and bloom, and you have a prelude not just to a wine-nice weekend but, also, to one of the best times of year in the area.

TICKETS... go on sale on Feb. 1.

<http://www.nbcbayarea.com/blogs/worth-the-trip/Dry-Creek-April-Prelude-to-Passport-367017871.html>