

Organic authority

Put Dry Creek Valley's Organic Winemaker Dinners (and Lunches) on Your Culinary Bucket List

By Donna Sozio



What makes winemaker dinners (and lunches) so memorable? Is it the farm-to-table cuisine? Library wines in your glass? Meeting the genius winemaker? Dining alfresco? The answer is yes, yes, and yes to all of the above.

Imagine being shown to your seat at a beautifully set table in a vineyard and poured the very best by the winemaker herself. Elegant yet relaxed, Dry Creek Valley in Sonoma, Calif., is home to some of the most memorable organic winemaker dinners and lunches. Whether you prefer casual lunches or a more refined evening affair, these dining adventures are sure to please your palate. And they are definitely bucket list worthy. The only caveat is to get your tickets early as intimate dining means limited seating.

Martorana Family Winery

At the annual sunset winemaker dinner in their Merlot vineyard, you'll sit with the Martorana family and indulge in a delicious dinner curated by organic and biodynamic chef Matthew Paille, owner of Epicurean Escape Catering. At dinner, you'll taste limited releases and Martorana's library wines that are perfectly paired with every plate. The dinner begins by being greeted personally by winemaker Gio Martorana and the Martorana family.

Then, you'll stroll through organic vineyards while Gio discusses his unique Italian-California style of winemaking: fruit-forward yet lower in alcohol. And learn how the wildlife habitat he maintains helps boost the population of Coho salmon in Dry Creek.

Next, you'll arrive at a romantically set table just outside the cave where guests will enjoy a rustic Italian family-style meal elegantly paired with Gio's favorite library wines. And if one organic winemaker dinner just isn't enough, join Martorana's organic olive oil dinner (of course, served with wine) during their olive harvest in the fall.

DaVero Farms & Winery

"From the Italian farm to the Dry Creek table" is Davero Farms and Winery motto and they don't disappoint. At the signature Dry Creek Valley Prelude to Passport lunch guests are invited to first tour the stunning Demeter certified biodynamic farm. Then, hold your glass out for barrel tasting, a delicious preview of next year's releases before they're bottled. Add in a little olive oil tasting to wet the whistle. Then guests are led to a lush al fresco dining area with views of the vineyard and garden surrounded by a living wall of gorgeous greenery to dine on a multi-course lunch.

Your glass will be half full as you sip and swirl DaVero's Mediterranean wine varietals such as Sagrantino, Malvasia Bianca, and Fiano. When it comes to the menu, you're in good hands as Colleen McGlynn, one of Davero's owners, is also a chef who expertly pairs her wines with freshly picked fruits and vegetables from their Biodynamic farm. And you want to lunch like this every day – or at least every month – be on the lookout for DaVero's monthly summer dinners (often vegetarian and vegan) hosted in their gorgeous gardens and vineyards.

Quivira Vineyards

Named after a mythical realm, Quivira makes every wine lover's fantasy of exceptional organic wine a reality. Leading the way is winemaker Hugh Chappelle creating balanced vintages that sing out of the of the glass. During Dry Creek Valley's Prelude to Passport event this spring, Quivira hosted an organic lunch harvested from its self-sustaining and biodynamic farm.

Focused on Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel, and Rhone varieties, Quivira also released a delicious rosé that guests enjoyed while clinking glasses in the hot afternoon sun. Lunch was served al fresco in the beautiful garden and truly was an organic spring harvest feast. Quivira's culinary partner, The Odd Couple, wowed guests with a spring onion, mushroom and chèvre focaccia, carrots in leek vinaigrette and the fan favorite... a perfect strawberry rhubarb crisp.

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