



MEDIA COVERAGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY CELEBRATES 28TH ANNUAL WEEKEND OF FINE WINES, CULINARY DELIGHTS AND LIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Tickets Go On Sale February 1, 2017; Passport is April 29-30, 2017

HEALDSBURG, Calif. (January 18, 2017)---Tickets sales open Wednesday, February 1 at 10:00 a.m. PST for the **28th Annual Passport to Dry Creek Valley**, hosted by the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley (WDCV). New this year are several VIP ticket add-ons, offering guests opportunities for intimate vineyard designate tasting experiences, meals with winemakers and vineyard tours.

At 45 participating wineries throughout Dry Creek Valley, guests will enjoy elaborate themed parties with exquisite food and wine pairings. Guests can meet Sonoma County's most renowned chefs, including Michelin-starred Chef Charlie Palmer, Diavola Chef/Owner Dino Bugica, Bistro 29 Chef/Owner Brian Anderson and other culinary stars, savoring their inspired culinary creations alongside newly released and limited edition wines. Wineries taking part range from the internationally-acclaimed Ridge Vineyards and Ferrari-Carano, to boutique wineries like Nalle and Talty, that produce fewer than 2,000 cases per year.

Live entertainment and activities support the wineries' unique themes. Music will include a Beatles cover band, bluegrass, jazz, Hawaiian music from Maile Swing, funk from The Jacktones and more. At Quivira Vineyards, guests will have the chance to blend their own custom herb salts from biodynamically-grown estate herbs. Winery themes range from the glamorous (think Prohibition-era speakeasy) to the goofy (think Caddyshack), with unforgettable food and wine at each stop.

[Click here](#) to view a Passport to Dry Creek Valley video. To request images, please contact Chelsea Kurnick at chelsea@mccuecommunications.com.

WHEN:

Friday, April 28, 2017 -- Prelude to Passport

Saturday & Sunday, April 29 & 30, 2017 from 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Dry Creek Valley is located in the heart of Sonoma County, just 15 minutes from Sonoma County Airport (STS) and 70 miles north of San Francisco and Bay Area international airports SFO and OAK. Direct flights into STS are available on **Alaska Airlines** from Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and Portland;

visitors on these flights can **check a case of wine for free on their flight home**. American Airlines flies from Phoenix Sky Harbor (PHX) to STS. Festivities take place at 45+ Dry Creek Valley wineries. A complete list of lodging options can be found at www.drycreekvalley.org.

TICKETS:

General Admission Price: \$135.00 for a 2-Day Passport or \$80.00 for Sunday-only Passport. \$55.00 for Daily Designated Driver Tickets. Tickets go on sale online at www.drycreekvalley.org on February 1, 2017 at 10:00 am PST.

Add-Ons:

- \$200 - First Class Upgrade - Includes one Prelude Dinner & our new Vineyard Designate Experience
- \$130 - Frequent Flier Upgrade - Includes one Prelude Lunch & our new Vineyard Designate Experience
- \$25 - Vineyard Tour - Attend a vineyard tour the morning of Passport, offered Saturday & Sunday

Prelude to Passport Price: \$75.00 for a Friday Lunch Ticket; \$150.00 for a Friday Dinner Ticket

Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis. VIP add-on experiences are highly limited.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Hashtags: #DCVPassport, #DryCreekValley

Facebook: facebook.com/drycreekvalley

Twitter: [@drycreekvalley](https://twitter.com/drycreekvalley)

Instagram: [@drycreekvalleywines](https://www.instagram.com/drycreekvalleywines)

About Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley:

Dry Creek Valley is a premium winegrowing region in northern Sonoma County, California, anchored by the charming town of Healdsburg. Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley® (WDCV) is a 501c6 non-profit trade association of over 60 wineries and 150 winegrape growers. Formed in 1989, the association represents a multi-generational family community of vintners and growers committed to growing high-quality fruit, producing world-class wines, and welcoming visitors to experience Wine Paired with Life®. Being good stewards of the land means that we are preserving the quality of our wines and the unparalleled beauty of Dry Creek Valley for future generations to discover. For more information, visit <http://www.drycreekvalley.org>.

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Wine Spectator

WineSpectator.com

TRUDIE & STING MAKING WINE IN ITALY



Dry Creek Valley has an open house with food, music and wine.

PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY

Website www.drycreekvalley.org/events/passport-to-dry-creek-valley

APRIL
22-24

Dry Creek Valley is a pastoral 16-mile-long AVA in northern Sonoma. On Saturday, April 23, and Sunday, April 24, more than 45 wineries will open their doors and vineyards to Passport holders. Standard tickets (\$135 for two days) get you exclusive tours, library tastings and access to food and entertainment. Winemakers and growers lead guests into the vineyards, cellars and tasting rooms, but if you want to drink wine, eat well and listen to music, you can do that too. On Friday, April 22, Prelude tickets get you lunch (\$76) or dinner (\$155) prepared by local chefs at participating wineries, including Sbragia and Pedroncelli. Dry Creek's character is down to earth, so expect casual, warm and fun visits. The winery list will offer special appeal to Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon lovers.

—Q.D.

MELISSA VOGT FOOD & DRINK CORRESPONDENT

Dry Creek Valley Struts its Stuff During Passport Weekend

By Melissa Vogt, April 28, 2016

Posted on Melissa Vogt Food & Drink Correspondent

Passport to Dry Creek Valley 2016

Every year in the spring, the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley invite wine lovers into their tasting rooms and vineyards for the open-house style weekend called Passport to Dry Creek Valley. Visitors from out of town, as well as wine-loving locals, appreciate the exclusive access to more than 45 wineries in one weekend. Pairing up with local chefs and caterers, each winery pours their wines alongside tasty culinary creations; at some wineries, there's live music and games in which to partake, and most certainly at every location there are incredible views of this renowned appellation.



DaVero Farms & Winery

This year, I started my one-day exploration of Dry Creek Valley at DaVero Farms & Winery. I had visited DaVero last year during Passport to DCV and was eager to taste their new releases. A fully operational farm, olive oil-producer and winery, this Italian heritage estate does it all. In addition to their olive grove and farm full of bountiful produce, they also raise chickens, pigs and sheep. For their wines, they focus on strictly Italian varietals made in an Old World style—fermentation with strictly native yeasts and barrel aging in neutral oak. These wines are clean and enjoyable expressions of some of my favorite Italian varietals.

I was particularly impressed, perhaps too because of how well it paired with the day's sunshine, with the 2015 Sangiovese Rosato.

Full of strawberries and cream on the nose, this dry Rosé is all too enticing; starting off round and creamy, with gentle barrel spice, the palate shows excellent contrast with its crisp-textured finish. This refreshing, dry pink is abundant with juicy strawberry fruit, and well-balanced with spices and acidity that juxtapose its plump mouthfeel. I'll certainly be back to enjoy more of this in the coming spring and summer months... as I can hardly think of a wine so aptly suited for relaxing, warm afternoons. This delightful wine was paired with a three-grain salad with fresh microgreens from their farm and it was absolutely delicious. The salad's earthy and tangy flavors provided for a light and refreshing accompaniment to the wine.

Another enjoyable wine from DaVero was their 2014 Ponzo Vineyards Primitivo. Classic Primitivo aromas of dominant black cherry and pepper-infused fruit leap from the glass. On the palate, this full-bodied, round and sultry wine shows spiced black raspberry, black cherry and a lot of pleasant black pepper.

Ridge Vineyards

In Dry Creek Valley, the views almost couldn't be any more iconic than at Ridge Vineyards. Gnarly, 115-year-old

Zinfandel vines are head-trained in that wild, picturesque fashion that makes this appellation so visually stunning. The estate Lytton Springs Vineyard boasts soft, rolling hills painted against a warm blue sky; the sun beats down at just the right temperature on the contorted old vines and during Passport to DCV, you take your time at this estate to simply to take it all in.

Seeing the beauty of these old vines, while sipping on some of the region's most classic expressions of Zinfandel, really speaks to why Dry Creek Valley has become synonymous with high-quality Zinfandel.



Of course, the 2013 Lytton Springs was showing in rare form; in this vintage, this estate wine is an assemblage of 74% Zinfandel, 16% Petite Sirah, 8% Carignane and 2% Mataro (Mourvèdre). Always showing impeccable balance and elegance, the 2013 expression is no exception. Seductive aromas of spiced raspberry, black cherry and a touch of meatiness lift in elegant fashion from the glass. Balanced and restrained on the palate, the fruit is anything but overripe. Spiced plums are enveloped in gentle tannins, with a hint of integrated barrel spice. This is top-notch Zinfandel clearly harvested at just the right time in grape development.

From the 2014 vintage, the Dry Creek Valley East Bench Zinfandel shows a bit more barrel influence on the nose with its soft aromas of vanilla mixed with red berry fruit. The palate possesses nicely

gripping tannins with restrained red fruit of dried cherry and strawberry. A hint of clove balances those fruit characteristics. This is a wine with poise and class, a seamless beauty that is easy to drink now, but will also age.

A special thank you to Ted, who was lucky enough to begin at Ridge Vineyards as a harvest intern and work his way into the tasting room, for the delightful splash of 2012 Monte Bello. It was an absolute pleasure to taste—a wine so good that I had to stop, put down my pen and simply sip while taking in those iconic views.

As for the cuisine, the tasty bite of sausage in yellow polenta—from chef Jesse McQuarrie of Feast Catering—was an excellent match for the balanced and restrained style of Ridge Vineyards Zinfandel. This pairing was so tasty that I hope to recreate it at home.

Mauritson Wines

At Mauritson Wines, always a favorite stop of mine when I am in Dry Creek Valley, the ever-famous duo of Winemaker Clay Mauritson and Chef Charlie Palmer certainly lived up to expectations. It is always a pleasure to chat with Clay, as he is one of the most friendly,



approachable and down-to-earth winemakers in Sonoma County. And you can bet he is always in the tasting room during Passport to Dry Creek Valley, kindly conversing with lovers of his wine and happily sharing stories about his family's history in the region.

The Mauritson family history dates back to 1868, making more than 140 years of grape-growing experience in the Dry Creek Valley and Rockpile appellations. Today, Clay remains committed to not only growing high



quality grapes from these appellations, but also to producing the wines. Since 1998, Clay has been crafting the Mauritson collection of wines, while continuing the family's time-honored tradition of growing high-quality grapes. I have been a fan of these wines for a long time and I am always excited to taste the new vintages.

Offering a change of pace from the region's famed Zinfandel, the 2014 Charlie Clay Pinot Noir—which is a Russian River Valley collaboration between winemaker and chef—showed beautifully and paired perfectly with the pulled pork sandwich. The 2014 Charlie Clay is a balanced, red-fruited Pinot Noir with a silky mouthfeel and complex flavors of fruit, spice and forest floor. Those earthier forest floor notes paired exceptionally well with the

smoky flavor of the pulled pork, really enhancing the wine's spice characteristics.

As for the Zinfandels, the 2013 Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel is a classic expression of its appellation—showing spiced red fruit and a gentle barrel touch with vanilla on the rather luscious nose. Mirroring that on the palate, spiced red fruit is front and center with additional flavors of raspberry and cherry; there is a gentle stroke of vanilla underneath the fruit in its balanced and elegant style. The tannins are soft and approachable, and there is a pleasant, drying, cocoa-tinged note that lingers a while on the finish. I loved this Zinfandel alongside the Painted Hills shaved beef with parmesan crostini; it gave the wine a bit more robust weight and meatiness, and the arugula increased the spice in the wine, making it a complex pairing in terms of both texture and flavor.

More Passport to DCV Favorites

It's hard to pick favorites, but there are always a handful of other memorable wines that are absolutely worth mentioning. This year, I fondly remember Amista Winery's estate-grown Morningsong Vineyards Syrah. Full of rich flavor and spice, it was delicious with Franchetti's wood-fired pizza. I also really enjoyed Kokomo Winery's Pauline's Vineyard Merlot—it was luscious, full of fruit and cocoa, and kissed perfectly by vanilla barrel-aging notes. I have learned over the years that Pauline's Vineyard is a real treasure trove in Dry Creek Valley. I've tasted Kokomo's Zinfandel from this same vineyard many times and the last several vintages have been fabulous. This Merlot was equally as enjoyable. Don't pass up a chance to taste any of



their Pauline's Vineyard wines. Last but certainly not least, the Primitivo from Collier Falls always puts a smile on my face, and the 2012 vintage was showing in perfect form. An expression of this lovely growing season, this Primitivo boasts dark fruit with notes of clove in its full-bodied, layered style.

<http://www.myfooddrink.com/blog/dry-creek-valley-struts-its-stuff-during-passport-weekend>



Passport to Dry Creek Valley 2016

By Hannah Gart, April 28, 2016

Posted on Healdsburg Social

What an amazing Passport this year! This annual event put on by the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley is such a blast and truly a celebration of Dry Creek Valley at its best. For more info and to be there next year visit <http://www.drycreekvalley.org/>.

Email us at HealdsburgSocial@gmail.com for more info on how you can be part of Healdsburg Social.



<http://www.healdsburgsocial.org/#!Passport-to-Dry-Creek-Valley-2016/cd23/57223ba20cf26b6d684580d2>



LOS ANGELES FOOD, EVENTS AND NIGHTLIFE BLOG

Culinary Experiences at Passport to Dry Creek Valley

By E*Star LA, April 22, 2016

Posted on E*Star LA

Now in its 27th year, the Passport to Dry Creek Valley event this weekend promises to be a great time to visit and taste Pinots, Zinfandels and other Sonoma wines. If you fly to Sonoma (via Alaska Air), you'll get to take home a case of wine free of charge. And if you wisely decide to take a bottle from a Dry Creek vineyard to dine at one of the participating charter restaurants, you'll also get free corkage as a part of their culinary cooperative.

While I love wine, food and wine always taste better when together, so I've highlighted some culinary-focused opportunities at certain wineries to turn your attention to this weekend:

Mauritson Wines is run by one of the most historic families in the area. They've been growing grapes since the 19th century, so they've got the Sonoma tradition passed on through many generations. Each year, they partner with Michelin-starred **Chef Charlie Palmer** (Aureole in NY, Dry Creek Kitchen in Healdsburg) for fantastic food pairings in their tasting room.



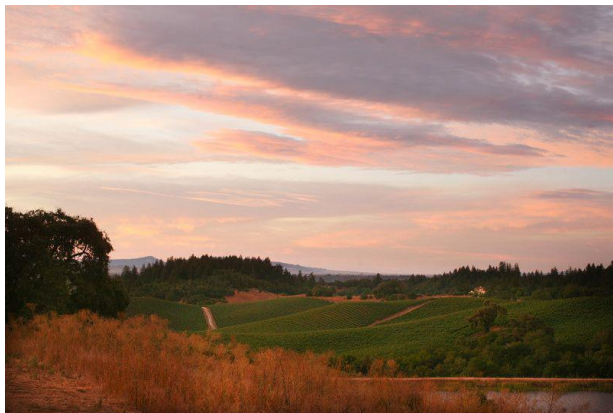
At **Fritz Underground Winery**, they're doing it up with a Scottish theme. Along with their herbaceous Sauvignon Blanc, they'll be serving potato cakes with smoked salmon and herbed creme fraiche. Their estate Zinfandel will be paired with a hearty beef stew. The winery opened in the 1970s, but recently in 2015 gave a fresh update to their tasting room that's worth checking out.

And don't miss the **Pedroncelli Winery**, which is partnering up with Chef Brian Anderson from Santa Rosa's 2016 Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurant, **Bistro 29**. Brittany cuisine (that is, food which originates in France's most western region) by Chef

will pair fantastically with food-friendly wines from this historic winery!

Zichichi Winery sells all of their wines as Futures, which means that they offer tastings straight from the barrel before their wines are finished aging and ready to bottle. This special barrel sampling experience is paired with cuisine from **Chef Dino Bugica** of nearby Geyserville's 2016 Michelin Bib Gourmand restaurant **Diavola Pizzeria** and **Salumeria**.

Arguably Dry Creek Valley's most famous winery, **Ridge Vineyards Lytton-Springs**, is where you'll fully experience Zinfandel as a single vineyard, food pairing wine. Stop here for fresh tastings of California's



heritage grape. Wines will be paired with wine country cuisine prepared by Feast Catering's **Chef Jesse McQuarrie**'s wine country cuisine.

So buy your ticket now and head on over to Passport to Dry Creek Valley for a memorable weekend. The great part is that unlike many other multi-winery tasting events, this one has a long-standing tradition. When buying your ticket, you also choose which winery you would like to pick your passport up at, which spreads the crowds over the entire valley. And 28 of the 45 wineries will be vegetarian friendly, so choose accordingly to your dietary restrictions. Use this [itinerary planner](#) to schedule your visits – it maps out all the participating wineries.

Cin cin!

Dry Creek Valley

2-Day Passport: \$135

Sunday Only Passport: \$75

Daily Designated Driver Tickets: \$55

Twitter: @drycreekvalley

Instagram: @drycreekvalleywines

Hashtag: #DCVPassport2016

<http://www.estarla.com/2016/04/22/culinary-experiences-at-passport-to-dry-creek-valley/>

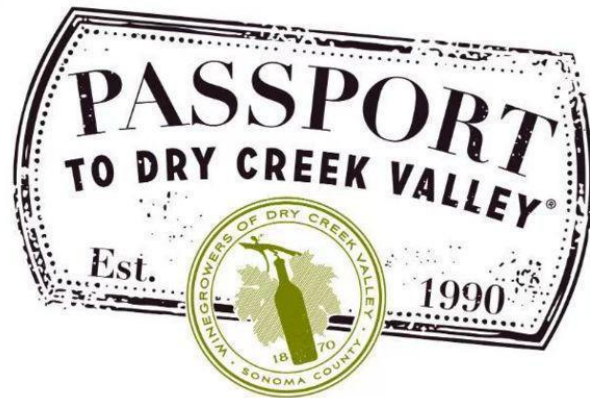




**Passport to Dry Creek Valley Raffle Supports Healdsburg Preschools
WDCV Launches Raffle Tickets Sales to Benefits Local Early
Education Scholarship Fund**

Press Release, April 12, 2016
Posted on Wine Industry Network Advisor

HEALDSBURG, Calif. (April 12, 2016)—
Five dollars can buy wine lovers a shot at
a collection of premium magnum wines to
stock their cellar and the joy of supporting
kids. The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley
(WDCV) have announced a new raffle
benefitting preschool education in the local
community; the raffle is happening in
conjunction with the **27th Annual
Passport to Dry Creek Valley** on April 23-
24. Prizes include seven packages with an
approximate value of \$300 each, featuring rare Dry
Creek Valley wines and tasting experiences.



"Our donated dollars support two programs:
training preschool teachers in the Healdsburg
Unified School District, and supporting Pasitos' work helping children of monolingual
Spanish-speaking parents to be successful in school. Last year, we raised more than \$20,000
for these programs." says Ann Petersen, executive director of the Winegrowers of Dry Creek
Valley.

"Passport to Dry Creek Valley celebrates the agricultural heritage of the region; we hope it can
also become a tool for improving the community that supports our industry," says Petersen.

RAFFLE:

\$5 each, or \$20 for five tickets

Purchase online at <http://tiny.cc/DCVRaffle16> or at participating Passport wineries

PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY:

Sunday-only tickets SOLD OUT

\$135 Two-day Passport

\$55 Designated Driver Passport

Purchase online at <http://bit.ly/DCVPassport16>

Passport to Dry Creek Valley is a modern tradition with century-old roots. Over one weekend, Passport guests are welcomed into 45+ wineries throughout Dry Creek Valley, each offering a unique pairing of premium wine, gourmet food and live entertainment. This year, tickets also include access to four different vineyard tours hosted by local winegrowers.

About Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley® (WDCV) is an association of more than 60 wineries and 150 growers, of which more than 95 percent are small, family-owned operations. WDCV is dedicated to advancing the recognition, enhancement and preservation of Dry Creek Valley as a premium winegrowing region. Anchored by the charming town of Healdsburg, the Dry Creek Valley appellation was officially designated in 1983. Known as a premier zinfandel growing region, Dry Creek Valley is one of California's oldest wine producing regions and is home to many heritage vineyards ranging in age from 50 to 120 years. To preserve this history and the valley's pristine beauty, the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley supports sustainable viticulture and low-impact farming practices. For more information, visit <http://www.drycreekvalley.org>.
<http://wineindustryadvisor.com/2016/04/12/passport-dry-creek-valley-supports-preschools>

Forbes

Learn from Top Winemakers at This Luxe Sonoma Festival April 12, 2016

Jeanne O'Brien Coffey
CONTRIBUTOR

While there are many wine festivals around, few offer the access to winemakers and intimate tastings that Passport to Dry Creek Valley in northern Sonoma County, Calif., boasts.

"I love this event because it is so connected to our guests," says Bill Smart, Vice President and General Manager, Lambert Bridge Winery in Healdsburg. "[Passport] connects wine and food in a very approachable, yet high-end sort of way. The entire experience for guests is about connection and relationships and I think that is what keeps people coming back."



Just two miles wide and 16 miles long, scenic Dry Creek Valley has 9,000 acres of vineyards.

Or perhaps it's the chance to sample wines that are only available through wine clubs or cellar door sales. Smart notes that Lambert Bridge, like many of the other 44 participating producers, will take the opportunity to trot out some special tastes. "We always have a surprise or two up our sleeves for Passport," he says. "We like to surprise our guests with wines that generally aren't sold to the public, along with large formats and library vintages." While their luscious brambly zinfandel is not to be missed – after all it's a signature grape of Dry Creek Valley— Lambert Bridge produces 13 different wines, all in limited quantities.

Mounts Family Winery also likes to pull out all the stops each year – perhaps in part because David and Lana Mounts had been dating for only one week when David invited Lana to attend

her first Passport, back in April 1997, then proposed a year later at Passport weekend 1998. To top it all off, their first child Jacob was born Passport weekend 2000.

“We want our Passport guests to experience a true family operation,” says Lana Mounts, co-owner. “You will meet our parents, siblings, children and closest friends who come out specifically to help us out during this joyful, unique festival.” All the while tasting small bites crafted from family recipes representing the couple’s Italian and Russian backgrounds.

For visitors, Dry Creek Valley is a charming mixture of small properties like Mounts and Lambert Bridge and more well-known names like pioneer Seghesio Family Vineyards, which has been growing zinfandel in Sonoma since 1895. Many festival-goers like to start their day at Seghesio to enjoy some classic wines paired with hearty Italian food.



Geek out on wine production or just indulge in tasty tipples at Passport to Dry Creek Valley

Insiders know that a few stops may be off the radar, but are well worth the time. Talty Winery, where winemaker Michael Talty crafts incredibly unique, lean expressions of Zinfandel, is generally only open by appointment, but during the Passport event, guests can talk to the man behind these cult favorites, and taste them this year paired with duck and cherry tacos.

And at DaVero Winery, visitors will get a rare opportunity to taste the vintner’s flagship sagrantino – a big-bodied tannic red wine seldom grown outside native Umbria that retails for \$125 per bottle.

While Gustafson Family Vineyards is Dry Creek Valley’s most remote winery, located at 1,200 feet elevation in the mountains, it’s worth the drive for spectacular views in a relaxed environment not to mention tastings of all-estate wines, including Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Rosé, and Zinfandel, along with food pairings by Baci Restaurant, and a visit to the cellar for barrel tasting of Estate Petite Sirah.

To get even closer to the source, several wineries are offering intimate vineyard tours this year—first come, first served on Saturday and by reservation on Sunday. Saturday, make sure to arrive early (tours start at 9:30) to get a peek at the amazingly steep and rocky Owl Hill Vineyard, home to four of the eight Rhone varieties that are produced in small batches at Frick Winery—named by *Daily Meal* as one of the Top 100 Wineries in the World for 2015. Sunday, reservations are necessary but worth it to tour Pritchett Peaks, one of Mauritson Family Winery's most unique vineyards. This high-elevation site is popular with area winemakers, and Kokomo, Dutcher Crossing, Seghesio, Bella and Mauritson Family Winery each will share wine they've crafted from grapes grown in different blocks within the vineyard.



Food pairings are as varied as the wine.

While there are plenty of opportunities to geek out on wine production, Passport is also a really good party – each stop on the 45 winery trail offers up unique food pairings, some crafted by Michelin-starred chefs, with live music and some lawn games, inviting guests to linger and enjoy. At Mauritson Family Winery, for example, visitors can try small bites from celebrated chef Charlie Palmer of Aureole New York and Dry Creek Kitchen. Or celebrate farm-to-table cuisine, country western music, dancing and games – not to mention the luscious Chardonnay —at Sbragia Family Vineyards.

For a more formal and exclusive experience, buy a ticket to the Prelude to Passport – a selection of three-course luncheons and dinners held the day before. The meals are hosted in a variety of unique venues, from wine cellars to vineyards formal gardens, often attended by multiple generations of winemakers, offering a vivid peek into the life of the vine. Collier Falls, for example, which makes elegant, beautifully structured red wines favored by top chefs around the country, is presenting a vineyard tour followed by a garden to table luncheon overlooking the pond at Palindrome Vineyard, accompanied of course by a selection of Collier Falls wines presented by owner, Barry Collier. It's an experience Collier himself will likely savor as much as his guests. "Passport is an intimate and personal experience with a chance for consumers to meet owners and winemakers," Collier says. "Drinking great wine, with the perfect food pairings and with views that match Tuscany is hard to beat."

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeanneobrien Coffey/2016/04/12/learn-from-winemakers-at-luxe-sonoma-festival/#a31840e3e6a4>

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>

examiner.com

Passport to Dry Creek Valley 2015: Another highly successful year

May 4, 2015

By Melissa Vogt



A view of iconic valley floor vineyards, densely-planted to old vine Zinfandel, is the first scene that comes to mind when someone speaks of the acclaimed Dry [Creek Valley](#) appellation—and rightly so. Dry Creek

Valley is home to some of Sonoma County's oldest and most prestigious Zinfandel vineyards, many of which were showcased in the incredible wines poured at this year's [Passport to Dry Creek Valley](#) weekend, hosted by [Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley](#).



Prelude to Passport with West Wines ***Melissa Vogt***

Prelude to Passport with West Wines

Friday night's inaugural [Prelude to Passport](#) proved incredibly successful with vineyard tours and lunches held during the daytime, and elegant, intimate dinners hosted by winemakers that same evening. Perhaps the most eloquent and impressive of them all, was the West Wines Nobel Prize Awards Banquet themed dinner, hosted at the [West Wines](#) owners' estate. Nestled at the top of a ridge at the end of the narrow, steep, winding West Dry Creek Road, the estate of Bengt Akerlind and Katarina Bonde is modern and inviting. Modern art adorns the colorful walls alongside family portraits and collectibles from travel abroad. Expansive windows make way for light to penetrate the open-design floor space. Of course, the views these windows provide—of the stunning Dry Creek Valley—is the perfect setting for a dinner that precedes such a wonderful weekend event.

Once outside on the patio, a 360 degree look at Dry Creek Valley shows that the terrain is much more varied than it seems from the view of the valley floor. Below, thin stretches of vineyards line the narrow valley floor, while facing west, thick views of oak and redwood trees tower above the vineyards that are carefully planted on gentle-sloping hillsides. To the north, the mountains become more noticeable, where Lake Sonoma resides and the mountainous fruit of the Rockpile appellation thrives.

To begin the evening, Bengt and Katarina greeted guests, warmly into their homes, with open arms and a glass of [2013 Sauvignon Blanc](#). A refreshing way to start the evening, to say the least. Notes of grapefruit and a touch of grass leap from the glass, while the palate boasts grapefruit and honeydew, wrapped up in nice acidity and a creamy texture at midpalate. To accompany the Sauvignon Blanc, as well as the [2011 Viognier](#), hors d'oeuvres were passed around while guests introduced themselves and mingled before dinner. With only ten people in attendance, in addition to the hosts, this dinner was truly an intimate experience.

Nobel Prize Awards Banquet Dinner

For dinner, Bengt and Katarina served an incredible menu, prepared by [Ken Rochioli Catering](#). To start, the 2011 Viognier was served with a delightfully fresh bed of baby greens, topped with blood orange, apricots and chive flowers, and splashed in a curry, honey and lemon dressing. The pineapple and orange peel flavors of the Viognier complemented the curry dressing in a beautiful way, while the crisp lettuce leaves provided perfect contrast in texture.

Cabernet Sauvignon from the Cellar

For the main course, Bengt and Katarina pulled a decade old [2005 Cabernet Sauvignon](#), from their personal cellar, to pair with filet mignon and lobster. This exact wine is the wine that was chosen blindly to be poured at the 2010 Nobel Prize Awards Banquet dinner; that year marked the very first time an American wine had been featured at the banquet—a real honor for West Wines.

The [2005 Cabernet Sauvignon](#) has an herbal nose, full of mint and jalapeño, accompanied by delicious aromas of black currant and dark red cherry. The palate is incredible—full-bodied with Bordeaux-like texture, rich and silky, with very smooth red and black fruit that lingers behind the layers of texture and complexity. Having ten years of age, the wine is truly at its peak, with mellow fruit and more textural structure and complexity that one finds in young Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine is aged for an impressive two years in 50% new French oak; the remaining 50% is once-used French oak. Bengt and Katarina insist on aging their wines for long amounts of time, and then holding them in the bottle for years before release. This method, although often more work for the winery, allows the West Wines collection to show at its best by the time it reaches a wine enthusiast's hands.

When paired with the astounding main course—filet mignon topped with poached lobster, served alongside roasted peppers and creamy polenta—the 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon truly shined. The filet mignon was cooked to perfection, while the poached lobster was immensely fresh, sweet and succulent. The sweet peppers acted as a natural bridge to bring all of the flavors of the dish together with the wine, and the polenta did wonders with the texture. The filet mignon added more richness and texture to the wine, and also brought out the background flavors of barrel spice and earthiness. The polenta also brought a nice amount of added texture, in addition to giving the fruit flavors in the wine a little extra pizzazz. Being that the poached lobster was so fresh and sweet, it too, brought forward the fruit in the wine a bit more.

Delectable Dessert

For dessert, Bengt and Katarina paired a lovely 2012 Late Harvest Viognier with a mango and buttermilk panna cotta, served with fresh slices of mango and coconut dust. The 2012 Late Harvest Viognier only possesses 5.5 grams of residual sugar, which is quite low for a lot of dessert wines. This is a winemaking choice that really represents Katarina's restrained style—she wants to let the grapes speak for themselves. The lower residual sugar actually allows for more of the grape's varietal characteristics to shine, and the viscosity of the wine is not syrupy at all—but rather light and refreshing, and just subtly sweet. The nose is highly aromatic with aromas of honey, sweet yellow peaches, candied lemon, baked croissant and a touch of spice. The palate is creamy but not thick, with flavors of yellow and white peach, honeysuckle, brioche and a touch of cinnamon. This pairing is all about texture. The density of the panna cotta brought more body to the wine, while the zesty mango slices brought out more tropical flavors in the wine.

From start to finish, West Wines owners Bengt and Katarina wowed guests with their stunning estate, exquisite menu and incredible wines.



DaVero Farms & Winery *Melissa Vogt*
DaVero Farms & Winery

Following the Prelude to Passport festivities, hundreds of wine connoisseurs flocked to Dry Creek Valley to hop from winery to winery throughout the weekend—tasting classic Dry Creek Valley varietals, award-winning wines, and an enormously delicious array of food. There were many highlights along the way

and far too many wineries to visit in just one weekend, but no matter where guests ended up, they were surely not disappointed.

Perhaps one of the most unique winery destinations throughout the weekend was [DaVero Farms & Winery](#). [Operating](#) not just a full estate vineyard for winemaking, DaVero also farms agricultural crops, and raises chickens and pigs. DaVero is a fully sustainable, biodynamic winery and farm in which an incredibly balanced ecosystem maintains healthy diversity for everything that is planted on the property.

Coming from an Italian heritage, the family stays true to their roots in the vineyards and cellar. They only grow Italian grape varieties and make the wines in an Old World style—nothing but native yeasts are used for fermenting and the wines are all aged in neutral barrels. This style of winemaking may seem risky, but with a diverse ecosystem in place to keep the vines healthy, they are able to harvest high quality grapes and produce wines that truly show their terroir and pure varietal characteristics.

The [2014 Vermentino](#) is full of luscious aromas of various stone fruits, white peach and pear. The palate possesses lovely notes of white peach, peach put, nectarine and a touch of spice. This wine had beautiful synergy with the tuna crostini and herbs; as a pairing, the flavors were well balanced and refreshingly delightful. Among the reds, the [2013 Dolcetto](#) was definitely an standout wine—in addition to the ever-popular Primitivo, which is Italy's Zinfandel grape variety. The 2013 Dolcetto smelled of spiced raspberry, plum and a touch of vanilla. The full-bodied palate tasted of raspberry, spiced plum cake and a hint of fresh blueberries. When paired with the smoked brisket slider, the wine became ever more appealing; the smokiness of the brisket gave the wine added spice, while the slightly sweet marinade on the brisket complemented the fruit flavors in the wine very well. Each of the wines and dishes served at DaVero were incredibly impressive.



Fritz Underground Winery *Melissa Vogt*
Fritz Underground Winery

The Highlight at the north end of the valley was definitely [Fritz Underground Winery](#). Guests worked their way through the underground cave, lined wall to wall with barrels full of aging wine, and then up into the

newly-remodeled tasting room—tasting wines and bites all along the way. Emerging through the tasting room, there is a rather picturesque view of the estate's private lake, surrounded by estate vineyards.

Notable wines at this destination were definitely the French oak-aged [2013 Estate Sauvignon Blanc](#). With a nose full of kiwi, lemon zest and melon, this Sauvignon Blanc was perfect for the warm spring weather. The palate is incredibly creamy, followed by bright acidity, and shows notes of kiwi, lychee and other tropical fruit. As for the reds, the [2013 Estate Zinfandel](#) was lovely. Notes of spiced plum and cherry liqueur abound on the nose, while the palate shows baking spice, bright cherry and plum, wrapped up in a smooth texture and medium body. With the beef and barely stew, this pairing was a perfect combination—both rich and decadent with delicious flavors that complemented each other very well.



Notable Food & Wine Pairings *Melissa Vogt*

Notable Food & Wine Pairings

In the heart of the valley, [Kokomo Winery](#)'s 2013 Petite Sirah showed very well, especially with the pork taco pairing. The nose shows aromas of blueberry, cocoa and violets, and the full-bodied palate boasts black and red fruit with a cocoa-like texture and dustiness that can often be attributed to the soil type of the vineyard. The tacos enhanced the wine—giving it more spice and contrasting textures to create a very complex and layered pairing, full of complementing flavors.

The 2012 Chardonnay from [Dry Creek Vineyard](#) was just perfect with the freshly-fried fish and chips. The nose boasts caramel and apple, and the palate has a lovely balance of nice crisp acidity and good creaminess on the center of the tongue; flavors of melon, green apple and pineapple make this wine a perfect accompaniment to fried food. Crisp acidity complemented the saltiness, while the crispy coating played with the creamy texture at mid palate. The bright fruit flavors lifted the food, giving it more freshness and really cutting into its richness.

At [Mauritson Family Winery](#), their 2013 Sauvignon Blanc, paired with Chef Charlie Palmer's Dry Creek Kitchen crab cakes, was an absolute show stopper. The crab cakes were so fresh and succulent, and paired impeccably well with the refreshing Sauvignon Blanc. This 2013 vintage shows notes of pear, melon and

lemon curd on the nose, and notes of melon, lemon zest and kiwi on the palate. The crisp acidity is made less angular and smoothed out in the mouth when enjoyed with the juicy crab cake, and the fruit notes are all heightened by the delicious spices and seasonings. Simple but sophisticated, this pairing really shined bright during Passport to Dry Creek Valley.

Something new and exciting this year was the addition of [D. Pfaff Wines](#), showcased at Talty Vineyards & Winery. Dustin Pfaff is the nephew of Michael Talty, owner and winemaker of Talty Winery, and set out to create his own wines two seasons ago. Dustin's 2014 Petite Sirah is only the second vintage of his new label; he offered passport guests the chance to taste his barreled wine, which is nearly ready for bottling. Notes of blueberry, chocolate and black cherry show beautifully in the nose; the palate is very well structured and mature, showing flavors of blueberry, blackberry, cocoa and a hint of vanilla. The body is medium and the texture is rather silky and round—a delightful wine, given it is only the second vintage from D. Pfaff.

[Talty Vineyards & Winery](#)'s impressive collection of Zinfandel, as always, showed well. The 2012 Filice Zinfandel has lovely aromas of spiced plum and red cherry; the palate is a touch lighter in style than many other Zinfandels, with a light to medium body and a lot of baking spice, plum, red cherry and cocoa. The 2012 Estate Zinfandel was a touch darker and deeper, showing aromas of black cherry, spice and vanilla. The palate is classic Dry Creek Valley Zinfandel—a lovely and complex combination of red and black fruits, particularly with a lot of cherry and blackberry, baking spice and vanilla.

Passport to Dry Creek Valley's Success

Year after year, the wineries of Dry Creek Valley coordinate for this epic weekend-long event, and every year, it is highly successful. Not only is this a testament to the fabulous bounty of cuisine we have in Sonoma County, and the incredibly talented winemakers who keep our glasses full on this weekend and all year long, but it is a true testament to the cooperation and camaraderie of everyone in Dry Creek Valley. From restaurants to wineries—be they owners, viticulturists or winemakers—to guests and the musicians that perform at many of the wineries throughout the weekend, the sense of community in Dry Creek Valley is what makes this appellation such a special destination.

8 great places for Zinfandel in Sonoma's Dry Creek Valley

Sarah Fritsche

Updated 2:11 pm, Friday, April 25, 2014

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Ted Seghesio (with German shepherd Charlie) samples a glass at the Seghesio Family Vineyards in Healdsburg. The family's Italian heritage is reflected on the property, which includes bocce courts. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle

Dry Creek Valley, a 16-mile stretch at the northern end of Sonoma County, is home to more than 70 wineries. It's also a jackpot for Zinfandel lovers. The region, which boasts more than 9,000 acres of vineyards, just so happens to have one of the heaviest concentrations of old-vine Zinfandel in the world.

Here are some places to taste it:

Papapietro Perry Winery

You'll find this winery tucked away in Timber Crest Farms, home to a collective of several family-owned wineries, along with an olive oil producer, a viticultural services company and a food manufacturing company in Healdsburg. Winemaker Ben Papapietro, who owns the winery along with his wife, Yolanda, and partners Bruce and Renae Perry, specializes in high-end Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. Papapietro learned winemaking from his Italian grandfather who made red blends in his basement. At the fun-loving and family-friendly tasting room, visitors can taste five wines for \$10. A private tasting option, Pinot on the Patio, is also available, pairing the winery's single-vineyard Pinot Noirs with carefully selected cheeses (\$45; reservations required). The property also features a picnic garden and bocce ball court.

4791 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg; (707) 433-0422. www.papapietro-perry.com. 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. daily.

Seghesio Family Vineyards

This multigenerational winemaking family planted its first Zinfandel vines in 1895, though it took the Seghesios nearly a century to begin bottling wines under their own label. In 2011, the winery joined the Crimson Wine Group, which also owns Napa Valley's Pine Ridge Vineyards, among others. The wines, much like the property's gracious surroundings, reflect the Seghesio family's Italian heritage. There's a daily tasting of five wines for \$15 and a heritage tasting of four library wines on the weekends. The rustic picnic-perfect grounds also feature an outdoor mezzanine and bocce ball courts.

700 Grove St., Healdsburg; (866) 734-4374. www.seghesio.com. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

Unti Vineyards

The Unti family purchased its Dry Creek Valley property in 1990, planted its first vineyards the following year and released its first vintage in 1997. The no-frills tasting room, located in the entrance to the winery warehouse, offers visitors an insider's perspective. It's also an intimate affair, as tastings are by appointment only and designed for groups of six or fewer. The \$5 tasting fee includes four to six tastes of Unti's full-bodied Zinfandels, Rhone and Italian varietals.

4202 Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg; (707) 433-5590. www.untivineyards.com. By appointment only, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily.

Michel-Schlumberger Wine Estate

This lovely 100-acre estate winery began life as Domaine Michel when Swiss-born Jean-Jacques Michel planted the first vines in 1979. In the early 1990s, Jacques Pierre Schlumberger came on board, bringing with him a winemaking pedigree that included a 400-year family legacy at Domaine Viticoles Schlumberger in the Alsace region of France. In 2011, Schlumberger retired, passing the torch to Steve Adams of Adams Wine Group, who owns several other wineries, including nearby Adler Fels.

Here, signature varietals include Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay. Several tasting selections are offered: five pours in the classic (\$10) and reserve (\$20) tastings, or a five-course wine and food pairing from winery executive chef Michael Pryor (\$45; Wednesday-Sunday; reservations required.) For an in-depth experience, opt for the winery tour and tasting (\$30), which take groups of up to seven guests on a "back roads" tour of the estate, including spring-fed Lac Schlumberger.

4155 Wine Creek Road, Healdsburg; (800) 447-3060. www.michelschlumberger.com. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. Guided tours by appointment.

Mazzocco Vineyards & Winery

Single-vineyard Zinfandels take center stage at this laid-back winery on a stretch of rolling hills that border Dry Creek and Alexander valleys. Ken and Diane Wilson, who also own nearby Wilson Winery, acquired Mazzocco in 2005. The tasting room with its floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking an intimate garden setting offers an airy ambience. The roster of wines from French-born winemaker Antoine Favero rotates often, but guests can usually sample six or seven for a modest \$5 fee. An expansive patio and picnic area also encourage guests to linger over a glass of wine.

1400 Lytton Springs Road, Healdsburg; (707) 431-8159. www.mazzocco.com. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. daily.

Ridge Vineyards - Lytton Springs

The Sonoma outpost of Paul Draper's celebrated Santa Cruz Mountains winery is surrounded by vines that are more than a century old. At the eco-sustainable tasting room and winemaking facility, built in 1999, several flight options await guests. The single-vineyard tasting (\$5) and the estate single-vineyard tasting (\$10) feature four wines. The winery's award-winning Bordeaux-style blend, Monte Bello, can

be added to the estate tasting for an additional \$10. During the warmer months, seated tastings on the vineyard terrace are available for the estate and Monte Bello tastings. Semi-private and private tours/tastings are also available (\$30-\$40; reservations required; 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. daily).

650 Lytton Springs Road, Healdsburg; (707) 433-7721. www.ridgewine.com. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday, until 5 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

Preston of Dry Creek

This organic farm and winery near Healdsburg is a special treat. Owners Lou and Susan Preston established the winery in 1975 and are best known for their Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel and Rhone-style wines, now made entirely from certified organic grapes. A sampling of four wines is \$10.

Visitors can also indulge in freshly baked bread, cured olives and fresh-pressed olive oil, as well as other seasonal produce. Adding to the pastoral experience, there's a picnic area surrounded by fruit trees, and a Victorian farmhouse.

9282 West Dry Creek Road, Healdsburg; (707) 433-3372. www.prestonvineyards.com. 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m. daily.

David Coffaro Vineyard and Winery

Though David Coffaro purchased the 20-acre Geyserville property in 1979 - selling grapes to E&J Gallo and experimenting with small batches of homemade wine - he didn't apply for a commercial winemaking permit until 1994. He now grows several varietals on the property, including Zinfandel and Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as lesser-known grapes such as Peloursin and Aglianico. The barrel warehouse next to Coffaro's home serves as the tasting room, where visitors can have an in-depth tasting of about six wines for \$5. Vineyard tours are also available by appointment.

7485 Dry Creek Road, Geyserville; (707) 433-9715. www.coffaro.com. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. daily.

Sarah Fritsche is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: sfritsche@sfchronicle.com Twitter: @foodcentric



Salumi cures in a controlled climate room visible from the tasting room on the grounds of Seghesio Family Vineyards. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle



Visitors drive over a bridge on the way to Michel-Schlumberger Wine Estate in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle

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Guests sip wine and picnic in a courtyard area at Preston of Dry Creek. Visitors can also indulge in freshly baked bread, cured olives and fresh-pressed olive oil, as well as other seasonal produce. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle

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Matt Norelli, above, is the winemaker at Preston of Dry Creek. The winery is best known for its Sauvignon Blanc, Zinfandel and Rhone-style wines, now made entirely from certified organic grapes. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle

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The Preston of Dry Creek winery in Healdsburg Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle

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A neon sign at the Preston of Dry Creek winery in Healdsburg encourages visitors to try the Zinfandel. Photo: Jason Henry, Special To The Chronicle

<http://www.sfgate.com/wine/article/8-great-places-for-Zinfandel-in-Sonoma-s-Dry-5430093.php#photo-6201516>

DEALS & EVENTS

One of Sonoma's Great Wine Events, Passport to Dry Creek, Runs April 24-26

By Virginia Miller

February 26, 2015

Photo by: Virginia Miller



Twenty six years and counting, **Passport to Dry Creek Valley** is one of the great Sonoma County events all year. Put on by the **Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley**, Passport is a party of a weekend where over 45 wineries are closed to Passport holders (you literally get a booklet passport stamped at each winery you hit), offering special wine pours, food and often live bands or other special events and decor themes just for Passport ticket holders. In years past, wineries pull out all the stops, holding themes like country BBQ, Roaring 20s, New Orleans' Mardi Gras or even African safari complete with jeep rides around the vineyards. Ideally, you go at your own pace, only visits wineries you want to and linger as long or as you like or pack in one neighboring winery after another.

Tickets: Details and tickets [here](#), for one day, two days or the first ever **Prelude to Passport**, on Friday, April 24, a day full of intimate lunches and dinners with the winemakers themselves.

Area Eats: Though you'll be outfitted with unlimited food and wine at all the wineries on Saturday and Sunday, April 25-26, during Passport, the event runs 11 AM - 4:30 PM both days so for dinner and dessert options during the evening, try one (or more) of these 8 local standouts:

SPLURGE-WORTHY:Madrona Manor

MID-RANGE CROWD-PLEASER:Chalkboard

ITALIAN & NEAPOLITAN PIZZA GOODNESS... WITH BOCCE:Campo Fina

SEAFOOD FAVORITE:Willi's Seafood & Raw Bar

NEW ORLEANS PO BOYS:The Parish Cafe **MARGARITAS &**

MEXICAN FOOD:Mateo's Cocina Latina

ALL-DAY, GOURMET-UNIQUE FOOD, SHOP, COFFEE OUTPOST & FERMENTATION BAR:Healdsburg

SHED

PIE & ICE CREAM FIX:Noble Folk Pie & Ice Cream Bar

[https://www.zagat.com/b/san-francisco/one-of-sonomas-great-wine-events-passport-to-dry-cr
eeek-runs-april-24-26](https://www.zagat.com/b/san-francisco/one-of-sonomas-great-wine-events-passport-to-dry-cr
eeek-runs-april-24-26)

DEPARTURES

Dining Agenda: New Restaurants and Food News this April

By Krista Simmons
March 26, 2015

Where to go, what to eat and what to drink this month.



For fans of **Healdsburg** pinot and **Sonoma** wines in general, the annual **Passport to Dry Creek Valley** from April 24–26 is the place to be. There will be over 40 family-owned wineries in attendance, as well as theme parties (such as the Roaring '20s) at various vineyards.

Read the full article here:

<http://www.departures.com/lifestyle/food/where-to-eat-this-april-new-restaurants-and-food-news>

HAUTE LIVING

SF: 9 Haute Wine Country Happenings You Can't Miss

BY KELLY E. CARTER
HAUTE PURSUITS
MARCH 19, 2015

Spring is here and that means festivals and events galore in California's celebrated wine country. Here are nine haute wine country happenings taking place this spring in the Napa Valley and Sonoma County that you won't want to miss.



Photo Credit: Courtesy Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley

Prelude to Passport

April 24

26th Annual Passport to Dry Creek Valley

April 25-26, 2015

Every April, Dry Creek Valley in Northern Sonoma County, anchored by the town of Healdsburg, is the place to be in Sonoma County. The county's premiere wine and food event features:

- New and rare wines to try from 45+ family-owned Dry Creek Valley wineries
- Incredible cuisine prepared by some of Healdsburg's most talented chefs & caterers

- Unique “theme parties” at each winery, immersing guests in the Roaring 20s, frolic in the South of France, follow the Yellow Brick Road, and more imaginative scenes
- Live entertainment amidst lush vineyard settings

New this year, the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley debut Prelude to Passport, on Friday, April 24, offering guests the chance to spend time with their favorite winemakers and learn about grape growing directly from the source. Prelude ticket-holders will enjoy intimate vineyard tour lunches and exclusive winemaker dinners featuring unique themes and premium wine and food pairings.

<http://hauteliving.com/2015/03/8-haute-wine-country-happenings-you-shouldnt-miss/557585/>



26TH ANNUAL PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY – GET YOUR TICKETS WHILE THEY LAST

Posted on January 27, 2015

By Karina Calayag

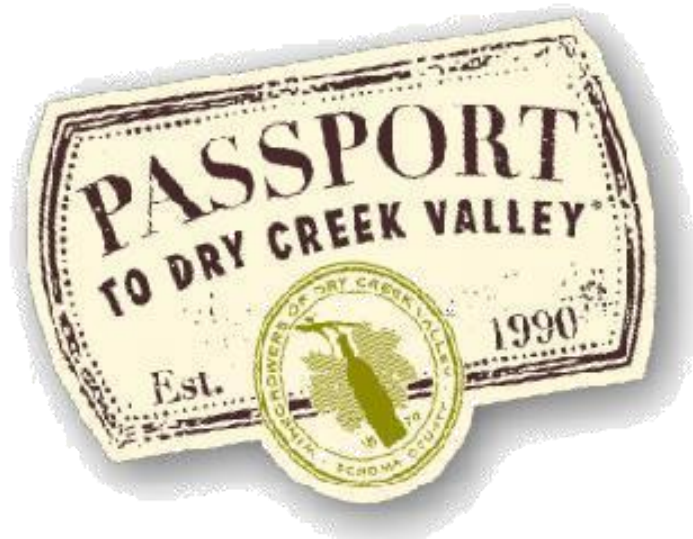


An immersive epicurean experience in Dry Creek Valley, nestled in the heart of Sonoma County. 26TH ANNUAL PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY

TICKET SALES START FEB. 1ST
Tickets Expected to Sell Out Early for California's Longest-Running Passport Wine Weekend

Tickets sales open Sunday, February 1 at 10:00 a.m. PST for the **26th Annual Passport to Dry Creek Valley**. New this year, the **Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley** debut [Prelude to Passport](#), on Friday, April 24, offering guests the chance to spend time with their favorite winemakers and learn about grape growing directly from the source. Prelude ticket-holders will enjoy intimate vineyard tour lunches and exclusive winemaker dinners featuring unique themes and premium wine and food pairings.

An immersive experience that goes beyond wine and food tasting, **Passport to Dry Creek Valley** transports guests into other worlds via elaborate themed parties thrown by participating wineries. Attendees can party like it's Mardi Gras, travel back to the Roaring 20s, frolic in the South of France, follow the Yellow Brick Road, and more — all within Dry Creek Valley!



[Click here to watch](#) a preview of Passport to Dry Creek Valley. **WHAT:**

Passport to Dry Creek Valley is a modern tradition with century-old roots, inviting wine lovers to experience the tastes, sights and sounds of the wine country lifestyle at its best. Festive themes at more than 45 wineries transport guests to another time and place, while food and wine pairings showcase the region's viticultural and epicurean masters. Find Passport updates at facebook.com/drycreekvalley or on Twitter [@drycreekvalley](https://twitter.com/drycreekvalley).

WHEN:

Friday, April 24, 2015 — Prelude to Passport

Saturday & Sunday, April 25-26, 2015 from 11 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Dry Creek Valley is located in the heart of Sonoma County, just 15 minutes from Sonoma County Airport and 70 miles north of San Francisco. Direct flights into Sonoma County Airport are available on Alaska Airlines from Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and Portland; visitors on these flights can check a case of wine for free on their flight home. Festivities take place at 45+ Dry Creek Valley wineries. A complete list of lodging options can be found at www.drycreekvalley.org.

TICKETS:

Prelude to Passport Price: \$75.00 for a lunch ticket; \$155.00 for a dinner ticket

General Admission Price: \$130.00 for a 2-Day Passport or \$75.00 for a Sunday-only

Passport Tickets go on sale online at www.drycreekvalley.org on February 1, 2015 at 10:00 am PST. This event will sell out quickly. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

SWEEPSTAKES:

The **Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley** are giving away three pairs of Passport tickets every week from Feb 1 – March 1 for a total of 12 pairs! Facebook fans can [click here](#) to enter.

About Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley

The **Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley**® (WDCV) is an association of more than 60 wineries and 150 growers, of which more than 95 percent are small, family-owned operations. WDCV is dedicated to advancing the recognition, enhancement and preservation of Dry Creek Valley as a premium winegrowing region. Anchored by the charming town of Healdsburg, the Dry Creek Valley appellation was officially designated in 1983. Known as a premier zinfandel growing region, Dry Creek Valley is one of California's oldest wine producing regions and is home to many heritage vineyards ranging in age from 50 to 120 years.

To preserve this history and the valley's pristine beauty, the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley supports sustainable viticulture and low-impact farming practices. For more information, visit <http://www.drycreekvalley.org>.

<http://exquisemag.com/2015/01/28/26th-annual-passport-dry-creek-valley-get-tickets-last/>

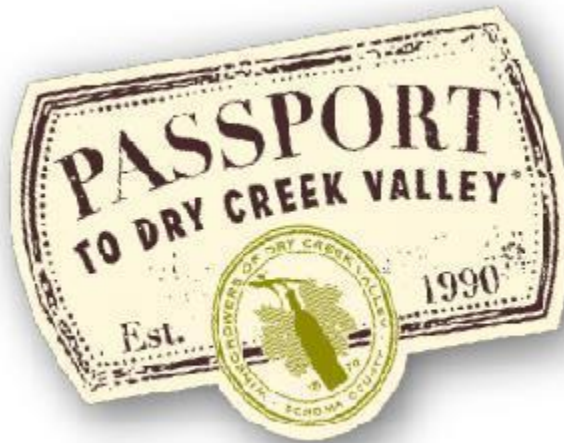
DailyBlend



**Tickets for Passport to Dry Creek Valley go on sale Sunday, February 1, 2015
at 10:00 am PST**

Posted on January 29, 2015

By John Cesano



The Passport to Dry Creek Valley online ticket store opens at 10:00 am PST on Sunday, February 1, 2015. PASSPORT to DRY CREEK VALLEY DATES: APRIL 25 & 26, 2015 NEW: PRELUDE TO PASSPORT: APRIL 24, 2015 Tickets are sold first-come-first-served starting Sunday, February 1 2015, at 10:00 a.m. PST...AND THIS EVENT DOES SELL OUT. For more information, and to get your tickets beginning Sunday, February 1 2015, at 10:00 a.m. PST, visit <http://www.drycreekvalley.org/events/passport-to-dry-creek-valley.php> To get an idea of what the 2015 Passport to Dry Creek Valley's 26th Annual Celebration is like, check out my recaps of [2013's Passport to](#)

[Dry Creek Valley](#) and [2014's Passport to Dry Creek Valley](#). Over one weekend, Passport guests are welcomed into 45+ wineries throughout Dry Creek Valley, each offering a unique pairing of premium wine, gourmet food and entertainment. Take a vineyard tour for a grape-to-glass look at Dry Creek Valley wine. Sample exclusive vintages, rarely available to taste. Meet winemakers and grapegrowers – the generations of people behind the wine and magical 'Dry Creek Valley spirit'. Savor exquisite food and wine pairings from acclaimed chefs. Delight in discovering each winery's unique Passport "theme," a tradition of the event. The possibilities are as varied as the wineries themselves and promise a fun, unforgettable weekend. Enjoy! Passport to Dry Creek Valley® was introduced in 1990, by the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley®, as a time every year when the winegrowing community could come together to celebrate the generations of farmers, vintners and families that are the roots of the Dry Creek Valley wine region. Over the 26 years since, the event has become a beloved tradition among wine lovers who enjoy a world-class tasting experience with a festive twist, all within the idyllic Dry Creek Valley.

NEW for 2015: PRELUDE TO PASSPORT FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2015– Select vineyard tour lunches and winemaker dinners hosted by Dry Creek Valley Wineries and Growers Kick off Passport to Dry Creek Valley weekend with a vineyard tour lunch or winemaker dinner. This is your opportunity to enjoy carefully selected wine and food pairings and spend time with your favorite winemaker or learn about grape growing directly from the source. Tickets are limited and are available on a first-come-first-served basis February 1st at 10 am pst. **LUNCHES**

Cast Wines–Cast Wines is pleased to welcome Passport guests for a vineyard lunch at our Grey Palm Estate. Enjoy a sumptuous feast inspired by the bounty of Sonoma County and expertly paired with Cast Wines while seated among the vines in the shadow of our majestic Canary Island date palm. Hosted by our Winemaker, you will get the opportunity to ask questions about our winemaking and viticulture programs, and learn about the history of Dry Creek's newest and most romantic new winery.

Collier Falls– Visit Collier Falls and learn about inter-planting Zinfandel and Primitivo. See a vineyard converted from head pruned to trellis canopy management. Enjoy lunch with Barry and Josh on the deck overlooking Dry Creek Valley and enjoy our Hillside Estate wines with a view.

DaVero–Enjoy a truly farm-to-table experience in a spectacular setting! Owners Ridgely Evers (winemaker) and Colleen McGlynn (chef) will give you a guided tour of our certified Biodynamic farm. You'll taste some very special wines straight from barrel, understand the importance of Biodynamic farming as well as its impact on flavor, and learn how to choose and use olive oil in your own kitchen. Then you'll sit down to a magnificent meal set in our garden that weaves our delightful Italian-varietal wines and olive oils with our own Spring lamb and fresh produce.

Pillsbury– Join us for a casual lunch on our deck (weather permitting) overlooking the beautiful Dry Creek Valley. Our property was originally part of the Rancho Sotome and then owned by Charlie Rose, (once called the Rose Ranch). We are in the shadow of Bradford mountain with 14 acres of vineyard dry-farmed Zinfandel, managed by Paul & Zuriel Bernier. We will serve local wines from our cellar with lunch.

DINNERS

Amista Vineyards– Come celebrate the newest in our collection of gems! Be among the first to experience the debut of our ruby-toned sparkling Grenache. Join us and our winemaker, Ashley, for a candlelit evening of sparkling wines and red Rhone varietals. Each course will be whimsically paired with cuisine from one of our favorite local chefs. Vicky & Mike Farrow, Proprietors

Fritz Cellars– Join our Winemaker Brad Longton for a truly unique experience as he walks you through the intricacies of creating a perfect blend. You'll taste, measure, blend, evaluate and blend again to create your perfect Pinot Noir. You'll have an opportunity to order bottles of your own custom blend to commemorate your newfound blending prowess. Dinner paired with Fritz Pinot Noirs and our Fritz Dry Creek Estate wines will also be provided as you view our special 120 acre estate from our patio and newly remodeled tasting room.

Lambert Bridge Winery– Together with Dry Creek Valley winegrowers, Dani Gasparini and Alyn Beals, Lambert Bridge Winery with winemaker, Jennifer Higgins welcomes you to our first ever “Dinner in the Vineyards”. Just a stone’s throw away from our own estate vineyards, we will all dine al fresco with a one-of-a-kind menu that will pair perfectly with the vineyard views.

Palindrome Vineyards– We could use cliches to describe what will happen at this dinner, but your cliches are probably better than ours. So, let’s just say you’ll have a memorable time. Great food . . . prepared by the owners of Palindrome Vineyard. Great wines . . . provided by Kokomo Winery. Great venue . . . at our house on Dry Creek Road. (Wine talk optional)

Pedroncelli Winery– Third generation member/owner Julie Pedroncelli will host the group in our Heritage Room for an intimate dinner seated at a dining table made from Redwood wine tanks. Catered by Chef Brian Anderson of Bistro 29 guests will enjoy a five course Italian feast paired with Pedroncelli wine.

Ridge Vineyards– Join winemaker John Olney for a delicious wine dinner at our Lytton Springs Estate. The dinner will be crafted by Chef Jesse McQuarrie and will feature his delicious, locally-sourced fare paired perfectly with our single-vineyard wines. Join us and learn about our “Pre-Industrial” winemaking philosophy and how a true old-vine field-blend vineyard impacts the final wines you’ll be tasting. We will be featuring our Lytton Springs and Geyserville bottlings (as well as a few surprises) each of which is sourced from a century-old vineyard. We look forward to seeing you on April 24th!

Vineyard of Pasterick– Gerry, Diane and Alexis Pasterick invite you to join them for a formal Candlelight Dinner in the PASTERICK WINE CAVE on the evening before Passport. Come and enjoy the limited offering of their Estate Viognier paired and served with passed appetizers of Cornets with Scallop and Smoked Salmon along with Crostini topped with Bacon Jam and Laura Chenel’s Chevre. At your sit down dinner in the Candlelight Wine Cave you will be served Estate Pasterick Syrah 2010 paired with Coco Rubbed Beef and Bordelaise Sauce with side offerings of Potato Gratin, Sauteed Marsala Mushrooms and Boursin Cheese Creamed Spinach. Dessert is a special Apple Tarte Tatin with a Dollop of Chantilly. This menu is a Pasterick favorite pairing well with our Estate Wines. It will be a pleasure to share this evening with you. **West Wines**– Have you ever been to the Nobel Awards Banquet? Here is your chance. In the home of West Wines’ owners, located in our upper vineyard with magnificent views of Dry Creek Valley, the three course dinner served at the Nobel Prize Awards Banquet 2010 will be reenacted by a master chef. West Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve was selected, in a blind tasting as the first ever American wine to be served at the Nobel Banquet in 2010. We are serving this wine and other rarities from our own wine cellar to enjoy with the original banquet menu.

THIS IS A SELL OUT EVENT. BE PART OF A DRY CREEK VALLEY TRADITION. I HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE! -JOHN

<http://dailyblend.net/go/tickets-for-passport-to-dry-creek-valley-go-on-sale-sunday-february-1-2015-at-10-00-am-pst>

The Ukiah DAILY JOURNAL

John On Wine – An early Thanksgiving

By John Cesano
05/13/15



Susan Johnson and John Cesano at Passport to Dry Creek Valley.

I know I am supposed to save up all my gratefulness for the year and post it in a cliché Thanksgiving post toward the end of November, but Thanksgiving is coming early this year.

During the recently passed Hopland Passport event, one of our visiting tasters told me that she wished she could have my job. Everybody sees greener grass outside their lives; I would love to have Anthony Bourdain's job, but I do recognize how blessed I am.

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley invited me to attend the Passport to Dry Creek Valley for the third consecutive year, and I am extraordinarily grateful. This year, I was accompanied by my good friend, Susan Johnson. Susan and I used to travel the country doing tradeshow, winemaker dinners, and corporate events for wineries, and then moved together to work for the Wine Appreciation Guild where we visited hundreds of wineries and tasting rooms throughout California.

Susan now works for a company that provides winemakers the tools to make great wine, and of course I pour great wine at one job and write about great wine in my other job. Although we came at each wine tasted from a different perspective, Susan looking at what could have made a wine better and me taking each wine as it is, we both were absolutely impressed front to back with the line ups at media check in host winery DaVero, Gustafson Family Winery, and Seghesio. Talty did the best job amplifying social media marketing, Selby had the best single bite of food, and Blanchard had the best 'story' wine.

DaVero produces organic or biodynamic wines from Italian varieties, and I shared the names of some Mendocino growers when asked by winemaker Evan, but if you grow grapes in the county, certified organic or biodynamic, and they are Italian varieties, then Evan wants to hear from you. Terrific wines that you will

not taste anywhere else, plus they have farm goods for sale — and you know how much I love an organic farm stand & tasting room!

Gustafson is a long drive from any other winery, but absolutely worth the time to get there. Best winery views ever, fantastic wines, whimsically wonderful presented tasty food creations, and a dream property for vacation rental. Gustafson joins Preston and Truett-Hurst as one of my three favorite Dry Creek places to spend an afternoon with wine and food.

In spite of my desire to visit new wineries each Dry Creek Passport, Seghesio pulls me in year after year. Between wine, food, and music this is probably the most dependably solid stop for complete satisfaction.

Within seconds of a #DCVPassport post by me, about any participating winery, Talty was sharing or retweeting it. Visit them if you like Zin, Zin, or Zin. Selby's duck and andouille sausage gumbo with crayfish cornbread was the best food I tasted all weekend. Blanchard had the best music with the Rosetown Rmblers covering Grateful Dead tunes, and each bottle sold of their "Helicopter" blend sees a donation to help the families of our military's special operators.

None of my opportunities would be possible without invitations from others, and those invitations come because I write for you, my readers, here in the Ukiah Daily Journal and online at JohnOnWine.com and you are the reason I have a life worthy of gratitude, of thanks, and of appreciation. I'm not waiting until Thursday, November 26, Thanksgiving day 2015; let me say it now (and possibly again then): Thank you!

Read the full article here:

<http://www.ukiahdailyjournal.com/lifestyle/20150513/john-on-wine-x2013-an-early-thanksgiving>



Fritz Cellar's Prelude to Passport

(photos at winery below)

PASSPORT TO DRY CREEK VALLEY, APRIL 24- APRIL 26

Passport to Dry Creek Valley is one of the great Sonoma County events under the auspice of the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley. The weekend event enabled Passport ticket holders to visit over 45 wineries which offered special wine pours, food and music and decor themes. This year the event organizers introduced Prelude to Passport, which featured winemaker's dinners on April 24th, before the Passport weekend began. We covered the first time offering of a dinner at Fritz Cellars, Dry Creek Estate Wines, just 20 minutes north of Healdsburg. The enchanting evening began in the tasting room, newly remodeled, where we were offered yummy appetizers of goat cheese crostini and duck confit with leeks, paired with some of the well nuanced Fritz Pinot Noirs. It was then that the charming owner, Clayton Fritz, gave us the history of Fritz Underground Winery. The winery is located in the picturesque hills of the dry creek region, with special views of their 120 acre estate including "Fritz Pond," as viewed from the patio. Clayton Fritz then lead us down to the barrel room where we were instructed under the capable guidance of the charming winemaker, Brad Longton, in tasting, measuring, and blending our very own creation of a custom blend of Pinot Noir. What fun as we sipped, compared notes and tastes and then created a blend to commemorate the evening. The wines we tasted included some special Pinot Noirs, (rated 94 Points by Wine Enthusiast Magazine), a crisp, citrus flavored Sauvignon Blanc, an aromatic Chardonnay, and a luscious Estate Re-serve Zinfandel.

The meal was scrumptious –salad, Beef Bourguignon that melted in one's mouth, and chocolate mousse. Another nice aspect is the limited, number of guests that could be accommodated for the dinner which translated into an intimate setting and special treatment by the wonderful staff of Fritz Cellar' including the winemaker and owner Clayton Fritz. You'll want to make sure to put this special event on your list for 2016, next April! Make sure you book early next year and check the website to reserve a spot in 2015 <http://www.drycreekvalley.org>

COMING UP IN MAY

Mill Valley Wine, Beer & Gourmet Food Tasting
Festival May 31, 2015, 1-4pm, www.millvalley.org
(photo to the right— MV Wine, Beer, Gourmet Food 2014 event)



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>

ADVISOR

WINE INDUSTRY NETWORK

Passport to Dry Creek Valley Ticket Sales Begin Feb. 1st

Tickets Will Sell Out for California's Longest-Running Passport Wine Weekend

By Editor, January 29, 2016

Posted on Wine Industry Network Advisor

HEALDSBURG, Calif. (January 28, 2016)— Tickets sales open Monday, February 1 at 10:00 a.m. PST for the **27th Annual Passport to Dry Creek Valley**, hosted by the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley. Passport to Dry Creek Valley is as imaginative as it is gourmet, transporting guests to other worlds via elaborate themed parties thrown by participating wineries. Attendees can party like they're in a Prohibition-era speakeasy, sail the high seas, develop disco fever on the dancefloor, search for Italy's finest bites, and more—all within Dry Creek Valley!



Likewise, guests can also book tickets for **Prelude to Passport**, which offers a chance to spend time with renowned winemakers over exclusive vineyard tours, lunches and lavish winemaker dinners; each features unique themes and premium wine and food pairings. New this year, daily designated driver passports will be offered, allowing guests all the food and fun without the wine.

WHAT:

Passport to Dry Creek Valley is a modern tradition with century-old roots, inviting wine lovers to experience the tastes, sights and sounds of the wine country lifestyle at its best. Festive themes at more than 45 wineries transport guests to another time and place, while food and wine pairings showcase the region's viticultural and epicurean masters. Find Passport updates at facebook.com/drycreekvalley or on Twitter @drycreekvalley.

WHEN:

Friday, April 22, 2016 — Prelude to Passport

Saturday & Sunday, April 23 & 24, 2016 from 11 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

WHERE:



Dry Creek Valley is located in the heart of Sonoma County, just 15 minutes from Sonoma County Airport and 70 miles north of San Francisco. Direct flights into Sonoma County Airport are available on **Alaska Airlines** from Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle and Portland; visitors on these flights can **check a case of wine for free on their flight home**. Festivities take place at 45+ Dry Creek Valley wineries. A complete list of lodging options can be found at www.drycreekvalley.org.

TICKETS:

Prelude to Passport Price: \$75.00 for a lunch ticket; \$155.00 for a dinner ticket

General Admission Price: \$135.00 for a 2-Day Passport or \$75.00 for Sunday-only Passport. \$55.00 for Daily Designated Driver Tickets. Tickets go on sale online at www.drycreekvalley.org February 1, 2016 at 10:00 am PST.

This event **will sell out quickly**. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

SWEEPSTAKES:

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley are giving away three pairs of Passport tickets every week from Feb 22 – March 22 for a total of 12 pairs! Fans can follow the WDCV on Facebook for more information.

About Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley

The Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley® (WDCV) is an association of more than 60 wineries and 150 growers, of which more than 95 percent are small, family-owned operations. WDCV is dedicated to advancing the recognition, enhancement and preservation of Dry Creek Valley as a premium winegrowing region. Anchored by the charming town of Healdsburg, the Dry Creek Valley appellation was officially designated in 1983. Known as a premier zinfandel growing region, Dry Creek Valley is one of California's oldest wine producing regions and is home to many heritage vineyards ranging in age from 50 to 120 years. To preserve this history and the valley's pristine beauty, the Winegrowers of Dry Creek Valley supports sustainable viticulture and low-impact farming practices. For more information, visit <http://www.drycreekvalley.org>.

<http://www.wineindustryadvisor.com/2016/01/29/passport-dry-creek-valley-sales-begin>