



Sonoma County starts just above San Francisco and runs north along the coast of California for about 70 miles. During the first half of the 1800s, a Russian fur trading company came down from Alaska and took possession of the northern part of Sonoma. Spanish explorers who came up from Mexico were in control of the southern part.

In 1823, Father José Altimira, a young Franciscan priest in San Francisco saw his mission as setting up a new mission in Sonoma. It became the most northerly mission in the Spanish mission system, which ran all the way down to the bottom of South America.



Within a few years, the newly independent government of Mexico decided to secularize the missions and return their lands to the people. Twenty-eight-year-old Lieutenant Mariano Vallejo was sent there to do the job. He started out by taking 100,000 acres for himself. (Good start.) It made him one of the wealthiest men in California. Then he sold or gave huge tracts of land to his friends and relatives.

The word back East was that there was free land to be had in the West and all through the 1830s and '40s settlers came into northern California. The Mexican government did not allow ownership of land by anyone who was not a Mexican citizen, which created considerable tension.

In 1846, rumors spread that the Mexican government was going to force all of the Americans out of the territory. At dawn on June 14<sup>th</sup>, an armed band of thirty Americans rode into Vallejo's Sonoma fort and—without firing a single shot—took control. Since Vallejo was asleep and the fort was almost empty, firing shots would have been:

- A. a waste of ammunition.
- B. a rude awakening for Vallejo.
- C. just plain revolting.

Actually it was all of the above. And in addition some historians believe that Vallejo phoned a friend to con-

firm his belief that he would do better being in business with the Americans than being in the Mexican military. In the end, his final answer appears to have been to discreetly welcome the revolt. A flag with a bear on it was raised in the town square, and for 25 days, Sonoma was the capital of the independent Republic of California.

### Sonoma

The town of Sonoma is the place where Father Altimira had been making wine for sacramental purposes but when General Vallejo took over the mission he secularized that aspect of the church by going into business as California's first commercial wine maker.

Today Sonoma is one of the best towns in the county to get a bite to eat, buy some wine, go to a spa, or shop. It's all within walking distance of the town plaza, which is the largest in California.

Sonoma is also the home of the Sears Point Raceway where you can take a course at the Jim Russell Racing Drivers School. The school is one of the most respected institutions in the automotive world and offers an extraordinary range of classes. On the simplest level you can come in and learn how to get the most from your own car.



You'll find out about maximum braking without losing control from wheel lockup, how to stop in the shortest possible distance, skid-control techniques and avoiding accidents on wet or icy roads. You could end up being the Mario Andretti of your kids' car pool. Or you can take a series of classes that will either let you live out a limited fantasy as a race car driver or put you on the road to actually becoming one.

### Luther Burbank

Sonoma County was the home of a man known as the garden wizard, a man who forever changed the world's fruits, vegetables and flowers. His name was Luther Burbank and he was born in 1849 in Lancaster, Massa-

chusetts. At the age of 27 he moved to Sonoma County, California. He was a horticulturist who spent his life trying to improve the quality of plants and increase the world's food supply. He moved to Sonoma because he felt it was the chosen spot of all the earth as far as nature was concerned. And it certainly worked for him.



He introduced more than 800 new varieties, including some of our most important fruits, vegetables, nuts, grains, and the Burbank potato, plus hundreds of ornamental flowers, including the Shasta daisy.

## Healdsburg

To the north of Burbank's home sits the town of Healdsburg. In 1857, Harmon Heald gave up his gold digger's dream of striking it rich and bought some nearby land. Humbled by his failure to find wealth beyond his wildest dreams he laid out a town plan and modestly called it Healdsburg. Today, Healdsburg is filled with boutiques, art galleries, spas, wine tasting rooms, and restaurants.



Eight miles from the center of Healdsburg is the Jimtown store. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, this historic landmark served as a general store, post office and neighborhood hangout.

Today it still serves as the area's general store, but the current owner, Carrie Brown, has given it a special edge. In addition to selling basics, like elephant-shaped watering cans, birds that serve toothpicks, and ant farms, the Jimtown Store is filled with antiques, vintage toys, American memorabilia, old-time candies and an eclectic assortment of bizarre stuff that Carrie and her husband found during their travels.

## California's Redwood Forest

To the southwest of the Jimtown Store is the Armstrong Redwood State Reserve, which contains some of the tallest and oldest trees in California. The park is filled with trails and you can wander through all 805 acres of ancient redwoods.

Laura Ayers, a naturalist who takes people through the forest on foot or on horseback, showed me around:



"Coastal redwoods grow primarily along the coastal fog belt in California, up into southern Oregon. They need that fog to get through the dry summers. They also like the canyons where they can get water for their very shallow roots. The roots go out

## THINGS TO DO

### ARMSTRONG REDWOOD STATE RESERVE

ARMSTRONG ROAD  
 GUERNEVILLE, CA 95446  
 TEL: (707) 869-2015  
[WWW.PARKS.SONOMA.NET](http://WWW.PARKS.SONOMA.NET)

### ARMSTRONG WOODS PACK STATION

BOX 970  
 GUERNEVILLE, CA 95446  
 TEL: (707) 887-2939  
[WWW.REDWOODHORSES.COM](http://WWW.REDWOODHORSES.COM)

Trailrides through the Armstrong Redwoods.

### DE LOACH VINEYARDS

1791 OLIVIER ROAD  
 SANTA ROSA, CA 95401  
 TEL: (707) 526-9111  
[WWW.DELOACHVINEYARDS.COM](http://WWW.DELOACHVINEYARDS.COM)

### FERRARI-CARANO VINEYARDS & WINERY

8761 DRY CREEK ROAD  
 HEALDSBURG, CA 95448  
 TEL: (707) 433-6700  
[WWW.FERRARI-CARANO.COM](http://WWW.FERRARI-CARANO.COM)

### JIM RUSSELL RACING DRIVERS SCHOOL

29305 ARNOLD DRIVE  
 SONOMA, CA 95476  
 TOLL-FREE: 1-800-733-0345  
 FAX: (707) 939-6851  
[WWW.RUSSELLRACING.COM](http://WWW.RUSSELLRACING.COM)

### JIMTOWN STORE

6706 STATE HIGHWAY 128  
 HEALDSBURG, CA 95448  
 TEL: (707) 433-1212  
 FAX: (707) 433-1252  
[WWW.JIMTOWN.COM](http://WWW.JIMTOWN.COM)

### KAYAKING GUIDE ~ GEORGE ZASTROW

C/O GUERNEVILLE GRAPHICS & PRINTING  
 16248 MAIN STREET  
 GUERNEVILLE, CA 95446  
 TEL: (707) 869-0700  
 FAX: (707) 869-9785

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### **LUTHER BURBANK HOME & GARDENS**

SANTA ROSA AVENUE @ SONOMA AVENUE  
P. O Box 1678  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95402  
TEL: (707) 524-5445  
[WWW.LUTHERBURBANK.ORG](http://WWW.LUTHERBURBANK.ORG)

### **SEARS POINT RACEWAY**

HIGHWAYS 37 & 121  
SONOMA, CALIFORNIA 95476  
TOLL-FREE: 1-800-870-RACE  
[WWW.SEARSPPOINT.COM](http://WWW.SEARSPPOINT.COM)

### **SONOMA STATE HISTORIC PARK**

MISSION SAN FRANCISCO SOLANO DE SONOMA  
114 EAST SPAIN STREET  
SONOMA, CA 95476  
TEL: (707) 938-1519  
[HTTP://ARCHAEOLOGY.PARKS.CA.GOV](http://ARCHAEOLOGY.PARKS.CA.GOV)

### **VINTAGE AIRCRAFT COMPANY**

23982 ARNOLD DRIVE  
SONOMA VALLEY, CA 95476  
TEL: (707) 938-2444  
[WWW.VINTAGEAIRCRAFT.COM](http://WWW.VINTAGEAIRCRAFT.COM)

## **WHERE TO EAT**

### **BACCHUS**

ONE DOUBLETREE DRIVE  
ROHNERT PARK, CA 94928  
TEL: (707) 584-4679

### **THE GIRL & THE FIG**

110 WEST SPAIN STREET  
SONOMA, CA 95476  
TEL: (707) 938-3634  
[WWW.THEGIRLANDTHEFIG.COM](http://WWW.THEGIRLANDTHEFIG.COM)

### **HANA**

101 GOLF COURSE DRIVE  
ROHNERT PARK, CA 94928  
TEL: (707) 586-0270

### **JOHN ASH & COMPANY AT VINTNERS INN**

4330 BARNES ROAD  
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403  
TEL: (707) 527-7687

as far as a mile, interlock, and grow together in a way that allows trees closer to the water source to send roots up the hillside and water trees that are further away. The redwood forest, through this root system, is totally interconnected."

## **California Cheese**



In 1920, Sonoma's wine production was interrupted by a series of federal laws that prohibited the sale of alcoholic beverages. They were enforced for ten years, wasted millions of dollars of

public money, gave organized crime its first big chance to get organized and totally failed to achieve any of its objectives.

The only positive benefit that came out of prohibition were a number of winemakers whose knowledge of fermentation turned them into cheesemakers. Today, California is the center for the production of some of the world's finest cheeses.

Cheese is very much in fashion, not only as an ingredient, but once again as its own course. Part of the reason for its popularity is the talent of the cheesemakers. In California artisanal cheesemakers are cropping up everyday—it's like the wine business of 30 years ago.

## **Kayaking**

Archaeologists have found evidence that cheesemaking goes back to 6000 BC. They also tell us that man has been using kayaks to travel over water since 2000 BC. Now you might think that these two facts were unrelated and that could actually be the case. But not in Sonoma.



Sonoma has a number of ideal places for kayaking. It's a relaxing sport and not difficult to learn. Of course, a lot depends on the strength of the river you choose.

It appears that kayaks were developed by native tribes living at the top of the world and used for hunting seals. Unlike a canoe, the traditional kayak places the paddler in an almost watertight shell and gives him a much safer and more maneuverable vehicle. These days, kayaks are primarily used by sportsmen exploring rivers and competitive athletes in whitewater trials. Kayaking events have been part of the Olympics since 1936 and once again, I will not be a contender.





**DOUBLE TREE HOTEL  
SONOMA WINE COUNTRY**

ONE DOUBLE TREE DRIVE  
ROHNERT PARK, CA 94928  
TOLL-FREE: 1-800-222-8733  
TEL: (707) 584-5466  
[WWW.DTSONOMA.COM](http://WWW.DTSONOMA.COM)

## WHERE TO STAY

Just an hour's drive from the San Francisco Bay area and within 30 minutes of some of the world's finest wineries, the DoubleTree Hotel Sonoma Wine Country is perfectly situated for anyone coming to Sonoma for either business or a vacation.

When it was originally built it was a roadside inn offering clean, inexpensive and comfortable accommodations and serving a community that was largely based in agriculture. Over the years DoubleTree has managed to keep those positive attributes while becoming a 245-room resort. Spread out over 22 landscaped acres it has tennis courts, an outdoor heated swimming pool, a Jacuzzi, a fitness center and is surrounded by the 36-hole Mountain Shadows championship golf course.

## Sonoma Winemakers

Today, Sonoma County is one of the world's most important wine-growing regions, and an ideal place for tourists to get a taste of what's going on in the California wine business. A good place to start is De Loach Vineyards.

In the late '60s Cecil De Loach decided to buy a weekend place in Sonoma. It was an easy drive from San Francisco and he thought it would be a good spot to relax. A twenty-four acre ranch near the Russian River looked like his dream come true.



The previous owner wanted to see it continue as a family farm. So he spent a year teaching the De Loachs how to grow grapes. At first they just sold their grapes to other wineries but in 1975 they began producing their own wines. Today, Cecil's son Michael runs the winery.

Another winemaking family is Don and Rhonda Carano. Their wine property is called *Villa Fiore*, which means the house of flowers. And that is a very descriptive name. Both Don and Rhonda were born into families that preserved their



Italian heritage, and both the villa and the gardens were designed to feel like a home outside of Florence.

The Caranos own 17 separate vineyards, spread out over a 50-mile radius, and strategically located so they can select their grapes from different soils and microclimates. Their wines are presented under the Ferrari-Carano label. Carano is the name of Don's father's family and Ferrari comes from his paternal grandmother. Their first wine, an Alexander Valley Chardonnay was introduced in 1987 and was an immediate success. Since then, every Alexander Valley Chardonnay they produced has been rated by *The Wine Spectator* as 90 or higher out of 100.

## Vintage Aircraft

Sonoma is clearly vineyard country and one of the most interesting ways to get an overview of the place is to take a ride with Chris Prevost at Sonoma's Vintage Aircraft Company.

He has a meticulously-restored fleet of vintage aircraft, including authentic Boeing "Stearman" biplanes. These planes were originally built to train pilot candidates for our Army, Air Corps and Navy during World War II. They are popular with pilots because they are strong, durable and have a rugged beauty that's easy to admire. For over 60 years, they've been used for flight training, fire fighting, crop dusting, movies and stunt flying. You can choose from the scenic flight, the aerobatic flight, and the kamikaze. Scenic sounded like it was just my speed.

## TO LEARN MORE . . .

**SONOMA COUNTY TOURISM PROGRAM**  
1-800-5-SONOMA (1-800-576-6662)  
[WWW.SONOMACOUNTY.COM](http://WWW.SONOMACOUNTY.COM)

A free 68-page visitor's guide to Sonoma County is available through the toll-free number and web site listed above.

**CALIFORNIA MILK ADVISORY BOARD**  
[WWW.REALCALIFORNIACHEESE.COM](http://WWW.REALCALIFORNIACHEESE.COM)

**SONOMA COUNTY WINERIES ASSOCIATION**  
TEL: (707) 586-3795  
[WWW.SONOMAWINE.COM](http://WWW.SONOMAWINE.COM)



**ORANGE GLAZED DUCK BREASTS  
WITH BRAISED LEEKS AND PANCETTA**

*Makes 4 servings*

FOR THE ORANGE GLAZE:

*½ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons water  
½ cup orange juice  
½ cup red wine vinegar  
1 cup chicken broth  
½ teaspoon fresh orange zest*

FOR THE DUCK:

*¾ cup diced pancetta  
3 cups diced leeks  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
2 tablespoons white wine  
Two Petaluma or Muscovy duck breasts (14 to 16 ounces each)  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper*

FOR THE POLENTA:

*2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion, diced  
1 cup polenta  
4½ cups chicken stock  
½ cup heavy cream  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh basil  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh parsley  
1 teaspoon chopped fresh chives  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper*

FOR THE ORANGE GLAZE: In a medium saucepan over medium high heat, stir the sugar and water together. Melt the sugar until it turns golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Carefully add the orange juice and vinegar to the caramel, stirring

constantly, until the sugar has dissolved. Add the chicken broth, reduce heat to medium and simmer for 30 minutes or until mixture becomes syrupy. Stir in the zest and set aside until ready to use.

FOR THE DUCK: Preheat the oven to 375° F. In a medium skillet over medium heat render the fat from the pancetta until the pancetta is crispy, about 5 minutes. Add the leeks and garlic and cook until the leeks are soft. Deglaze the skillet with the wine, scraping the browned bits in the bottom of the skillet with a wooden spoon. Continue cooking until wine has evaporated, about 2 minutes more. Set aside until ready to use.

Heat a large skillet over medium high heat. Score the skin of the duck breasts in 1-inch intervals about ¼-inch deep. This will help to render the fat from the skin. Season the duck breasts to taste with salt and pepper. Sear, skin side down, until the skin is crispy and has rendered its fat, about 7 to 10 minutes. Turn the duck skin side up and put skillet into oven to finish cooking to the desired temperature, 5 to 8 minutes for medium rare. Allow the breasts to rest for at least 10 minutes before carving.

FOR THE POLENTA: In a medium saucepan over medium heat, heat the oil. Add the onion and saute until soft. Add the polenta and half of the stock and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add the remaining stock and cook, stirring often, until the polenta is tender and all of the liquid has been absorbed, 10 to 15 minutes. Pour in the heavy cream and add the herbs. Season the polenta to taste with the salt and pepper.

TO SERVE: Carve the duck breasts on the bias into thin slices. Place a mound of the polenta in the center of four dinner plates. Spoon the pancetta and leek mixture at the base of the mound. Divide the duck breasts between the four plates, fanning out the slices over the pancetta and leek mixture. Drizzle each plate with the orange glaze.



**HERB CRUSTED RACK OF LAMB  
WITH WALNUT ROSEMARY RED WINE REDUCTION**

*Makes 4 servings*

FOR THE SAUCE:

*3 tablespoons olive oil  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 shallot, chopped  
¼ cup dry red wine  
½ cup shelled toasted chopped walnuts  
2 cups veal or beef broth  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper*

FOR THE LAMB:

*5 tablespoons olive oil  
Two 8 bone racks of lamb, trimmed and Frenched  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
¼ cup Dijon-style mustard  
2 cups Panko bread crumbs (Japanese breadcrumbs)  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh chives  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh parsley  
4 cups prepared mashed potatoes  
4 sprigs fresh rosemary for garnish*

FOR THE SAUCE: In a medium saucepan over medium high heat, heat oil. Add the garlic and shallot and cook for 5 minutes. Pour in the wine and reduce to the consistency of syrup, about 2 minutes. Add the walnuts, broth, and rosemary and cook, stirring often, until the liquid has reduced to a sauce consistency, about 8 to 10 minutes. Season to taste with the salt and pepper and keep warm over low heat while you prepare the lamb.

FOR THE LAMB: Preheat oven to 375° F. In an oven-proof large skillet over high heat, heat 3 tablespoons of the oil. Generously season the racks of lamb with salt and pepper. Sear the meat, fat side down, until golden brown. Remove the skillet from the heat. Turn the racks over, bone side down, and spread the mustard over the entire surface of the meat to a smooth layer. In a large bowl mix together the breadcrumbs, herbs, 2 tablespoons of the oil. Carefully top the mustard with the breadcrumb mixture, gently pressing the mixture to make it. Bake the lamb for 15 to 20 minutes

for medium rare or longer for the degree of doneness you desire. Allow the lamb to rest at least 10 minutes before carving.

TO SERVE: Cut each rack into 2 bone portions. Center a mound of the mashed potatoes on 4 dinner plates. Arrange each plate with 2 portions of the lamb on either side of the potatoes with the bones interlocking and standing upright. Drizzle the sauce over each plate and garnish each with a sprig of fresh rosemary.



**TOMATO BRUSCHETTA**

*Makes 4 to 6 servings*

*2 large tomatoes  
6 tablespoons olive oil  
2 shallots, diced  
3 cloves garlic, chopped  
1 cup Pinot Noir or other dry red wine  
6 slices ciabatta or Italian bread, cut on the bias  
1 teaspoon basil  
1 teaspoon parsley  
1 teaspoon chives  
Salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
½ cup grated asiago cheese*

In a medium pot over high heat bring the water to a boil. Score an X on the blossom end of each of the tomatoes, then drop into the boiling water and cook until the skin begins to peel away, about 1 minute. Drain the tomatoes and rinse under cold water. Peel, core, and seed the tomatoes. Dice the tomatoes and set aside.

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat 4 tablespoons of the oil. Add the shallots and garlic and saute until soft. Pour in the wine and simmer until the liquid has reduced to ¼ of a cup, about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Rub one side of the bread with the remaining olive oil and grill until toasted. Set aside. Add the diced tomatoes and herbs to the cooled wine mixture and season to taste with the salt and pepper.

To serve, place some grilled bread on an oven-proof plate, spoon a mound of the tomato mixture on top and sprinkle the cheese over the tomatoes. Broil until the cheese melts.

Serve immediately.