Visit Temecula Valley

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**Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country**

Casual, picturesque Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country is a beautiful wine region of rolling hills and vineyards, with high mountains forming a dramatic backdrop. The popular boutique, getaway and vacation destination welcomes nearly 3 million visitors each year. Perhaps because of the sunny, relaxed spirit synonymous with Southern California, Temecula Valley Wine Country is one of California’s most engaging and approachable wine regions.

There are now more than 40 wineries in the significant and diverse Temecula Valley AVA (American Viticultural Area), considered to be the major AVA in Southern California. The wine region continues to gain recognition for its award-winning, premium varietal and proprietary blended wines, and for its talented winemakers; and is home to three-time, award-winning California State Winery of the Year, South Coast Winery.

Visitors from throughout California and beyond are attracted to Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country by its natural gifts of climate and geography. Many return to enjoy again the region's welcoming wineries; learning experiences and wine education programs; concerts and signature wine-and-live-music events; outdoor activities; and dining in excellent winery restaurants amidst the vineyards. Less-busy weekdays provide potential opportunities to converse with talented winemakers and gracious and friendly, winemaking family members.

**TEMECULA VALLEY AVA (AMERICAN VITICULTURAL AREA)**

The 33,000-acre **Temecula Valley (AVA)** American Viticultural Area is part of the larger, 115,200-acre South Coast AVA, the largest AVA in Southern California. Within the Temecula Valley AVA, 5,185 acres are protected in an agricultural preserve known as the Citrus/Vineyard zone. Within the CV zone, there are approximately 1,500 planted vineyard acres.

Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country enjoys great **geography**, excellent **soils**, and an ideal **climate** for growing high quality wine grapes. The region's vineyard plantings grow at elevations ranging from 1,400 to 2,500 feet above sea level. Soils are granitic, a light sandy loam, that is excellent for growing high-quality grapes. Grapevines thrive in these well-drained soils that also contribute to clean, pure, varietal wine flavors. The valley's unique microclimate makes for a general pattern of morning mist, warm midday sun, cooling afternoon breezes, and cooler nights. These weather factors combined with the perfect balance of geography and soils create an ideal environment for growing high quality wine grapes.

The vineyards and wineries of Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country practice a variety of sustainable measures. Many of these practices begin in the vineyards where vine health is a precursor to wine flavors. Cover crops grow between vineyard rows to fortify soils. Daytime pest management is encouraged by Red Tail hawks; at night, by owls. At harvest time, many vineyards' grapes are picked during the cool of night and early-early morning for energy savings and the quality berries night harvesting helps ensure. Three of the valley’s vineyard and winery estates are **certified sustainable under the strict standards of the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance** program created by the **Wine Institute** and the **California Association of Winegrape Growers**. Less than 60 of the vineyard and winery estates in the entire state of California have achieved membership in the California Sustainable Wine Growing Alliance. Temecula Valley’s three certified members are **Palumbo Family Vineyards & Winery, Ponte Family Estate Winery, and South Coast Winery.**

**TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY HISTORY**

**Late 1960s and the 1970s**

In the late 1960s and the 1970s, the first of Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country pioneers purchased acreage and planted their vineyards. In 1974, the founding of Callaway Winery marked the beginning of winemaking in the Temecula Valley.

**In 1984**

In ***The Los Angeles Times Book of California Wines*** published in 1984, 40-year veteran wine-writer Robert Lawrence Balzer wrote, "When Ely Callaway, the former president of Burlington Industries, decided to dedicate his autumn years to winemaking in a remote region of southern California, few among his associates shared his enthusiasm.

"In ten years the Callaway Vineyard & Winery of Temecula has become a principal case study for the enological school at UC-Davis and for connoisseurs across the country. The microclimate of this high plateau, 23 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, has the advantage of cooling sea breezes almost daily. In his 135-acre vineyard, Ely Callaway has his own weather station to record the all-important moisture affecting the surfaces of the vine leaves and the skins of the grapes. Temperature and sunlight records confirm Callaway’s belief that the environmental factors here duplicate those of the more celebrated North Coast wine lands."

"Callaway brought his administrative thoroughness and perfectionist drive to winegrowing. (In the vineyard, cluster thinning limits) each crop to about two tons or less per acre where others might push the vines to ten tons per acre. His objective is richly concentrated berries, at the peak of their varietal character. ... In the winery, oak aging barrels are steam-leached to remove excess flavor producing agents…"

"In 1981, Ely Callaway sold the winery to Hiram Walker & Sons, Ltd. of Canada, but remained as consultant and neighboring grape grower."

"Ever since Callaway (wine) was served to Queen Elizabeth at a (New York City) Waldorf Astoria luncheon in 1976, Callaway wines have had their special cachet ... Temecula can no longer be considered a dry, and desert region. It is one of California’s newly discovered areas for quality wine.”

**In 1989**

The cover of the April 30, 1989, edition of ***The Wine Spectator*** touted "Discovering Wine Country Two Hours From Los Angeles." The companion article stated, "Clean air and vineyard views, new restaurants and a good bed and breakfast make the Temecula wine region a fine weekend destination." Hot air ballooning was featured and the article noted that pioneers set the stage for an influx of wineries, of which there were then 11.

**In 2009**

On June 26, 2009, in the ***Napa Valley Register***, Dan Berger wrote, "We exited the freeway at Rancho California Road, and drove east. In three miles we reached the first building, Joe Hart’s winery. It was 1982, and Hart had founded the winery two years before."

"Move forward 27 years. After more trials and headaches than most fine-wine regions in California, the Temecula Valley remains vibrant and successful — by any measure. (There are now) more than two dozen wineries..."

"Once, the primary wineries were Hart, Callaway (founded by textile magnate Ely Callaway, who later became a golf magnate), radio station owner John Poole’s Mt. Palomar, and many now-gone pioneers. Today, Callaway has new owners. Hart still operates his own property and has been joined by many who are doing a stunning job of wine making. Among them is South Coast (Winery). Founded by shopping center developer Jim Carter, this energetic project has made remarkable progress with a huge range of wines made by a talented and dedicated team. Maurice Car’rie and Van Roekel are two popular stops for visitors. Phil Baily, at his small Baily vineyards, is a skilled wine maker."

"The fact that Temecula is here at all surprises many. A decade ago, Pierce’s disease here was the talk of the industry. A vine-killing pathogen, it is one of the most difficult vine problems. It seemed as if Temecula was doomed. But diligent work by wine scientists and a commitment by most local wineries has kept Pierce’s disease under control, for the most part."

"One key to the popularity of the wines here is the population base. Napa and Sonoma may be known as California’s wine country, but to the 20 million or so who live in Southern California, this is wine country — an easy trip to a bucolic countryside and a place to sip great wine."

**In 2014**

In 2014, more than 40 wineries prosper in Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country.

**TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND WINE EDUCATION**

Many Temecula Valley Wineries offer specially designed tours, wine tasting, and other educational events that inspire visitors to expand their wine knowledge and appreciation. Because each is unique, multiple experiences at different wineries over the course of a Temecula Valley get-away or vacation combine to become especially enriching. Most educational winery offerings require advance reservations.

Weekday offerings include **Bel Vino Winery’s** Vine to Wine tour and tasting experience; **Briar Rose**, seated wine tasting with wine education by a staff sommelier; and **Callaway**, an informative tour from the demonstration vines to crush pad, fermentation cellars, and barrel room. **Danza del Sol** offers a VIP tasting; **Leoness** **Cellars** has a wide variety of informative tours and tastings available by advance reservation; while the Journey through **Miramonte** tour provides insights into the creative process with VIP access to the winery property. By prior appointment, **Palumbo** provides a mini-tour and tasting; also offered by prior appointment only is an exclusive Barrel Tasting, Tour and Lunch with the Winemaker. **Ponte** has a vineyard tour and tasting experience by electric bus, and **South Coast**, a behind-the-scenes winery tour followed by wine tasting and cheese pairing.

Weekends (Saturdays and Sundays) also include tours and tastings available by advance reservation. **Falkner** offers an in-depth educational tour; while **Keyways** offers a 2½-hour Winemaking Tasting Tour that includes food and wine pairing. **Thornton** offers an educational tour specifically about the Méthode Champenoise sparkling wine process, and the **Wiens** seated wine tasting in the cellar room includes a flight of reserve and limited red wines.

Additionally **Falkner** offers monthly wine appreciation classes; **Europa Village** and **Oak Mountain** also offer wine appreciation programs. **Wilson Creek** has a new Wine Academy; instructors include a Certified Specialist of Wine Accreditation from the Society of Wine Educators and a Collegiate Instructor of Wine at San Diego State University.

**TEMECULA VALLEY WINERY RESTAURANTS**

At Temecula Valley winery restaurants, talented chefs expertly pair award-winning varietals and proprietary blends with fresh, local, seasonal ingredients. For visitors - including culinary travelers, and wine enthusiasts – wine country dining is an excellent way to experience and savor Temecula Valley Wine Country. Midweek is especially ideal; less-busy weekdays make for potential opportunities to meet talented and passionate chefs, winemakers, and winemaking family members.

Among Temecula Valley winery restaurants are **Café Champagne** at Thornton Winery, **Carol’s Restauran**t at Baily Winery, **Creekside Grille** at Wilson Creek Winery, **Meritage** restaurant at Callaway Vineyard & Winery, **Pinnacle** restaurant at Falkner Winery, **Annata** at Mount Palomar Winery, **The** **Restaurant** at Ponte Family Estate Winery, and **The Vineyard** **Rose** restaurant at South Coast Winery. Winery bistros open exclusively on Fridays-Saturdays-Sundays, include **Bel Vino Bistro** at Bel Vino Winery, **Avensole Restaurant** at Avensole Winery, **Monte de Oro Bistro** at Monte de Oro Winery, and **The Restaurant** at Leoness Cellars.

**TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY CONCERTS AND SIGNATURE WINE-AND-LIVE-MUSIC EVENTS**

Among Temecula Valley’s most popular culture and entertainment are intimate, summer afternoon and evening concerts featuring musical artists’ live performances. At the French-style chateau that is the gateway to the graceful vineyards of Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country, the **Thornton Winery** Champagne Jazz series (May through October) has included talents like Michael McDonald, David Sanborn, Bob James, Kenny G, and Boz Scaggs.

Additional summer concerts with authentic winery settings are on the majestic, **Monte de Oro** outdoor winery patio; under the stars in the courtyard at **South Coast Winery**; at **Wiens Family Cellars’** outdoor winery stage; and on the outdoor concert stage with views of the vineyards at **Wilson Creek Winery**.

Gracious and friendly Temecula Valley wineries host a variety of signature wine-and-live-music events, Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons and evenings, and Sunday afternoons and evenings – some year-round, some only seasonally. The great variety of authentic winery venues include **Carol’s Restaurant at Baily Winery; Meritage restaurant at Callaway; Bel Vino, Europa Village, Falkner, Lorimar, Miramonte, Ponte, Thornton, and Wilson Creek. Along the De Portola Wine Trail signature wine-and-live-music venues include Cougar, Danza del Sol, Keyways, Leoness, Oak Mountain, and Robert Renzoni.**

**LUXURY AND INDULGENCE IN TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY: THE GRAPESEED SPA**

For total vintage relaxation, visitors head to The **GrapeSeed Spa** at **South Coast Winery Resort & Spa**. For re-energizing body, mind, and soul, there is nothing like the signature spa's blend of innovative, vine-based treatments, state-of-the-art fitness center, private movement studio, and secluded places to unwind. Inquire about “Vino-Vinyasa” – a yoga and wine tasting session to “wine and unwind.”

**HOT AIR BALLOON FLIGHTS OVER TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY**

A hot air balloon flight over Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country is the opportunity to experience some of Southern California’s last remaining open, rural countryside. Floating serenely over open-country with a big, blue sky overhead provides a spectacular view of rolling hills, vineyards, farms, ranchlands, and citrus groves.

Throughout the year, hot air balloon flights highlight an ever-changing scene that puts one in touch with the seasons. Wisps of summer’s morning mist lingering above vineyards vast and lush. Chance-opportunities to witness grape harvest at dawn from overhead. The brisk cool of autumn as vines’ leaves turn golden and red. The crisp of morning in winter, dormant vines row-upon-row, and snow-capped mountains circle the valley. Then wildflowers in bloom after early spring rains.

The valley’s delightful, year-round climate makes it possible for hot air balloon companies like **A Grape Escape**, **California Dreamin’**, and **Magical Adventures** to launch at dawn year-round, 7 days a week including holidays (weather permitting) – floating quietly, just above the vineyards and to 2,000 feet. Because hot air balloons fly in Southern California’s inversion zone, temperatures aloft are typically as mild and comfortable as on the ground.

**EQUESTRIAN EXPERIENCES IN TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY**

Aspiring equestrians can enjoy guided rides and picturesque trails in Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country. **Green Acres Ranch** provides gentle horses and guides for rides in the open country setting off De Portola Wine Trail. **Temecula Carriage Company** provides wine tasting tours in a carriage drawn by elegant horses; passengers travel leisurely along a scenic route through the vineyards.

**SIGNATURE EVENTS IN TEMECULA VALLEY WINE COUNTRY**

Throughout the year, Temecula Valley Wine Country is host to variety of festive events including:

* **Annual Barrel Tasting** (first full Saturday-Sunday in March) with exclusive wine samplings and food and wine pairings, a Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association event.
* **Grape Day in Temecula Valley Wine Country** (April) for aspiring and current winegrowers, vintners, and the wine-curious, a full day of education and insights about winemaking, a Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association event.
* **Temecula Valley Balloon and Wine Festival** (first weekend in June) with dramatic evening hot air balloon glows, passenger flights at dawn aboard one of 40 to 50 hot air balloons lifting off and floating effortlessly over Temecula Valley Wine Country; tasting of Temecula Valley AVA award-winning wines; food and wine pairings; and top-name bands and musicians in live concerts.
* **California Wine Month in Temecula Valley Wine Country** (daily throughout September) with a special SIP passport offered by the Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association.
* **CRUSH** **Gala - Wine & Culinary Showcase in Temecula Valley Wine Country** (weekend evening in mid- September) with culinary creations of both winery and local restaurants; award-winning Temecula Valley premium varietals and proprietary blends; and opportunities to meet local, winemaking families and converse with talented winemakers, a Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association event.
* **People’s Choice Awards** (November) provides blind tastings of Temecula Valley reds and whites along with a wine reception with the winemakers and winery owners and a sit down awards dinner.

For a complete, daily Temecula Valley Events Calendar, please see VisitTemeculaValley.com.

Information is believed accurate but may be subject to change.

**ABOUT THE TEMECULA VALLEY AND VISIT TEMECULA VALLEY**

Welcoming more than 2 million visitors each year, the casual, picturesque Temecula Valley is a year-round getaway and vacation destination located 60 minutes from San Diego, Orange County, and Palm Springs; 90 minutes from Los Angeles and Hollywood.

With natural gifts of climate and geography, bolstered by Pu’eska Mountain, the Rainbow Gap, and Santa Margarita Gap, Temecula Valley is widely recognized for its scenic vineyards, award-winning wines, and gracious and friendly wineries as Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country. The popular boutique destination includes the Temecula Valley A.V.A. (American Viticulture Area) as well as Downtown Old Town Temecula, Pechanga Resort & Casino, and the Temecula Wine Country Golf Trail, and is home to three-time award-winning California Golden State Winery of the Year, South Coast Winery.

Visit Temecula Valley (formerly the Temecula Valley Convention & Visitors Bureau), the region’s official tourism marketing organization and resource for visitors is online including a complete daily Event Calendar at VisitTemeculaValley.com; “Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country” on Facebook; and @Visit\_Temecula on Twitter. Visit Temecula Valley also welcomes ad agencies, location scouts, writers, and directors online at FilmTemecula.com. The Temecula Valley Visitors Center is located in Downtown Old Town Temecula (Third Street and Mercedes) adjacent the Old Town Temecula Parking Garage. For visitor information and assistance, please call 888/363-2852 or 951/491-6085.

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