

# Paso Robles: Your Guide to Approachable Wine Country

Sunday, June 7, 2020 3:55 PM

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## Paso Robles: Your Guide to Approachable Wine Country

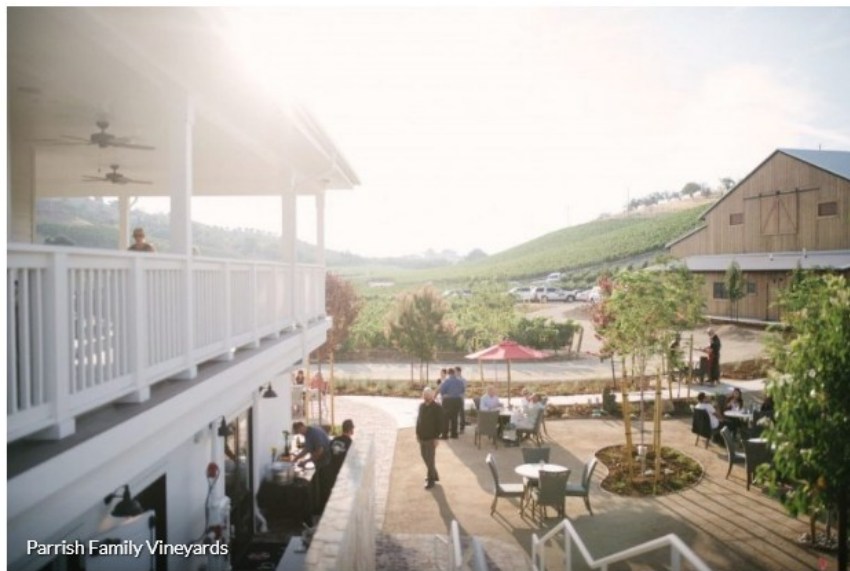
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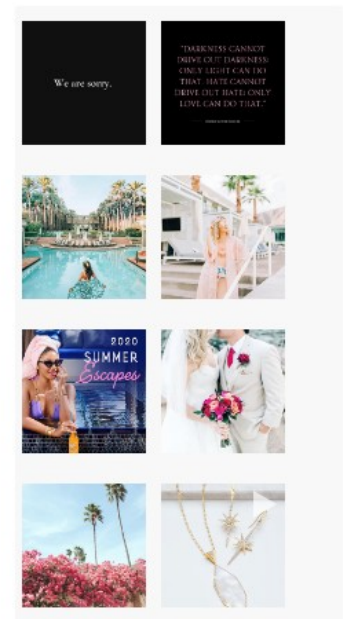
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Located directly in between San Francisco and Los Angeles, **Paso Robles** (pronounced Pass-oh Row-bulls...for all us Southwesterners out there) is more approachable than its more famous counterparts up north. It's also warmer and easier on the wallet. While a Napa wine tasting might easily cost you \$50, most tastings in Paso are a mere \$15. That means more wine tastings, which means more happiness. And that sunny weather translates to prime conditions for those deep reds like Cabernets, Malbecs and Rhone varietals. Even *more* good vibes.



Since many wineries in Paso are still family-owned and operated, don't be shocked to find yourself getting a personal tour by the winemaker in between sips of vino. I even found myself climbing the ladder up the side of a vat to peek into the churning red grapes during harvest season (thanks Joe at Grey Wolf Cellars!). And since the community is so small and friendly, many winemakers know and support each other and sometimes even collaborate. The prestigious and competitive vibe does not live here. It's just a lot of great wine and a lot of

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progress and competitive rise does not mean there's just a lot of... great wine and a lot of friendly faces.

Thanks to a recent trip to the Central California destination, we rounded up all the best places to see and drink while there. So why not pour yourself a glass of wine and get to planning your trip to Paso?



### Where to Stay

The small town recently opened its first luxury hotel, **Allegretto Vineyard Resort**. The eclectic resort at first glance brings to mind an Italian villa. But once inside, you'll find elements from all over the world. Discover hallways lined with art from the Far East, a Moroccan-inspired cupola, a Romeo and Juliette tunnel, Mediterranean gardens, hand-carved Italian statues, a French-inspired chapel and more. Rooms are spacious with 14-foot high European ceilings and there's even a tasting room just off the lobby. The resort is also backed up against 20 acres of olive and fruit trees, plus wine grapes from which they produce their own label. Book a room located off the 12,000-square-foot courtyard for the ultimate experience.

Another option for those seeking the luxury life is **Hotel Cheval**. Named the No. 1 Small Hotel in the U.S. in the 2018 Travelers' Choice awards by Trip Advisor, the 16-room boutique stay is charming and magical, transporting guests to another world without sacrificing location. The hotel is in the city's town square in the heart of downtown, within walking distance to some of Paso's best shopping and dining.



### Where to Wine

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#### ARCHIVES

The wineries in Paso are separated into the west and the east side of town. Consider dedicating one day to each side for the easiest way to explore.

## West Side

**Parrish Family Vineyards:** This winery recently opened a brand new tasting room at its 30-acre estate vineyards whose interiors will give Pottery Barn a run for its money. The beautifully designed two-story white cottage houses a bar, indoor and outdoor seating and expansive windows with views of the surrounding vineyards. A visit here feels homey and relaxing, somewhere you can stay all day.

**SummerWood Winery:** Arriving here feels like stepping into someone's home. And it should, since the winery houses its own boutique inn across from its tasting room. The bright and airy nine-room inn is a step above a bed and breakfast. Experience cooked-to-order meals, rooms named after wine varieties and breathtaking views of the vineyards. Not to mention, it's mere steps from the tasting room which should be visited regardless of where you're staying.

**Grey Wolf Cellars/KROBAR Distillery:** A boutique winery that churns out spirits in its free time? Sounds about right. Grey Wolf Cellars and KROBAR are both divisions of Barton Family Wines whose tasting room is in the former home of the founders. Get your hands on a variety of wines before stepping in to the distillery for unique gins, whiskeys and bourbons, among other spirits. But it doesn't stop there; award-winning Chef Jeff Thomas whips up seasonal eats with a New Orleans flair at on-site Barton's Kitchen.

**PasoPort/Pendray's:** Fans of port wine should head to PasoPort whose known for their tasty port-style wines, each of which boasts custom-designed artwork of retro pinup girls. In the same location you'll find Pendray's Distillery, specializing in brandy, grappas and some wildly popular fruit liqueurs.



## East Side

**J. Lohr:** For one of Paso's bigger names in the wine industry, visit J. Lohr. The family-owned and operated label boasts the No. 1 selling Cabernet in North America but you won't be sipping that in their tasting room. But trust us, if you're a fan of their Cab, you'll be more than happy you made a stop here. Like so many wineries, you can get your hands on varieties not found in stores. Be sure to get a taste of the Gesture Mourvèdre while there.

**Vina Robles Vineyards & Winery:** This stunning winery not only serves up great wine, but also great food. Order a plate of Älplermagronen, a Swiss version of mac n' cheese that is to die for. If you're visiting April through November, be sure to catch a concert at the on-site **amphitheater**...yes, you read that right. The outdoor concert venue has hosted big name acts like Willie Nelson, Kip Moore and more. And whatever you do, don't leave here without a bag of truffle potato chips — an absolute must-have. Seriously, is there a chip club I can sign up for?



### Where to Dine

Eating in Paso is just as divine as drinking. An absolute standout with heaping portions of irresistible eats can be found at **Fish Gaucho**. The upscale Mexican restaurant is in the heart of town and offers an easy break from wine with its great tequila selection. If you like fresh fish and spicy sips, order the ahi crudo and the Mach1 margarita. But after checking out the menu, you'll likely want to come back. With items like duck confit empanadas, short rib enchiladas and fresh fish burros, how could you not?

For comfort food, **Jeffry's Wine Country BBQ** has all the classic fixins. Find this gem in the heart of downtown in the alley between 12th and 13th St. Feast on pulled pork and tri-tip sandwiches on picnic benches

in a large courtyard while soaking up the California sunshine.

Let your taste buds take you to Europe by dining at **Cello Ristorante & Bar**, the signature restaurant at Allegretto. The Mediterranean-inspired outlet is not only the perfect spot to try the hotel's own wine label, it's also a delicious spot for dinner. While diners can dig into everything from pizza to steak, we suggest ordering the Risotto del Giorno. The dish is continuously changing based on the chef's choice of the freshest ingredients. In short, it's heaven on a plate.

You may not expect a small town like Paso to have a speakeasy lounge, but perhaps that's what makes **1122** so surprising. While it doesn't serve food, it's the ideal spot for after-dinner drinks. The intimate bar features an unassuming exterior and all the elements of a swanky secret like a doorbell, curtained off foyer, sound-proof tufted walls, a mirror-backed bar, Great Gatsby playlist, gilded bar carts and cocktails mixed tableside by all-knowing mixologists. The bar only seats 28 at a time which makes its even easier to focus on the liquid creations which are the real star of the show.



For more information on Paso Robles, visit: [travelpaso.com](http://travelpaso.com)

After checking out of your hotel, don't head to the airport, head to the coast for the ultimate California road trip up Highway 1. Click [here](#) for our guide to the can't-miss stops and more.

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