



Scott Strazzante/The Chronicle

By Esther Mobley | Aug. 5, 2024

Going wine tasting is one of the great Bay Area pastimes. It's a chance to experience so much of what makes this place special: the land's natural beauty, a rich tradition of artisanal craftsmanship and a deep, abiding love for all things delicious.

This 2024 edition of our Top 25 Wineries list is heavy on recommendations in Napa Valley and Sonoma County, California's marquee wine regions. But it also includes wineries in other Bay Area corners, like the venerable Silicon Valley estates Ridge Monte Bello and Mount Eden, and natural wine juggernaut Broc in Berkeley. New additions to this year's guide include Obsidian, which opened a fun new tasting room in downtown Sonoma with a menu of experimental sparkling wines; Martinelli, a historic family operation in the Russian River Valley that hosts tastings on a gorgeous terrace; and Failla, a top-notch producer of Pinot Noir whose St. Helena tasting room is located in a former hunting lodge.

A growing number of Bay Area wineries now allow walk-in visitors, a reversal of the appointment-only trend that accelerated during the pandemic. We've added a filter to this list so that you can search for wineries that don't require reservations (though all of the wineries on this list still recommend them, if you have the foresight to plan ahead).

Obsidian Wine Co. - Sonoma

Down a little path that's set back from the downtown Sonoma square, this casual new tasting room feels like a tranquil retreat. Noted San Francisco architect Seth Boor (Liholiho Yacht Club, Tartine) brought Japanese-inspired design elements to the space, which includes an obsidian-studded outdoor fireplace and tall wooden fencing that resembles bamboo. Customers can order wines by the glass or choose between two very different flights: one (\$50) showcasing Obsidian's red wines, including the excellent Cabernet Sauvignon from Lake County that it's known for, and another (\$30) that highlights the winery's experimental bubbly bottlings, like a pear-Sauvignon Blanc hybrid and a Pinot Noir pet-nat.