

FOOD & WINE

#HOWIHOLIDAY

+
**AWESOME
GIFTS
TO GIVE
(AND
GET!)**

ULTIMATE HOLIDAY HANDBOOK

53 RECIPES YOU'LL
WANT TO SHARE

GO BIG
Nothing says
party like
an epic roast
(p. 79).

DECEMBER 2016

30
**BUBBLIES TO
DRINK NOW**



Russian River Idyll

FROM FIVE-COURSE LUNCHES TO FISHERMAN'S STEW, WITH LOTS OF WINE IN BETWEEN, WE'VE MAPPED OUT THE IDEAL WEEKEND GETAWAY IN SONOMA COUNTY'S MOST FAMOUS REGION.

BY RAY ISLE PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE MORRISONS

HERE'S AN INSIDER tip for visiting California's Russian River Valley, where many of the state's best Pinot Noirs, Chardonnays and old-vine Zinfandels are produced: Go in the late fall or early winter. The weather is crisp and beautiful, and tasting rooms are far less crowded than during the summer or harvest.

Sonoma County is chockablock with wineries, but don't overpack your schedule. Plan on four or five visits a day, both

boutique producers and bigger names. After all, a day of wine tasting should be a relaxing ramble, not a grueling march.

You'll also want to reserve time to explore the chic town of Healdsburg (stay at the luxe Hotel Healdsburg or the eco-friendly H2 Hotel down the street) and boho Sebastopol, both of which have fantastic food scenes. And end your trip with a night at the landmark (and now extensively renovated) Timber Cove resort, which offers dramatic views of the rugged Sonoma coastline and the Pacific. Read on for a road map to the best wine weekend ever.





10:20 A.M. BOUTIQUE PINOT

Like many top wineries, Benovia isn't open for drive-by visits. But winemaker Mike Sullivan's elegant, single-vineyard Pinots and Chardonnays are more than worth the effort it takes to send an email to make an appointment in advance. The selection changes frequently, but if the winery is pouring its gorgeous 2013 Tilton Hill Pinot Noir, we believe a silent high-five to yourself would be appropriate. *benoviawinery.com.*