

Until California Wineries Reopen, Try These At-Home Napa Valley Wine Tastings

Tasting your way through [Napa Valley](#) is a rite of passage for any passionate appreciator of wine. Since March, though, all of California's wineries have been closed to in-person tastings. Currently, in the state's [Stage 2 Reopening Plan](#), wineries that serve full meals are allowed to accept guests again—but most Napa vineyards don't have full-service restaurants, and must remain closed until Stage 3, which includes bars, night clubs and tasting rooms.

This partial reopening has been met with no small amount of controversy. [Caymus Vineyards filed suit](#) against California Governor Gavin Newsom earlier this week, claiming the distinction between "safe" wine service at wineries with food and "unsafe" wine service at wineries without is discriminatory.

Until Napa is fully reopen, many of the region's best wineries are off-limits to visitors. At least, they're off-limits in person. Virtual tastings and estate tours let you experience Napa Valley at home until you're able to visit again.

Chateau Montelena



There's an argument to be made that without Chateau Montelena, California wine never would have reached the world-class status it currently enjoys. It was that vineyard's 1973 Chardonnay, the story of which was made into the movie *Bottle Shock*, that famously won the 1976 Judgement of Paris and put California wine on the world stage in a way it had never been before. (To the oenophiles to whom these things matter, though the wine was made at the Calistoga estate, it was made mostly with grapes from Sonoma's Alexander and Russian River valleys, and very few actual Napa grapes)

Today, the winery encompasses not just the 1888 castle on the wine labels and the estate vineyards, but also Chinese gardens and walking paths. [This virtual tour](#) allows you to explore the grounds, which are currently closed to the public. The vineyard has been hosting events on social media, announced through their [Facebook](#) page, like a Chardonnay and Lobster pairing with winery CEO Bo Barrett and Four Seasons Napa Valley's Chef Erik Anderson, and an [Instagram Live estate tour](#).



When the estate is open, they offer tastings of their current vintages, in addition to a [Library Tasting](#) of older vintages and a comprehensive [Montelena Estate Collection Tasting](#) that allows you to compare four different vintages of Cabernet Sauvignon side by side, as well as taste an archival bottle of Chardonnay.

According to Chateau Montelena's website, the winery is looking towards a [June 8 reopening](#), when they hope to accept guests on a reservation-only basis.