



## Murrieta's Well great place to kick off wine tour

*Explore a different part of Livermore Valley wine country with this itinerary for a great afternoon of wine tasting with a minimum of driving.*

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Plan your Livermore Valley Wine Country visit [here](#) or print the driving directions [here](#).

**1** Located less than half a mile down Mines Road, [Murrieta's Well](#) is one of the historic gems of Livermore Valley. Gold Rush-era bandit Joaquin Murrieta favored the water at the property's artesian well, but it was a French native who recognized the land's potential for amazing wine quality. Louis Mel bought the 92-acre property in 1883 and built a winery into the hillside adjacent to the well. The old stone winery building is a gorgeous example of early California architecture.

In 1990, Philip Wenthe and Sergio Traverso realized a lifelong dream to revive the historic 92-acre estate. Today, the winery is well known for its popular blends, The Whip (white) and The Spur (red). Be sure to taste the "Los Tesoros de Joaquin" small-lot wines, only available at the tasting room. Located at 3005 Mines Road, Murrieta's Well is open for tasting daily starting Thursday and through Oct. 31 from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The tasting fee is \$10, [www.murrietaswell.com](http://www.murrietaswell.com).

**2** Return to Tesla Road, make a right turn and you will quickly arrive at [The Steven Kent Winery](#), which was started in 1996 with one mission: to make cabernet here in the Livermore Valley that rivals in quality the greatest red wines made anywhere in the world. Livermore Valley has a long, dedicated history of growing Bordeaux varietals and in particular cabernet sauvignon. Our climate and soils closely resemble those of Bordeaux's famed left bank of the Gironde. By the turn of the last century, Livermore Valley was already far ahead of its Napa Valley neighbor in specializing in the Bordeaux varieties. The Steven Kent Winery is devoted to carrying on that tradition.

Owner and winemaker Steven Kent Mirassou is a member of one of the oldest winemaking families in California. He carefully selects grapes from local vineyards to make acclaimed small-lot wines, including Lineage, which showcases the finely tuned terroir of the Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard. Located at 5443 Tesla Road, Steven Kent is open each day from 12 to 4:30 p.m. Tasting fees are \$15 in the Barrel Room and \$25 for a seated tasting of limited collector wines in the Reserve Room. Visit [www.stevenkent.com](http://www.stevenkent.com).

**3** Visitors to Steven Kent also have the opportunity to experience the [La Rochelle Winery](#) passion for pinot. Kent Mirassou's family introduced the pinot noir grape to California in the 1850s. Today, he and winemaker Tom Stutz partner with the state's most renowned pinot noir and chardonnay vineyards to make exceptional wines. Flights and collector wines are available for tasting in the Steven Kent Barrel Room and Reserve Room (reservations are recommended for seated tastings). Visit [www.lrwine.com](http://www.lrwine.com).

**4** Consider ending your day in wine country with dinner at [Double Barrel Wine Bar](#). This award-winning wine bar and restaurant offers local wines and tapas with a warm and welcoming neighborhood vibe. Everything on the menu is made-to-order from fresh, often locally grown farmers' market ingredients. Located at 2086 First St., Double Barrel also features live music nightly, a unique back patio with fire pits and space for private events. Visit [www.doublebarrelwinebar.com](http://www.doublebarrelwinebar.com).

*Between the Vines in a bi-weekly column on wine and wine making in the Livermore Valley wine region. This column was contributed by the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association.*