

inside napa valley

FALL 2025



WINE COUNTRY WEDDINGS

VENUES, VINEYARDS & MORE

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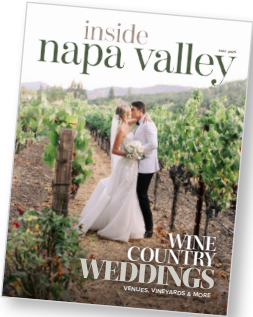
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ON THE COVER

A couple in the vineyard on their
wedding day at Charles Krug.

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5 EVENTS TO CHECK OUT IN NAPA VALLEY THIS FALL

There is never a lack of things to do in Napa Valley, but autumn offers a mix of free community events and long-standing ticketed traditions that appeal to locals and tourists alike. Here is a taste of the seasonal offerings you'll want to put on your calendars.

BROADWAY AND VINE

Oct. 13: The magic of Broadway unfolds in the vineyards of Napa Valley. This popular series continues with a performance by Bradley Gibson who is known for his starring roles in "Hercules" and "The Lion King." The series will conclude on Oct. 23 with a performance from Ana Gasteyer. The "Saturday Night Live" alum will perform songs from her resume, which includes "Wicked," "Once Upon A Mattress," and "Rocky Horror Picture Show." Locations and ticket prices vary. Visit broadwayandvine.org for full details.

THE WALL THAT HEALS

Oct. 16-18: Hosted by the city of American Canyon, The Wall That Heals brings the official three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, located in Washington, D.C. and mobile education center, to Napa County for everyone in Northern California. Free admission. The exhibit is located at Independence Park, 20 Benton Way, American Canyon. Info: vvmf.org/The-Wall-That-Heals.

'REVENGE OF THE REBOBS!'

Oct. 17-Nov. 2: Lucky Penny Productions presents a new musical inspired by Napa Valley's most notorious urban legend. "Revenge of

the Reboobs!" follows a skeptic who comes to Napa Valley to find out the truth about the Reboobs, but when bodies start piling up, it seems like the Reboobs are out for revenge. The musical is by composer/lyricist Rob Broadhurst and writer Barry Martin who created "The Real Housewives of Napa Valley" and "A Napa Valley Christmas Carol." Tickets start at \$25. Lucky Penny Productions presents its live stage events at its community theater located at 1758 Industrial Way in Napa. Info: luckypennynapa.com.

HOMETOWN HARVEST FESTIVAL

Oct. 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: The Hometown Harvest Festival is St. Helena's most-beloved autumn event featuring live music, wine and beer, a food alley, kids zone and an array of arts and crafts vendors. The highlight of the event is always the Pet PAWrade, where pets of all shapes and sizes are invited to show off

their best Halloween costumes. The event is held along Oak Avenue between Adams and Spring streets in downtown St. Helena. Info: cityofsthelena.gov.

CALISTOGA HALLOWEEN PARADE

Oct. 31, 6 p.m.: Calistoga's annual Halloween Parade is a beloved tradition for the Upvalley community. For decades, local schools, families, businesses and community groups have dressed up in their best costumes to share in the spookiness of the season. For decades, this cherished event has captured the magic of Halloween with everything from ghostly ghouls to whimsical witches. Lineup begins at Pioneer Park at 5:30 p.m. The parade starts promptly at 6 p.m. as Lincoln Avenue transforms into a vibrant display of Halloween spirit. Whether you're a local or a visitor, you're sure to leave with a heart full of joy and a bag full of goodies. Info: celebratenapavalley.org. ■



St. Helena's annual Harvest Festival is known for its Pet PAWrade.

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Beringer Vineyards' Rhine House in St. Helena is a popular location for couples taking photographs to celebrate their nuptials.

JBL STUDIOS PHOTO

Land use rules limit weddings in wine country

BY NATALIE HANSON

Although it's surprisingly difficult to host a wedding at many wine venues across the Napa Valley, some vendors say they find ways to work with happy couples this season while complying with the county's complicated rules.

Most Napa Valley wineries cannot host a formal wedding, due to Napa County's Winery Definition Ordinance. The ordinance was established in 1989 to protect agricultural land by clearly specifying what sorts of activities were allowed and

not allowed on property. It says that the county's vineyards are known for their quality and must be preserved for agricultural use and educating the public about wine, thus necessitating strict control over commercial land uses.

Charlene Gallina, the county's supervising planner of Planning, Building & Environmental Services, told the Napa Valley Register that the ordinance means wineries would not be able to obtain a use permit for weddings, since weddings are considered commercial uses, not involving education about wine. Wineries

approved for business after 1990 may not host cultural and social events because of language included in the county's definition of "marketing" – unless the event qualifies as a "temporary event" and has the required permits.

Gallina said that the code has been consistently interpreted to prohibit those wineries from hosting weddings and other social events because they have been deemed "unrelated to education and development" around wine. To intentionally make a change to allow weddings, the county would have to amend its tempo-

rary events ordinance, she said.

"People can have a party and bring a cake," Gallina said. "But you can't have a whole wine tasting organized around the party. If they (couples) have their wedding at the church, and they drop by the winery to take a picture, that's OK. But it's not OK to have the reception or ceremony there."

Only a few wineries are permitted to host weddings, as they were grandfathered in due to their pre-regulatory status, Gallina said, referring to the winery ordinance's exception for wineries established prior to 1974, before use permits were required.

Beaulieu Vineyard, for example, holds a certificate of legal nonconformity from decades ago, allowing it to continue operating a wedding venue.

"These wineries may continue to host cultural and social events if it was part of their operations prior to 1974 (and if they are recognized via a county-approved certificate of conformity)," she said.

The good news, Gallina added, is that a great number of the valley's wineries are permitted to host unique and intimate



"If they (couples) have their wedding at the church, and they drop by the winery to take a picture, that's OK. But it's not OK to have the reception or ceremony there."

— Charlene Gallina,

Napa County's supervising planner of Planning, Building & Environmental Services

wedding-related events, such as rehearsal dinners, bridal showers and family gatherings. Hotels can typically host weddings, as is the case for the new Oak Knoll Resort at 591 Solano Ave. on Napa's north side that is currently under construction, she said. Once complete, it will be able to host receptions under a specific permit and zoning designation. The county lost

Calistoga Ranch in the 2020 Glass Fire, which was able to host weddings as a resort under the local hotel permitting rules.

Gallina admitted that at the county level, "we know they're doing weddings out there. They just don't come to us and ask us, because we would say no." She recounted situations in which weddings were held covertly in the valley, with the



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county only learning of them after the fact due to noise complaints.

“Unfortunately, any winery that is conducting weddings is doing it illegally,” Gallina said. “So, I am not aware of any that have received authorization of conducting such activities. I don’t believe that any wineries notify the county that they are doing this type of activity.”

Similar rules limit Napa’s wedding season within city limits, as all wineries are subject to the standards of Napa Municipal Code 17.52.540.

Michael Allen, acting planning manager in the city Planning Division, said that the city only has one area that has the capacity for vineyard cultivation: the 708-acre Stanly Ranch resort, located southwest of the intersection of Highways 29, 12 and 121. Like other vineyards, these acres are zoned as an agricultural resource with very few commercial activities, including weddings, allowed. The ranch does contain a resort on 95 acres, which has its own Master Plan district allowing

entertainment uses and weddings, Allen said.

“The use permit for migration only allows limited commercial activities and special events that are directly related to wine sales and marketing,” Allen said. “Wine production, not including vineyard cultivation, is considered an industrial use and is also allowed in the light industrial district or tourist commercial district. These districts are industrial in use and only permit wine production, not weddings.”

Allen added that really, this means: “There are no wineries within the city limits that are allowed to provide weddings or any other commercial activities that are not directly related to wine production or sales.”

Despite such limitations, some vintners find ways to help happy couples tie the knot legally.

Tia Butts, public relations director for Treasury Wine Estates – managing properties like Stags’ Leap Winery, Etude and

Frank Family Vineyards – said that the only property the company owns that can host weddings is Beringer Vineyards, because it is technically located within the city limits of St. Helena.

Butts described the estate as “a romantic escape into a bygone era.”

“Surrounded by stately 19th-century architecture and lush, verdant gardens, it is the longest continuously operating winery in Napa and was honored with a designation as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places,” Butts told the Register. “The Hudson House, built in the mid-1800s, can welcome up to 90 guests indoors and up to 200 guests outdoors in a redwood grove. Guests can also explore historic wine caves for a wine reception and tour.”

While Butts said she can’t comment on how the county’s rules complicate doing business during a busy wedding season, she said the company works to always comply with the current ordinances to entertain its guests. ■

Beringer Vineyards’ Redwood Grove in St. Helena is seen set for a wedding ceremony.





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Kim Northrop works on a wedding dress at her shop, Betty's Girl Boutique, on Thursday, Aug. 14.

NICK OTTO/REGISTER

FROM EIGHTH-GRADE DRESSES TO WEDDING GOWNS

Napa seamstress stitches calm into the chaos of wedding planning

BY LILY DOMINGUEZ

While the boutique side of Betty's Girl Napa brims with quilted jackets and patterned skirts in every color imaginable, its atelier turns to one hue: white.

Both spaces belong to Betty's Girl Napa, a shop tucked inside Antiques On Second that has become both a vibrant treasure trove for vintage lovers and a comforting destination for brides. Through the gray French doors welcoming customers into the atelier, owner

Kim Northrop crafts handmade women's wedding wear.

"The bridal (work) ranges from simple alterations on a dress that somebody gets at another boutique to redesigning an heirloom gown from the family to be worn by the bride, either for her wedding or for her rehearsal dinner or her reception dress," Northrop said, seated behind the white sewing machine she was using to alter a dress for a customer. "And then I also do custom couture, where I can design a gown from scratch

as well."

In addition to bridal dresses, the atelier designs dresses for attendants and accessories like veils, garters and sashes to bring to life all of the details the bride envisions, something Northrop has been working at since around 2008 when she took on her first gowns.

A Cincinnati native, Northrop fell in love with Napa while visiting on her 30th birthday. She met her husband a few years later and has now lived here for 26 years.



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After her mother died in 2003, Northrop named and launched Betty's Girl in her honor, reflecting the values of sustainability, redesign and upcycling she had been raised on.

"I wanted to create a vintage boutique where when people came in they would go, 'Is this old or new?'" she remembered. "So I opened my first store on First Street in September of 2003. And at the time, about 80% of the store were just great vintage pieces that I had found and procured. And about 20% of the store I redesigned. But what quickly happened was people were gravitating towards the things that I had my signature on."

In particular, customers were drawn to pieces that had not initially been Northrop's primary focus.

"They started coming looking for the dresses for eighth-grade promotion and Turnabout, for homecoming, for prom," she said. "And so I started making more and more dresses, and it got to the point

where I became the Napa destination for any party dress that you needed, for holiday parties or for all the high school dances and such.

"And then the girls graduated high school, and then they went away to college, and then they came back engaged, and one day one said, 'Could you make me a wedding dress?' And I said, 'I guess I can.'"

Last year, after her colleague Molly Silcox retired, Northrop moved from her location inside the Nostalgia of Napa antique store to her current space within Antiques on Second. The casual retail items available in the boutique section of Betty's Girl are rung up seven days a week at the store's main register even when she is not on site, which has giv-

en Northrop even more time to focus on her creations.

Both alterations (ranging in price based on the amount of work) and custom creations (typically around \$2,000) are developed through pre-scheduled appointments from Thursdays through Saturdays within the atelier. Initial consultations may discuss possibilities, and customers are welcome to bring any ideas they have – or don't have.

"Some of my brides come in and they give me a Pinterest board," Northrop said. "Other brides come in, and because I've known them, they literally go, 'Can you please help me? I don't know what I'm doing.' For some of my brides, what I do is I'll send them out, and I'll say, go try dresses

"There's so many different approaches, but I want it to always be personal to each bride."

— Kim Northrop,
Betty's Girl Napa owner



Kim Northrop helps a client with a wedding dress fitting at her shop.

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on, and your job is to find elements of dresses that you really like, the bodice of ones, sleeves of another, maybe lace from a third, train from a fourth, and then come back back with those, and then I can take all those different elements and integrate it into a custom gown for them.

“There’s so many different approaches, but I want it to always be personal to each bride. Sometimes we finish the project in one fitting and sometimes it’s 20 fittings. And that’s all up to the process.”

One way the process can take longer is when attendees get involved.

“A lot of times what happens is I have a bride that comes to me and asks if I can alter or design or rework her wedding gown, and then by the time of the wedding, I will have done all the bridesmaids, the mother of the bride, the mother of the groom,” she said. “So one gown can transform into eight or 10, because the bride says, ‘Oh, I really, like what you’re doing.’”

Since every wedding is different, Northrop understands how to adapt.

“Every dress I work on, the first thing I say to the bride is, ‘When’s your wedding date?’ And then from there, I look at the dress on her, and then I create the timeline that works with her schedule, because my schedule is very flexible,” she explained. “So I have brides that sometimes will meet at 7:30 on a Sunday morning. Or 6 o’clock on a Wednesday night, because that’s what works best with their schedule.”

Northrop’s flexibility is impressive considering the high demand she experiences due to the growth of the Napa Valley wedding scene.

“It’s much more than it used to be, and mainly because we have more and more locations that you can have weddings at,”



**Betty’s Girl
Boutique in Napa
provides a variety
of dress styles.**



Vintage wedding dresses for sale at Betty's Girl Boutique.

she said. "When I got married in '99, there were three places in the valley – three wine-related places – where you could have your ceremony and your wedding. And that was Harvest Inn, Goosecross Cellars and Hans Fahden. That was it. And now look where we are all these years later. It's a whole industry now."

As a result, many Betty's Girl customers aren't Napa locals but are just holding their weddings nearby.

"I have done a lot of emergency work for people that have weddings here, that show up and their dress is ill-fitting or they forgot their veil. Or they don't have a rehearsal dinner dress and all kinds of random things, and then I end up helping them," she said. "Or I had a mother of the bride recently. The day before the wedding, she went to steam her dress and she melted her dress, so she came in and I helped sal-

vage her dress."

Northrop's work shifts not only with changing circumstances but also with the personal taste of her clients. Over the years, she has produced pieces in a wide range of styles, drawing inspiration from films, fashion history and the second-hand scraps she collects. While much of her early work reimagined gowns from the 1980s and early '90s, she has since worked in silhouettes from the 1920s to the '50s and beyond.

"A lot of my inspiration is just the way a piece of fabric looks or the way it falls on the table, sometimes what it lands on the table next to," she said. "There'll be two things that are on my work table at the same time, and all of a sudden my brain goes, 'Oh, that would be really cool together.' And then I stop and I make it."

But the most important influence is the bride herself.

"I love it when a bride comes in who doesn't fall into the traditional camp and I'm talking to her, and I see all of a sudden that she's got an idea, but she's afraid to articulate it because maybe it's not

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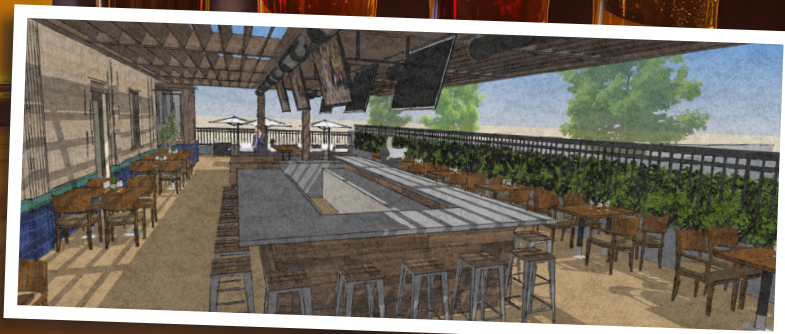
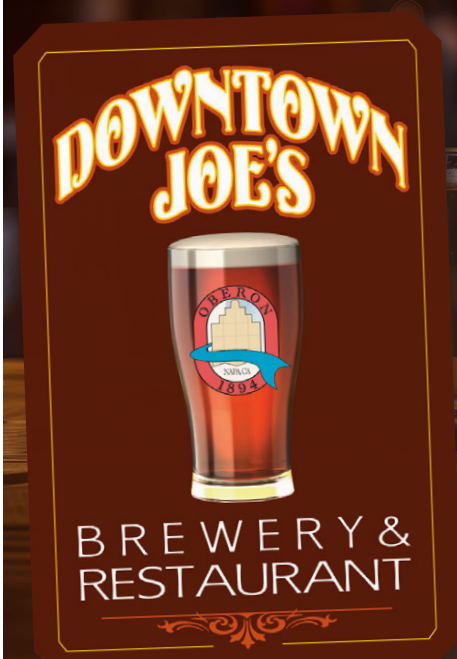
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Kim Northrop of Betty's Girl works on a dress.



NICK OTTO/REGISTER

appropriate," Northrop explained. "Maybe it's not what's averagely thought of. And then all of a sudden I'm like, 'Let's do it.'"

Through situations like those, Northrop has designed dresses of denim, suede and even 150-year-old vintage lace.

"I just did a whole wedding on July 5, and the entire wedding party's, including the bride's, dresses were made out of vintage tablecloths," she said. "The girls' dresses I dyed, and then the bride's was white, and then we covered it with lace. And I knew as soon as she asked me to do the wedding that I was going to do a tablecloth dress, because I've probably made her

about 50 tablecloth skirts and dresses in the 20 years I've known her."

Having a longstanding relationship with a customer is typical for Northrop.

"This year in particular, I would say probably a third of my brides that I'm working with I've known since eighth grade," she estimated. "I dressed them for their eighth-grade promotion. I've done all their prom dresses. And I even have a couple who live across the country and are having me do their gowns. So they're making trips back and forth across the country so that I can work on the dresses. It's a total community."

The loyal customers don't just come for the gowns Northrop designs. They also return for her and her advice.

"I spend probably 50% of my time working with a bride in a bridal party as a therapist, getting them feeling good about their gown, getting them feeling good about their wedding," Northrop said. "I also provide a lot of insights into what the groomsmen should wear, how to manage issues that you're having with your maid of honor, how to fire some-

body from your bridal party, what's the proper etiquette for who walks you down the aisle when you have a dad and a stepfather. It's all these weird, random things.

"There's just so much stress involved with weddings. So I always say, I'm gonna take the stress off the bride and I'm gonna put it on my shoulders. And I got some pretty sturdy shoulders."

The customers notice how much Northrop cares about them.

"She always has this much energy and is this much fun," said Novato resident Bridget Park while trying on a patchwork-style sundress on one of the visits to the boutique she makes whenever she's in town. "Every time you walk in, she's brimming

with ideas, and she makes all of us feel so special."

This personal touch is Northrop's specialty.

"There's just so much stress involved with weddings. So I always say, I'm gonna take the stress off the bride and I'm gonna put it on my shoulders. And I got some pretty sturdy shoulders."

— Kim Northrop

"I really love, more than anything, the moment when a bride puts on a gown and it is her dress," she said. "I always tell my brides my job is to take a dress and transform it into your dress. And there is that moment with every bride where you see the twinkle in her eye, and you know you've hit the mark."

The boutique is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily inside Antiques on Second, 1370 Second St. in Napa. More information and atelier appointments are available at bettysgirlnapa.com. ■

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A Chandon reserve wine is served at a wedding hosted at Domaine Chandon in Yountville.

ASHLEY BAUMGARTNER/COURTESY PHOTO

‘LIKE POETRY IN A BOTTLE’

WINE’S PLACE IN THE NAPA VALLEY WEDDING SCENE

BY JOSHUA GUTIERREZ

There is a reason why people come to the Napa Valley to get married.

And whether the couples tying the knot realize it or not, wine is a central figure.

At least that’s how Kelly McLeskey, owner and creative director of A Savvy Event, explains it. The luxury planning company, which primarily operates in Napa and Nashville, Tennessee, centers on “destination experiences” meant to leave a lasting impression.

Evoking the Mediterranean coastline of the French Riviera or Tuscany, McLeskey said couples are compelled by Napa Valley’s ability to emulate those locations. And much like those European destinations, wineries create an ubiquitous facet of the storytelling process and fulfill this “lifelong

dream” couples want to tell.

“What is unique about Napa Valley is the landscape and the romanticism of it,” McLeskey said in a telephone interview. “This place tells a romantic love story. I always say to my clients, ‘Wine is like poetry in a bottle,’ and I think that’s what attracts people to Napa Valley. It’s beautiful here and it’s telling a story, so this is where people want to tell their story.”

For Sonia Oliver, founder and lead planner of Under the Vine Events, wine is one of the most crucial components of a wedding.

The Napa-based boutique wedding and design planning company, founded in 2019, is rooted in her experience growing up in a large family. Coming together to celebrate and enjoy good food was central to her upbringing. Adding wine is not only a natural addition to this philosophy, but can

elevate the party in many ways.

“In my opinion, the top five most important elements of a great wedding are bride, groom, family, friends, then food and wine,” Oliver wrote in an email to Inside Napa Valley. “What better way to kick off the celebration than by popping open a bottle of Napa sparkling and greeting guests with a glass as they arrive at the ceremony? ... With it being the most important day of a couple’s life, tensions can be high and wine never fails to lighten the mood, bring people together and get the shy ones on the dance floor.”

Just as important as the landscape, Napa Valley’s diverse range of wedding venues is a crucial element in the planning process.

This is true for Yountville’s Domaine Chandon, one of only a handful of wineries licensed to host weddings in Napa Valley,

according to general manager Stéphane de Meurville. In its newly updated Yountville home, Chandon boasts “sweeping vineyard views, modern yet warm architecture, and spaces that feel intimate and elevated.” Yet again, the ubiquitous vineyards not only serve as a backdrop but also dictate much of the meal planning process.

“Napa Valley’s natural beauty is unparalleled, welcoming and organic,” de Meurville wrote in an email. “The rolling vineyards, green hills and the golden California light makes wedding couples feel immediately relaxed and at home. Beyond the scenery, guests to Napa have access to world-class wines, including Chandon sparkling, of course, incredible food, and unique wine country experiences that make wedding celebrations truly memorable.”

As de Meurville notes, sparkling is always “the star wine for a wedding” and characterizes it as “festive, versatile and perfect for toasts.” Most couples gravitate toward Chandon’s Brut and Rosé for “a true taste of California,” or for an elevated option, select reserve wines like Blanc de Blancs or Étoile, de Meurville adds.

For a deeper meal planning perspec-

tive, Oliver adds that for first courses and salads, it’s an even split between Sauvignon Blanc and chardonnay. With the main course, Cabernet Sauvignon remains the main choice, but Oliver notes some couples opt for Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel or Merlot alongside their dinner menus.

McLeskey notes the trend of couples in recent years steering toward a diverse range of alcoholic options beyond wine and, increasingly, a dry bar. Whether it’s a generational shift away from alcohol or exposure to a vast range of options, McLeskey said mocktails, beers and spirits are becoming increasingly popular.

Oliver reinforces that mocktails drive appeal because of the limitless combinations of ingredients like strawberries, watermelon, prickly pear, basil, lime, cucumber, ginger and lavender. Additionally, non-alcoholic options like hoppy waters, craft beers

and non-alcoholic juice from wine grapes are also gaining popularity, she adds.

But for all the shifting tendencies toward other drinks, McLeskey adds that Napa Valley is famous for its wines for a reason. Coupled with its rich culinary scene, McLeskey said nothing pairs quite as well as wine as a meal option, but also drives home the storytelling element ev-

“I think that’s what attracts people to Napa Valley. It’s beautiful here and it’s telling a story, so this is where people want to tell their story.”

— **Kelly McLeskey**, owner and creative director of A Savvy Event

ery wedding needs.

“I did a wedding and the couple explained, ‘No one is going to drink wine at our wedding. We will have a bunch of beer drinkers,’” McLeskey said. “Well, it turned out, most everybody ended up drinking wine and barely had any beer. There is a reason why they are coming to Napa Valley. They are coming for the full experience and romanticism that is surrounded around wine and culinary excellence. They all work together.” ■

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Dreaming of a Napa Valley wedding?



A ceremony on the lawn of the Charles Krug Winery in St. Helena.

COURTESY OF CHARLES KRUG WINERY

Here are four idyllic venues to consider

BY JORDAN SILVA-BENHAM

Looking to tie the knot in the Napa Valley?

With the multitude of options available, getting started can feel overwhelming. For couples hoping to plan their big day in wine country, here's a helpful guide highlighting three beautiful and distinctive venues.

Before diving into the locations themselves, there are a few things every cou-

ple should prepare before reaching out to a venue.

Riana Mondavi, the director of direct-to-consumer operations at Charles Krug Winery, emphasized the importance of coming prepared when inquiring about hosting a wedding. Couples should be ready to share the basics — such as the wedding date or timeframe, estimated guest count, budget, desired theme or style, and a list of must-haves or non-negotiables (such as live music,

specific photo opportunities, or cultural and religious traditions).

Mondavi also suggests letting the venue and planner know if any vendors are already booked, dietary restrictions or menu preferences, travel needs like shuttles, and the type of ceremony being planned. Providing a wedding website or Pinterest board with inspiration can also go a long way in helping a couple's vision come to life.

With those tips in mind, here are four

Napa Valley venues that perfectly capture the romance of wine country.

Charles Krug Winery

Charles Krug Winery, founded in 1861, is the oldest winery in Napa Valley and one of only a handful of wineries permitted to host weddings in the area, according to Visit Napa Valley's website. Its rich history and sweeping grounds make it a timeless choice for couples seeking both beauty and tradition.

According to Mondavi, the St. Helena winery is "more than just a beautiful venue — it offers a personalized and seamless planning experience in the heart of Napa Valley. The estate blends historic charm with modern elegance, allowing couples to create a celebration that reflects their unique vision."

The winery's expansive site offers

flexibility for both large and intimate gatherings. The outdoor space accommodates up to 800 guests, while the historic indoor Carriage House can host up to 260 guests and includes an on-site kitchen. For those looking for added convenience, a guest house is available for use from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. at an additional fee of \$1,500. Couples can also enhance the experience with unique wine-focused offerings, such as private tastings and curated wine pairings.

The winery's planning team provides extensive support throughout the pro-

cess. As Mondavi explained, "Charles Krug offers couples the freedom to curate the look, feel and flow of their special day, all while surrounded by the elegance of wine country and the richness of history."

The site fee for weddings begins at \$16,000, according to Milestone Events Group.

Charles Krug Winery is located at 800 Main St. (Highway 29/128) in St. Helena. For more

information about planning a wedding, visit milestoneeventsgroup.com/venue/charles-krug-winery.

"The estate blends historic charm with modern elegance, allowing couples to create a celebration that reflects their unique vision."

— **Riana Mondavi**, director of direct-to-consumer operations at Charles Krug Winery



An indoor wedding at the Carriage House at Charles Krug Winery.

COURTESY OF CHARLES KRUG WINERY

Carneros Resort and Spa

Situated off the Sonoma Highway southwest of the city of Napa, the resort features private cottages and vacation

homes, multiple onsite dining options, and a full-service spa — making it both a wedding destination and a romantic retreat.

“At Carneros, we aim to offer couples

a wedding day that feels as timeless and meaningful as their love story,” said Edward Costa, managing director of the resort. “Every detail is thoughtfully curated to reflect romance, intention and



A couple at the altar at Carneros Resort and Spa.

CARNEROS RESORT AND SPA/COURTESY PHOTO

LUXURY SPOTLIGHT

Carneros resort nestles proposal experience in vineyard landscape

Carneros Resort and Spa recently announced a one-of-a-kind proposal package in partnership with Brilliant Earth, a San Francisco-based global leader in ethically sourced fine jewelry.

Today, couples are increasingly seeking engagement rings that reflect both their values and personal story, embracing craftsmanship and ethical sourcing alongside meaningful customization.

“Protecting the surrounding landscape has created a secluded, romantic setting at our resort that pairs well with the exclusive experiences available to couples. To show our commitment to conservation, we prioritize sustainability throughout the property, whether it's sourcing fresh

produce from our culinary gardens or using recycled milk cartons to build the rocking chairs on each cottage's porch, where couples can relax together,” Edward Costa, managing director at Carneros Resort and Spa, said in a news release. “Being eco-conscious is now a necessity rather than a luxury across industries, so Brilliant Earth is a natural fit as a partner with their impressive dedication to transparency, ethical sourcing, and distinctive designs.”

The proposal package features every element essential for crafting a moment of profound significance, including the white-glove presentation of a Camellia-inspired engagement ring from Brilliant Earth's distinguished Signature Collec-

tions. These collections showcase two decades of innovation and represent the pinnacle of Brilliant Earth's in-house design expertise and award winning craftsmanship — a testament to their enduring commitment to excellence. The exquisite Camellia designs, with their delicate symmetry and nature inspiration, feature exceptional diamonds meticulously selected by world-class gemologists, capturing the inherent grace and refined beauty of their namesake flower.

In addition to a stunning ring, the package includes a one-night stay in one of Carneros Resort and Spa's Residences, which include 1,700 square feet of ultimate luxury, a full kitchen and dining area, a spacious

backyard with an in-ground hot tub, and more, according to the resort. Couples can enjoy an intimate candlelit dinner in the privacy of their Residence curated by the talented chefs at FARM, the resort's seasonally driven signature restaurant. The resort team will also set the stage for a surprise proposal at one of its idyllic venues with sweeping views of Napa Valley's famed vineyards and rolling hills. Guests can then capture one of their happiest moments with a professional photography session on property.

Carneros Resort and Spa is located at 4048 Sonoma Highway (Highway 12/121) in Carneros. For more information, visit carnerosresort.com.



A wedding at the Jackson Family Wines Amphitheater at the CIA at Copia.

KAYT ZIRKLE PHOTOGRAPHY

natural beauty — creating unforgettable moments from the moment they say ‘yes’ to the moment they say ‘I do.’”

The property offers six unique wedding venues ranging from 3,276 to 10,000 square feet, each accommodating up to 300 guests. Couples can choose from vineyard-view terraces to more intimate spaces in the heart of the resort.

Carneros Resort also provides specialty packages designed to simplify the planning process. The Brilliant Beginnings Proposal Package includes a partnership with Brilliant Earth jewelry, featuring an engagement ring from the Camellia Collection, a one-night stay, a candlelit dinner for two, a personalized proposal setting, and a professional engagement photography session. Pricing varies depending on the ring selection and current room rates.

For couples ready to say “I do,” the

“Every detail is thoughtfully curated to reflect romance, intention and natural beauty — creating unforgettable moments from the moment they say ‘yes’ to the moment they say ‘I do.’”

— **Edward Costa**, Carneros Resort and Spa managing director

Elopement Package accommodates up to 18 guests and includes a ceremony service, officiant, flowers, photographer, musicians, sparkling wine and snacks.

The package costs \$6,250.

Carneros Resort and Spa is located at 4048 Sonoma Highway (Highway 12/121) in Carneros. To learn more about wedding and engagement packages, visit carnerosresort.com/luxury-napa-weddings.

Culinary Institute of America

The Culinary Institute of America has two locations in the Napa Valley for couples looking for their perfect wedding venue — CIA at Copia and Greystone.

Both locations offer a multitude of options for couples. The venues combine world-class cuisine with different event spaces, offering a setting that is as delicious as it is picturesque.

Situated in the heart of downtown Napa, CIA at Copia is an ideal venue for

A wedding in The Atrium at the CIA at Copia in downtown Napa



Chuck Williams Culinary Arts Museum - 2nd Floor

KAYT ZIRKLE PHOTOGRAPHY

“At the Culinary Institute of America at Copia, your wedding should be as unforgettable as your love story.”

— Kristin Lehmkuhl, Culinary Institute of America special events sales manager

a city wedding. Copia has seven available spaces, including The Atrium for an indoor option and the Culinary Garden for an outdoor space.

“At the Culinary Institute of America at Copia, your wedding should be as unforgettable as your love story,” stated Kristin Lehmkuhl, the special events sales manager for the CIA at Copia and Greystone. “In the heart of downtown Napa, we celebrate the beauty of the valley by pairing world-class cuisine with exceptional hospitality, creating a celebration for all to enjoy.”

For those looking for a traditional, luxurious wedding, CIA at Greystone is an excellent choice. Greystone is located in a castle-like building in St. Helena, surrounded by vineyards. The property also has seven spaces to choose from, including the Barrel Room, surrounded by redwood wine barrels, and the Herb

The dining setup for a wedding at the CIA at Copia.



Terrace, with flower beds and herb gardens.

Both venues accommodate up to 300 guests, with site fees ranging from \$4,000 to \$10,000 for a six-hour event. Fees include set-up, takedown, cleanup, tables, chairs and tableware. Couples must also meet a food and beverage minimum averaging \$120 per guest, with customizable options that range from appetizers and formal plated dinners to full bar service.

In addition, CIA at Copia and Greystone require couples to hire a dedicated wedding coordinator (outside of attendees) and provide liability insurance covering up to \$1 million.

CIA at Copia is located at 500 First St. in Napa, and CIA at Greystone is located at 2555 Main St. in St. Helena. For details on planning a wedding, visit ciafoodies.com/weddings-napa-ca. ■



Cakes on display for a wedding at the CIA at Copia.

KAYT ZIRKLE PHOTOGRAPHY



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Appellation Lodi's Garden Ballroom.

LODI LEVELS UP

Appellation hotel signals new era for Central Valley wine country

BY DAN EVANS

East along the dusty roads of Highway 12, way past Fairfield, and beyond the wind-powered generators that dot the landscape like a sci-fi fever dream, lies Lodi, arguably the capital of California's largest, if under-the-radar, winemaking region.

The northernmost city in San Joaquin County, if considered by the state's more coastal inhabitants, may more be as answers to particularly tricky "Jeopardy!" questions than anything else. ("Where was the A&W fast-food franchise

founded?" "What Central Valley town is frequently mentioned in the biker drama 'Sons of Anarchy'?"") The more musically inclined may already be humming the Creedence Clearwater Revival song. "Oh Lord, I'm stuck in Lodi again ..." (Random fact: Members of the El Cerrito-founded band had never been to the city before recording the song; they just liked the name of the place.)

Despite all this, a remarkable — and likely surprising to those not in the biz — amount of wine grapes are grown here. According to the latest California Grape Crush report, the Lodi region sold about

361,000 tons of red grapes and 241,000 tons of white grapes in 2024, or nearly 21% of the statewide total. (For the sake of comparison, Napa's grape growers sold around 83,000 tons of red grapes and 44,000 tons of white in 2024, a bit more than 4% of the overall total.)

Hoteliers and restaurateurs have taken notice. Lodi's central-ish location — roughly 90 minutes from the Bay Area and under two hours from many parts of Silicon Valley or Sacramento — and its affordability (for those weary of \$125 tasting fees) make it poised for a tourism boost. In recent years, entrepreneurs

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have been working to capitalize on this potential for Bay Area and Southern California day-trippers and wine tourists — perhaps even a wedding party or two.

Enter Appellation Lodi, the debut property of the brand co-founded by celebrity chef Charlie Palmer and luxury hotel veteran Christopher Hunsberger. The pair partnered with Wine & Roses owners Russ and Kathryn Munson to upgrade the storied institution from a local gem into a regional culinary-centric treasure. Opened to guests in June, the hotel features a French-style bakery and coffeeshop, a fine-dining restaurant, a well-appointed spa, a half-dozen event spaces, and luxuriously landscaped grounds.

“We’ve always been fortunate to have a loyal following from within the region, and we’ll never lose that local connection,” Russ Munson said. “But yes, this partnership is very much about broadening our reach. ... We believe this will

bring new visitors to Lodi while still feeling like home for our community.”

The driveway on the resort may be smooth and the property meticulous, but the road for Appellation as a brand has had a few bumps.

The planned Appellation Petaluma project, one of two planned hotels in Sonoma County, has faced a series of local challenges, including vocal opposition from preservationists concerned about the scale of the development. In contrast, projects in Morgan Hill and Healdsburg have made significant strides, with progress becoming particularly apparent in Healdsburg, where the brand plans to open its flagship location in September.

Still, all is well and operational in the Central Valley.

For those unfamiliar with Lodi beyond pop culture mentions, the numbers speak libraries. Wine Libraries. The region encompasses over 85 boutique wineries and around 750 grape growers,

“For those of us who live here, Lodi has always been a great wine destination. The vineyards, the multi-generational winemakers, and the agricultural richness has always been there. What’s changing is the perception outside the area.”

— Kathryn Munson,
Appellation Lodi -
Wine & Roses Resort
co-owner



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according to the Lodi Winegrape Commission, growing more than 100 different grape varieties. Though Lodi has historically been known for more value-oriented (read: cheaper) wines, local reviewers and bloggers are noting growers and winemakers have been working to increase quality as of late, making the current moment an opportune one to check it out.

“For those of us who live here, Lodi has always been a great wine destination,” said Kathryn Munson. “The vineyards, the multi-generational winemakers, and the agricultural richness has always been there. What’s changing is the perception outside the area.”

Despite all this agricultural abundance

and heritage — dating back to 19th-century vineyards — its tourism profile lags many acre-tons behind Napa and Sonoma. That could be changing. Though Wine & Roses has been Lodi’s premier lodging and event venue for decades, its draw has been geographically limited.

By teaming up with Appellation Hotels, the Munsons are betting on Lodi’s future as a bona fide wine country destination.

“Charlie and Chris share our belief that hospitality should be rooted in a sense of place, and their culinary-first approach brings a fresh energy to what we’ve built,” said Russ Munson. “The timing was right, Lodi’s profile is rising nationally, and we wanted to be part of shaping that story.”

Transforming a Lodi landmark into ‘Appellation Lodi’

The Munsons’ Wine & Roses property isn’t a new build — it’s a historic estate with a cat-like number of lifetimes. Starting as a working ranch more than a century ago, it later became a 10-room bed-and-breakfast, and over the years evolved into today’s 66-room boutique hotel set on seven acres of gardens.

The challenge for Palmer and Hunsberger’s team was to refresh and elevate this landmark without losing its soul.

“Wine & Roses has a strong legacy, and we wanted to preserve its spirit while bringing in the Appellation vi-

“Maison Lodi celebrates the timeless craft of French baking, which pairs beautifully with Lodi’s wines.”

— **Charlie Palmer**, Chef and Appellation Lodi - Wine & Roses Resort co-owner



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sion,” said Hunsberger. “That meant honoring the historic structures, the gardens, and the relationships that make this place special, while introducing new culinary venues, refreshed guest rooms, Lodi-inspired artwork, and enhanced outdoor spaces. Every design decision was about blending the old and the new in a way that feels seamless.”

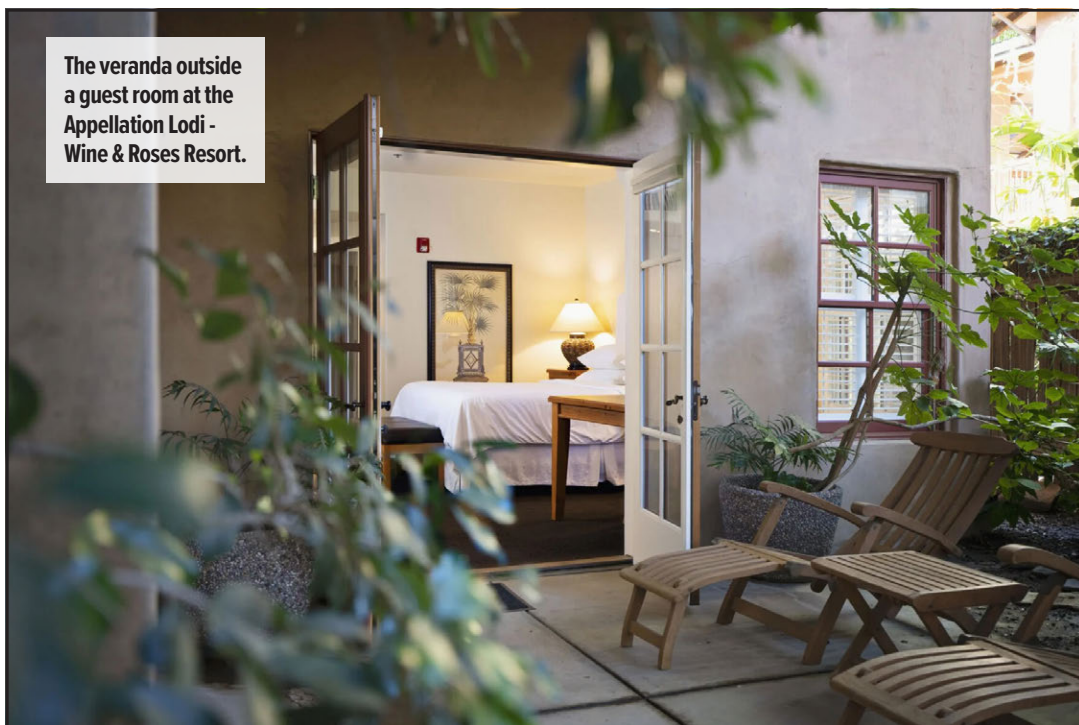
Appellation officially took over operations in 2024 when it partnered with the Munsons, who retain ownership of the property. Over the past year, crews have been gradually updating guest rooms, common areas and culinary spaces in preparation for its grand reintroduction in June.

Hunsberger said the larger idea is for the resort to serve as a hub for the larger community, allowing visitors and locals to regularly “rub shoulders with the growers, makers and purveyors who make up the hotel’s vibrant community.”

In practice, that means weaving Lodi’s agricultural story and local craftsmanship into the fabric of the hotel’s design and programming.

A philosophy of design, food and an immersive experience

The updated rooms and suites lean bright and open, with oak furniture that looks built to last and enough texture to



APPELLATION LODI / COURTESY PHOTO

feel lived-in rather than staged. The colors pull straight from Lodi’s backyard — greens and eucalyptus, browns the shade of barrel staves, and golds that could pass for late-summer wheat or Chardonnay at sunset. Many spaces carry small, custom details that nod to the vineyards and farmland just outside the windows, giving the place a sense of belonging rather than just passing through.

Outside, the already green-and-growing grounds have gotten their own glow-up.

Paths snake through bigger culinary gardens, practically daring you not to

wander through rows of herbs and seasonal produce. They’re not just decorative — the kitchen will be pulling from them daily, keeping the “local” in hyperlocal. Patios with fireplaces invite lingering, even after the sun drops. The spa retains its “Wine & Roses” name, a rare case of rebranding by un-rebranding. And in a move to corner the Central Valley wellness crowd, the hotel is rolling out the full lineup — yoga, meditation, even sound baths — for guests who want their relaxation with a side of intention.



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There are a total of six event spaces totaling 7,000 square feet, which can accommodate up to 350 guests, making the resort an desirable option for weddings.

“The Garden Ballroom and the Cellular Room & Patio offer beautiful indoor-outdoor flow, while our manicured lawns and patios with fireplaces create romantic backdrops,” said Hunsberger. “Couples also love that guests can stay on-site, dine in our signature restaurants, and experience the spa and gardens, making it a complete destination wedding package.”

But at the core of Appellation’s brand philosophy, said Palmer, is weaving culinary artistry into every guest experience.

The famed chef, who burnished his reputation (earning a Michelin star) at Aureole and other ventures, is overseeing the new culinary program at the resort alongside chef Thomas Bellec

(Appellation’s chief culinary director) and Marco Fossati (the resort’s executive chef and food and beverage director). Together, they unboxed two signature Charlie Palmer dining concepts on-site, infusing food and drink throughout the property.

“When I first came to Lodi, I felt the same spark I did in Healdsburg 20 years ago — an authenticity, an agricultural abundance, and a deep sense of community,” said Palmer. “The wines are expressive, the produce is extraordinary, and there’s a pride here that’s infectious.”

The first major debut came this February with Maison Lodi, a French-inspired bakery, café and market. Housed in the former Towne Corner Café & Market space at Wine & Roses, Maison Lodi brings the timeless craft of French baking to Lodi wine country, he said.

Guests and locals alike drop in for hearty levain breads, delicate pastries, and rotisserie-roasted chickens from the

rotisserie oven. The concept was crafted in collaboration with Quail & Condor, an acclaimed bakery from Palmer’s hometown of Healdsburg, to ensure top-notch artisan techniques.

“Maison Lodi celebrates the timeless craft of French baking, which pairs beautifully with Lodi’s wines,” said Palmer. “Melissa Yanc at Quail & Condor initially trained our head baker and pastry chef, Anne Rosete, which now allows us to offer world-class breads, pastries and rotisserie in a warm, approachable setting.”

Appellation Lodi’s main restaurant reopened in June with a completely new identity, which Palmer called “a reimagining with respect for the past.”

The former Towne House Restaurant, a fine-dining spot long associated with Wine & Roses, is being reinvented as Americana House. Under Palmer’s direction, Americana House will showcase his hallmark “Progressive American Cooking” — a contemporary, refined



A view of the Lodi Wine Visitor Center, next door to Appellation Lodi.

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A view of the patio outside the Americana House restaurant on the Appellation Lodi - Wine & Roses Resort grounds.



APPELLATION LODI / COURTESY PHOTO

take on seasonal American cuisine that highlights the bounty of local farms and vineyards.

Palmer's team is also adding some interactive and experiential twists to Americana House. Those include a culinary counter where guests can sit right up by the open kitchen and chat with chefs while enjoying curated small bites and wine tastings. The restaurant will even feature a dedicated cheese-aging cabinet, allowing them to age their own house-made cheese curds and ricotta on-site, alongside cheeses from Lodi dairies and other Northern California producers.

In the dining room, design touches will continue the "harvest" theme with warm woods, copper and brass accents, and large windows opening to refreshed outdoor seating among the greenery. Even the wine service gets a flourish; an old-fashioned wine decanter station will let servers decant wines tableside,

adding a bit of theater and encouraging guests to explore new varietals.

Beyond the restaurants, food and drink will permeate the guest experience in other ways. The Appellation brand brings its signature "Crafted at Appellation" program to Lodi, which opens up hands-on classes and workshops to both hotel guests and the local community. These might include cooking classes with the resort's chefs, tastings with local winemakers, or workshops with Lodi artisans (think cheese-making, jam preserving, or even crafts like pottery that tie back to the region's culture).

The hotel also plans to inaugurate an annual food and wine festival highlighting Lodi's winemakers, growers, and restaurants — with a charitable bent to give back via scholarships and community grants. In short, Appellation Lodi aims to be not just a place to stay, but a culinary hub for the region, engaging visitors and locals alike in celebrating

Lodi's bounty.

Expanding amid bumps and milestones

While Appellation Lodi is the first operational hotel for the fledgling brand, Palmer and Hunsberger have ambitious plans for additional locations.

However, the road to expansion hasn't been entirely smooth. In fact, the brand's next few projects illustrate both significant momentum and some growing pains.

First up is Appellation Petaluma, a high-profile project planned for downtown Petaluma in Sonoma County. Petaluma, with its own charming riverfront downtown, is not traditionally a major wine tourist town (though it's part of the Sonoma Coast and Petaluma Gap wine areas). Appellation announced plans in early 2023 to build a five-story, 93-room luxury hotel there on an empty lot at Petaluma Boulevard South and B

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Street. The proposed hotel would include a 190-seat Charlie Palmer restaurant and a rooftop space designed for events.

“This proposal represents a rare opportunity to revitalize a long-blighted downtown property, generate critical new revenue for city services, and strengthen the economic ecosystem that sustains our local businesses, artists, farmers, and producers,” a group of downtown business owners wrote in an opinion piece published by the Petaluma Argus-Courier in May.

But not everyone in Petaluma is riding this bus. A group called Petaluma Historic Advocates is staunchly opposed to the Appellation hotel plan. Their concerns center on the hotel’s size and the potential impact on Petaluma’s historic small-town character.

The project requires a special downtown zoning overlay (approved by the City Council) to allow taller, denser development on that site — and opponents have fought that decision at every turn.

They gathered over 6,400 petition signatures — more than enough to force a citywide referendum on overturning the zoning change. In July, with the referendum pending, PHA filed a lawsuit against the city, claiming the new ordinance enabling the hotel is illegal and would “cause substantial and irreversible harm” to Petaluma and its residents. This legal battle has thrown the project’s timeline into question.

On paper, Appellation has optimistically listed an opening in the summer of 2026 for the Petaluma hotel, but given the uncertainties, that date is far from certain. Hunsberger and Palmer declined comment on the project.

In contrast to Petaluma, the Appellation project in Healdsburg, just a few miles north, has been moving forward and is nearing completion.

Appellation Healdsburg is particularly significant for Palmer and Hunsberger — both men live in Healdsburg and

have deep ties to that community. Unlike Lodi (a renovation) or Petaluma (still on the drawing board), Healdsburg’s hotel is a ground-up new build on an 8.5-acre site just south of downtown. The project broke ground in March 2024 and represents a whopping \$150 million investment. When it opens, slated for this fall, it will stand as the flagship of the Appellation brand — the first fully realized vision of their culinary-hospitality concept in a custom-built resort.

Plans for Appellation Healdsburg detail a 108-room luxury resort spread across 12 buildings with all the bells and whistles. Guests will find two pools, a high-end spa, 15,500 square feet of indoor-outdoor event space, and immersive culinary amenities. Two Charlie Palmer restaurants will anchor the experience: Folia Bar & Kitchen, a 204-seat signature dining room focusing on locally sourced Californian-Mediterranean fare, and Andy’s Beeline Rooftop, an open-air lounge

A sandwich prepared at Maison Lodi on the grounds of the Appellation Lodi - Wine & Roses Resort.



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for cocktails, small plates, and panoramic vineyard views.

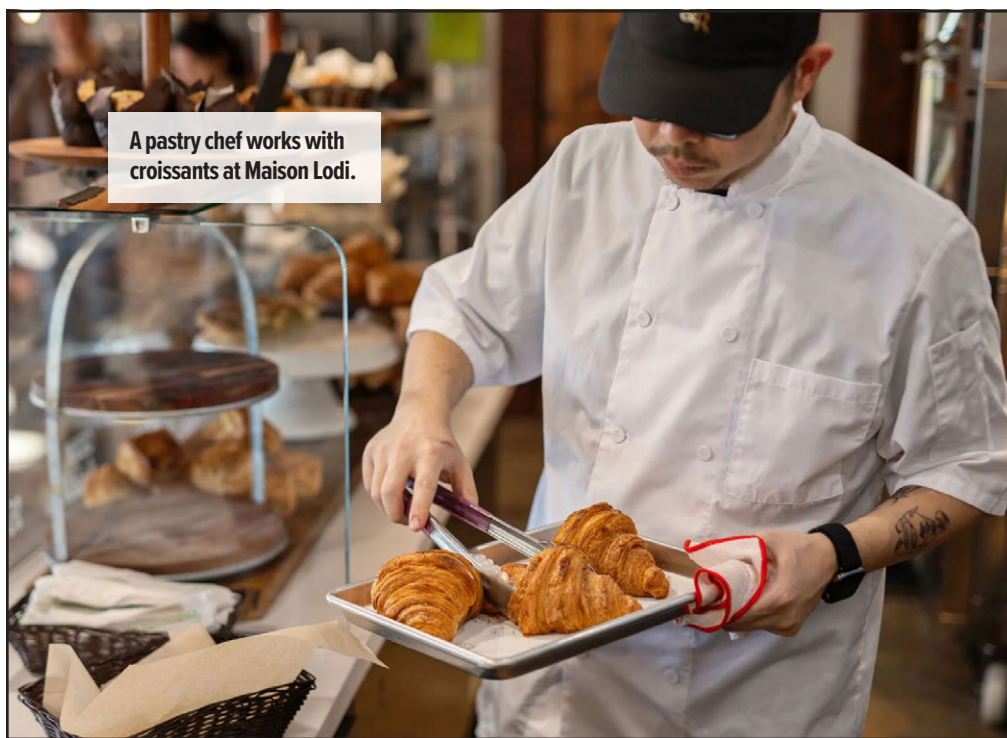
What's next

With Appellation Lodi now open and the paint barely dry, Charlie Palmer and Christopher Hunsberger's culinary-meets-hospitality experiment is officially on the clock. The concept sounds good on paper: Wrap a hotel stay around local food, wine, and enough hands-on activities to convince guests they've gotten a full pour of the place.

Is that enough to lure Bay Area drinkers east for Zinfandel weekends — or tempt Southern Californians to trade Highway 29 for Highway 99? It remains to be seen, but the quality in Lodi is certainly on the mark.

Elsewhere, the brand's to-do list is busy. Healdsburg is next in line, a flagship in the making. A project in Morgan Hill is quietly moving forward. And Petaluma ... well, Petaluma is Petaluma. For Appellation, winning over communities may prove as important as the menu.

For now, Lodi is the proof of concept. Visitors can grab a baguette and local Syrah at Maison Lodi, wander the re-



APPELLATION LODI / COURTESY PHOTO

vamped gardens, and settle in for a long dinner at Americana House. If the strategy works, they'll feel the opposite of being stuck. They'll want to come again. ■

The author was provided meals and accommodations by Appellation's management as part of the research for this story.

“This proposal represents a rare opportunity to revitalize a long-blighted downtown property, generate critical new revenue for city services, and strengthen the economic ecosystem that sustains our local businesses, artists, farmers, and producers.”

— **Downtown Petaluma business owners**, in an opinion article on the planned Appellation Petaluma project, published in the *Argus-Courier*

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EYE ON NAPA VALLEY

Moments captured by Register photographer Nick Otto



Campers participate in a drill during the Brock Bowers youth football camp at Napa High School on Monday, June 30.



People gather during a Pride event at Napa Valley Nursery School on Sunday, June 8.



Campers play at Connolly Ranch on Tuesday, July 8.

EYE ON NAPA VALLEY



Napa American's Vince Ruiz (27) and Cruz San Nicolas celebrate after scoring on a triple by San Nicolas, who came home on an errant throw, in the first inning of a Little League District 53 Major Division All-Star game against Benicia at Garfield Park on Tuesday, July 1.



Members of the Girl Scouts of America wait for the start of Napa's annual Fourth of July parade.



Children taking part in a free youth choir camp at the former Oxbow School campus take a break to play with bubbles on Wednesday, July 2.

A scene from a wedding at Charles Krug Winery in St. Helena.



MICHELLE WALKER PHOTOGRAPHY

MEET MICHELLE WALKER

Napa Valley wedding photographer



Michelle Walker

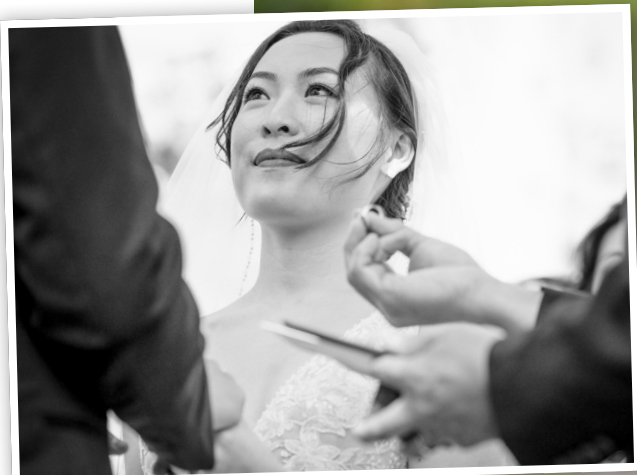
Michelle Walker is an award-winning photojournalist whose natural, authentic style has helped define the look of modern wedding photography. Based in beautiful Napa Valley, Walker has photographed hundreds of weddings over two decades, earning a reputation for putting couples and their guests at ease while unobtrusively capturing the joy, laughter, and emotion of the day.

Her meaningful images have been featured in top magazines, blogs,

and books, and she has been recognized as one of the Bay Area's leading wedding photographers. Clients often remark, "I didn't even see you!"—a testament to her ability to document moments as they unfold without interrupting the celebration.

Trained at the Academy of Art University, Walker brings her relaxed photojournalistic approach not only to weddings, but also to portraits, elopements, and corporate events.

Whether she's documenting a wedding day, a corporate event, or the streets



▲ Portrait of a bride during a wedding at Silverado Resort in Napa.

A lovely bride during a wedding ceremony at Auberge du Soleil in Rutherford. ▼



A couple during a wedding ceremony at Solage in Calistoga.

MICHELLE WALKER PHOTOGRAPHY



of Havana, Michelle's philosophy is simple: emotional, meaningful photography that tells a true story.
For more information, visit michellewalker.com. ■



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10 QUESTIONS

Inspired by Walt Disney

Napa wedding planner aims to go 'above and beyond' expectations

BY JENNIFER HUFFMAN

Over the past 13 years, Lisa McAdams, of Lisa McAdams Events, has planned and coordinated weddings up and down Napa Valley — and beyond.

McAdams said one of the things she loves about her work is that first phone call with a new client, “where we have the best connection” and can already tell “we would make the best team.”

Assisting clients in the planning process, “and seeing the actual wedding come to fruition and having it turn out to be above and beyond” their expectations is “EVERYTHING,” she said.

“I have made some amazing friends along the way, vendors and clients, and every event is a learning experience; always changing and evolving.”

1. What was your childhood ambition?

To be a pediatrician and comedian.

2. What job would you like to try/not try?

Try: Cruise ship director.

Not try: Landscaper/gardener.

3. How did you get into the wedding industry?

In 2010 I was asked to assist at a wedding with another local wedding planner. After that first event I was hooked and knew I wanted to eventually do this as my main job.

4. What is the biggest challenge the wedding industry has faced?

COVID...and social media.

COVID for obvious reasons: having to postpone a whole year of events, then playing catch-up for the next couple of years was certainly challenging. Navigating masks, social distancing at a social event...whew!

Social media has changed people's expectations. The videos and images that people want are 90% of the time out of budget. Trying to explain these price differences and expectations to someone who has this im-

age in their head is difficult, and I get it, you want what you want! My job is to come in and present realistic expectations to my clients within budget, and still create the wedding of their dreams.

5. Who do you most admire in the business world?

Walt Disney — he had a dream and didn't let anything get in his way. He kept trying, and never gave up. He had one idea that has now impacted billions of people.

6. What's one thing Napa could do to help local businesses or the economy?

Lower rents, more affordable hotels and lodging. Maybe more local venues (could) host weddings at more reasonable prices so more local couples can afford to get married in their hometown.

7. If you could change one thing about the wedding industry, what would it be?

In the wedding industry specifically, getting back to the main idea that it is about a union of two people in love, and not about how your photos are going to translate onto Instagram.

8. What's your favorite charity or nonprofit?

Whiskers, Tails and Ferals here in Napa Valley and always helping out the families at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

Lisa McAdams of Lisa McAdams Events has been planning weddings and other gatherings in and around Napa Valley for the past 13 years.



WILLOW AND BEN PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY PHOTO

9. What's something people might be surprised to know about you?

I have a killer whale phobia. Is there a name for that?

10. What is one thing you hope to accomplish in your lifetime that you haven't yet?

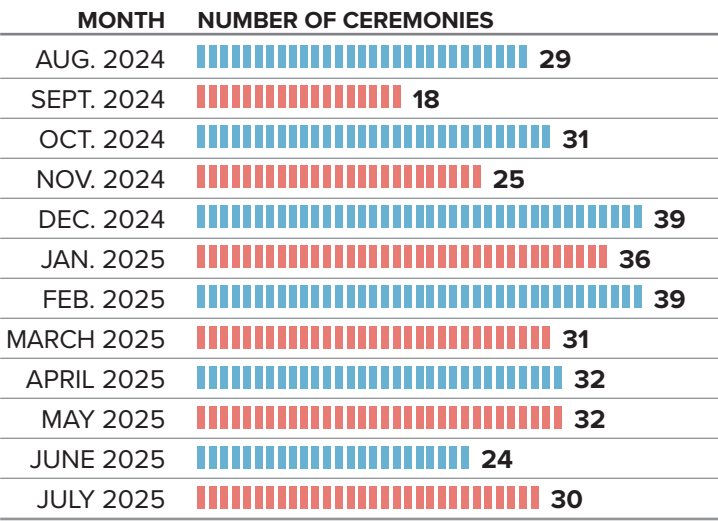
I would love to one day live abroad or own a home abroad. When my kids are old and grown, I want to also give them a place to go to.

Lisa McAdams can be reached at 707-363-3566 or hello@lisamcadamsevents.com ■

NAPASTAT

WEDDING CEREMONIES PERFORMED

Wedding ceremonies in the Napa Valley come in many shapes and sizes. This includes those conducted by Napa County Recorder-Clerk staff, which is shown in this graphic.



SOURCE: NAPA COUNTY RECORDER-CLERK OFFICE



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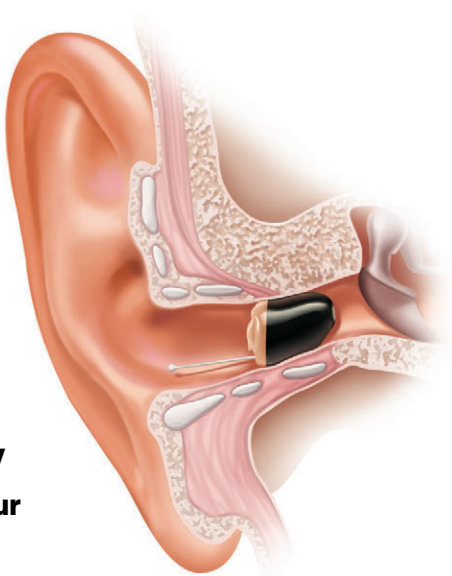
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