



**nileGUIDE**

ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP



## From Apple Butter to Zinfandel: A Harvest-time Getaway to Healdsburg and the Russian River

### Healdsburg, Sonoma, 3 Days

#### Table of contents:

Guide Description 2

Itinerary Overview 3

Daily Itineraries 4

Sonoma Snapshot 6



[www.nileguide.com](http://www.nileguide.com)

# Guide Description



**AUTHOR NOTE:** Cutesy Healdsburg might be, but get a block or two off the plaza and the tourist trappings fall away, revealing a hard-working Sonoma valley town where viticulture is taken seriously, and has been for many generations. No matter which road you take out of town, you'll stop umpteen times for snaps. The Alexander Valley boasts the Jimtown Store, everyone's favorite haute-roadhouse lunch stop, and the best bike route. Dry Creek Valley has some of my favorite wineries, including Preston, where the picnic area features bocce ball courts and a wood-fired oven turning out hot loaves of homemade sourdough bread. After dinner at Dry Creek Kitchen and breakfast on the inn's sunny terrace, you'll be wondering if Sonoma residents ever eat anything that's not phenomenally fresh. Head south along River Road and you can taste sparkling wine from Korbel, and consider whether it's as good as the French version from the Champagne region whose name Californian bubbly is not allowed to use. Or stop being grown-up for a while and join the kids paddling in the river. Whether you'd rather kayak, canoe, or float downstream in an inner tube, the Russian River is the quintessential lazy river, with sandy beaches, cool green water and plenty of deep swimming holes to choose from. Though a short distance away from the river, the Farmhouse Inn is worth the drive for the rustic elegance of its atmosphere, sort of a cross between English manor house and Tuscan villa. The food is anything but rustic, though; San Franciscan foodies make the drive just for Chef Steve Litke's savory creations, which make the most of local ingredients like goat cheese handcrafted at an organic dairy just down the road. On the way home, be sure to stop at Mom's Apple Pies and pick up one made from gravensteins so fresh they were probably picked that morning in the orchard behind the bakery. Take home a slice of Sonoma graciousness to start the week off easy.

# Itinerary Overview

things to do  
restaurants  
hotels  
nightlife

## Day 1 - Healdsburg



### **The Raford Inn of Healdsburg**

Historic B&B surveys a vine-covered valley

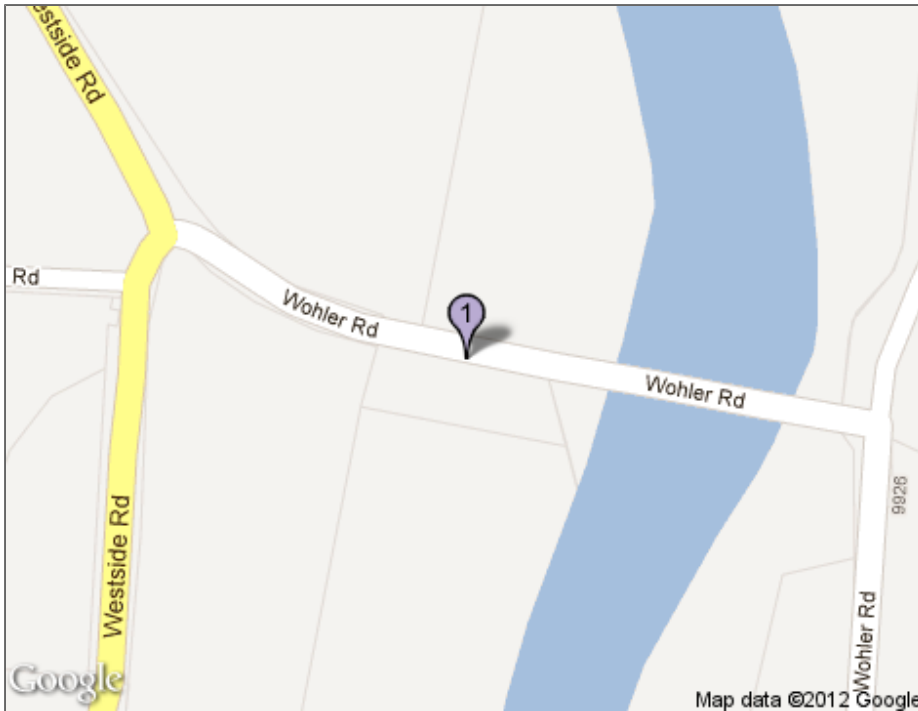
## Day 3 - Sonoma



### **Korbel Champagne Cellars**

An Estate Worth a Visit

# Day 1 - Healdsburg



QUICK NOTE

**contact:**

<http://www.bedandbreakfast.com/california-healdsburg-the-rafordinnofhealdsburg.html>

**location:**

10630 Wohler Road  
Healdsburg CA 95448



## The Raford Inn of Healdsburg

**DESCRIPTION:** The Raford Inn overlooks award winning vineyards and is listed as a Sonoma County Historical Landmark. Surrounding the inn are towering palm trees and old-fashioned gardens featuring Victorian plantings and more than 100 antique roses. The six guest rooms are furnished with turn-of-the-century antiques. A full breakfast is served in the dining room. The sun room and front porch invite guests to enjoy the splendid view and complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres in the evening.



more at [BedandBreakfast.com](http://BedandBreakfast.com)

# Day 3 - Sonoma



## QUICK NOTE

### contact:

tel: +1 707 824 7000  
fax: +1 707 869 2506  
<http://www.korbel.com/>

### location:

13250 River Road  
Guerneville CA 95471

### hours:

Daily 9a-4:30p

## 1 Korbel Champagne Cellars

**DESCRIPTION:** While in Guerneville, a visit to the Korbel Estate is a must. Opt for the 50 minute Champagne Cellar Tour, which familiarizes you with wine-making techniques and includes a visit to the History Museum. After all the activity, you can cater to your gastronomic needs at the Korbel Delicatessen and Market by feasting on some traditional local food, and don't forget to stop by the gift shop to take home some of the rare wines (some of which are available only on the estate), wine accessories and other local souvenirs. You can also tour the Rose Garden, which features 250 varieties of antique roses. © wcities.com



Photo courtesy of Korbel Champagne Cellars

# Sonoma Snapshot

## Local Info

Known to locals as the "real wine country," Sonoma County has fewer tourists and at least as many working farms and wineries as Napa, giving it more the sense of a country getaway. Towns at the southern end of the county, just 45 minutes north of San Francisco are close enough for day trips or weekends, while the northern end of the county maintains a rugged remoteness perfect for getting away from it all. Laid-back and back to nature are the key concepts in Sonoma; with an incredible rock-studded coastline to the west and the Russian River making lazy Z-curves through the valley, there are endless opportunities for hiking, biking, beachcombing, and water sports of all kinds.

Epicurean culture is rooted in the rich soil that has yielded world-class wines and fresh produce for generations. Wine is a way of life in "Slow-noma," birthplace of the California wine industry and home to over 250 wineries. Family-run wineries and intimate tasting rooms abound visitors eager to drink in Sonoma's offerings. Local produce fills the many restaurants, which showcase superb California cuisine in elegant-yet-casual settings. A resort destination for over 100 years, hot springs await, and luxury resorts and spas are prepared to pamper. Sonoma County captures the natural diversity of Northern California with its fertile farmlands, rolling vineyards, redwood reserves and ruggedly beautiful coastline, and features outdoor activities such as golfing, kayaking, hiking and cycling. But even as its tourism grows, Sonoma County retains its small-town approachability and historical charm. An ideal getaway destination, Sonoma gives the perfect taste of Northern California living.

### Sonoma

The city of Sonoma is the historical heart of Sonoma County and serves as a great base from which to explore Sonoma Valley. Sonoma welcomes visitors with its small-town charm and first-class amenities. Despite its recent growth and rediscovery as tourist center, Sonoma remains a laid-back and more affordable alternative to its neighbor Napa. At the city's center lays the leafy and tranquil Sonoma Plaza, a national historical landmark lined with hotels,

restaurants and quaint shops. Sonoma Plaza hosts several festivals every year, including the Valley of the Moon Festival, a Sonoma tradition for over 100 years. Wine tasting rooms and artisan food markets can be found throughout the city, while natural thermal waters can be enjoyed at nearby Boyes Hot Springs, original home to Sonoma's tourist industry.

### Healdsburg

In northern Sonoma County, Healdsburg is a quainter, more upscale version of Sonoma, with every shop, restaurant and service you could need to indulge your "weekend in the country" fantasy. Once the working heart of Sonoma's wine culture, today Healdsburg is packed with acclaimed and luxury bed-and-breakfasts.

Three wine appellations converge near Healdsburg, making the area rife with lauded wineries and that low-key wine-country lifestyle. Nearby Alexander Valley is Sonoma wine country's most densely planted area, famous for its Zinfandels and signature Cabernets. Whether you prefer the elegant Francophile dining experience of Cyrus, the hip, happening feeling of Cafe Zin, or the locavore artisanal indulgence of Barndiva, devoted foodies will find a critically acclaimed restaurant to their taste.

Lodging options include the warm hospitality of Honor Mansion, the romantic indulgence of Hotel Healdsburg, with its resort-like spa and pool, and-- the newest arrival-- the quaint farmstay atmosphere of Healdsburg Modern Cottages, brought to you by the artsy collective that runs Barndiva. For the outdoorsy, hiking and biking options are aplenty, while the nearby Russian River makes a picturesque setting for kayaking and inner-tubing.

### Guerneville

Nestled along the Russian River, Guerneville is a popular day-trip destination for Bay Area families. The town's small beach rents paddle boats, kayaks and inner tubes, and also makes for fun splashing around. Riverside redwood reserves keep the area cool and shaded during the hot summer months. Home to many ex-urbanites, Guerneville is also known for its environmental and gay activism.

### Petaluma

One of Sonoma County's larger cities, Petaluma boasts a picturesque historical downtown of restored 18th-century buildings filled with antique shops and restaurants. Although Petaluma is largely a quiet residential city, it does offer some of the area's best nightlife options. Both housed in historical buildings, McNear's Mystic Theater and the Phoenix Theater attract some of the biggest musical acts the North Bay sees. You can also play pool or karaoke at one of the many bars and pubs.

### Santa Rosa

Sonoma County's biggest city, Santa Rosa is a wealthy community full of bustle and traffic jams. Three shopping districts offer everything from brand-name apparel to local art, while historical residential neighborhoods offer a glimpse into Santa Rosa's small-town past. Reasonably priced rooms can be found in Santa Rosa, in name hotels such as Hilton, Holiday Inn and Best Western. Families enjoy Santa Rosa's many kid-(and adult) friendly activities, from an ice-skating rink to Safari West, a safari-style African wildlife reserve. Comic lovers will have to make a stop at the Charles M. Schulz Museum for all things Peanuts.

### Bodega Bay/Sonoma Coast

The Sonoma Coast showcases some of Northern California's most breathtaking views. Cliffs dramatically descend into the crashing Pacific surf along legendary Highway 1; take in the stunning views on a coastal hike or drive. The largest destination along the Sonoma Coast is Bodega Bay, a working-class fishing town that swells with tourists in the summer months. The town was the location for Alfred Hitchcock's horror film *The Birds*. But with luxury resorts like Bodega Bay Lodge & Spa, you have nothing to be afraid of.

Sonoma County's mild Mediterranean climate makes visiting enjoyable at any time of year. High season begins in April and runs through the summer, when many food, wine and cultural festivals take place. You'll encounter the greatest crowds during Harvest Season, or "Crush," as locals call it. The Sonoma wine country swells during this time, although the crowds are still less than in neighboring Napa County. If you are at all interested in wine and wine production, this is the best time of year to visit. Winter affords great deals

## Sonoma Snapshot continued

and less crowds, though outdoor activities are limited. Weekdays are generally less

busy all times of the year, as Sonoma is a popular weekend destination for San Francisco Bay Area residents.

© NileGuide