

## Why is Placer County collecting wine awards?



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If you are seeking a wine-infused road trip destination this weekend, unfold your maps and set a path for **Placer County**.

The “Wine Trail” here is home to 20 wineries accessible from I-80 and Highway 49.

Here are some suggestions for wine swilling and sipping:

**Vina Castellano** in Auburn crafts a muscular 2008 tempranillo (often called the cabernet sauvignon of Spain) that is bold

and deep purple in the glass. Open the bottle (\$33), give it some air and stand back. Cascades of dark fruit and spicy aromas open the senses. The warm, sunny climate here pampers this varietal to attain its full potential. Concentrated cherry and blackberry flavors are tempered with wood and oak.

The wizards at **Mt. Vernon Winery**, also located in Auburn, have two exceptional wines: a first vintage 2012 pinot noir (\$45) and a 2011 red table wine (\$42).

Grown at an elevation of 2,700 feet, the pinot noir exhibits an exquisite, velvety and bright varietal nuances with strawberry and raspberry characteristics. It is elegant with subtle tannins

and a lush finish. Pour this with wild salmon and fresh rosemary.

Mt. Vernon's "Expression" (\$42) red table wine is crafted from 30 percent petite verdot, 30 percent cabernet franc, 16 percent cabernet sauvignon, 12 percent malbec and 12 percent merlot. This selection is a unique take on a Bordeaux blend with oak notes and juicy red fruit, mocha and baking spice.

**Wise Villa Winery** in Lincoln produces a sophisticated 2011 cabernet sauvignon (\$40) that is an award winner that opens with clouds of dense vineyard scents followed by strong notes of black currants, juicy berry and oak. This rich, zesty wine improves beautifully with age but don't wait; open this now.