

## MENDOCINO: ANDERSON VALLEY

**A**nderson Valley in Mendocino County is one of California's most respected and quietest wine regions. Respected because the mountains, sunny summers and ocean winds make it perfect pinot noir country. It's quiet here because, well, it's a haul. It's 28 gorgeous but winding miles north from Highway 101 in Cloverdale to the valley bottom and Boonville, the eccentric, throwback town with, seriously, its own language. (It's called Boontling. *Frati*, for instance, means wine. Apparently, there was a vintner named Frati.) But it's worth the drive. Anderson Valley is much like its wines: beautiful, a bit wild and memorable.

### WINE TASTING

Actually, start with beer. **Anderson Valley Brewing Company**, one of the founding breweries of the craft beer movement, is based in Boonville with brewery tours and, even better, sampler trays of nearly two-dozen beers.

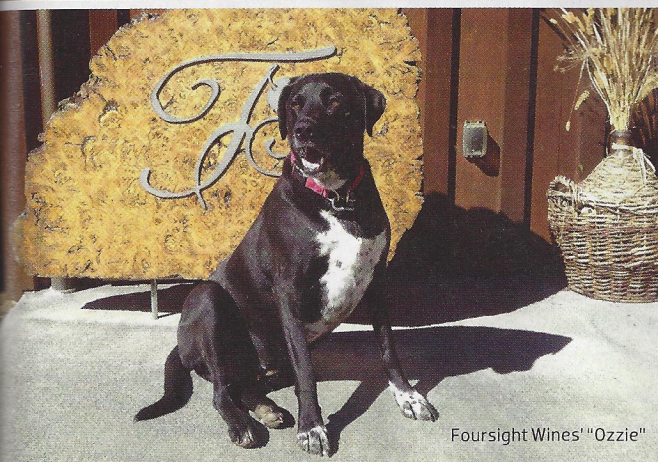
Then comes the wine tasting, which blends intimacy with real chops. You can meet the winemakers, and they're some of the best in the state. There are 20 tasting rooms, mostly along Highway 128, and anywhere you stop will be worth the time. Many are free and include some of the more prominent names in California, like **Husch Vineyards**, **Handley Cellars**, **Goldeneye**, the popular pinot noir-centric spinoff from **Duckhorn Vineyards**, and **Navarro Vineyards**, maybe the winery that most represents Anderson Valley with its light, lively touch and a specialty in wines such as gewurztraminer and riesling. There's also a nationally regarded sparkling wine producer, **Roederer Estate**. Some of the notable smaller rooms include **Phillips Hill**, **Foursight Wines** and **Baxter Winery**.

### FOOD AND LODGING

For the essence of Anderson Valley, **The Boonville Hotel** is the place. It's part roadhouse, part cool country inn, and a snapshot of the town's peculiar zeitgeist—old, modern, rustic, arty. Its restaurant, **Table 128**, serves prix fixe dinners family style and dazzles with bright colors and odd yet comfortable spaces. Up the road in tiny Philo, **The Madrones** could be an entire visit. It has five country-elegant guest rooms, four winery tasting rooms and a sophisticated restaurant, **Stone and Embers**. Or if you don't mind another drive and a splurge, go north to the coast and **Albion River Inn**. The guest rooms, like the dining room, are built for views of the stunning coastline.



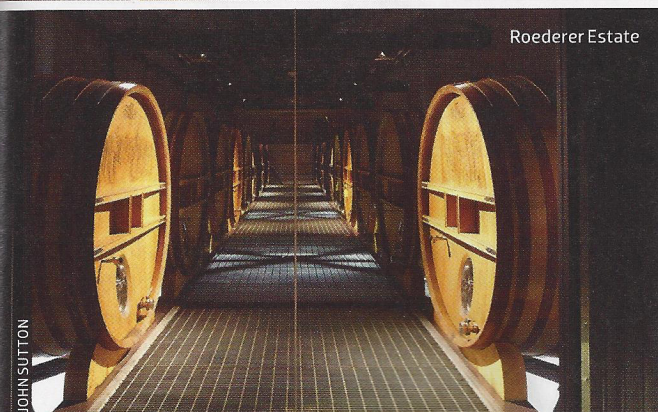
Boonville Hotel



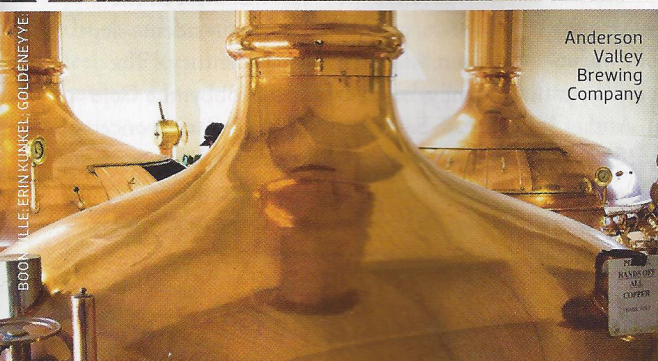
Foursight Wines' "Ozzie"



Goldeneye



Roederer Estate



Anderson Valley Brewing Company