



Up and Down the Valley

Take an all-encompassing tour of Napa's different terroirs in a single epic tasting

Napa Valley is synonymous with cabernet sauvignon, and seemingly every one of the nearly 500 wineries here produces a cab. That single grape variety, however, can be expressed in dramatically distinct wines based on where in the valley it was grown. Now, one ambitious tasting room is showing just how much difference terroir can make.

you, we're doing that with the intention of allowing you to explore the entire valley."

The presentation starts with lighter wines and works up to ones with bigger texture and more tannins; that translates roughly to a progression from the valley floor up the mountainsides. "You're going from brighter, tarter characteristics to coffee and fig [notes]," Madrid says.

"It's fascinating how geography affects agriculture," says Daniel Rodriguez, a Sonoma resident and sommelier who *Hemispheres* met at a tasting along with his wife, Kasey Kuchinski. (One tasting can be split between two people.) "The Oakville cab has much more of that eucalyptus characteristic, whereas Coombsville, Oak Knoll, not so much."

If this sounds like a lot of wine, well, it is. The experience lasts two hours, and according to Madrid no one has finished all of the glasses. "You don't even feel how intense it gets," Kuchinski says, "until you go back to the first one." \$175, 1881napa.com

Get a Taste of Napa: A journey through a thousand wines begins with a single flight. Pick one of several United destinations in or near Napa Valley, including San Francisco, Sacramento, San Jose, and Sonoma County (seasonal). Book today at united.com.



Clockwise from left: the historic building that houses the tasting room and museum; vintage wine bottles; 1881 Napa wines served beneath a map of the valley's AVAs

Oakville Wine Merchant, which debuted in February in the 19th-century Victorian building on State Route 29 that houses the wine history museum 1881 Napa, recently inaugurated its "Embark on a Journey Throughout the Valley" tasting. The experience offers guests the chance to sample same-vintage cabs from 12 of Napa Valley's 16 American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) during one sitting. The wines are sourced from a network of Napa Valley producers, with several of them made in-house, under the property's 1881 Napa label.

"We are focusing on the vineyard location, the attributes of the physical soil, and what they're doing to that wine," says Ali Madrid, Oakville Wine Merchant's tasting room manager. "When we set—in crazy fashion—all 12 glasses in front of



Scott Chebegia (exterior), vintage bottle display; Lowell Downey (wineglasses on table)