

ONE FINE WEEKEND

SingleThread Farm provides produce for its namesake restaurant's 11-course tasting menus.



Supporting Sonoma County

As memories of blazing hillsides begin to fade, the Geyserville-Healdsburg-Windsor stretch of Wine Country is due for a visit.

BY DANA REBMANN

Once you see them, they're impossible to forget. Photos and newsclips of Sonoma County on fire—yet again—were heartbreaking, whether you live down the street or halfway around the world. But that was last fall. Visit today and you'll find thriving communities eager to welcome tourists again.

It's easy to think the worst. The Kincade Fire destroyed 174 homes, nearly 78,000 acres of wilderness in the rugged northeast corner of the county, and a large chunk of a historic winery. The blaze left a devastating mark on Sonoma County, while folks throughout the San Francisco Bay Area dealt with what seemed like endless power shutoffs.

But if Sonoma County has taught us anything over the past few years, it's that it is a force to be reckoned with. The Kincade Fire damaged less than 8 percent of Sonoma County's million-acre landscape. If you take the time to do the math, the numbers prove little has changed. Thousands of acres of vineyards, a booming beer scene, and countless local businesses are waiting for you.

HIGH-END HEALDSBURG

Because Healdsburg, Geyserville, and Windsor were closest to the flames, the fire impacted them most acutely. To help those communities recoup some of the tourism dollars they lost during the catastrophe, head to Healdsburg—you could easily spend an entire weekend there.



Healdsburg's Jordan Winery evokes a stately French chateau.

FROM TOP: JASON JAACKS; JOSE MANUEL ALORDA

Seemingly always humming with visitors, the city is known for its vibrant plaza and hot spots like **SingleThread** (the first Sonoma County restaurant to be awarded three Michelin stars), **Jordan Winery**, and the swanky **Hotel Les Mars**. But broadening your must-do list will help you make the most of your time there. Sample tasty Spanish small plates at **Bravas Bar de Tapas** or a juicy burger (big enough to be split) with a side of onion rings at **Healdsburger**. If you're in the mood for some retail therapy, you'll find high-end boutiques surrounding the plaza. Or wander a few blocks to the locally owned **Jam Jar** to find one-of-a-kind jewelry, art, and other handmade gifts, created mostly by Sonoma County artists.

GEYSERVILLE GASTRONOMY

Less than 10 minutes north of Healdsburg, Geyserville knows how to turn on the charm. While it's frequently overshadowed by its ever-popular neighbor, life here moves at a slower, less crowded pace. Start your day by walking through the vineyards at **Dutcher Crossing Winery**, then sit down to a wine tasting accompanied by pastries from a local bakery.

It would be easy to linger, but be sure to save time to poke around downtown Geyserville. It's only a few blocks long but brimming with ways to fill a getaway. **Bosworth and Son Store**, a fixture since 1911, carries Western wear and gifts, and is home to the Geyserville historical museum. If you're lucky, a lovable pooch named Willie will greet you when you walk in the door. Just across the street, shabby-chic furnishings spill out the front doors of **Gin'gilli's Vintage Home**, making it hard to walk by without taking a peek. Shop for vintage clothes and knick-knacks in between sips from 10 wineries at **Locals** tasting room. The lineup of additional tasting rooms on Geyserville Avenue—**Meeker**, **Pech Merle**, and **Ramazzotti**, to name just a few—means you can park your car and taste the town on foot.

Shake up a wine-centric afternoon with a stop in the **Geyserville Gun Club Bar and Lounge**. Located on the main drag in the Odd Fellows Building, the hip neighborhood watering hole whips up libations with names like Blunderbuss and Spaghetti Western. Happy hour happens Monday through Friday, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., at which point you might be thinking about dinner. **Catelli's** opened in Geyserville in the 1930s; today, the family's third generation is at the helm, serving Italian specialties like house-made ravioli, lasagna, and chicken parmesan. A short block away, **Diavola** is famous for its Neapolitan-style pizzas and house-cured salumi and sausages.

WINDSOR WONDERLAND

The fight to save Windsor from the Kincade Fire brought with it sudden notoriety, but the town has been quietly growing a fan base for years. Its thriving beer scene went from low-key rumblings to rock-star status thanks to the opening of **Russian River Brewing Company's** enormous new brewpub in an industrial area off Highway 101. Beer lovers can take a self-led tour anytime, but the guided tour includes a taste of three brews and a souvenir glass. The food menu here is smaller than the one at the brand's original Santa Rosa location, but you can still order everything from salmon cakes to pork schnitzel while enjoying any of the 16 to 20 beers on tap. Around the corner, **St. Florian's Brewery** donates at least 5 percent of its profits to fire-related and community-based organizations. (Florian is the patron saint of firefighters, and the brewery is co-owned by Windsor's fire

captain.) St. Florian's shuttered due to smoke damage following the October blaze, but the owners hope to reopen it soon.

It's so close, you can practically taste the beers on tap at the neighboring **Barley and Bine Beer Cafe**—one of a handful of businesses that call **Artisan Alley** home. Parking spots in this beverage district aren't solely for cars; you'll find stacked wine barrels and apple crates as part of the scenery, too. Along with **Sonoma Brothers Distilling** and a few boutique wineries including **Two Shepherds** and **Colagrossi Wines**, the little-known complex houses **Tilted Shed Ciderworks**. (Some tenants have limited hours or are open predominantly by appointment, so check before you go.) If you're craving more time in the vineyards, **Enriquez Estate Wines**—10 minutes outside of town, toward Forestville—offers ATV tours and a renovated milk barn where visitors can spend the night.



Clockwise from left: Sip suds such as the cult-favorite Pliny the Elder IPA at Russian River Brewing Company's Windsor outpost; historic downtown Geyserville boasts an Old West charm; enjoy a chef-prepared picnic at Enriquez Estate Wines, near Windsor, or a scenic tasting at Dutcher Crossing Winery in Geyserville.

