



Destination: Northern California

San Francisco's historic landmarks and contemporary attractions and Napa Valley's wine country offers entertainment options for all ages

Nearby in Napa Valley

When we decided to make nearby Napa Valley part of the weekend getaway, we were a little overwhelmed by the sheer volume of wineries, restaurants and accommodations to choose from. Luckily, we seem to have selected not only the most ideal, but truly inimitable place to call homebase (**Dr. Wilkinson's Hot Springs Resort** - www.drwilkinson.com) and what might arguably be among the best wine tour experiences in town (Jarvis Wines).

Situated at one end of Lincoln Avenue - the main strip for traversing the picturesque town of Calistoga - and within easy strolling distance to its shops, restaurants, nightlife and recreation, Dr. Wilkinson's is an attraction in its own right - a throwback to the region of half a century ago, affordable and down to earth rather than rarified and relentlessly upscale - not unlike the town it calls home here at the northern edge of Napa Valley.

Since its founding in 1952, Dr. Wilkinson's has evolved into a funky, motel-style resort with 36 guest rooms and a spa featuring mud baths, mineral pools, massages and facials. The original retro red neon sign out front is testament to its old school charm further evidenced in the passion and personalities of its current

degrees than the famous Carneros region, which allow for a long "hang time," permitting a long, slow fruit maturation for maximum flavor and concentration at harvest (the winery's Finch Hollow Chardonnay is worth a special mention).

Originally built in 1904 as a private residence, **Ma(i)sonry Napa Valley** (www.maisonry.com) offers a decidedly different lifestyle experience in wine country. Unlike a traditional tour, this destination is defined by a "living gallery" atmosphere - both indoors in its 16th century - mid-20th century furnishings paired with contemporary works crafted by today's top designers to its gorgeous outdoor grounds. Ma(i)sonry serves as a stylized backdrop for the appreciation of limited production boutique wines and visitors here have a variety of choices for their wine tasting setting - they can enjoy the intimacy of one of three private tasting rooms, lounge in either of the great rooms, gather outdoors at individual and communal tables, around the fire pit, or even stretch out on a blanket on the lawn. The outdoor gardens are beautifully landscaped around architectural remnants and contemporary sculpture.