



the *Pase of the* Paso Robles

A Flying Adventures WINE COUNTRY FLY-IN

Several months ago, my office phone rang, and Shonna—a cheery soul from Paso Robles, California introduced herself. She had read the *Flying Adventures* article on the vintners in Napa, California and wondered if we'd be willing to learn one of the best-kept secrets in the world of fine wines—the winemakers of Paso Robles. Shonna offered to host a group of *Flying Adventures* readers to visit and experience the wines of Paso Robles firsthand. Hard to turn an offer like that down!

Villa Toscana stands before the verdant vines of the Martin & Weyrich vineyards, home to many of Paso Robles award winning wines.

THE CASE OF THE PASO ROBLES

Flying Adventures readers and aviators Roger and Lori Parker had immediately responded to the opportunity, and David and Suzanne Burke moved mountains to take advantage of this very privileged opportunity. Shonna met us at the airport as we were parking our planes and escorted us to a luxurious bus operated by Wine Country Tasting Tours. Now, this is the way to visit the 190-plus wineries of Paso Robles.

The first stop in our inspection was the esteemed Garretson Wine Company and a meeting with the proprietor, Matt Garretson, who is also a pilot. Over generous samples of Garretson wines, he explained how Paso Robles grapes now rivaled the originals in the Rhône River area of France. For the last 15 years, Paso Robles hosted the Hospice du Rhône, now the largest international Rhône-tasting event *in the world*! Wow, now that's impressive.

Next, we stopped at Justin Winery, a family-run operation with roots back to 1981 when there were less than 10 wineries in the area (today they ship their premium wines all over the U.S. and to 20 countries). Justin's winemaker, Fred Holloway, showed us around their winemaking operations and walked us through their caves used to age many of the wines. He explained their techniques for making great wines. We tasted their best Rhône, a 2005 Syrah. It was big and jammy, with lots of fruit. Also, you must try their flagship wine, Isosceles, a Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Justin also produces limited amounts of Tempranillo, Zinfandel, Malbec, Petit Verdot, Sangiovese, Obtuse (port wine), Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

Wines at the Justin Vineyards age in a series of caves called the Barrel Chai.

Resting in Cave 8 (right) are barrels of Isosceles and Cabernet Sauvignon. When they are ready, vintages are shared in the Wine Society Lounge (below).



Paso Robles Hospice du Rhône is the largest international Rhône-tasting event in the world

Shonna had also arranged for us to meet with the Rhône Rangers, a nonprofit organization whose entire *raison d'être* is promoting American Rhône varietal wines. Jason Haas, a Rhône Rangers board member and general manager of Tablas Creek Winery, organized seven other Rangers to meet with us and explain their Rhône vintages and how vintners in Paso Robles actually combined the old techniques of traditional winemaking from Europe with new, modern technology that has been discovered and perfected right here in Paso Robles. We got to taste a bottle of white and a red from each of their wineries. It was an amazing opportunity to be able to sip, compare and discuss.

That night, under a waxing moon, we gathered at Adelaida Cellars to help them celebrate the 2007 harvest, plus a recent Double Gold win at the San Francisco Wine Competition for their *Version*, a Rhône-style red. We also sipped their Gamay Beaujolais and were blessed by an unending parade of French haute cuisine. All of us were falling in love with Paso Robles.

WINE FACTOID

A 20-year study of 12,000 people in Denmark indicates that combining alcohol and exercise can help reduce cardiac disease more than just exercise alone. People who drink moderately (that’s 1-2 glasses of wine a day) and exercise had a 50% lower risk of heart disease.

THE ORIGINAL RHÔNE WINES OF FRANCE

The original Rhône wine region is in Southeastern France, 150 miles along the Rhône River Valley, and is divided into two sub-regions, north and south. The Northern region produces red wines from the Syrah grape and often blended with white-wine grapes, such as Voignier, Marsanne and Rousanne. Well-regarded producers in the Northern Rhône sub-region include Vidal-Fleury, Rene Rostaing, Delas Freres, Chateau Grillet, Chapoutier, Guigal, Chave and Jaboulet.

The Southern region produces a variety of reds wines (the entire Rhône region only produces 2% whites), often with blends of several grapes, such as in the Chateauneuf-du-Pape, containing up to 13 varieties of grapes (Grenache, Carignan, Mourvedre, Terrior Noir, and others). Famous winemakers in the area include Paul Jaboulet Aine, E. Guigal, Chateau de Beaucastel, Domaine du View Telegraphe, Chapoutier, Mordoree, Grand Veneur and Chateau La Nerthe.

For a map of the Rhône Valley Wine Region, go to flyingadventures.com/rhonemap.jpg

For more Wine Country Adventures, go to FlyingAdventures.com/wine



The pool at the Four Seasons Farm (left) offers a restful view of the rolling Paso Robles country side.

Accommodations for the *Flying Adventures* taste team were provided by Villa Toscana, which calls itself a bed and breakfast. With eight opulent suites that would humble a sultan and a 3,000-plus-square-foot winemaker's house that rents for \$2,400 a night on the weekends, this is hardly what most people would consider a B&B, with its lavish breakfast and magnificent setting in the rolling hills of vineyards. Still, whatever you call it, Villa Toscana outshines many five-star hotels.

Breakfast the next morning was at the Four Seasons Farms, a beautiful private residence overlooking the west side of Paso Robles. The breathtaking grounds and gardens are available for corporate retreats and special events, and Shonna wanted to really set the scene for our second day of wine tasting. It was, in fact, a remarkable way to start the day!

Our first stop this morning was the Terry Hoage Vineyards. Terry and Jennifer greeted us like long-lost friends and fellow aviators,

referring to the many enjoyable articles they've enjoyed from *Flying Adventures* magazine over the years. The twosome has produced a number of award-winning wines. Having a chance to actually sit and talk with the world-class winemakers was a remarkable treat. Terry let us taste some of his "futures" wine, which was still aging, pointing out to us the nuances and comparing them to wines which they've already bottled. It's opportunities like this that made our trip to Paso Robles really, really interesting.



Chef Andre educates the group on the theories of wine pairing and his special food preparing techniques as Rodger and Lori Parker begin the culinary fun.



By lunchtime we were hungry, and Shonna had arranged a rare treat. We were invited into the personal kitchen of French chef Andre, and his wife Christina. The idea was for us to cook our own gourmet meals under the care and guidance of a master. And as the foods cooked, Andre and Christina opened a selection of special wines from the Treana Winery. This was more than just wine tasting. In fact, our mission was to learn about "wine pairing," when the flavors of the food and the flavors of the wine enhance and compliment each other. The more Andre explained it to us, the more we noticed how herbs and spices interact with certain wines and not with others. While wine pairing is something that we all know about, this experience with Chef Andre and Christina delivered an indelible lesson on matching inimitable wines with fine foods.

The last stop on our investigation was a sprawling and beautiful winery called Martin & Weyrich. This is

the mother lode of wineries in Paso Robles, producing award-winning Italian varietals—like Moscato Allegro, Sangiovese, Nebbiolo, Cabernet Etrusco, Edna Valley Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio and Zinfandel. This family-run winery has not only mastered Italian wines, but also wines from France, Spain and Portugal. As with most of the previous wineries we visited, our *Flying Adventures* team did not hesitate to purchase many wines to enjoy at home and to remember our unique experience in Paso Robles.

"Why doesn't the world know more about these amazing wines?" we asked our hosts at Martin & Weyrich. Part of the reason is that many of the grapes grown in the idyllic climate of Paso Robles are actually sold to famous winemakers in Napa and Sonoma. There, they are bottled with no reference to where the grapes were grown. In my mind, it gave me a whole new perspective on Paso Robles as truly one of world's great wine regions!

Villa Toscana has all the luxury and romance of a small Italian village, but conveniently closer in the rolling landscape of Central California's top winemaking region. Eight elegant rooms exude luxury, beg for relaxation, and offer rejuvenation.



the Food & Wine Experience

Deborah's Room (JUSTIN Winery)

805.238-6932
justinwine.com

Dinign wih Andre (Catering & Cooking Classes)

805.227-4100
diningwithandre.com

Four Seasons Farms (Special Events & Weddings)

805.674.2131
no website ????

Matthew's at the Airport

805.237-2007
matthewsattheairport.com

THE CASE OF THE PASO ROBLES

Our last day in Paso Robles needed to be wine-free because we were flying home that afternoon. Shonna took us to visit the Pasolivo/Willow Creek Olive Ranch. These people make some of the most sought-after olive oils in the world. The process is still very much a “by hand” process, and we all learned more about olives and olive oils than I ever knew existed.

And before we knew it, the *Flying Adventures* taste test team was back at the Paso Robles Airport. As the perfect send-off, Shonna had arranged for our last moment together to be at Matthew’s at the Airport, the absolute best airport restaurant in the world. As proof, I offer this challenge: Find another *airport* eatery whose guest list includes the likes of Arnold Schwarzenegger and Angelina Jolie!

We all talked about the mind-bending, eye-opening experiences we had touring Paso Robles. Roger shared that he was particularly taken by the Rhône wines he had tasted and learned about, saying that the next time he hears a pilot talking about flying IFR, to Roger, that would mean “I Follow Rhône’s!” For David and Suzanne, the most memorable moment came from cooking and pairing wines with Andre and Christina. For Lori, she thought Paso Robles was like Napa 25 years ago, something with which we all agreed. And we all told Shonna that she made us feel very, very special with the wonderful hospitality she arranged.

Shonna smiled. The best part for her, she said, was watching us all fall in love with of Paso Robles.

For a complete profile of Paso Robles Wineries, go to pasowine.com. Learn more about Beautiful Paso Robles at prcity.com. Or contact Shonna directly at 805-227-7236 for additional information. Also, Shonna would be happy to make special arrangement for you as a *Flying Adventures* reader.



Flying Adventures readers David and Suzanne Burke load wine into their Citation, while Rodger and Lori Parker gaze from below the wing of their Cessna 210.

**Wanna Join Us On Our Next
Flying Adventures Wine Country Fly-In?**
Write us at winecountry@flyingadventures.com.

Paso Robles Airport (PRB), Paso Robles, California

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation:	836'
Runways:	1/19 6,009' 13/31 4,700'
Approaches:	VOR, VOR DME, GPS
ATIS/ASOS:	805.239.3593

FIXED BASE OPERATIONS/FUEL/SERVICES

Paso Robles Jet Center	805.239.5860
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AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

Matthew's at the Airport	805.237.2007
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ACCOMMODATIONS

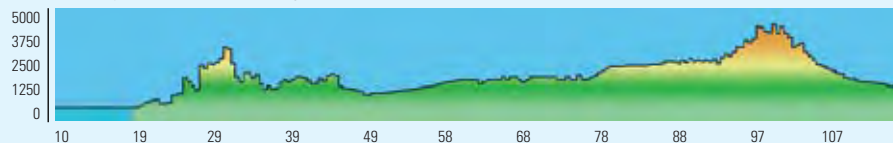
Villa Toscana	805.238.5600
myvillatoscana.com	

TRANSPORTATION

Breakaway Tours (Wine Tours)	800.799.7657
Grapeline Shuttle (Wine Tours)	800.239.4747
Budget Car Rental	805.226.9470
Central Coast Taxi	805.438.3990



Profile map viewed from the south looking north



Maps provided by Voyager Flight Planning Software