

Tasting Architecture in the Napa Valley

A trip through the Napa Valley is truly a feast for the senses. Don't be surprised if, as you arrive, you instinctively roll down your car window to catch the first sweet scent of grapes ripening on the vines and a better look at the fertile valley and gentle sloping hills. If you do, you'll be in for another visual treat: a clear view of Napa Valley winery architecture. From mission-style haciendas to French châteaux to classic rural barns to bold geometric structures—you have the opportunity to experience them all without leaving this 35-mile-long valley.

"There are so many great, gorgeous winery buildings in the Napa Valley," says Bob Torres, senior vice president for Trinchero Family Estates. "It's all a matter of taste, but a winery's architecture reflects its heritage, image, and legacy. Some people really want to make a statement."

With more than 300 wineries in the Napa Valley, your architectural options may seem overwhelming. The good news is that most of the buildings were influenced by either European, classic California Ranch, or ultra-modern designs. If you think of these as categories, and fit one or two from each category into your Napa Valley itinerary, you'll surely enjoy a well-balanced feast for the eyes as well as the palate.

European

Beringer Vineyards, 2000 Main Street, St. Helena

Built in 1879, Beringer Vineyards' entire winery site was designated a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. There are many inspiring buildings to admire on the property, especially Frederick Beringer's 17-room mansion, the Rhine House. The ornate Victorian wonder was completed in 1884 by architect Albert Schroepfer in an effort to recreate the Beringers' family home in Mainz, Germany. The house features beautiful exterior stonework, California redwood, gables, turrets, stained-glass windows, and interior wood paneling—all exhibiting exceptional artistry and craftsmanship. *beringer.com*

Castello di Amorosa, 4045 North St. Helena Highway, Calistoga

A 15-year labor of love, the 12th-century Tuscan design of Castello di Amorosa (Castle of Love) was directed by Daryl Sattui. The 121,000-square-foot stone fortress is entirely authentic, complete with guard towers, escape tunnels, family chapels—even a dungeon with torture devices. Impressive attention to detail was given to each of the castle's 107 rooms. An extra-spectacular room to note is the grand hall, with colorful frescoes and a massive 500-year-old fireplace. *castellodiamorosa.com*

Sterling Vineyards and Winery, 1111 Dunaweal Lane, Calistoga

Sterling Vineyards' iconic stark white building was inspired by the island of Mykonos, where the winery's founder, Peter Newton, once lived. The controller

for Peter's company, Martin Waterfield, designed the structure in the style of an Aegean monastery. Its tall bell towers feature bells brought from St. Dunstan-in-the-East, a church in London designed by Christopher Wren that was bombed during World War II. *sterlingvineyards.com*

Classic California Ranch

Robert Mondavi, 7801 St. Helena Highway, Oakville

Designed by Cliff May, often called the father of the Western ranch house, the winery opened in 1966 as one of the region's first new wineries since Prohibition. The grand cream-colored, thick-walled structure is a tribute to early California's haciendas and missions. A St. Francis statue by legendary sculptor Beniamino Bufano greets visitors at the entrance. At the center of the spreading, gabled facade, a giant gateway arch frames a view into a courtyard and to vineyards and mountains beyond. *robertmondaviwinery.com*

Trefethen Family Vineyards, 1160 Oak Knoll Avenue, Napa

Built entirely from wood, Trefethen is the only surviving example of what was once the most common winery architecture in Napa: a three-story wooden gravity-flow winery. Designed and constructed in 1886 by Scottish sea captain Hamden McIntyre, the winery first used a horse-drawn winch to transport grapes to the third floor. There, the grapes were crushed and the juice descended to the second floor for fermenting and, finally, to the first floor for aging. Although Trefethen now incorporates a state-of-the-art fermentation facility, it still uses the McIntyre building to age wine and entertain wine tasters. *trefethen.com*

Trinchero Family Estates, 277 South St. Helena Highway, St. Helena

With the help of BAR Architects, Bob Torres set out to design a tribute to the legacy of his grandparents. Three buildings comprise the completed winery—all with a traditional California flavor that includes high-pitched shingle roofs, wood siding, and native stone. Bob insisted on the use of steel trusses instead of heavy lumber ones to reflect the use of steel in his grandparents' day. The 8,500-square-foot hospitality building boasts a kitchen that was built strictly for the trade and is the home of Trinchero's internationally recognized Vine to Dine program. *tfewines.com*

Ultra-modern

Artesa Vineyards & Winery, 1345 Henry Road, Napa

Spanish architect Domingo Triay was truly inspired by the earth when he masterminded this unique, in-ground winery. At first glance, the building actually appears to be built right into the countryside. Visitors wander through expansive courtyards featuring sculptures and an exquisite fountain. Don't miss the in-house art exhibit and artifacts museum and the magnificent views provided by the winery's massive windows. *artesaawinery.com*

Hall St. Helena Winery, 401 South St. Helena Highway, St. Helena

It has been nearly a decade since world-renowned architect Frank Gehry first began sketching ideas for the new Hall St. Helena Winery. Gehry, who is known for his unsurpassed ability to express movement in architectural masterpieces, designed complex undulating trellises to encompass the winery building and adjoining courtyard. With phase one of construction complete, the winery was recently certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold, demonstrating its commitment to state-of-the-art green building and business practices. *hallwines.com*