

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 put 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 chateaux, 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 quite a few more than 300 wineries in the valley, your architectural options may seem bewildering. But they basically fall into these few broad categories: European, classic California farm, and ultra-modern. If you're able to fit a couple from each category into your Napa Valley itinerary, you'll surely enjoy a well-balanced feast for the eyes-- as well as the palate.

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 winery's massive windows. *artesawinery.com*

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' German family home at Mainz-on-the-Rhine. The ornate Victorian wonder features beautiful exterior stonework, Californian 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 twelfth 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. An 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*

Robert Mondavi, 7801 St. Helena Hwy, 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—and the ancient god Bacchus. 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*

Sterling Vineyards and Winery, 1111 Dunaweal Ln, Calistoga

The stark white iconic 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 features bells brought from St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, a church designed by Christopher Wren that was bombed in World War II. *sterlingvineyards.com*

Trefethen Family Vineyards, 1160 Oak Knoll Ave. 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 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 St. Helena Highway South, St. Helena

Bob Torres set out to design a tribute to the legacy of his grandparents with the help of BAR Architects. Three buildings comprise the completed winery—all with a traditional California flavor with high pitched shingle roofs, wood siding, and indigenous 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*