

ONLINE NOW
**BATTLESCARS:
BREAST CANCER
SERIES...**



THE VANCOUVER SUN



ONLINE NOW
**PHOTOS: FINAL
DAY OF U.S.
ELECTION...**

Magical time in wine country

Forget Disneyland. For wine lovers, a grape camp in California is the real magic kingdom.

BY VANESSA PINNIGER, VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 29, 2012

Recommend Tweet 2 +1 0 Pin it Comment 0 ShareThis

STORY PHOTOS (27)



Dinner is served al fresco on the terrace at Francis Ford Coppola's Winery. Photograph by: Darren Miller Photography

SONOMA COUNTY, Calif. — Harvest is a magical time in Sonoma.

Straw-coloured hills are bathed in a golden light and the lush landscape of wine country is bursting. Tractors hum between manicured rows. Trucks, weighed down under bins of grapes, amble along rural roads. Pickers work late into the night under the glare of artificial floodlights to pluck grapes cold from their vines. And cellars smell of newly fermenting juice.

The days are warm and the nights are cool.

Sound perfect? It is and one of the best ways to savour it is with Sonoma County's Grape Camp.

RELATED TOPICS

- Travel
- Sonoma
- Food & Drink

The Real Story Behind Annuities

If you have a \$500,000 portfolio and own an annuity, you have a lot at stake. Make sure you understand the details by downloading **Annuity Insights: Your Guide to Better Understanding Annuities** by Forbes columnist Ken Fisher's firm. This guide is designed to help you better understand these investments. Act now!

[Click Here to Download!](#)

FISHER INVESTMENTS

POPULAR STORIES around ME

[Click here](#) for the top stories being read by people in your neighbourhood and across the country.

[Learn more](#)

STORY TOOLS

E-mail this Article

Print this Article

Font: A A A A

WE RECOMMEND

U.S. man stranded after finding himself on no-fly list during stopover in Hawaii

Cruise ship makeovers almost ready for their big reveals

Paulina Gretzky is off limits, dad Wayne says

Spoiled for choice: southern France or southern Italy?

Stephen Harper visits historic Taj Mahal with wife, Lauren (with video)

FROM AROUND THE WEB

5 Things to Bring on Every Flight (AARP.org)

Photography: Dry Tortugas National Park (GORP.com)

Rekindle the Romance at The House Adults-Only Barbados Resort (JustLuxe)

787: Game-changing innovation (The Boeing Company)

Restless Legs Syndrome Facts (Lifescript)

What's this?

RESOURCES

- Watch Videos Online
- What's on Tonight?

Lunch is at Lambert Bridge and we're surprisingly hungry, quickly getting into the groove of the Sonoma lifestyle.

They say there is something magical about Sonoma and that people who come here often come back, some never leaving at all.

At Lambert Bridge we meet a former JP Morgan employee who did just that, throwing in the towel for a simpler life. You can see why.

Lunch is prepared and served in the garden by chef Andrea Mugnaini — an assortment of pizzas hot from the wood-fired outdoor oven; wood-roasted pork tenderloin saltimbocca; roasted beets. All paired with wines: 2011 Sauvignon Blanc, 2008 Cab Franc, 2008 Crane Creek Cuvee, 2010 Chardonnay 2009 Forchini Vineyard Zinfandel and 2007 Limited Selection Cab Sauvignon.

It is a haze of wine and sunshine.

And it continues at DeLoach Winery, where not only do we have the pleasure of meeting the charming Jean-Charles Boisset, dubbed California's new wine "rock star" by Sonoma magazine, but we also get the chance to try his new No. 3 JCB.

In 2003, the Boisset family brought two generations of sustainable winemaking experience from Burgundy to the Russian River Valley with their purchase of DeLoach. Now with his No. 3 JCB, Boisset marries grapes from the Old World (40 per cent French Burgundy from the Cote de Nuits) and New (60 per cent Pinot Noir from the Sebastopol Hills and Russian River).

After our tasting, we are challenged to create our own wine blend from 2010 Jean-Claude Boisset Bourgogne, 2010 DeLoach Green Valley Pinot Noir and 2010 DeLoach O.F.S. Russian River Valley Pinot Noir.

We blend, taste, bottle and cork, then create our own label for the wines that are judged by Boisset himself. It's the best French class I've ever taken.

Graduation dinner that evening at the Applewood Restaurant is our last meal together after the whirlwind experience. Each course is thoughtfully paired with wines from Mauritsen Winery, and the two young Mauritsen brothers — Clay the winemaker, and Cam, a sixth-generation vineyard worker, are here to share it with us. On offer are a crudo of albacore tuna with 2011 Sauvignon Blanc; tempura squash blossom ratatouille with 2011 Rose, Rockpile; beef tenderloin and 2009 Cab Sauvignon; and chocolate mascarpone cannoli with 2009 Rockpile Independence.

We can barely move after dinner. I roll off to bed, realizing it will be worth the extra pounds I have inevitably gained. For gained with them are new friends, a new understanding of an industry that has always fascinated me, and a truly memorable experience.

The end result? I got on the scale the morning after I returned and I had lost two pounds. Magic indeed.

If you go:

The 2013 Sonoma County Grape Camp runs Sept. 23 to 25 next year.

Accommodations and wineries change each year. For more information visit the website at www.sonomagrapecamp.com

Sonoma County is a two-hour drive north of San Francisco through amazing wine country.

Air Canada, WestJet, United Airlines and more offer daily non-stop service into San Francisco International Airport (SFO) from Vancouver's YVR.

Alaska Airlines now flies directly into Santa Rosa airport from YVR via Seattle, alleviating the two-hour drive from San Francisco.

To experience Sonoma wines closer to home, Wine Arts 2012: A Taste of Sonoma takes place here next month.

This fundraiser for Arts Umbrella, in partnership with Sonoma County Vintners, features a Sonoma Winemakers Dinner Nov. 13 at Brix Restaurant and Wine Bar in Yaletown and A Taste of Sonoma Nov. 14 at the Sutton Place Hotel.

To purchase tickets visit www.artsumbrella.com/events/fundraising/wine

© Copyright (c) The Vancouver Sun

Original source article: [Magical time in wine country](#)

 [E-mail this Article](#)  [Print this Article](#)  [Share this Article](#)

Videos That May Interest You



The Conjoined Twins:
Through her sister's eyes



Google takes street view
farther off road



Air NZealand finds magic in
hobbit safety video

by Taboola

From The Web



The Getaway: Airport
Security
(NYTimes)



Kevin Nealon & DeStorm
Power speak to Larry King
on legalizing marijuana, S...
(Ora.TV)



TED Talk: Deborah Gordon
Digs Ants
(Daily Motion - TED)

TOP LOCAL FLYERS »

Powered by 



Powerful Deals on Quality Products
Rona



Smart Clothes for Every Season
Mark's



Get Cozy with Holiday Style
Sears