Hike Your Way Through Wine Country

BY LAURA BEAUSIRE

Hiking around the Rogue River / Photo courtesy Morrisons Rogue Wilderness Adventures & Lodge

Over the river and through the woods: What could be better than a stroll to a vineyard? From relaxed meanders to energetic jaunts, there are a bounty of hikes across the country that encourage you to have an adventure in nature while on the trail to your next wine tasting.

Oregon | Rogue River

Four-day "Wiking" Lodge-to-Lodge Trips

Organized by: Morrisons Rogue Wilderness Adventures & Lodge

Difficulty: Intermediate. The trail was blazed by miners and pack mules in days of yore. It includes 1,000-foot elevation gains and drops.

Distance: Forty miles over four days.

This energetic, four-day outing includes more than 40 miles of hiking along the wild and scenic Rogue River Trail. A sommelier shares local wines over dinner each evening at a different off-the-grid lodge. The guides bring rafts along, so if you get tired, you can always float.

Drinks: Each trip includes different wines, but recent "wikes" have featured selections from Del Rio Vineyard Estate (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Malbec, Claret, Syrah, Rouge Jolee, Chardonnay, Pino Gris, Viognier, Grenache Rosé, Rose Jolee), Cliff Creek Cellars (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Syrah, Claret, Sangiovese, Super Tuscan), Troon Vineyard (Certified Organic and

Biodynamic Vermentino, Grenache, Zinfandel, Riesling, Orange, Tannat, Malbec, and more) and Valley View Winery (Viognier, Tempranillo, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Rogue Red).

Extra: Care to explore a little more? Morrisons Rogue Wilderness Adventures offers an exciting range of multi-day hiking, river rafting and steelhead and salmon fishing trips to discover.

Palisade Rim Trail, Grand Valley, Colorado / Photo courtesy Visit Grand Junction

Colorado | Grand Valley

Palisade Rim Trail

Self-guided

Difficulty: Moderate.

Distance: 3.3 miles.

Colorado's Grand Valley, on the sunny western slope of the Continental Divide, is a great destination for both outdoor recreation and wine exploration, with more than 20 wineries in the area. The out-and-back Palisade Rim Trail offers spectacular views over the valley that include the Colorado River, acres of vineyards, the Grand Mesa and miles of rugged terrain. Keep an eye out for Ute petroglyphs along the trail, and feel free to bring your dog. Afterward, meander down to meet the area's winemakers and get a taste of what they've created.

Drinks: Stop by for a tour or tasting at Colterris and try its prize-winning Merlot, Petit Verdot, or Coral White Cabernet Sauvignon. There's also BookCliff Vineyards (Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Riesling, Chardonnay, Viognier, Syrah) Varaison Vineyards & Winery (Cuvée Blanc, Viognier, Rosé, Primitivo, Barbera, Nebbiolo, Chardonnay, Merlot) and Maison la Belle Vie Winery (Petit Verdot, Syrah, Malbec, Merlot, Port, Muscat or Vin de Pêche).

Extra: Grab a map and rent a cruiser or e-bike from Palisade's Rapid Creek Cycles. Pedal off on the Palisade Fruit & Wine Byway that offers paved five- and seven-mile loops, and a 25-mile East Orchard Mesa Loop along the river that travels past wineries and orchards.

Biking through the vineyards at 45 North / Photo by Two Twisted Trees Photography

Michigan | Leelanau Peninsula

Vineyard Trail

Organized by: 45 North Vineyard & Winery

Difficulty: Easy to moderate, with a gradual incline.

Distance: Three miles.

Located on the 45th Parallel, 45 North Vineyard offers a self-guided, scenic hiking trail that allows guests to explore the grounds of the winery's 100-acre property. Watch for birds and other wildlife as you explore pine and birch forests, as well as a stream, pond, meadow, orchards and vineyards. In spring, enjoy the sweet scents of apple and cherry blossoms.

The trail is groomed year-round for hiking, fat-tire biking and cross-country skiing. There's also a separate winter trail to snowshoe during colder months. Once you make it to the top of the hill, the winery provides picnic tables for impromptu tastings.

Drinks: There are 31 different wines and ciders on their tasting menu, so you can find something for everyone. You might try 45 North's Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, La Crescent, Frontenac Gris or Marquette wines. Or take a chance on its Sparkling Peach, Sparkling Strawberry or fortified Cherry Dessert wine options. Hungry? There's also a small-plate menu to help you refuel.

Extra: 45 North hosts a series of biking and running races throughout the year to benefit local non-profits. They also offer free cross-country ski and fat-tire bike clinics for first timers.

Natural Areas Wine Tours in Ohio's Grand River Valley and Lake Erie / Photo by Judy Semroc

Ohio | Grand River Valley and Lake Erie

Natural Areas Wine Tours

Organized by: Cleveland Museum of Natural History and Ohio Wine Producers Association

Difficulty: Easy and relaxed; novice hikers welcome.

Distance: Distances vary, but the hike usually lasts about two hours, followed by a two-hour light lunch and tasting at the winery.

These hikes are low-key rambles led by two of the museum's naturalists. You'll have a chance to explore and discuss birds, plants, insects and other wild creatures along the way. After the hike, participants drive to the day's chosen vineyard, where the vintner will lead you in a tasting and, often, a tour of the winery.

Drinks: Wineries rotate, but recent hikes have featured stops at Laleure Vineyards (Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc, Chambourcin, Chardonnay, Riesling, Vignoles) and Laurentia Winery (Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Rosé).

Extra: The naturalist guides are experts on local parks and trails. They can suggest additional hikes nearby, if your feet still feel like wandering.

Blocks of Chardonnay and Riesling at Millbrook / Photo courtesy Millbrook Vineyards & Winery

New York | Hudson River

Vineyard Walking Trail

Organized by: Millbrook Vineyards & Winery

Difficulty: Easy to moderate, with a few steep, rocky and hilly sections.

Distance: One mile.

Millbrook's scenic, self-guided trail takes visitors on a loop up and around its Castle Hill vineyard blocks where both Chardonnay and Riesling are planted. Views of the Shawangunk and Catskill Mountain ranges will enchant guests along the way. Bring a picnic basket and stop for a treat and tasting at one of the hilltop tables. The trail is open May through October.

Drinks: Guided year-round tours and tastings held in Millbrook's 1940s Dutch-style barn and loft include samples of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Franc and Tocai Friulano. For a bite to eat, the Vineyard Grille is open weekends from May through October, with a Taproom & Terrace that also offers shared plates and wines by the glass.

Extra: Check Millbrook's calendar for art events, author appearances, parties and special tastings. The Dutchess Wine Trail is comprised of roads that link Millbrook with Clinton Vineyards, a 15-minute drive away, with horse farms, historic mansions, antique shops and country inns along the route. Pedal or walk along the nearby Harlem Valley Rail Trail for a peaceful country escape.

Views of fall foliage from Meramec River Trail and Hilltop Loop / Photo courtesy Peaceful Bend Vineyard

Missouri | Ozark Highlands

Meramec River Trail and Hilltop Loop

Organized by: Peaceful Bend Vineyard

Difficulty: Moderate. Meramec is easy going downhill, but steep coming back up. The Hilltop route, as its name suggests, involves a hill, but it's a gentle climb.

Distance: Meramec is one mile, Hilltop is ¾ mile.

Peaceful Bend Vineyard offers two self-guided hiking trails that meander through the property. The Meramec River Trail follows a hay field and crosses through the Ozark woods before it descends to a dock on the river, populated by heron, eagles, turtles, deer and beavers. The Hilltop Loop runs up through the forest to a vantage point where guests are invited to "sit for a spell" and savor the view of the Ozark hills and pastures. Stop at the tasting room after either hike to taste Peaceful Bend's wines or house-made draft beers.

Drinks: White wines from Peaceful Blend Vineyard include Courtois, Dry Creek (a Viognier-Vignoles blend) and semi-sweet Whittenburg. For red wines, there's Forche Renault, Meramec (a blend of Chambourcin and Norton grapes) and Norton, the state grape of Missouri.

Extra: Peaceful Bend occasionally adds a Wild Edible Walk to its calendar, so keep an eye on its website for event details. Its onsite Eatery offers a casual lunch and dinner menu also.

MALIBU WINE HIKES

Hiking around Saddlerock Ranch and Semler Estate Vineyards / Photo courtesy Malibu Wine Hikes

California | Saddlerock, Malibu

Semler Estate Vineyards Wine Hikes

Organized by: **Malibu Wine Hikes**

Difficulty: Easy to moderate

Distance: Two miles, 2–3 hours.

This fun loop hike up and around the oak groves and mountainous terrain of Saddlerock Ranch, home of Semler Estate Vineyards, allows guests to explore the vines and greet llamas, alpacas, donkeys, Scottish Highland cattle, yaks, zebra and bison. Ready for a pour? Settle in for a flight of three of the winery's offerings halfway through the hike, followed by a few lawn games, perhaps.

Drinks: Sample the Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Saddlerock Rosé of Grenache and Malibu Wine Safaris Kendrick Llama Cabernet Sauvignon.

Extra: Malibu Wine Hikes also offers a Safari Hike, which includes quality time with local-legend Stanley the Giraffe, and a Musical Safari Hike & Concert in the summer and fall, which culminates with sunset tunes. If you're reluctant to leave, there's an option to end your hike at Saddlerock Gardens, where you can feast on a catered lunch or dinner.

Vineyard hiking and wine tasting at Jordan Winery in Healdsburg / Photos courtesy Jordan Winery

California | Alexander Valley

Fall Vineyard Hikes

Organized by: Jordan Vineyard & Winery

Difficulty: Moderate

Distance: Four miles, three-to-four hours, including an elegant picnic lunch.

As you wind through Jordan's idyllic 1,200-acre property, over three-quarters of which has been preserved in its natural state, it will ease your mind and engage your senses. Power up with a gourmet continental breakfast at the winery's hilltop chateau before you roam through vineyards of Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot and Malbec grapes.

Along the way, you'll cross a creek or two, rest under the shade of ancient oaks, meander along a lake, through an olive grove, taste Jordan-produced olive oil and enjoy panoramic views of Mount St. Helena, Alexander Valley, the Russian River and Fitch Mountain. Trek over to the estate's apiary and farm, where you can tip your cap to the winery's bees, cows, donkeys, goats and chickens. Then climb the stairs beside the chef's garden and emerge onto a glorious terrace where a light lunch featuring charcuterie, salad and wines are served.

Drinks: Jordan Chardonnay and Cabernet, along with the Brut Jordan Cuvée by Champagne AR Lenoble, available only at the estate.

Extra: Head over to Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve or Lake Sonoma Recreation Area for other great hikes nearby.

Dogs and vineyard hikes at Kunde / Photo courtesy Kunde Family Winery

California | Sonoma Valley

Dog Hikes and "Hike and Taste in the Vineyards"

Organized by: Kunde Family Winery

Difficulty: Moderate, with an elevation gain of 800 feet or more.

Distance: The Dog Hike is 3–4 miles, lasting four hours. The "Hike and Taste" is 4–5 miles, and also takes approximately four hours.

The Kunde family invites guests to traipse through its certified sustainably farmed vineyards on the 1,850-acre estate. Dog Hikes, led by Jeff and Roberta Kunde and their canine companions, Cooper and Kalie, roam from the vineyards, valleys and woodlands up to the base of the Mayacamas Mountains.

Bask in the scents and sounds of the season, from wet dogs and wildflowers to grapes and fresh-mown grass, and taste wines as you go. You'll also be treated to a wine country lunch at the end of the trail, as well as "Yappy Hour" at the Paw Bar, offering treats and flavored waters for the dogs. The dog-free, "Hike and Taste in the Vineyards," is a walk and bring-your-own-picnic excursion that ends at the estate's tasting room.

Drinks: During and after the hike, you'll be treated to wines made from some of the 18 varieties of grapes that grow right beside you, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot. The Kundes are especially proud of the vineyard's 140-year-old Zinfandel vines, which produce wines they call "history in a glass."

Extra: Private group tours are available, and the winery also partners with the Sonoma County Humane Society and Dogwood Animal Rescue for special hikes with dogs and puppies available for adoption. A portion of the proceeds from all of Kunde's dog hikes is donated to the animal rescue and rehabilitation organizations.

If you're hungry for more hiking, you'll find Sugarloaf State Park, Annadel State Park, Jack London State Park and Hood Mountain State Park within a four-mile radius of the winery.

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