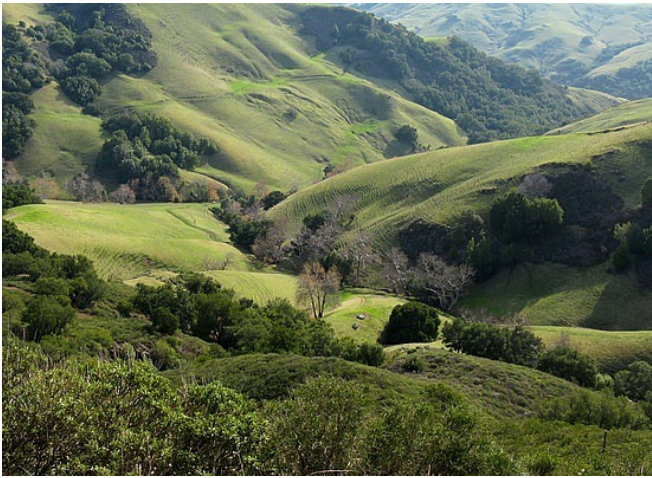


Paso Robles Wine Country

A Bay Gourmet Get Away

October 12-14, 2012



Dear Club Member,

I invite you to join **Cathy Curtis**, Bay Gourmet Member-Led Forum Chair, for a food and wine adventure in Paso Robles.

This *Bay Gourmet Get Away* gives you three days of touring, two nights right in the center of downtown Paso Robles, and round-trip transportation from San Francisco. This is an easy way to get out of town, enjoy fabulous food and wine, and have everything taken care of for you!

Our *Bay Gourmet* events are popular, and we expect this to fill up quickly, so call soon to reserve your space!

Best regards,



Kristina Nemeth
Director of Club Travel
(415) 597-6720
knemeth@commonwealthclub.org

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sip** the wines of some of the top winemakers of Paso Robles – Eberle, Robert Hall, and Justin, to name a few.
- **Relax** during a private lunch and tasting, hosted by the owners of Pear Valley Winery.
- **Stay** two nights at the centrally located Paso Robles Inn, walking distance from shops, tasting rooms and restaurants.
- **Visit** a local farm, and meet organic farmers Bill and Barbara Spencer.
- **Savor** organic *farm to table* creations during our gourmet dinners.
- **Meet** local artists at Studios on the Park.
- **Learn** about what makes the region unique during a talk and tasting with the President of the Paso Robles Wine Club.



Cathy Curtis has been a member of the Commonwealth Club for 30 years and volunteer leader of the Bay Gourmet Forum since 2004. Prior to her current career as a Certified Financial Planner and owner of Curtis Financial Planning, Cathy spent 20 years in sales and marketing in the food industry. She is a passionate advocate for healthy eating, sustainable food systems and supporting local farms and food businesses. Cathy serves on the board of CUESA, the Center for Urban Education for Sustainable Agriculture and on the Advisory Council for the Community Alliance for Family Farms (CAFF). She is a native San Franciscan, and lives in the Oakland Hills with her husband Rob.

ITINERARY

Friday, October 12

Meet early this morning at the San Francisco Commonwealth Club office and board our small passenger bus for our journey to Paso Robles. (Departure time is 8:30 a.m.)

On our way south, we drive through **Soledad** and pass by La Mision de Maria Santisima Nuestra Senora Dolorosissima de la Soledad (Mary Most Holy, Our Most Sorrowful Lady of Solitude). The Mission was founded by Father Fermin Lasuen in 1791 near the site of an Esselen village named Chuttusgelis. The Esselen were the original inhabitants of the valley. The mission was built to link Mission San Antonio and Mission Carmel so that the distance between the missions could be walked in one day. When the padres needed relief from rheumatism they would go to nearby Paraiso Hot Springs for the mineral baths. They learned of the medicinal value of the mineral baths from the Esselen. (Paraiso is the also the name of a nearby winery.)

The highest recorded population of this mission was 687 in 1804, and at one time it included a chapel, a church, four granaries, offices, a mill, a cheese factory, a hen house, a tallow factory, a kitchen, guest rooms, unmarried women's quarters, two warehouses, a carpenter's shop and quarters, a guard house, a corporal's quarters, a forge, a soap factory, an apothecary, a tannery, tile kilns, a privy, a pantry, a grist mill, a lavanderia, a weavery, and possibly a fulling tank for wool production. *There was also a vineyard with five thousand vines and an orchard.*

We stop at **Paraiso Vineyards** in Soledad for a comfort stop and some wine tasting. Paraiso's 400-acre estate vineyard lies at the southern end of the Santa Lucia Highlands AVA in Monterey County, California. Wine grape pioneers of the region, Rich and Claudia Smith began planting this property in 1973. Today, Rich and his son Jason manage almost 150,000 vines in 16 different blocks. The land provides varying soils, elevations and microclimates, producing grapes uniquely expressive of their individual sites.

The Smiths have employed sustainable farming techniques since day one. Knowing that their vineyard could be in the family for generations, Rich and Claudia have always been keenly aware of their own environment as well as their potential impact on the surrounding area. Rich was a founding member of the Central Coast Vineyard Team, an organization that later created the state's first sustainable farming certification for wine grapes, called Sustainability in Practice, or SIP™ Certified Sustainable. Paraiso Vineyards was the first in the Santa Lucia Highlands to earn this certification in 2008.

We continue to Paso Robles. Nestled in the rolling foothills of the Central Coast's Santa Lucia Mountains, Paso Robles has historically been an agricultural region, though originally discovered for its natural mineral hot springs by the Salinan Indians.

The region's first grapes were planted in 1779 by Franciscan missionaries and today it is home to the third highest concentration of wineries in the United States. Paso Robles Wine Country is an American Viticultural Area (AVA) located in San Luis Obispo County. It has approximately 26,000 vineyard acres planted with wine grapes, and is well known for its heritage varietal Zinfandel, Rhône-style wines, and "Crazy Blends," and styles that are unique to Paso Robles.

Arrive in downtown Paso Robles and enjoy **lunch at Robert's** restaurant and wine bar. Roberts celebrates the best of American traditions by providing you with beautifully prepared foods that are satisfying. The atmosphere is elegant, yet refreshingly relaxed with glossy woods, exquisite decor, and captivating photography.

After lunch we walk down to City Park and **meet with Anne Laddon, Founder & Artistic Director of Studios on the Park**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a creative, educational, and transformational experiences to enhance understanding and appreciation of the visual arts. We enjoy the art exhibits and meet with some of the artists in the eight working studios.



Get prepared with information for our next two days of wine tasting. Learn about what makes Paso Robles' wines so unique during a talk and tasting with **Paso Robles Wine Club President, Coy Barnes**. Mr. Barnes has been featured in both *Travel & Leisure* and *USA TODAY*.

A short walk, takes us to the centrally-located **Paso Robles Inn**, where we check-in for our two-night stay.

Tonight enjoy a gourmet **dinner at Thomas Hill Organics Bistro**, a market-bistro and wine bar dedicated to serving organic produce from their farm and highlighting unique wines from the Central Coast. Their menu changes weekly depending on the season and the availability of ingredients. They work with local providers for meat and fish, and their bread is made exclusively by in-town bakers who are celebrated artisans of their trade.

Return to our hotel on foot and perhaps enjoy some socializing at inn's Cattleman's Lounge.

PASO ROBLES INN (L, D)

Saturday, October 13

Breakfast is on your own. There are a couple of options for you at the Paso Robles Inn - the casual Coffee Shop, or the Steakhouse restaurant if you'd like something a little upscale. There are also coffee shops in town if you'd like an early morning stroll.



Meet in the lobby for our departure for a morning tour of **Windrose Farms**. Tucked in a unique valley of 50 acres, 12 are in vegetable rotations, 6 are in apples and stone fruit and 5 are sheep pasture. The rest is habitat – full of animal, bird and insect life who usually help them.

Meet owners **Bill & Barbara Spencer** who have been organic and were certified with C.C.O.F. from August 1999 to 2009, but are currently transitioning to biodynamic! The farm has been “clean” for twenty years; since its purchase in 1990.

The rest of the day we will explore the east Paso Robles winery area.

We start our tasting at **Eberle Winery**. In 1973, Gary Eberle began his career in the wine industry by heading his family's Estrella River Winery and produced 500,000 cases a year. Eberle's pioneering spirit didn't stop there. In 1980, he co-founded the Paso Robles Appellation and in 1983, Gary opened the doors to his own Eberle Winery with the premiere of Eberle's 1979 Cabernet Sauvignon. Today, Eberle handcrafts 25,000 cases of wine each year from surrounding Estate vineyards. And, after more than 25 years since the release of the Eberle label, the winery consistently remains one of the highest award-winning wineries in the United States.

The German name "Eberle" translates to "small boar." A bronze boar statue, a 93rd replica of the original bronze Porcellino cast by Tacca in 1620, greets guests. (The original can be found in the straw market in Florence, Italy.) It is considered good luck to rub the boar's nose and toss a coin in the water below. All money collected at the Eberle boar fountain is donated to local children's charities.

The redwood building that houses the Winery and Tasting Room was built to be a natural extension of the vineyard and surrounding countryside. But in 1994, Eberle was seeking additional space for the red wine program and decided to go underground. Today, 16,000 square feet of underground caves located below the winery create the perfect place to age every bottle of wine they make.

We then enjoy a specially arranged **private lunch and tasting at the Pear Valley Vineyard**.

While stationed on a U.S. army base in Germany in the late 60's, Tom Maas experienced being surrounded by scenic country vineyards and distinctive wineries. He promised himself that one day he would follow his passion, and have a vineyard and winery back home in California. Tom made his dream a reality. He planted his first block of grapevines in Paso Robles on his 115-acre estate with his wife Kathleen. Pear Valley was established in 1997, and today, Tom and

Kathleen share a mission to create delightful regional wines while conducting sustainable farming practices with a no-waste philosophy in mind. Creating unique vintages that reflect vibrant fruit nourished by ancient soils under ideal climate conditions while leaving little impact on the environment is the impetus behind Pear Valley.

Continuing the dedication to providing the best environment possible, Tom and Kathleen designed a tasting room that is an open and inviting space that is energy efficient and environmentally sound. **Meet Tom and Kathleen** and enjoy their wines while enjoying the 360 degree views of the Paso Robles countryside.



We finish our tasting today at **Robert Hall Winery**. During a family trip to France in the late 70's, Robert Hall visited the Rhone valley and was captivated by the winery lifestyle of farming, crafting wine and the pairing of wine with food. Robert began developing his idea for a premium-producing vineyard and winery in the early-80's, and ventured west with the goal of visiting each of

California's wine appellations to explore the optimum growing conditions for the production of premium wine grapes, specifically the Rhone varieties he had enjoyed so much.

In early-90's, Robert and Margaret discovered the perfect *terroir* in the Paso Robles appellation. Featuring soil rich in nutrients, coupled with warm days and cool nights, Robert felt the viticultural conditions were ideal to the development of the enological characteristics he was seeking to produce. "Home Ranch" was acquired in 1995. Soon after, the "Terrace" and "Bench" vineyards joined the Hall Ranch enclave. In May, Robert Hall Winery's Winemaker, Don Brady, was featured as a "Rock Star Winemaker" in VINO magazine. We'll sample their award-winning wine, explore the grounds, and perhaps play a little bocce ball.

Return to Paso Robles for some free time to enjoy the shops, walk in **City Park** or visit the **Paso Robles Historical Society**. You may also enjoy a cheese tasting at **Vivant Cheeses**. (All of these stops are within walking distance of our hotel.)

Tonight we enjoy rustic Italian fine dining at **IL Cortile** in town. Executive Chef Santos MacDonal provides a melody of exceptional homemade pastas, fresh seafood, top quality meats and antipasti.

PASO ROBLES INN (L, D)

Sunday, October - 14

After breakfast on your own, we head out to explore the west side of Paso Robles.

This morning visit **Justin Winery**, a family owned and operated winery making estate grown and produced wines. The property was founded in 1981 by Justin Baldwin when he purchased 160 acre property west of Paso Robles. Since its inception, Justin has focused his efforts on producing world class Bordeaux style blends from the estate vineyards. Justin is a pioneer in producing this style of wine on the Central Coast and his efforts have been rewarded with past and present vintages earning 90+ points by the major wine trade publications. More encompassing recognition has come from awards such as the Grand Sweepstakes award winner, Best of Class, Best of Region, the coveted Pichon Lalande trophy for "World's Best Blended Red Wine" and Wine Spectators Top 10 Wines of the World.

Justin has consistently earned the praise of the wine press with recognition from the likes of Robert M. Parker Jr. naming Justin Baldwin one of his "Wine Heroes of the Year" and the "Star of Paso Robles", and earning the James Beard Foundation's "Great American Winemaker Award." We'll visit the winemaking facility, caves and the dramatic ISOSCELES Library located 120 feet underground.

Continue to **Limerock Orchards** a small, family owned **walnut farm** located in the hills of western Paso Robles. Each autumn their family hand harvests exceptional walnuts to make gourmet walnut oil that is wonderfully aromatic and bursting with a delicate, toasty flavor. By carefully roasting the walnuts before pressing, their full flavor is preserved in every ounce along with healthy omega 3 fatty acids and natural antioxidants. Named for the orchard's rich, limestone-like soil, their trees have been quietly producing extraordinarily delicious walnuts for more than 40 years. Their secret is the age-old technique of dry farming, an irrigation-free method with smaller yields in exchange for a crop of undeniably flavorful walnuts – all grown with nothing but rain and sunshine. Limerock Orchards is also home to culinary delights like candied walnuts, chocolate walnuts and limited edition flavors inspired with the seasons.



We pick up our **organic lunch from Farm Stand 46** and continue to **Halter Ranch**, an estate vineyard which sits amidst a 900-acre ranch, where we'll have a picnic and final wine tasting.

The history of **Halter Ranch Vineyard** dates to the 1880's, when the ranch was part of a 3,600-acre holding owned by businessman Edwin Smith. Smith had been a wholesale butcher in San Francisco, but migrated to the area west of Paso Robles (then known as Las Tablas) in 1874. In 1881, Smith acquired what was to become Halter Ranch and built a grand house. He became a dealer in farm produce and livestock, and also invested heavily in silver mining.

A horse racing enthusiast, Smith kept a private box at Tanforan Race Track and a stable of thoroughbreds on his estate. In 1885, Smith's mansion burned to the ground, but he immediately rebuilt it, enjoying another dozen years of prosperity before his business empire floundered. In the early 1900s, the estate was broken up, and in 1943, 1200 acres were purchased by the MacGillivray family, who farmed it for the next 50-plus years, introducing the first grapevines in 1996.



In 2000, Hansjörg Wyss purchased 900 acres of the ranch, renovated Smith's historic farmhouse, and began enlarging the vineyard to its present 250 acres. Born and raised in Switzerland, where wine is part of daily life, Hansjörg believes Paso Robles is the best place in California to pursue his dream of producing world-class grapes and wines.



We'll explore the grounds and try some of the 20 grape varieties planted in 48 separate vineyard blocks delineated primarily based on soil types, which range from calcareous clay to clay loam with shale and sandstone deposits. Sixty percent are Bordeaux varieties and 40% Rhône varieties, plus Zinfandel and Tannat.

Toast to a wonderful weekend of exploring California with the Commonwealth Club. After lunch we depart for our drive back to San Francisco. **(L)**

Cathy Curtis' events are always great!

– Marilyn Presten, 2010 Bay Gourmet Get Away to Mendocino and Anderson Valley

Please note that visits and activities in this itinerary are subject to change.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

This program is limited to 22 travelers maximum and costs are based on a minimum of 15 participants.

COST

\$1,095 per person, based on double occupancy

\$1,295 per person, based on single occupancy

INCLUDED

- Coach transportation for three days from the San Francisco Club office. You don't have to drive, worry about where you are going or how to get there. Just sit back and enjoy!
- Driver/guide from Wine Wrangler Tours
- 2 nights at the centrally located and historic Paso Robles Inn
- 3 lunches and 2 gourmet dinners (including wine)
- Tours, wine tastings, guest speakers, and events as specified in the itinerary
- Gratuities for hotel staff, restaurant staff, and bus driver and for all group activities
- Bay Gourmet Trip Leader to assist you throughout the program
- The camaraderie of the Club's Bay Gourmet travelers

NOT INCLUDED

- Meals and beverages other than those specified as included. (Limited wine is served at lunches and dinners.)
- Optional excursions and other activities done independently
- Trip-cancellation/interruption and baggage insurance
- Personal items such as e-mail, telephone, souvenirs, laundry and gratuities for non-group services

PAYMENT

To make a reservation, send your check payable to "Commonwealth Club of California," or charge instructions, with your completed reservation form to the address on the reservation form. You may also fax in your reservation form or call our office. **Space is limited in our hotel. Reservations should be received by July 31 to confirm your reservation and hotel space.**

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Payment is fully refundable, less a \$250-per-person cancellation fee, until 60 days prior to departure, or August 12, 2012. After that date, refunds can be made only if the program is sold out and your place(s) can be resold, in which case the \$250 cancellation fee will apply. We recommend trip-cancellation insurance; applications will be sent to you.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Commonwealth Club of California and our ground operators and suppliers act only as agents for the travelers with respect to transportation and arrangements, and exercise every care possible in doing so. However, we can assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity in connection with the service of any automobile, motorcoach, or any other conveyance used in carrying out this program or for the acts or defaults of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the program. We cannot accept any responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, *force majeure* or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger as tour rates provide arrangements only for the time stated. We reserve the right to make such alterations to this published itinerary as may be deemed necessary. The right is reserved to cancel any program prior to departure in which case the entire payment will be refunded without further obligation on our part. No refund will be made for an unused portion of any tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The Commonwealth Club of California accepts no liability for any carrier's cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in connection with the tour.

California Seller of Travel Program Registration #2096889-40

RESERVATION FORM

**Paso Robles Wine Country
October 12-14, 2012**

MR. / MRS. / MS.
NAME(S) MISS / DR. / PROF. _____

MR. / MRS. / MS.
MISS / DR. / PROF. _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

SINGLE TRAVELERS ONLY:

If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:

- I plan to share accommodations with _____
- OR I wish to have single accommodations.
- OR I'd like to know about possible roommates. I am a smoker / nonsmoker. (circle one)

PAYMENT:

Here is my payment of \$_____ (\$1,095 per person, double or \$1,295 single) for ___ place(s).

-
- Enclosed is my check (make payable to *Commonwealth Club of California*).
 - OR Charge my deposit to my Visa MasterCard American Express.

CARD# _____ EXPIRES _____

AUTHORIZED CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

Mail completed form to: Commonwealth Club Travel, 595 Market St., 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105, or fax to (415) 597-6729. For questions call (415) 597-6720.

I/We have read the Terms and Conditions for this program and agree to them.

Signature _____