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A PEAK INTO PASO ROBLES WINE COUNTRY

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Paso Robles Wine Country is tucked away along California's Central Coast, situated along U.S. Highway 101, halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. California's Central Coast is geologically different from other California wine growing regions. Unlike others with deep, rich fertile valley soils, over 30 soil series are found in the Paso Robles AVA. The appellation comprises 612,000 acres of which more than 40,000 acres are in wine grape vines. It is the fastest growing and largest by far of three AVAs in San Luis Obispo County, and the main reason that the county ranks behind only Napa, Sonoma, and Monterey counties in planted acreage among the state's coastal growing areas.

The area is home to a host of notable wineries and events throughout the year. The three most popular are the Vintage Paso Zinfandel Weekend (March 17 – 19), the 35th annual Paso Wine Festival will be held again this year (May 18 – 21), and finally the Harvest Wine Weekend (Oct 20 – 21). In addition to these fun and wine focused community events, the more than 130 wineries also offer many special tastings and events to attend throughout the year. Paso Robles wine country has more than 40 grape varietals grown in the region producing some of the best wines in California. Outside of the Napa Sonoma region, Paso Robles has



become California hidden gem when it comes to producing high-quality, hand-crafted wines.

Some of our favorite wineries that we would place on the “not to miss” list when visiting this serene area of the California coast include:

HERMAN STORY WINERY: Proprietor and winemaker, Russell P. From, began Herman Story Wines in 2001 with 7 barrels stashed in his employer's cellar. What started as a modest homage to his rancher grandfather has become a beacon to those seeking opulent, structured Syrah and Grenache. To maintain balance while giving flavor full stage, Russell works with 30 top-tier vineyards in over 7 distinct growing regions between Santa Barbara and Paso Robles. Vineyards of particular note include: Bien Nacido, John Sebastiano, Larner, Shadow Canyon, Chelle Mountain, Vogelzang, and White Hawk. These are no-nonsense, balls to the walls wines that are not

for the faint of heart or the pinky raising set.

EPOCH ESTATE WINES: Founded in 2004, Epoch has quickly developed a big reputation for small production, hand crafted wines with abundant personalities. Made from Rhone, Tempranillo, and Zinfandel varieties grown on our two estate vineyards in west Paso Robles, Paderewski and Catapult Vineyard, they strive, successfully we might add, to make wines that are complex and delicious, seriously fun to drink, thought-provoking, and most important, memory-making.

MCPRIE MYERS WINE COMPANY: McPrice Myers Wine Company produces Rhone wines from Paso Robles and Santa Barbara County. The focus is on small production from some of the best vineyards on the Central Coast.

CALIZA WINERY AND VINEYARDS: Husband and wife team, Carl and Pam Bowker, share

their love of wine, the beautiful Paso Robles region, and their passion for viticulture and winemaking with friends, family, and all who visit them at Caliza Winery and Vineyards. They meticulously grow their own grapes using sustainable farming practices on a 20-acre West Paso Robles vineyard in the American Viticulture Area (AVA) known as the Willow Creek District. The primary focus is on the production of wines from blends of Rhone varieties such as Syrah, Grenache and Mourvedre, or Viognier and Roussanne.

TURLEY WINE CELLARS: Turley Wine Cellars was founded by former emergency room physician Larry Turley in 1993. Because Larry has never met an old vine vineyard he didn't like, Turley now makes 28 separate wines from 35 different vineyards, mostly Zinfandel and Petite Syrah, with many vineyards dating back to the late 1800's. By focusing on old vine vineyards in particular, Turley aims to both create and preserve California's unique winemaking culture.

If your schedule doesn't allow time away to explore Paso Robles Wine Country in the near future, you can also stop into Village Vino in Kensington on March 25 and sample some of the latest gems from this California wine region. Cori Holstedt, the Village Vino Wine Director, and her team are great at cutting through the myriad of wine selections from various growing regions and finding the truly special selections. Cheers! ■

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BEVERAGES