

# 6 Secrets About Paso Robles, A Vibrant Wine Region Of California

By Liza B. Zimmerman, Contributor.



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Cass Winery in the Paso Robles region.  
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One of Central California's most charming towns is an easy drive from both San Francisco and Los Angeles. [Paso Robles](#) is a half an hour from the Pacific Ocean and is home to great local wineries and fun bars and restaurants.

Local girl Danna Stroud, the executive director of [Travel Paso](#), has shared some of the things that stand out about her home town. She adds that her love for the region began in her childhood by riding with her grandma over the rolling hills to take lunch to her grandpa during the grain harvest.



Danna Stroud heads up Travel Paso.



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She eventually ended up in the tourism industry by working in hotel sales in Southern California. After that, she relocated back to the area almost two decades ago to run what was then called the Paso Robles Conference and Visitors' Bureau. At that time, the region was home to only 57 wineries. However, the wine industry has grown and is now home to more than 200 producers.

### **Vines and the History of Paso Robles**

In the early years, Paso Robles' farmers and ranchers were major producers of almonds, grain, cattle and Zinfandel, she notes. [The Paso Robles Farmer's Alliance](#) was founded in 1891 and served as a co-op to better serve the needs of the local farmers and ranchers.

She adds that, from a wine perspective, the region's multiple micro-climates and diverse soils have led to a vibrant wine industry. Paso Robles is now home to 11 different wine sub-appellations. As a wine-growing region, what sets Paso Robles apart from other regions is its elevation, 10-mile proximity to the Pacific and the fact that it has a coastal climate — which means that consistently hot dry sunny days are followed by cool nights — with thick sea fog, which blankets the region nightly.

Some of the best wines are produced from grapes traditionally grown in the Rhône region of France, such as Grenache, Mourvèdre, Syrah, Grenache Blanc, Picpoul Blanc, Roussanne and Marsanne — and even Zinfandel. In last few years, Cabernet Sauvignon has really taken off. While the region has been producing wine for more than 100 years, in the last 30 years it has really cemented itself as a world-class region.

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Paso Robles was incorporated in 1889 and early city leaders were relatives of Jesse James. Rumor has it, according to Stroud, that he passed through a few times. Also in the early 1900s, the Chicago White Sox used a local baseball field for spring training purposes. Hollywood screen legend James Dean met an untimely death just outside of Paso Robles in 1955. And over 80 years ago, residents began the tradition of Pioneer Day, shares Stroud, which is an opportunity for city residents to invite farmers and ranchers to break bread with family, friends and neighbors.

### **Views, Dining and Hotel Options**

While Stroud says that she is partial to the view she had from the hill she was raised on along Buena Vista Drive, there are many others to enjoy. You can't beat the vistas found at the Alta Colina, Adelaida and Daou wineries and vineyards, she says. There are a few stops along some of the country roads, such as Kiler Canyon and Peachy Canyon, that offer commanding views of the rolling hills on the west side of the town. The moment you see the Pacific Ocean as you head west from Paso Robles is also impressive.

Paso's downtown square is home to The Hatch, La Cosecha, Jeffry's Wine Country BBQ and Los Robles Café. There are just over 20 tasting rooms downtown to visit for a glass of wine, including Diablo Paso and Paso Underground. A visit to Pappy McGregor's will afford you a pint of beer from one of the local craft breweries. And, adds Stroud, one has to pop into the [General Store Paso Robles](#) to work made by a selection of local artisans. Studios on the Park is another unique spot to discover an art studios and a gallery that offers wine tasting. Tin City, a collection of bars and restaurants just outside of town, is also not be missed, along with Etto, which makes its own pasta.



A country fair in Paso. Travel Paso  
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In terms of downtown hotels, the Historic Paso Robles Inn offers a step back in time with early 1900s design while Hotel Cheval is a small luxury hotel that is slated to expand.