

ESSENTIAL PASO ROBLES ITINERARY: TOP HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND BARS

BY [KRISTY WENZ](#) | WINE & TRAVEL WRITER, CONSULTANT & MARKETER

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“Paso Robles... yes I’ve heard of it. Wait, where is it again?”

“Is that in Texas?”

“Isn’t it too hot to make good wine there?”

“But Cab is king in Napa. I thought Paso was Zin or Rhone blends.”

These are all questions and comments I hear when I would talk about wine from Paso Robles, or when I told people I was heading out to this Central Coast region to check things out for myself.

So, let's first start what Paso Robles is not. It's not in Texas and it's not too hot to make outstanding wine. It is also not exclusively Rhone styles or Zinfandel. While it may be known as California's "Rhône Zone," more than 50% of the grapes grown are Bordeaux varieties, including **Cabernet Sauvignon**. On the other hand, Paso Robles IS a region every Winetraveler should get to know and put on their bucket list.

Paso Robles is a large and diverse wine appellation with 11 sub-regions. It is located just inland of the Santa Lucia coastal mountains in San Luis Obispo County on California's Central Coast. The region includes over 40,000 vineyard acres, over 60 grape varieties, and nearly 300 wineries, most of which produce less than 5,000 cases.

Although situated inland from the coast, Paso Robles still benefits from the maritime influences of the Pacific Ocean and it has the greatest day-to-night temperature swing of any other region in California. Additionally, the various slopes, altitudes (from 700 to 2,000 feet), meso-climates and the vast diversity of the soils (over 30 types!) lend to a long growing season with optimal conditions for producing high-quality vines with varietally expressive grapes.

How to Get to Paso Robles

Located between San Francisco and Los Angeles, Paso Robles is an easy drive from most major California cities with beautiful coastline to traverse along the way.

For those looking to fly, the San Luis Obispo airport is an ideal option located minutes from wine country. Numerous direct flights are available as are any easy connections from most major cities. Rental cars are easy to source and helpful as the region spans about 45 miles east to west and 25 miles north to south. That said, if numerous winery visits are on the agenda, we recommend hiring a private driver or tour service, of which many are available.

Where to Stay

It's easy to source hotel options, bed and breakfasts and winery accommodations in both San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles. That said, here are a few options we recommend:

The Just Inn

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Situated within walking distance of the Tasting Room and Restaurant at the JUSTIN Vineyards & Winery are several luxuriously appointed accommodations inspired by the impeccable style of Chateau Margaux. The JUST Inn offers three suites ranging in size from 600 to 1,200 square feet each offers a unique space with stunning views, hydro-spa baths, and modern furnishings. A 1,400 square foot French townhouse is also available and located within ¼ mile of the Tasting Room. The Vintner's Villa features a full kitchen and dining room and is surrounded by JUSTIN's vineyards. Traveling with a large party? The 12,000 square foot, hilltop Chateau is sure to dazzle with its chef's kitchen and library.

The Allegretto Vineyard Resort Paso Robles

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Located in Paso Robles, the Allegretto Vineyard Resort Paso Robles is a luxury, 4.5-star hotel with a Mediterranean-inspired motif. Nestled among vineyards and orchards, the hotel offers fine cuisine, lush gardens, soothing spa treatments, and an extensive wine list featuring many of the area's finest wines. You'll want to plan downtime at this stunning property be it in a private poolside cabana, sipping a glass of wine fireside, or by meandering the property to explore the extensive original art collection curated by owner and visionary, Doug Ayers. Here's a video to inspire you, but trust me it's better to experience it in person.

Castoro Cellars – The Hive

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If you're looking for a **private wine country retreat**, **Castoro Cellars** offers a beautiful stay at **The Hive**, a single-family, five-bedroom, 4.5- bath home nestled in the winery's Cobble Creek vineyards. This is a great option for larger groups or family gatherings. You'll even have access to the winery's 18-hole disc golf course should you choose!

La Quinta Inn & Suites San Luis Obispo

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If you're looking for a more cost-effective, but well-reviewed hotel option, the La Quinta Inn & Suites in San Luis Obispo is a clean, welcoming option within minutes of the San Luis Obispo airport. Located off Highway 101 and four miles from the airport, the pet-friendly hotel is in the heart of downtown historic San Luis Obispo and is surrounded by restaurants and shops. Amenities include free WiFi, free breakfast, and an on-site restaurant.

Cass Winery – Coming Soon

Coming soon to Cass Vineyard & Winery is a new, winery stay experience. Made from modified shipping containers, each guest room will feature dramatic views of the sunset at this serene vineyard property located between Paso Robles and Creston. It's an ideal location for wedding parties and guests at the property, as well as anyone seeking a unique stay in wine country.

Recommended Restaurants in Paso Robles

Cello Ristorante & Bar

Located at the Allegretto Vineyard Resort Paso Robles, Cello Ristorante & Bar is led by Executive Chef Justin Picard and is a culinary work of genius. Dishes are crafted from regionally sourced ingredients and accompanied by an extensive wine, cocktail, and craft beer list. Dishes are seasoned and cocktails are infused with garden herbs grown right on the property. We recommend a sunset reservation on the restaurant's patio.

Il Cortile

Another fine-dining Italian restaurant in Paso Robles, Il Cortile is led by Executive Chef Santos MacDonal and offers an array of homemade pastas, fresh seafood, and top-quality meats. Menus are seasonal and feature fresh ingredients sourced in the surrounding local and regional landscapes. If you're a seafood lover, ask for the bottarga pasta. You won't be disappointed!

BL Brasserie

Chef Laurent Grangien inspires at BL Brasserie in Paso Robles. Offering traditional brasserie-style fare in a casual, yet elegant setting, Chef Grangien also utilizes local ingredients and pairs them perfectly with both local and French wines. We recommend a patio seat at lunch and sharing plates to sample a wider variety of the Chef's delicious offerings.

Cass Cafe

Sampling wines at Cass Vineyard & Winery? Stop in for lunch at Cass Café. The menu ranges from cheese boards to salads and sandwiches. The pork sandwiches here are well-known to locals and travelers alike.

Niner Wine Estates Restaurant

Another winery dining option, Niner Wine Estate's restaurant overlooks the winery's famous Heart Hill Vineyard. The extra-virgin olive oil is milled from the property's 350 olive trees, eggs are sourced from the estate's chickens, and the produce is sourced from either the Estate Garden or local farmers.

Thomas Hill Organics

Thomas Hill Organics was founded in 2008 and offers a menu including organic fruits and vegetables from an array of regional purveyors such as Olea Farms, Pepper Creek Family Farm, Bautista Farms, Loo Loo Farms, Windrose Farms, Rocking Chair Farms, and others from local farmer's markets. You can read more about Thomas Hill Organics [here](#).

Bonus: Paso Robles Downtown Bars & Wine Bars

Paso Robles Underground

Open from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, the Paso Underground opened in August 2013 with the goal of bringing together like-minded winemakers without their own tasting rooms. Currently, the collective tasting room features four small production wineries (less than 500 cases each) whose passion is evident in each pour. It's a great way to sample wines you may not otherwise have the chance to, as well as meet the winemakers themselves as they're often the ones pouring!

Eleven Twenty Two

A great option for experiencing Paso Robles after dark is Eleven Twenty Two. A cocktail lounge and speakeasy unlike anything else in town. You'll likely wait in line to get into the small lounge, but once you do, it's like stepping back into the 1930s, and the craft cocktails will be well worth the wait. You'll only find this hidden gem if you can find Pappy McGregor's Pub in downtown Paso Robles. The speakeasy is located on the back patio and you'll need to ring a buzzer (or wait in a short line) for entry. No reservations are allowed.

Plan Your Getaway

Now, I realize I have yet to touch on the wineries for this Paso Robles itinerary ([you can see several recommended wineries here](#)), but fear not, we have a few more parts of this story to come your way. Until then, it's time to start planning your stay for this incredibly diverse wine region in California's beautiful Central Coast hills. You'll find warmth, welcome, and wine at nearly every turn. And while many wine regions require appointments, Paso Robles encourages walk-ins and affordable tastings can be found at most wineries open to the public.