

Two-Day Paso Robles Winery Itinerary: Adelaida District

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Wine with a View: A Two-Day Paso Robles Adelaida District Wine Tasting Itinerary

This is part five — the final edition — of the **Paso Robles itinerary series** and now it's time to head into the highlands of the northwestern region of Paso Robles in the Adelaida District. The Adelaida became an official district of the **Paso Robles AVA** in 2014, but it first gained notoriety under the guidance of ~~Dr. Stanley Hoffman~~, who purchased a 1,200-acre ranch in the District in 1964. He then planted some of the first Pinot Noir vines in the region. Later he was joined by winemaker André Tchelistcheff and they went on to open the first modern commercial winery in Paso Robles, the Hoffman Mountain Ranch Winery (HMR).

What makes the Adelaida District unique? Well, first the entire region sits between 900-feet to 2,300-feet in elevation. Further from the famed cooling winds of the Templeton Gap, the Adelaida is also warmer allowing for longer ripening periods of both **Rhône** and Bordeaux varietals. The soils are limestone and calcareous which helps to retain water and allow for drainage. These features combined with a significant level of rainfall in the non-growing season and very little during the growing season allow for most vineyards to dry farm (meaning no supplemental irrigation). It also still benefits from that unique Paso Robles diurnal swing with growing season days averaging around 81 degrees and the nights dropping to an average of 44 degrees. This extends the ripening season and helps the grapes to gradually increase sugar while maintaining acidity.

Fortunately for us wine-loving history buffs, you can still taste the wines from these early Pinot Noir vines and get a peak from above of the original HMR Winery. That's where we'll head next.

While our **last itinerary took you tasting at five wineries in one-day**, this itinerary requires a slowdown. You could certainly taste at each of these five wineries in one day; however, once you see these views you won't want to be going anywhere fast. These spots beg for you to sit down, sip and enjoy your favorite wine while relaxing.

Day 1

For Day One of our hilltop itinerary, we suggest a three-winery experience beginning about 20 minutes out of town on Adelaida Road.

Again, these wineries aren't far from downtown Paso Robles or many of **our recommended accommodations**, but the terrain changes rapidly. You'll drive from the valley to Adelaida Road where you'll ascend through lush forests filled with giant old oaks, past rugged terrain and hilly vistas as you climb to our first stop and one of the highest elevations in the District.

Adelaida

The Story: Adelaida's seven vineyards total over 170 acres of vines planted specifically to match the soil, elevation and climate of each site. The property also has hundreds of acres of white walnut trees. The vineyards are certified organic and grow around 25 varieties of grapes – including those Pinot Noir grapes planted in 1964 on the HMR Vineyard. The original 23 acres of vines today produce around 1.5 tons per acre, with an additional 11 acres planted from cuttings of the original vines. And yes, they have a Pinot Noir from these vines available to taste!



The Wines: Adelaida's winemaking philosophy begins in the sustainably managed vineyards. The unique and varied sites are specifically designated to selected grape varieties, allowing for a range of wines that are expressive of the terroir. You'll find everything from Rhône reds and whites to **Burgundian varieties**. And of course, the Bordeaux varieties including **Cabernet Sauvignon**.

Winetraveler Tip: **Reserve a hilltop tasting** and experience a one-of-a-kind treat. You'll be driven up the road above the winery and your tasting will be poured under a canopy of oak trees at 2,200 feet with expansive and breathtaking views in every direction. It's utterly serene and you may never want to leave.

Next on up on our vista and wine adventure, we'll head about five minutes up Adelaida Road to our lunch destination — Tablas Creek — one of the original Rhône Rangers of the area.

Tablas Creek

The Story: Tablas Creek was formed in 1989 by two of the international wine community's leading families: the Perrin family, proprietors of Château de Beaucastel, and the Haas family of Vineyard Brands. The Tablas Creek Vineyard elevation averages 1,500 feet, and the rocky limestone soils match that of Beaucastel in Chateauneuf-du-Pape. Planting at the estate began in 1994 with vine cuttings of Mourvèdre, Grenache Noir, Syrah, Counoise, Roussanne, Viognier, Marsanne, Grenache Blanc and Picpoul Blanc imported from Beaucastel. The Tablas Creek Vineyard label debuted in 1997 as construction on the estate winery was underway. Since then, Tablas Creek has helped to put Paso Robles Rhône wines on the world stage.

The Wines: Tablas Creek Vineyard produces wines that balance richness and elegance with complexity, freshness, and **minerality**. Winemaking techniques include dry farming, native yeast fermentation and the use of large neutral French oak foudres. Production includes red wines from Mourvèdre, Grenache, Syrah and Counoise; white wines from Roussanne, Marsanne, Picpoul Blanc and Grenache Blanc. They also make two rosés from Grenache and Mourvèdre.

Winetraveler Tip: Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy after your tasting with a glass of wine on the shaded patio. The Rhône line-up is food friendly and a delightful way to spend your mid-day.

After relaxing and sipping through a leisurely picnic lunch, it's time to head to the western-most winery in the Paso Robles region and Adelaida District, JUSTIN. From Tablas Creek, you'll head northwest on Adelaida Road to Chimney Rock Road where you'll head west to JUSTIN Vineyards & Winery. The tasting room here is open daily. But for a more intimate experience, we recommend a reservation for the Reserve, Chateau or Private Cellar tasting which you can follow with dinner at JUSTIN Restaurant

JUSTIN Vineyards & Winery

The Story: First planted in 1981 by Justin Baldwin, who was on a mission to make world-class Bordeaux-style blends, JUSTIN has since consistently been ranked by **Wine Spectator** among the world's top 100 wines. JUSTIN credits both its site and expert winemakers for continuing the tradition of excellence at the winery. In the vineyard, the vines are

planted on fossilized limestone soils, which stress the vines and enable the grapes to express their full varietal character; and for the winemaking, JUSTIN combines Old World techniques such as hand-harvesting and sorting with New World technology and small barrel aging.

The Wines: JUSTIN is best known for its Bordeaux-style red wines including the renowned Isosceles line. First released in 1987, the Isosceles wines are comprised of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. However, even white wine lovers will find options here including Chardonnay, Viognier and Sauvignon Blanc.

Winetraveler Tip: The Restaurant at JUSTIN will take reservations on the same-day if made before 3 p.m. Three seatings are available at 6, 6:30 and 7:30. It's the perfect way to end your day. (Note: guests must be 12 years of age and older to dine at the Restaurant.)

Day 2

On this day I suggest one of two options. First, you can have a leisurely morning stroll in downtown Paso Robles and enjoy a nice breakfast before heading out. Or you can stop in at our bonus winery on the way to our first Adelaida District stop. Either way you decide, it's hard to go wrong. Should you choose the extra winery option, from town you'll take the 101 south to 46 West and then head northwest on scenic Vineyard Drive to our bonus stop.

Bonus Winery: *Opolo Vineyards*

The Story: Sitting along Vineyard Road is Opolo's Westside vineyard located in the Willow Creek District, which is where you'll also find the tasting room open at 10 a.m. Opolo's estate vineyards were established from 1994-1996 by neighbors and fellow wine lovers Rick Quinn and Dave Nichols. Today with sites on both the west and east side of Paso Robles, they have almost 300 acres focused primarily on Bordeaux varietals.



The Wines: While Opolo first began with a focus on Bordeaux style blends, today you'll find a wide-ranging line-up of wines from blends to single varietals including Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, Marsanne, Viognier and even a sparkling wine option.

Winetraveler Tip: See if you can score a sample of their homemade sausage to pair with one of their red wines. It's delish!

Now as we head back to our regularly scheduled Adelaida District winery tour, you will continue north on Vineyard Drive a short distance to Peachy Canyon Road. Here you'll head back east on a winding road up to your mid-day destination: Calcareous Winery.

Calcareous Winery.

The Story: Father and daughter Lloyd Messer and Dana Brown established Calcareous Vineyards in 2000 on one of the highest limestone plateaus on the westside of Paso Robles. Both experienced wine distributors from Iowa, they recognized the land's potential to produce world class wines and acquired 442 acres atop solid calcareous rock reaching 1,800 feet. Unfortunately, Lloyd passed on in 2006, but his daughter Dana advances their vision to let the soil speak. For Dana and her expert team, the most important aspect of a winery is its place. They believe the one thing that makes for the creation of uniqueness for wineries and their wines is the exact place the vines reside.



The Wines: The blends and single varietals at Calcareous are made to showcase one thing: the distinct and different characteristics of Paso Robles terroir. Calcareous Estate wines are produced from grapes grown at one of three vineyards producing small yields for a more profound sense of place. Winemaking techniques include small lot fermentations, extended maceration, no use of chemical fining, premium cooperages and minimal racking as the wine ages.

Winetraveler Tip: Enjoy lunch on the patio for an unforgettable afternoon. The menu offerings include a small selection of sandwiches from **Thomas Hill Organics**, which you will surely enjoy as you marvel at the expansive views sitting at 1,500 feet.

Our final stop on this itinerary will be made late afternoon and will take you even higher to an elevation of 2,200 feet for views that will leave your jaw dropped. From Calcareous, drive back west on Peachy Canyon Road to Vineyard Road. Turning right, you'll head north to Adelaida Road and head east to Hidden Mountain Road for a total travel time of roughly 15 minutes. Here is where you'll find the one-and-only DAOU Vineyards.

DAOU Vineyards

The Story: You will hear and read that Georges and Daniel Daou are inseparable as brothers, friends and visionaries. DAOU was their childhood dream, and a testament to the timelessness of love and family. This is true and tangible in every sense, from the team that welcomes you, to the wines that are poured – love, soul and family come through. And that's to say nothing of the insanely incredible views atop DAOU Mountain. Breathtaking and unbelievable are the only words that come to my mind.

Today Georges is the creative force behind the brand, whose goal is to bring the “jewels” of the mountains to all those wanting to walk the journey with DAOU. Daniel is the winemaker often found among the vines where he is dedicated to cultivating the purest expression of the terroir. You will not leave here unimpressed, in fact, it’s likely you’ll get chills, or even a tear, as you experience for yourself this truly special place overflowing with history, place, soul, love and family.



The Wines: All fruit from DAOU Mountain is hand-picked and sorted both by human eye and cutting-edge optical technology. Using only 100-percent free run juice, fermentation is initiated with native yeasts cultivated from the estate and customized by measuring phenolic composition and sensory analysis. While DAOU is best known for its Bordeaux-style blends including the renowned Soul of a Lion, we also recommend trying the Cabernet Franc at the tasting room when it’s available, as well as the forthcoming Barrel Reserve Chardonnay that just about blew my mind.

Winetraveler Tip: As we mentioned before, hints of what was once the HMR Ranch and Winery are still visible in Paso Robles. DAOU Vineyards sits on what was the Hoffman Mountain Ranch, and the DAOU cellar sits within the restored, original redwood HMR Winery. From high above at the DAOU tasting room you can see the cellar down the steep vineyards at the base of the valley.

Winetraveler Bonus Tip: When daylight is shorter in autumn and winter, make sure to grab a glass on the patio for a sunset extravaganza like no other.

We hope you’ve enjoyed this tour of Paso Robles with us. If you’re looking for any further recommendations, don’t hesitate to [**reach out to us at Winetraveler**](#). And if you missed any of the previous itineraries, click away (links below and all open in new tabs)!