



## 8 Places to Eat Really Well in Sonoma County, California

*Awesome dining is the norm, not the exception, in this section of wine country*

By Katie Chang, November 18, 2015

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Encompassing more than 1,600 square miles, Sonoma County, California, is an easy drive north from San Francisco and offers a distinctly more low-key vibe than neighboring Napa. The postcard-perfect scenery is seemingly endless, and the area is home to more than 400 wineries and countless farms, too. (Meaning there's loads of good eating to be found in Sonoma.) No wonder so many Bay Area residents and visitors from beyond head this way to escape the stressors of everyday life. Awesome dining is the norm, not the exception, in this section of wine country, and the eight spots listed below will have you humming about your meal long after leaving.

### John Ash & Co. and Vintners Inn Cafe

Surrounded by 92 acres of lush gardens and vineyards, the charming 44-room Vintners Inn in Santa Rosa is also home to two terrific restaurants. And this year, the Inn's fine-dining spot, John Ash & Co., celebrates its 35th anniversary and the tradition — many refer to founding chef John Ash as the “father of Wine Country cuisine” — of marrying artfully prepared food sourced from more than 30 local farmers with its extensive, award-winning wine collection. While Ash departed his eponymous restaurant years ago, executive chef Thomas Schmidt continues Ash's legacy with hearty plates such as fork-tender gochujang-glazed BN Ranch beef cheeks, hearty cauliflower steak, and rustic brick chicken. If you're in the mood for something more casual, pop by the restaurant's popular Front Room bar and lounge for some wallet-friendly daily drink and snack specials. Breakfast is an equally delicious affair at Vintners Inn Cafe, located steps from John Ash. It's

only open in the mornings and just might be one of the area's best kept secrets when it comes to starting your day off right. 4350 Barnes Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95403; 707-575-7350; [vintnersinn.com/johnash.asp](http://vintnersinn.com/johnash.asp)

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