



# TRAVEL TIPS

## Mendocino County Gains Acclaim As World-Class Wine Region

(NAPS)—Mendocino County, California, has finally arrived as a premier wine grape growing region. Long considered a backwater to the more familiar Napa and Sonoma regions by many wine critics, the county now finds wine lovers and travel aficionados beating a path to its door.

Located just two hours north of San Francisco, Mendocino County is a microcosm of California's best grape growing regions. The area is blessed with many micro-climates, including the cool coastal region of Anderson Valley, which favors Pinot Noir and Alsatian-style Riesling; prime Chardonnay soils of the Russian River valleys of Eureka and Ukiah in the southeast corner of the county; and warm interior hillsides of Redwood Valley and Potter Valley, known for some of the finest Cabernet Sauvignon.

Mendocino County is home to 7 wineries of various sizes ranging from the popular Fetzer Vineyards, the largest, to Duncan Vineyard, the smallest. In the mix of wineries are several sparkling wine producers, three brandy makers and what syndicated wine writer Dan Berger has described as "some of the finest wineries in the world."

Of course, Mendocino County's major asset is, and always has been, its grape growers. Across the hills and valleys can be found some of the most distinctive characters ever to ride a tractor. This healthy industry, comprised of more than 600 "mom-and-pop" farming families, has quietly turned Mendocino's precious grapes into some of the most sought-after agricultural commodities in California. Nowadays former aerospace workers, investment bankers, lawyers, and just plain working-class people have taken their place next to old-timers who have been farming since prohibition. Most have been drawn to the county's rugged beauty, clean



Winemaker Dennis Martin oversees the harvest at Fetzer's Mendocino County Winery, one of America's most popular wine producers.

water, blue skies and redwood- and oak-studded hillsides.

The county features seven distinct viticultural appellations: Mendocino, Redwood Valley,

Anderson Valley, McDowell Valley, Potter Valley, Mendocino Ridge and Cole Ranch. Federal approval is pending for one additional region, Yorkville Highlands, while two more — Ukiah Valley and Sanel Valley — are in the proposal stage.

"Mendocino County growers are the backbone of our company," says Fetzer winemaker Dennis Martin. "Quality Mendocino County grapes remain at the heart of our wine production, now being sold in all 50 states and 40 nations throughout the world."

During the past decade, organically grown grapes have become a major element in the agricultural landscape of the county, with Fetzer Vineyards and the Fetzer family leading the way. Bonterra Vineyards, a brand launched by Fetzer Vineyards several years ago, has become one of the more well-known wineries featuring organically grown Mendocino County grapes.

And a cottage industry of organic grape growing has sprung up, consisting of several other

local wineries (Frey Vineyards, Hidden Cellars, Yorkville Cellars, Lolonis Winery) and more than two dozen local grape growers. About 25 percent of the county's 15,000 producing vineyards acres are being farmed organically.

*For Classified Information Call 682-2913!*

## From Asheville to Beaufort, Bus Tour Connects NCSU Faculty With State

During a five-day bus tour across the state, North Carolina State University faculty and staff members will learn how university research is addressing environmental challenges throughout North Carolina.

The "Connecting in North Carolina" bus tour, an annual excursion for new faculty and professional staff members, is an introduction to the citizens, culture and economy of North Carolina — from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Atlantic coast. The scenic 1,200-mile trip runs May 18-22.

Stops along the tour route include research, extension, manufacturing and processing sites from the mountains to the sea, at locations ranging from Greensboro to New Bern, and Asheville to Beaufort.

This year, many of the stops share an environmental theme, in keeping with NC State's research expertise and extension initiatives in a wide variety of environmental areas. Among other things, the NC State representatives will:

- \* Talk with Rick Dove, the Neuse River Foundation "river keeper." Dr. Robert Bruck, coordinator of NC State University Environmental Programs, and Dr. Lunde Spence, marine education specialist with North Carolina Sea Grant, about water quality problems and the fish-killing microbe *Pfiesteria piscicida*.
- \* Learn about NC State's collaboration with a large furniture manufacturer to reduce the emissions of volatile organic compounds.
- \* Hear how the NC State Minerals Research Laboratory helps mining industries solve environmental problems.
- \* Learn about the livestock industry's response to environmental regulations, water treatment and health-related issues.

As they learn about the people, natural resources and history of the state, members of the group also will see firsthand how NC State improves the quality of life and economic development of Connect - the state. At the same time, they'll have the chance to look for their own opportunities to apply the university's expertise to practical challenges.

"Connecting in North Carolina," was launched in 1995 by NC State Provost Phillip Siles. It offers an opportunity for new faculty and professional staff members to better understand students' hometown roots, meet successful graduates, and discover the variety of ways NC State meets the state's teaching, research and extension needs.

The tour enriches faculty members in the classroom and in their research and outreach efforts by helping foster relationships outside NC State and within the university, said Sondra Kirsch, vice provost for outreach, extension and continuing studies. "All of the faculty have gained a greater sense of pride in where they're working, what being a land-grant institution means and how they're a part of that," she said.

Kirsch said past tour participants have used the trip to build research and service partnerships with the representatives of the private and public institutions they visited.

### 1998 Wine Events In Mendocino County

Mendocino County wineries host a number of wine and food events each year, including the popular Mendocino County Winegrowers Alliance Wine Auction & Barbecue, to be held this year on June 27 in Hopland. Here are other major 1998 wine tasting events in the county:

- Mendocino Whale Festival, March 7-8, Mendocino
- Fort Bragg Whale Festival, March 21-22, Fort Bragg
- Hopland Winery Spring Passport Weekend, April 4-5, Hopland
- Ukiah Mairi Street Grand Tasting, May 29, Ukiah
- A Taste Of Redwood Valley, June 20-21, Redwood Valley
- Handley Cellars—Expressions Of Anderson Valley, July 18, Ukiah
- Wine Tasting, Eureka/Potter Valley

July 25-26, Greenwood Ridge, Anderson Valley

• Winesong!—Mendocino Coast Hospital Wine Auction, Sept. 12, Fort Bragg

• Celebration Of The Harvest, Fetzer Vineyards, October, Hopland

• Hopland Harvest Passport Weekend, Oct 24-25, Hopland

• Fetzer Holiday Celebration, November-December, Hopland

For more information or a map of Mendocino County that lists all of its wineries, call the Mendocino Winegrowers Alliance at (707) 744-1363. For more about Mendocino Coast events, call the Mendocino/Fort Bragg Coast Chamber of Commerce at (707) 961-6300. For more about upcoming Fetzer Vineyards events, call (800) 846-6637.