



A WINE LOVER'S DREAM

In the heart of Sonoma, wake up among the vines of a working vineyard with a unique stay at Vintner's Cottage.

BY CORTNI DIETZ PHOTOGRAPHS BY VANCE FOX



(left)

COZY RETREAT

Vintner's Cottage, nestled on the property of Blue Rock Vineyard, evokes the feel of the French countryside in the heart of Sonoma.

A SIP BY THE POOL

Members have full access to roam the property—and use the pool—even after the vineyard closes for the day.



RELAX IN THE OUTDOORS

The grounds of Vintner's Cottage date back to the 1800s.

BLUE ROCK VINEYARDS

One of life's simple pleasures is opening a bottle of wine at the end of a long day or workweek, when surrounded by friends, or right before diving into a good book.

But have you ever thought about the journey wine takes before it gets to the bottle? For Inspirato members curious about the winemaking process, a one-of-a-kind, immersive experience awaits in Sonoma: a stay at Vintner's Cottage.

Vintner's Cottage sits on the property of a family-owned winery: Blue Rock Vineyard. Blue Rock got its start as a winery in the 1800s run by Italian immigrants. Vintner's Cottage itself was once the site of Villa Maria winery, but that operation was shuttered during Prohibition. In 1987, Kenny and Cheryl Kahn bought the property, which became the sustainability-focused winery that it is today.

"It's a true hidden gem, tucked into a breathtaking section of Alexander Valley. The grounds have an incredible history, dating back to the mid-1800s. The vineyards are speckled with gorgeous blue serpentine rock," said Carla Jeffries, Blue Rock's director of hospitality. "In fact, serpentine is used in much of the landscaping throughout the estate and in the walls of the home."

Serpentine rock—so named for the group of minerals that make it up—is both the winery's namesake and California's state rock. It plays a distinct role in California's plant life, with 10 percent of the state's native flora growing on serpentine soils.

Yet what makes Blue Rock truly different, Jeffries said, is that walking through its gate is like being transported to a different place and time.

"Time truly seems to stand still here. We like to say our guests are hugged—figuratively and literally—by the land,



and by those of us who are its stewards,” Jeffries said. “We’re passionate about this special place—the grapes we grow, the wines we craft, and the guests we meet.”

Blue Rock is also about 15 minutes north of downtown Healdsburg, a charming Sonoma County stopover with a beautiful town square, art galleries, boutiques, antique shops, and farm-to-table restaurants.

Inspirato members who have stayed at the historic home—a French stone cottage reminiscent of the European countryside, boasting its own private pool and a bocce ball court—have loved the opportunity to be in the midst of the action of a working vineyard.

Member Michelle T. usually travels to Napa Valley for wine-tasting excursions, but she and her group opted for Sonoma on their recent trip for a new experience.

Michelle had high praise for the home—“French country expertly crafted with luxury amenities”—and said the entire property has an air of magic about it. Her group also loved getting the chance to sit down with Blue Rock staff to learn more about the ins and outs of winemaking.

“We spent two hours with our hosts by the fireplace learning the history of the vineyard and gaining insight to the complexity of the winemaking process, starting with the soil nurturing the grapevines,” she said.

Another Inspirato member, Rebecca M., chose an off-season stay at Vintner’s Cottage for her first visit to wine country, and her first trip with Inspirato.

“The cottage was quaint, beautifully decorated, very comfortable—absolutely amazing,” she said. “The grounds were breathtaking, even though we stayed there (at the) end of January, first of February.”

She was particularly impressed with Alicia, the Inspirato Destination Concierge in Sonoma.

“Our concierge, Alicia, really went above and beyond to ensure our trip was the best. She put together the perfect itinerary of restaurants, wineries, transportation, groceries, etc.,” Rebecca said. “She even made sure we had extra firewood, fresh chocolate chip cookies daily, and a bottle of Baby Blue wine from the winery sitting on the table.”

And a trip to Vintner’s Cottage during the fall provides a special opportunity: getting to see the harvesting of the grapes up close, a treat for Inspirato member Bruce M.

“We had the opportunity to join an early-morning harvest, and we enjoyed a truly exceptional farm-to-table lunch in a dining room built for that purpose, overlooking the vineyard through a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows,” he said. “Carla and the rest of the Blue Rock team were extraordinarily hospitable, and very accommodating.”

Bruce also said he was perfectly happy to stay on the property in the evening—members have free rein to explore after the winery closes at 6 p.m.—and grill up some steaks, pairing them with Blue Rock wines. (He recommends the Best Barrel Cabernet Sauvignon.)

Wine aficionado or not, any Inspirato member with an interest in the winemaking process should consider a stay at Vintner’s Cottage for their next trip to wine country.

“My only regret is that our stay ended before we had a chance to try out the bocce lawn,” Bruce said, “but we’ll make a point of that the next time we stay here!” ❖



(from top to bottom)

BEAUTY ABOUNDS

The vineyard’s namesake blue serpentine rock is used throughout much of the property’s landscaping.

WINEMAKERS DREAM

Blue Rock was bought by its current owners, Kenny and Cheryl Kahn, in 1987.

DINNER WITH A VIEW

The cottage’s dining room, with floor-to-ceiling windows, was built for taking in gorgeous vineyard views while enjoying a farm-to-table meal.

