

WorldMark
BY Trendwest

Destinations

A Magazine Exclusively for WorldMark Owners

July 2003

WorldMark's WINE COUNTRY

Windsor • Clear Lake • Angels Camp

Vineyards and Vintages
The New Windsor Castle
Jumping Frogs and
Giant Redwoods



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Destinations

A Magazine Exclusively for WorldMark Owners

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Drink In The Good Life

There's something about the California wine country—the very air you inhale seems special. The rich earth, the fragrant vines, the warm sunshine and the soft breezes all combine to put you in a relaxed yet heady mood even before you've had that first sip of the first tasting at the first vineyard on your list. You breathe deep and know you've entered The Good Life.

WorldMark's primary reason for being is to bring you this delectable feeling as often as you can fit it into your schedule. In this issue of *Destinations*, Keith Walsh previews WorldMark Windsor, our newest California location. Tucked into the heart of Sonoma County, Windsor presents an opportunity to tour family-owned wineries and savor the unique flavor of small-town life. While in the area, Keith visited a couple of old Northern California friends—WorldMark Clear Lake and WorldMark Angels Camp—to help reacquaint you with the many charms of these two favorite getaways.

In this month's Spotlight section you'll get a preview of WorldMark TravelSecure, an exciting new concept that was first mentioned in April's edition of *Destinations*. WorldMark TravelSecure is the first service being brought to you by the WorldMark Owner Network, a program available exclusively to WorldMark owners that will revolutionize the way you stay connected while traveling.

It's always exhilarating to present you with innovative solutions that enable you to better enjoy your precious vacation time. The reason you became a WorldMark owner is the same reason we're all here: To help make your life The Good Life.

Basta Jachowski Baker



WORLD MARK CLEAR LAKE / PHOTO BY DAN STEARNS

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The alternative to wine country is already yours at this gold country resort.

COVER: Mission charm at WorldMark Clear Lake. (Photo by Dan Stearns)





Our U-2's exciting new design comes to life. (Photo by Scott Sites)

Miss Trendwest Soars Again!

Trendwest Resorts, Inc. will once again be represented in the thrill-a-minute world of unlimited hydroplane racing when the *Miss Trendwest* takes to the water for the 2003 racing season. Jim Harvey Motorsports—one of the most prestigious names in the U-2 racing world—continues as our partner in what had been dubbed “Water Racing’s Greatest Show.”

Just as we were ahead of the curve in initiating point-based vacation ownership, Trendwest is at the forefront again with the revolutionary design of this year’s *Miss Trendwest*. Noted veteran driver Terry Troxell

will pilot this innovative vessel with its groundbreaking technology. Terry has been racing boats for over 35 years, winning four National Championships, numerous divisional championships and induction into the American Power Boat Association Hall of Champions.

WorldMark owners will again have the opportunity to enjoy a day on the shores of Lake Washington and cheer their own U-2 champion on to victory during this year’s Seafair in Seattle, Washington—see page 15 of this issue for details.

CORRECTIONS

In the June issue of *Destinations*, our article introducing WorldMark Cape Schanck in Australia stated that North American owners may book their vacations at this resort up to 10 months out. The correct time frame is up to 11 months out.

On the Adventure page of the June issue, the dates of the three-night Baja “Mexican Valentine” cruise were listed as February 13–16, 2003. The correct dates are February 13–16, 2004.



Next Month in Your Magazine

Here’s what’s on deck for the August issue of *Destinations*:

- WorldMark Board of Directors and nominee profiles
- Board history
- The WorldMark Owner Network

COMMENT CARD DRAWING

We Have a Winner!

Congratulations to **Simon and Konnie Brewer** of Salt Lake City, Utah! They are the winners of a three-night stay at the WorldMark resort of their choice. Their completed resort comment card was chosen in our latest monthly drawing. When you take the time to fill out a card, you help us improve our service and increase your chances for vacation opportunities!



in Steamboat Springs

WorldMark Steamboat Springs is pleased to announce that the resort is now equipped with air conditioning. We are happy to provide this option for those days when the fresh mountain air coming through your windows just isn’t cool enough.



WorldMark St. George joins the Premier Club.

Resort Managers' Meeting in Las Vegas

On May 5, 2003, WorldMark management descended upon Las Vegas in record numbers for the 14th Annual Resort Managers' Meeting hosted by Dave Akins, Corporate Director of Resort Operations. Regional directors and leaders from the Redmond corporate office joined resort managers from 48 properties for two stimulating days in the desert before the start of the busy summer season.

This year's theme, "Catching The Next Wave," explored ways in which our organization continues to be innovative from a technological, educational and personal perspective. Guest speaker Howard Nussbaum, President of the American Resort Development Association (ARDA), kicked off the meeting by expressing his appreciation of Trendwest's significant role in the timeshare industry. WorldMark directors and managers shared initiatives their departments were pursuing to ensure WorldMark keeps its edge as one of the most enticing vacation ownership offerings available.

20 resorts achieved Premier Club status for 2003 by consistently meeting benchmarks for excellence as indicated by owners' ratings on resort comment cards collected throughout 2002. Those resorts were Bass Lake, Bear Lake, Bison Ranch, Branson, The Canadian, Clear Lake, Depoe Bay, Fiji, Kapaa Shores, Kihei, Kona, Lake of the Ozarks, Las Vegas, Oceanside Harbor, Park Village, Pinetop, Reno, South Shore, St. George and Vistoso.

Congratulations!

FAREWELL

Seaside's Dolna Mespelt

Trendwest and WorldMark lost a good friend when Dolna Mespelt, longtime Executive Director of the Seaside Downtown Development Association (SDDA), passed away suddenly on May 15, 2003.

An enthusiastic proponent for the town of Seaside, Oregon, where she had made her home for over 30 years, Dolna served her community tirelessly and lovingly. She spent many years as Project Coordinator for the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and helped form the SDDA to help Seaside's downtown core maintain its unique charm while remaining fiscally viable.



Dolna Mespelt at her desk at the SDDA. (Photo by Steven Baker)

Although she was the city's ultimate cheerleader, Dolna was a consummate pragmatist. It was this quality that helped ally her with Trendwest when WorldMark Seaside—the city's largest structure to date—was first proposed. Many residents resisted the idea of such a grand building situated directly on one of Oregon's best beaches. Dolna researched Trendwest and WorldMark and, confident in her findings, led a charge of fervent support for the resort, a project she felt would strongly benefit her city. "We have been the state's oldest resort community on the Northern coast for 150 years," she stated. "We know how to be a resort community... Why re-invent the wheel?"

Dolna Mespelt will be soundly missed by all who knew her and by the city she served so well.

Contributions in her name can be made to the SDDA Winter Lighting Fund or Flower Basket Fund, SDDA, P.O. Box 133, Seaside, Oregon 97138-0133.

INVENTORY SPECIALS

LAST BLAST OF SUMMER

During the month of August, you can vacation at the following resorts for just four cents per credit. Call the Vacation Planning Center at 1-800-457-0103 to make your reservations.

MIDWEEK AND LIMITED WEEKENDS

Rancho Vistoso, AZ

EXOTIC

Denarau Island, Fiji

MIDWEEK ONLY

Bison Ranch, AZ

Branson, MO

Pinetop, AZ

Midweek stays must take place Sunday through Thursday. Reservations at the above resorts are not subject to the 14-day booking window, and you may book multiple units. Labor Day weekend (August 30 — September 1) is excluded.





Summer Birthday Gift Solution

WORLDMARK GIFT CERTIFICATES

Is someone special in your life celebrating a summer birthday? Give them the gift of relaxation—a WorldMark Gift Certificate! Non-fattening, always a perfect fit and they'll never have to dust it. Call 1-800-457-0103 today and let the Vacation Planning Center be your one-stop shop to give the gift of WorldMark.

- TWO-NIGHT WEEKEND GETAWAY**
\$299 USD*
- FOUR-NIGHT MIDWEEK ESCAPE**
\$399 USD
- SEVEN-NIGHT DREAM VACATION**
\$795 USD

**Please note corrected price. Gift certificates are redeemed with FAX credits and are subject to Owner Guidelines. Certificates are valid for any size unit (excluding penthouses) and must be booked within a year for travel no more than two years from date of issue.*

WorldMark Galena

Be Our Guest in the Midwest

WorldMark owners will soon be welcomed at our newest Midwestern destination in Galena, Illinois. Tucked into the northwest corner of the state near the Mississippi River, Galena is second only to Chicago as the most visited location in Illinois. Its rugged cliffs and luscious rolling hills reflect a primal beauty that survived the ravages of the Ice Age's leveling glaciers, and is so lovely that local Native Americans declared it to be "Manitoomie"—"God's Country."

Once a teeming center of lead ore mining, steamboat transport and commerce, the city's boom quieted after the Civil War; the town and its superb Gothic and Victorian architecture remained a hidden treasure until the 1960s. Since then, Galena and surrounding Jo Daviess

County have become a resort and tourism mecca, offering the unbeatable combination of natural beauty and gracious amenities.

Guests in Galena will be housed in stylish comfort and can expect the characteristic WorldMark features such as a fireplace and inviting deck; the resort also has an indoor pool, spa, sauna, exercise facility and game room. Four world-class golf courses beckon at nearby Eagle Ridge, including their newest 18-hole challenge, The General. Outdoor activity opportunities abound at the Shenandoah Riding Center, Apple River Canyon State Park and Chestnut Mountain Ski Resort. A Mississippi River-themed indoor water park at the Grand Harbor Resort in nearby Dubuque, Iowa, guarantees splashing fun.

WorldMark Galena is scheduled to begin receiving guests this autumn.



TOP: Charming downtown Galena. **BOTTOM:** WorldMark Galena's inviting entrance. (Photos by Dan Stearns)

BREAKING NEWS

This is W-O-N

In the April issue of *Destinations*, Vice President of Resort Operations Dave Herrick introduced you to the concept of a travel assistance program under development that would be available exclusively to WorldMark owners. We are happy to announce that plans for this program have achieved a scope far beyond simple roadside aid and medical support.

The **WorldMark Owner Network**—or **WON**—is being created as your own personal communication network: Your ultimate connection every time you're on vacation. Over time, we'll be adding more advanced capabilities to help you connect with others within the WorldMark network. WON will allow you to travel with greater confidence and peace of mind than you've ever experienced before.

The first program to roll out under WON will be **WorldMark TravelSecure**. A comprehensive service you can access via a toll-free number or, eventually, over the



Web, WorldMark TravelSecure will offer

- A round-the-clock medical assistance call center
- \$25,000 emergency medical evacuation*
- \$1,000 accident and sickness expense*
- Emergency roadside assistance*
- Up to \$800 lost luggage and personal effects insurance*

And much, much more, all for only **\$39 per family, per year for all your WorldMark vacations!** This means that while you're on your WorldMark vacation, all of your family *and guests* staying at your

WorldMark resort are covered under this extraordinary policy.

Look for details in the August issue of *Destinations* and stay tuned—the WorldMark Owner Network is on the way!

**Terms and conditions apply.*

Initially may only be available to owners in selected states. Any proceeds from WorldMark TravelSecure and other WorldMark Owner Network services help reduce WorldMark operating expenses. Check with your vacation counselor for details. WorldMark TravelSecure service provided by Goodwell Travel Communications, Inc. in affiliation with On Call International.

construction zone

SPECIAL OFFER
for Interval International Members Only

This Month's Featured
Getaways

One-Week Accommodations

Hilton Head, South Carolina
1 Bedroom: **\$749**

Vail/Avon, Colorado
1 Bedroom: **\$359**

Orlando, Florida
1 Bedroom: **\$399**

Use of the Getaway program is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Individual Membership and Exchange set forth in the current Interval International Resort Directory. Getaways are subject to availability. Holidays and highly demanded weeks are generally not available or may be priced differently. You do not relinquish the member price that you paid. Getaway cancellations are final and non-refundable. Getaways are subject to local taxes where applicable. Travel must be completed by October 31, 2003.

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GALENA

Activity at WorldMark's first "dot on the map" in the state of Illinois is progressing in a timely manner. Condos have been acquired and registered, remodeling is underway and schedules for loading units have been coordinated. Reservations are now officially being accepted for this Midwestern destination, and 27 studios, 21 one-bedroom and seven two-bedroom condos will start receiving guests as of December 1, 2003. This date will move forward as refurbishment progresses.

**Seaside = 169 WorldMark + 114 Residence Club; South Shore II = 51 WorldMark + 59 Residence Club. Information as of June 10, 2003.*

ONGOING PROJECTS

ANGELS CAMP II, CA

No. Units: 88
Est. Completion: Summer 2003
Status: Finishing to operational

SEASIDE, OR

No. Units: *283
Est. Completion: Summer 2003
Status: Finishing

SEATTLE, WA (Camlin Hotel)

No. Units: 100
Est. Completion: Summer 2004
Status: Acquisition

SOUTH SHORE PHASE II, NV

No. Units: *110
Est. Completion: Summer 2003
Status: Final inspection

WINDSOR PHASE I, CA

No. Units: 150
Est. Completion: Autumn 2003
Status: Sheetrock to landscaping

WorldMark's Mark

BY KEITH WALSH

in California's Wine Country

Taste the Flavor of the Russian River Valley

I am a wine expert, by which I mean I can expertly uncork a bottle, pour the libation into a glass without spilling and imbibe without losing a drop through my nose. I'm serious about wines that way. Maybe I can't always tell a Zinfandel from a Syrah, but I can tell what I like. I can even drum up some proper descriptive posturing: Oaky with a hint of cranberry and a little juniper, or dusty with earthy overtones and a cherry finish.

No wonder I landed the assignment to visit California's wine country, to find out what wonders await WorldMark owners who visit our new resort in Windsor. I set out to cover it all—Highway 101 and Windsor in Sonoma County, Clear Lake and its neighbor Lake Mendocino, gold country and the vineyards close to WorldMark Angels Camp and the most celebrated wine region of all: Napa Valley.

Windsor and the Russian River Valley

Sonoma County, one of the premium grape producing regions in the world, hugs the Pacific Coast north of Marin County and west of Napa. It's home to 11 different appellations and more than 200 wineries. Within its fertile boundaries you'll find your newest WorldMark destination, midway between Santa Rosa and Healdsburg, situated off Route 101 adjacent to the Windsor Golf Club.

WorldMark Windsor will open its first 150 units this September (in time for the 2003 grape crush); 78 additional

units in Phase II will open in 2004. The resort measures up to the bed-and-breakfast feel of wine country, with arches and exposed beams on the outside and spacious living rooms with fireplaces and comfortable furnishings inside. Phase I buildings are all oriented to overlook the pool area, where a kidney-shaped pool, stone barbecue area, children's pool and three hot tubs issue an invitation to relax after a full day of tasting, touring and shopping. An added bonus is the proximity to the golf club, which is not only renowned for its course but also for Charlie's, a gourmet restaurant that serves steak, seafood, chicken, pasta and even duck.

So where is the wine? All around you, for the Russian River—the water source for five appellations—runs south through the county until it turns westward through Windsor. To tour the vineyards and wineries, simply follow the river north to Healdsburg (pronounced “HEELds-berg”) and then Geyeserville, or head west along River Road on the way to Guerneville and the coast.

A smorgasbord of tasting options awaits in Healdsburg: **Windsor Vineyards**, **Gallo of Sonoma** and a few others have set up tasting rooms in town. Windsor Vineyards, which is headquartered back in Windsor next to the Town Green, sells their wine only from their tasting room and by mail order. This is where to order your own personal vintages, specially labeled for your retirement party or family reunion. The French Colombard and other fruity whites are good selections and



Young grapes on the vine.



Niebaum-Coppola Winery.



Oakville Grocery in Oakville, CA.



Mondavi vines.

the prices are extremely reasonable. A few doors down you'll find Gallo of Sonoma, the premium label for the brand started by Ernest and Julio. Unlike most tasting rooms that contain only a small wine bar and a few gift items, this place invites you to stay awhile with barstools and tables. Enjoy the Chardonnay (particularly quenching in hot weather) and the Pinot Gris.

The must-do tour in the area is the **Korbel Champagne Cellars** in Guerneville. The old-world buildings on the estate are imposing and dramatic and the stone cellar and museum will leave you with lots of impressive tidbits to share the next time you break out a bottle of bubbly with friends.

Sonoma Valley

Route 12 East from Santa Rosa leads you into the Sonoma Valley and ties together three cities: Kenwood, Glen Ellen and Sonoma. Before reaching Napa, you can find yourself in twenty different tasting rooms if you're not careful. Along this road you'll find some of the oldest vineyards in California: **Buena Vista Carneros** dates back to 1857, **Bartholomew Park Winery** to 1864 and **Sebastiani Sonoma Cask Cellars** to 1904.

There is no Glen Ellen Winery in Glen Ellen today, but you can visit the **Benzinger Family Winery**, where Bruno Benzinger started the Glen Ellen business before selling it to a major corporation. Tour the estate and sample a sweet dessert wine. **Ravenswood** is another brand name you might recognize, notable for pleasant Zinfandels, Cabernets and Merlots.

Napa Valley

As you turn left and head north on Route 29 from Napa, prepare yourself for grandeur—the wineries between here and St. Helena are a far cry from Mom and Pop shops. Robert Mondavi, Niebaum-Coppola, Sutter Home and Beringer are all here. Due to the vast number of visitors—many of whom tend to sample wine without buying any—most of these wineries charge tasting fees that range from \$3 USD for a selection of four or five wines to \$30 USD for a sampling of private reserves.

To say you've properly done the wine country, you must visit the grounds of the **Robert Mondavi Winery** and the **Niebaum-Coppola Winery**. Besides tasting, both provide guided or self-guided tours. There's even a museum in Niebaum-Coppola that takes you through Hollywood director Francis Ford Coppola's family tree, early screenwriting efforts and illustrious filmmaking career. It was the proceeds of his film *The Godfather* that made the purchase of this estate from Inglenook possible.

When your trip is over, you'll no doubt find yourself lingering a little longer in your local wine section, as I have since I've returned home, more familiar with the names of valleys, estates and wineries. And as you uncork a bottle for friends, you will describe for them the landscape of brown hills slashed with lines of vineyards and the hot sunny days you spent sampling the bounties of this countryside. You too will be a wine expert, just like me. 🍷



Old Downtown in Windsor. (Photo by Keith Walsh)

Windsor: The Village Grows Up



Windsor became a city just 11 years ago and already it has become a vital economic force in Sonoma County. Evidence of its progress in creating a lively downtown is the new Town Green and Old Downtown. Mind you, Old Downtown is anything but old; its grand opening took place on June 26 of this year. But it's charming in its bold optimism and its aesthetics. When complete, an entire block of 19th century-looking three-story buildings, filled with shops, offices and condominiums, will grace the south side of the Green. This summer the Green comes to life on Sunday mornings with a farmers market and on Thursday nights with music concerts.



Mondavi Winery.



Windsor Winery headquarters on the Green.
(All photos by Keith Walsh)

Sonoma County Harvest Fair
October 3 – 5, 2003



Russian River Barrel Tasting
March 6 – 7, 2004



Heart of the Valley Barrel Tasting
March 20 – 21, 2004

Destinations Planner Windsor, CA

Getting There: WorldMark Windsor accommodations range from studio-sized units (with a Murphy bed in the living room) to three-bedroom deluxe units that sleep eight. One week in a two-bedroom unit during Red Season is 10,000 credits. The most convenient airport to the resort in Windsor is Oakland International, though Sacramento and San Francisco can work, too.

What to Do: The Windsor Golf Club is a simple walk down the driveway. It's a challenging par-72 course that plays host to PGA Nike Tour events. Rates are reasonable, and club rentals are available.

Sonoma Coast State Beach is just an hour west and has long sandy beaches separated by rugged coastline.

For wine tasting, get on the Napa Valley Wine Train at the McKinstry Street Station in Napa or take a bus, van or limousine tour. Request a Sonoma County Visitor's Guide by calling 1-707-996-1090 or visit www.sonomavalley.com. A map of Russian River wineries is available from Russian River Wine Road: 1-800-723-6336.

Special Dining Suggestion:

The Culinary Institute of America is located in St. Helena and its Wine Spectator Restaurant on campus is open to the public. For lunch or dinner reservations call 1-707-967-1010.



Culinary Institute of America at Greystone.

BY KEITH WALSH

Clearly a Superior View

The Wine Country's Northern Rim

We approached Clear Lake on Route 175, crossing from US-101 in Hopland to Route 29 in Lake County. This is not a trail for the faint of heart and I must admit that I learned to some degree the limits of my courage. In tight switchbacks, the road climbs over a mountain—not a pass between mountains, but the mountain itself. Our rental had a little outside temperature gauge and we watched the digits drop as we ascended.

But lo! At last we reached the summit and the lake came into view. The wondrous sight of it spread out before us—the widest vista of green mountains and blue water I'd ever seen.

Clear Lake is the largest natural freshwater lake in California and from all perspectives it is phenomenal. Sixty-four square miles of surface area and 100 miles of shoreline, framed on all sides by impressive hills. This is recreation paradise!

Sitting on the north shore is the splendidly restored Mission-style building that houses WorldMark Clear Lake's clubhouse. Its distinctive look sums up the WorldMark experience: Tradition, style, function and comfort.

The rich colors of walnut and oak in the clubhouse are carried into the condominiums. Our two-bedroom unit overlooked the pool, with the lake in the background. Here the kitchen cabinets and wood furniture provided the sophisticated wood tones and the roomy couch and high-armed chairs provided relief from the long drive. We decided on a simple run to the grocery store for dinner; we'd try eating out tomorrow.

The next day we got our first chance to see the countryside and visit the local vintners. We rode into the Redwood Valley, which runs north of Highway 20 along Route 101 and feeds the Russian River Valley.

Our first stop was **Redwood Valley Cellars**, which has one of the most distinctive tasting rooms of all the wineries we visited. A former champagne cellar, the building once resembled an upside-down champagne glass. The wines poured here are made from organically grown grapes of the Barra of Mendocino vineyards. We liked the Petite Sirah, which had a bold flavor, and the Muscat Canelli, a dessert wine that comes in a full-size 750 ml bottle.

In the Redwood Valley we also visited **Gabrielli Winery**, where we sampled an old-vine Zinfandel and learned what “dusty” means when applied to flavor and **Fife Vineyards**, the host to a very popular wine club—piles of boxes bearing subscribers' names crowded the store while we were there. Fife's specialty is red wine, so much so that they produce no whites at all. Our host was proudest of the Zinfandel and we went home with a couple of bottles plus some of their Petite Sirah.

Tasting in Style in the Redwood Valley

Our journey begins with a simple question: "What kind of wine do you enjoy?"

Robert Folk, proprietor of The Limousine Connection, is our guide, and he takes his mission seriously. He opens the limousine doors for my wife and me, makes sure we are absolutely comfortable and tells us that the bottle of champagne on ice is complimentary. And then he adds that the big red wines I told him are my favorites are just 20 minutes away.

Robert narrates the drive westward on Route 20. We learn the history of Clear Lake and Lake Mendocino all the way back to the ice age. It's clear he loves introducing WorldMark owners to the area.

Our wine trip is scheduled for six hours with 11 wineries chosen. At each stop, Robert states which wines he likes and when we enter he's always greeted enthusiastically. We meet a few other WorldMark owners and start to chat; Robert whisks our wine purchases away and stows them in the limo's trunk. We experience seven tasting rooms at a relaxed tempo, often getting the full attention of the winery owners and always getting great advice from our guide Robert.

The Limousine Connection is on-site at WorldMark Clear Lake Monday through Saturday. A variety of tours are available, and a vacation credits payment option is available. Contact the resort front desk at 1-707-274-0118 for more information.



Robert Folk of The Limousine Connection.

Vintage



Views of WorldMark Clear Lake.
(All photos by Keith Walsh)

A decade ago, the Fetzer family sold the brand that bears their name to Brown-Forman Beverages Worldwide. The deal contained a non-competition agreement that kept the family from opening any new wineries for 10 years. This year, the first of many new wineries that carry on the Fetzer legacy opened **Jeriko Estate**, owned by Dan Fetzer and located on Route 101 in Hopland. The winery building itself compares to the most elegant in the Napa Valley and the wines are sure to follow. Its inaugural list contains four offerings: Two Chardonnays, a Pinot Noir and a Sangiovese. I really liked the fullness of the latter and the crisp, butterless flavor of the Chardonnay. The influence of the Fetzers will soon be felt more directly at WorldMark Clear Lake, as Dan's brother Jim is building a 270-acre food and wine center on the shores of the lake between Nice and Lucerne to complement his organic vineyard operation in Mendocino County.

The only distillery we saw on our trip was at **Jepson Vineyards**. Besides a nice selection of white and red wines, a few dessert wines and brandies are on their tasting menu. I fell in love with the Zinfandel Mistel, a sweet berry-flavored wine.

While tasting and comparing vintages at Jepson, we got to know two other couples who were staying at our resort in Clear Lake. Perhaps it was partly the brandy we were enjoying, but in a short time we got to know each other and discovered what things we had in common. I realized as were saying goodbye that this was what always makes my WorldMark stays special: Not just the beautiful setting or the comfortable accommodations, but this feeling of belonging to a community, of having a vacation home that comes complete not only with a kitchen but with friendly people like these who are open to conversation and willing to make connections. ☒

For your WorldMark Clear Lake Destinations Planner, see *Destinations Extra* on the WorldMark Web site.



Angels Camp: The Other Wine Country

Vineyards Thrive Again in Gold Country

BY KEITH WALSH

L Duck low as you climb the cement stairs into the basement tasting room of **Zucca Mountain Vineyards**; under the exposed beams and plumbing you'll find a few bottles of great tasting wine and the friendliest service in town. This was how my tour of Calaveras wineries began, with samples of the entire list of Zucca wines save the Sauvignon Blanc that had all been shipped to the L.A. County Fair. I compared the Zinfandel to the Syrah and decided to buy a few bottles of Syrah Port, mostly as gifts. I also got to know my host, who has relatives near my home; we just might meet up this summer when he goes to visit them.

Such are the delights of wine tasting in the Sierra foothills, where people-traffic, especially on a weekday, is light, and where the winery staff can take the time to talk to you about the weather, about wines and about life. The experience of these pleasantries came to me by way of my stay at WorldMark Angels Camp, another bastion of great service and an alternative to the bustling wine regions of Napa and Sonoma.

My two-bedroom condominium overlooked the 10th fairway of the Greenhorn Creek Golf Course. The resort has seen a good deal of refurbishment this year, with most rooms receiving new furniture and carpeting. As well, construction of the additional 88 units is nearing completion, pushing

Angels Camp into the ranks of the largest WorldMark resorts. There is much to like about this setting, from the sunsets over the golf course to the pool and the spacious hot tub. And then there are the vineyards.

Most people already know the Angels Camp area for the 1848 discovery of gold—so plentiful it flowed down streams and into the pans of many an ambitious prospector. The climate and the prosperity of the region led a few of these prospectors to try their hands at winemaking, and the gold country was, for a short time, the most—pardon the pun—fruitful region in California with more than 100 wineries.

The end of the gold rush and prohibition dampened the industry considerably, but by the 1970s vineyards were beginning to reappear on hillsides in El Dorado, Amador and Calaveras Counties. Today the area is home to about 50 wineries, many of which are winning awards. In Calaveras County's dozen wineries, you'll find an abundance of big fruity Zinfandels and Cabernet Francs as well as more than a few light and zesty Sauvignon Blancs and Chardonnays.

The wine route on which I embarked led me up a gentle incline eight miles from our resort to the town of Murphys. Murphys has the slightest advantage in altitude, which apparently makes all the difference in growing wine grapes.

While there are a couple of wineries just north of our resort, a full day or two of tasting can be found in Murphys, interspersed with antique, knick-knack and gift shopping and capped off with excellent dining options.

An old service station on Main Street is the quirky home of **Milliaire** (pronounced “mill-YAY”), where Steve and Liz Millier set up shop in 1991. The car repair bay is now a cool storage area for cases of wine and Liz takes her time describing the offerings. Her husband Steve, who doubles as the winemaker for Ironstone Vineyards, concocts reds with the distinctive Calaveras spiciness as well as a nice buttery Chardonnay.

Stevenot Winery (pronounced “STEVE-a-no”) has a tasting room on Main Street, but to get the full experience you really must venture out to the homestead on Sheep Ranch Road. The two-mile winding trail passes the famous Mercer Caverns into a valley of vineyards to a tasting room that was once the family kitchen. You'll get a vivid impression of 19th-century life in the foothills from the room's sturdy aged wood floors and the huge fireplace that once served double duty as both furnace and stove. My friendly host here talked with me for two hours about the Stevenot vineyard and wines. I especially enjoyed the Tempranillo, a luscious red wine from the Spanish grape; it has a big red berry taste and is a rare find in the U.S.

The grounds of the Stevenot Winery include an outdoor amphitheater and from late June through early August it plays host to Shakespearean Theater Under the Stars. Performances take place on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings; Stevenot wine is available for you to purchase and enjoy on the lawn.

Moving to the other side of town, I discovered **Kautz Ironstone Vineyards**, the biggest winemaking show in town. In fact, in order to keep the visitors coming, Ironstone paved the one-mile-long road leading to it. It's not just a winery but a gift and souvenir boutique, delicatessen, picnic area, banquet facility, jewelry shop, historical museum and a major entertainment venue with an outdoor stage; Willie Nelson and Los Lobos are scheduled to perform here this summer. The tasting bar is spacious and of all the Murphys wineries I visited, this was the only one where I felt part of a crowd, albeit a small one. I found the Ironstone Cabernet Franc and Zinfandel exceptional, but my favorite sample was the 2000 Obsession, a sweet and clean-tasting white made from Symphony grapes.

The real fun of tasting in Calaveras County is the pace. Relaxed, without the hassles of crowds and tasting fees and traffic. The wine is terrific—I bought enough of it to last me until I can get there again—but the intimate stone basement and the time spent with the many hosts in Murphys are the memories I'll cherish most from this trip. 🍷

*For your Destinations Planner for Angels Camp, see **Destinations Extra** on the WorldMark Web site.*

OPPOSITE: View from Angels Camp to the 10th fairway of Greenhorn Creek Golf Course.

BELOW: Downtown Angels Camp. (Photos by Keith Walsh)



Jumping Frogs and the Roaring Camp



*Harte, Twain and the
California Gold Country*

The largest shadows cast over Angels Camp and the surrounding area aren't from the Sierras but rather from two young prospectors with a flair for writing. Their influence is everywhere: Bret Harte Union High School, the town of Twain Harte, frogs on street signs, billboards, storefronts and even brass sidewalk inlays. So just who were they and how did they have such an impact on this far-flung gold rush town?

Mark Twain's first published short story, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," made him and the town of Angels Camp famous. In 1865, Twain lived in small cabin east of Angels Camp. Ostensibly there for the gold like everyone else, he hung around the bar in the Angels Hotel and, the story goes, heard the tale of Simon Wheeler. He wrote it down and the rest is history.

The man who published that legendary story was Bret Harte. He had lived in nearby Sonora and Angels Camp, working as a teacher and typesetter. He later became editor of a San Francisco magazine and wrote "The Luck of Roaring Camp." It was unlike any story of its time, depicting the rough and tumble lives of young men seeking their fortunes in the hills, and soon the whole country was captivated by tales of mining camps and the odd characters who inhabited them.

Both storytellers went on to illustrious careers as authors. Twain invented Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn, two of America's greatest fictional characters. Harte's fiction and poetry was forever after marked with the exuberant spirit he'd found in California. Today you can still find that spirit of the gold rush alive in Angels Camp, where a distinctive American character emerged.



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THREE-NIGHT MEXICAN BAJA CRUISE

Royal Caribbean's *Monarch of the Seas* sails from Los Angeles for Ensenada
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Villas de Santa Fe invite you to relax. (Photo courtesy of Sunterra Pacific)

Direct Exchange Featured Resort

Our featured resort available through Direct Exchange is Villas de Santa Fe in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Rich with magnificent natural beauty, Santa Fe offers something for everyone. Galleries and artisan markets feed the artistic spirit, mission churches and local Indian lore speak to the soul, inventive cuisine inspires the inner gourmet and the rollicking waters of the Rio Grande and bold slopes of the Taos Ski Valley beckon to the athlete in all. Your air-conditioned one-bedroom unit is equipped with cable TV, a VCR and a small kitchen

with a microwave, two-burner stovetop, dishwasher and full-size refrigerator. The resort offers an outdoor pool and spa, fitness center, barbecue and picnic areas and organized activities. Spring 2004 presents excellent availability.

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DESIGN BY MATT WILSON

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