

TAKE IT WITH YOU

The long and winning road

Paying a visit to the wine country is a decision fraught with choices. Do you go strictly for the tasting or for the larger visitor experience? How do you plan a trip when you want to impress visitors from out of town or spend a day feasting your eyes as well as your palate?

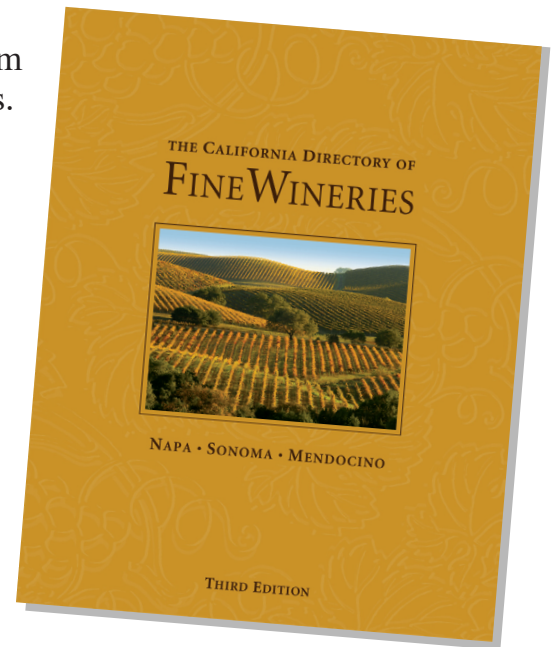
A \$20 bill can make anyone pseudo-expert enough to never go wrong. That's the cost of a handsome new hardcover edition of "The California Directory of Fine Wineries" by Marty Olmstead with photos by Robert Holmes. The 144-page book (Wine House Press, \$19.95) profiles 61 destination wineries in Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino counties. Each entry includes conversation-starting background and historical information, along with a full-page photo that serves as a visual preview of what visitors will encounter on arrival. All the "if you go"

information you need is there, too, from tasting room details to nearby attractions.

Publisher Tom Silberkleit, a Sonoma resident and wine connoisseur who has been taking visitors around the wine country for 20 years, says the wineries selected were chosen first for the quality of their product and second for amenities such as caves, art exhibitions, elaborate picnic areas and gardens that arrest the attention of visitors.

The book's handsome, easy-to-navigate design makes it easy to design an itinerary.

"What I've found over years of taking visitors around is that there's always someone in the group who's not passionate about wine," he said in a phone interview. "These wineries were selected for those who



love wine -- and for those who don't, to enjoy the wineries' other attractions."

The "Directory," distributed by Ten Speed Press, is available at Borders, Barnes and Noble and other bookstores.

-- Janet Fullwood