

# San Jose Mercury News

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# Food+Wine

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## Four new books uncork wine country

By Carolyn Jung  
Mercury News

With grapes ripening and soon to be harvested, summer is a glorious time to visit Wine Country. Four new books help you plan your next getaway.

In "A Moveable Feast" (Wiley, 326 pp., \$14.95) and best friends Rick Kuchman and Hank Beal embark on a lightful romp through Napa Valley, in which they rate all 144 public tasting rooms. The book has a concise review of each tasting while the rest of the book is akin to "Rick and Hank's Excellent Adventures" — a catalogue of their often hilarious adventures doing all of this.

Beal is executive wine director for Nugget Market, a Sacramento-area chain. And Kuchman is a television columnist for the Sacramento Bee who admits he knows very little about vino. But fortunately, he's not afraid to ask a lot of questions.

"Frommer's Napa & Sonoma Day By Day" by Avital Binshtock (Wiley, 256 pp., \$12.99) includes recommendations for the best wineries and restaurants and a handy pull-out map of both counties. Also included is a timeline of significant events in wine country history and a primer on varietals.

For a more expanded look, there's "California Wine Country" by Peter Fish and

**"The California Directory of Fine Wineries"** by Marty Olmstead (Wine House Press, 142 pp., \$19.95) spans the gamut of wineries in Napa, Sonoma and Mendocino, complete with beautiful color photos of each site. Sixty wineries are profiled in great detail, with information on tasting costs, appellations, history, owners, annual events and the wines they specialize in.

### RESTAURANT HAPPENINGS:

Manresa, 320 Village Lane in Los Gatos, welcomes a new executive pastry chef on Aug. 3. And not just any pastry chef, but Kendra L. Baker, who hails from that temple of heavenly bakings: Rar Tartine in San

nitae and Prima Taste in San Jose comes a new pan-Asian restaurant and wine bar; Merlion, 1962 Stevens Creek Blvd. in Cupertino. It is open daily, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. For reservations, call (408) 777-8228.

Corn will be the star of a special tasting menu at 231 Ellsworth Restaurant (231 S. Ellsworth Ave. in San Mateo) on Tuesday. The nine-course dinner is \$90 per person; wine pairing is an additional \$40. Start with an amuse bouche of truffled corn fritter and wind your way through corn-braised pork with grits and mole, and corn ice cream with grilled watermelon. For reservations, call (650) 347-7231.

Restaurant designer extraordinaire Pat Aiello has finally realized his dream of restoring Nick's Cove, 3240 Highway 1 in Marshall, on the shores of Tomales Bay. A collection of rustic cabins and a restaurant that catered to tourists after the advent of automobiles and decent roads, Nick's Cove operated for almost 70 years until 1999.

Now find luxury cottages, a new pier to allow local fishermen to dock easily, and a restored restaurant overseen by Executive Chef Mark Franz of San Francisco's Farallon. Dine on broiled local sardines (\$9), Maine lobster club sandwich (\$16), and slow-roasted prime rib (\$28). Go to [www.nickscove.com](http://www.nickscove.com) or call (866) 636-4257.