



OFF DUTY
IN ISRAEL

CLAIRE DANES
EXPLORES TEL AVIV

Fall Travel with stops in Amsterdam, Berlin, CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST, DETROIT, Easter Island, Georgia, IRELAND, Istanbul, LONDON, Maine, Marseille, Mauritius, MONTREAL, PANAMA CITY, Phuket, Sweden, TOKYO and UGANDA. Plus DWIGHT HENRY heads to Harlem and The SELBY drops in on Brooklyn.

CALIFORNIA'S CENTRAL COAST THE GOLDEN STATE'S MIDDLE GROUND IS RIPE WITH NEW WINERIES, GASTRO-INNS AND FARM-FRESH SHOPPING. BY TANVI CHHEDA

place



FRUIT FORWARD

Call them American “garagistes,” a term once used to describe small-lot vintners in Bordeaux, France, who challenged traditional winemaking styles in the early 1990s. The young winemakers of Paso Robles, a few still under 30, are keen to push boundaries and experiment, and here in Paso, four hours south of Napa, they can. “I was able to grow my brand organically on a shoestring budget,” says Aaron Jackson, 29, whose label, **Aaron Wines** (aaronwines.com), focuses on petite syrahs. Getting the grapes is also easier than in points north. “You could never walk into a Napa vineyard and get fruit,” says Janell Dusi, 32, whose zinfandels are sold by the name **J Dusi Wines** (jdusiwines.com). Like many of the area’s rising stars, Anthony Yount, 27, works at an established vineyard, Denner Vineyards, while making his **Kinero Cellars** (notplonk.com) blends on the side. (He’s known for his whites.) Jacob Toft, 35, who was studying landscape architecture when a viticulture class turned him on to grapes, produces his acclaimed **Jacob Toft Wines** (jacobtoft.com) at the Denner facility. Brian Benson, 30, started making his own five-gallon batches at his father’s winery, Dark Star Cellars, as a teenager, and he now creates bold wines at **Brian Benson Cellars** (brianbensoncellars.com). The viticultural freedom of Paso even persuaded Guillaume Fabre, 33, to move from France eight years ago. He credits the success of his boutique label, **Clos Solène** (clossolene.com), to Paso’s limestone-rich soil. “When I moved,” Fabre says, “I saw potential with no limit.”



The young winemakers of Paso Robles include, from left to right, Brian Benson, Janell Dusi, Guillaume Fabre, Anthony Yount, Aaron Jackson and Jacob Toft.



THE SLO-DOWN

Halfway between L.A. and San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, or SLO (“slow”) to its 45,000 residents, is routinely praised for its progressive, college-town feel and rural surroundings. A creek runs alongside the historic downtown — a few blocks of galleries, restaurants and shops anchored by the 240-year-old Spanish mission ❶ — and the conelike peaks encircling the city serve as a backdrop for outdoorsy pursuits. This month, SLO gets its first luxury boutique hotel: the 17-room **Granada** (1126 Morro Street; 805-544-9100; doubles from \$200), housed in a 1920s brick building in the heart of downtown. Rooms mix the raw (exposed brick walls) with the refined (velvet-covered armchairs), and there’s a terrace bar and restaurant that’s sure to be a hit. **Atmosphere** ❷ (1119 Chorro Street; 805-594-1119; atmosphere.com) offers up items for the modern home, like green wall kits and tables by the local furniture maker Jory Brigham, and Victorian living comes alive at the **Jack House** (536 Marsh Street; 805-781-7308; slocity.org), a well-preserved 1880s residence. At **Luna Red** ❸ (1023 Chorro Street; 805-540-5243; lunaredslo.com; tapas \$7 to \$15), the brunch includes Asian tacos and Spanish-style omelets, and at **Meze** ❹ (1880 Santa Barbara Avenue; 805-548-8070; mezemarket.com), a market-café near the railyard, you can pick up supplies for a picnic at one of the Edna Valley wineries, like **Baileyana** (5828 Orcutt Road; 805-269-8200; baileyana.com), set in a 1909 schoolhouse. For more formal fare, head to **Koberl at Blue** (998 Monterey Street; 805-783-1135; epkoberl.com; entrees \$23 to \$39) for butternut squash empanadas and coriander sea scallops.

SIP AND STAY

BARNs, FARMHOUSES AND REFURBISHED INNS ARE OPENING UP GUEST ROOMS ON VINEYARDS ALL AROUND PASO ROBLES.



HAMMERSKY VINEYARDS & INN

Built in 1904, this four-bedroom farmhouse (above) was meticulously renovated by Doug and Kim Hauck, who bought the 50-acre property in 2007. The clapboard-style farmhouse retains its original pine floors and wood-burning stove, while a mix of furnishings — including mirrored side tables, rattan headboards and footboards, and landscape paintings by the local artist Ken Fuller — lend bedrooms a modern coziness. And you can have a soak with a view: the upstairs claw-foot tub peers out onto the vines. See them up close on a 45-minute stroll through the vineyard and surrounding hayfields. 7725 Vineyard Drive; (805) 239-0930; hammersky.com; doubles from \$350, including wine tastings (three-night minimum stay in high season).

VENTEUX VINEYARDS BED & BREAKFAST

Set on 22 acres in nearby Templeton, this decade-old winery rents out two rustic guest rooms within its farmhouse-turned-inn: a sage-hued room with an antique writing desk and claw-foot tub, and a blue room with a whitewashed four-poster-bed and beamed ceiling. For breakfast, the inn serves veggie frittatas and local berries with lemon curd on the wraparound porch. Or you can book the 1,000-square-foot barn, which comes with a deck and a well-stocked kitchen. 1795 Las Tablas Road; (805) 369-0127;

venteuxvineyards.com; doubles from \$285.

JUST INN

The four-room inn at this esteemed vineyard in Adelaide Valley, west of Paso’s pint-size downtown, has a formal feel, with stone fireplaces, tapestry curtains and leather armchairs in the rooms. Included in the stay is a 45-minute tour and tasting that covers virtually the complete winemaking process — from crush pad to tank room to 16,000-square-foot wine caves — and includes a glass of one of the vineyard’s wines, like the Bordeaux-style blend, Isosceles. 11680 Chimney Rock Road; (805) 238-6932; justinwine.com; doubles from \$375 (two-night minimum on weekends).

COMUS HOUSE

Opened in April, this modernist 4,000-square-foot ranch is perched on a hill overlooking Denner Vineyards’ syrah, grenache and cabernet vines. Inside, the sun-filled rooms, four in total, feel like contemporary cabins, most with vaulted ceilings and reclaimed wood floors. Wake up to breakfast of French toast with blood orange jam and end the day with wine pairings on the patio. 5414 Vineyard Drive, Paso Robles; (805) 239-4287; dennervineyards.com; doubles from \$335 (two-night minimum on weekends).