

Bring a hearty appetite to the ONE Travel Conference!

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The Napa Valley is a food and wine lover's paradise. The number and variety of restaurants located in downtown Napa near the Embassy Suites as well as others "up Valley" in Yountville and beyond is staggering. Whether you crave the famous *oysters and pearls* at the three-star Michelin **French Laundry** in Yountville where the cost per person is now \$310 without wine, or the \$5.99 *Niman Ranch Fearless Frank* 100% beef hot dog at Gott's Roadside in Napa, you'll be very happy eating in the Napa Valley. I've lived here nineteen years and I haven't been bored with the choice of restaurants yet. In fact, I have a hard time keeping up with all the new ones popping up. Of course, I consider it my sacred duty to try them!

Below is a highly selective, arbitrary and idiosyncratic list of my favorite restaurants. I've included the phone number for each. Dining out is such a popular activity here among the locals and visitors that it's not too early to make reservations for the nights of the conference. All the restaurants listed are in **area code 707**. Reservations at most of these restaurants can also be booked through OpenTable.com. Dress code throughout the Napa Valley is casual, but you may need a sweater or jacket if you dine outdoors because the temperature drops at night.

Let's start with the restaurants in downtown Napa. The Embassy Suites is located at the western edge of downtown. The farthest ones away are on the eastern edge of the town. It is a 1.4 mile walk or an 8 minute Uber ride. (I Googled it.)

**The Restaurant at CIA Copia**, 501 First Street. 967-2555. CIA stands for the Culinary Institute of America which is located in St. Helena, north of Napa. Their signature restaurant is located at the eastern edge of downtown Napa, and it's sleek and elegant. The menu changes often to reflect the season. The vegetables come from CIA's own gardens; you can often see students carefully tending the gardens across the street. Try the Roasted CIA Gardens Carrots with truffled ricotta.

**Oxbow Public Market**, 610 First Street, is next to The Restaurant at CIA Copia. In fact, both places share the same parking lot. Open seven days a week, Oxbow is a lively, 40,000 square foot home to 22 merchants. It describes itself as "the community gathering place for great food and wine in Napa," and it truly is a destination for locals and visitors. The atmosphere is casual and relaxed and the food offerings range from fresh oysters at the *Hog Island Oyster Bar* to quesadillas at *C Casa* to sushi at *Eiko's at Oxbow*, topped off with a Himalayan salted caramel at *Anette's Chocolates*. You can enjoy your food at tables throughout the marketplace or on a riverside deck. *Kitchen Door* is a full service restaurant at Oxbow with an eclectic menu that features "multi-ethnic comfort food." That includes a beef burger with wine stewed onions, Armenian flatbread, Korean style short ribs and pepperoni pizza.

You can also get that Fearless Frank hot dog at *Gott's Roadside* which is adjacent to the main marketplace. Gott's, which has ample outdoor seating, offers the juiciest beef burgers as well as an ahi burger that contains five ounces of sushi grade ahi tuna with ginger wasabi mayo and Asian slaw on a toasted egg bun. Only in Napa!

Downtown Napa has two excellent steakhouses for unreconstructed carnivores. The older of the two and my personal favorite is *Coles Chop House*, 224-6328, 1122 Main Street, which intersects with First Street. I've eaten there so often with my family that our picture is on the wall over one of the booths. My grandson loves the Oysters Rockefeller; I'm partial to the full rack of New Zealand lamb chops because I can have the leftovers for dinner the next night. The new kid on the block is *Charlie Palmer Steak*, 819-2500, 1260 First Street in the Archer Hotel. The American Wagyu beef carpaccio is outstanding. There's no corkage if you bring a bottle of Napa Valley wine.

Even if you don't eat at Charlie Palmer's Steak, do stop into the boutique **Archer Hotel** at 1230 First Street which has the most impressive lobby bar in town. It was on the cover of the local paper when the hotel opened earlier this year. The 7,000 square foot **Sky & Vine Rooftop Bar** billed as "Napa's new haute spot," is now open, and it's well worth a visit. The 360 degree panoramic views of Napa are spectacular, and the wicker chairs are so comfortable you won't want to leave. You can have everything from a full meal to light snacks. For an innovative variation on a classic, try the Lobster Corn Dog with pickled ramp remoulade.

Other downtown restaurants I like are:

**Mango on Main**, 253-8880, 1142 Main Street, for Thai food. It's been in the Trip Advisor Hall of Fame and recommended by the Michelin guide. I can't resist a spicy curry, but the grilled fish is very good, too.

**Tarla Mediterranean Bar & Grill**, 255-5599, 1480 First Street, featuring locally sourced Turkish and Greek dishes. There are a number of tasty starters like warm hummus, baba ganoush, tzatziki and grilled pita that are good for sharing.

For high-end Japanese food, you can't beat **Morimoto**, 252-1600, 610 Main Street. The sushi is superb, as you'd expect, and the entrees include mouth-watering braised black cod, angry chicken, and sea urchin carbonara with smoked bacon. The setting is serene and you can dine outdoors on a patio overlooking the Napa River.

**Angele Restaurant and Bar**, 252-8115, 540 Main Street, is a longtime favorite. The inside is classic French bistro blue shutters and a gorgeous flower arrangement that greets you as you enter, and the good-sized patio overlooks the Napa River. The soup du jour is always delicious and the steamed mussels and escargots will transport you to Paris.

**Norman Rose Tavern**, 258-1516, 1401 First Street, calls itself "a neighborhood pub with a cool vibe in a modern-rustic setting." The beef chili is very popular, but I'm always drawn to the lamb burger with herbed goat cheese. There's outdoor seating overlooking busy First Street.

**Bistro Don Giovanni**, 224-3300, 4110 Howard Lane, isn't in downtown Napa, but I would be remiss in not including it in my list of favorites. It's just off Highway 29, at the north end of Napa – definitely an Uber destination. Famed for its Italian bistro fare, it has indoor or outdoor seating. Everything on the menu is delicious, but I can't go for long without the fritto misto or the risotto, which changes daily. The incomparable fig and goat cheese pizza should be available in August. I wait for it all year.

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Now, it's on to Yountville where I live. Yountville is nine miles north of Napa, and the self-professed restaurant capital of the United States, not just California. No one will accuse Yountville of false modesty, but that IS quite an achievement for a town of about 3,500 people, including residents of the Veterans Home, the largest west of the Mississippi. Adjusting for size, Yountville has as many Michelin-starred restaurants as New York City. You will not be surprised to learn that I've been to all of them. The restaurants listed below have Michelin stars, but that's not why I like them. The food and ambience make me return to them again and again.

The best thing about living in Yountville is that the restaurants are within walking distance of my house. That's hardly typical in California. All 31 of them line the main drag, Washington Street, which runs north/south parallel to Highway 29 and is about a mile long. I live at the south end of town, called SoYo (I'm not kidding) by the Yountville Sun, the weekly newspaper. Being able to stroll home from a restaurant is good for the digestion and means that I can have that extra glass of wine because I don't have to get behind the wheel!

The famous **French Laundry**, 944-2380, 6640 Washington Street, isn't the only restaurant owned by famous chef, Thomas Keller, in Yountville. He also owns **Bouchon**, 944-8037, 6534 Washington Street, an elegant French bistro that serves the most exquisite potatoes I've ever eaten. There are lots of other wonderful things on the menu, including the Grand Plateau, consisting of 1 lobster, 16 oysters, 8 shrimp, 8 clams, 10 mussels, seasonal crab, and a special selection, but don't forget to order a side of the Puree de Pommes de Terre. Bouchon is located next to Bouchon Bakery, where a long line forms each morning of locals and visitors who dreamed of the lighter-than-air croissants the night before.

**Ad Hoc**, 944-2487, 6478 Washington Street, an informal restaurant with a family-style set menu is another Keller restaurant. (There's a joke going around town that Yountville is changing its name to Kellerville.) Every other Monday night is fried chicken night and people drive up from San Francisco for it. Rumor has it that Keller is opening a Mexican restaurant soon in Yountville in a space he bought from a retired restaurateur. Everyone in town is wondering if he'll be serving \$50 tacos.

**Redd**, 944-2222, 6480 Washington Street, is a five-minute walk from my house. It's probably my very favorite Yountville restaurant. The food is described as "upscale California fare with Asian undertones." The ambience is very contemporary, and the patio is one of the most pleasant on a summer evening in the Napa Valley. I've never been disappointed with anything I've eaten there, but the petrale sole, creamy jasmine rice, clams, chorizo, and saffron curry nage speaks to me on every visit. A more casual restaurant, **Reddwood**, 299-5030, 6755 Washington Street, is also owned by chef Reddington. Specializing in wood-fired pizza and handmade pasta, it's at the north end of Yountville.

Across the street from Redwood is a small, unpretentious Italian restaurant called **Ciccio**, 945-1000, 6770 Washington Street. It's always crowded, the noise is deafening, but the food is sublime. Lamb ribs with honey and Roman spices and the whole roasted fish couldn't taste any better in Italy. It's closed Monday and Tuesday. People line up at 5:00 pm to get in, and the tables fill within 15 minutes.

There's no better restaurant in the Napa Valley for classic, hearty French country food like coq au vin than **Bistro Jeanty**, 944-0103, 6510 Washington Street. It's famous for its tomato soup in puff pastry, and the cassoulet is so filling you won't have to eat for several days. I pride myself on making a mean boeuf Bourguignon, but it's no equal to the one at Bistro Jeanty. Save room for the chocolate crème brulee.

One of the original celebrity chefs, Michael Chiarello, created **Bottega**, 945-1050, V Marketplace, 6525 Washington Street. It's a much heralded, rustic, farm-to-table restaurant featuring "micro-regional" Italian food. The polenta under glass topped with mushrooms is a favorite of mine. Bottega's expansive patio with two stone fireplaces is very inviting and quintessentially Californian. The interior of the restaurant features soft leather chairs that encourage lingering.

Last but not least, **Mustards Grill**, 944- 2424m 7399 St. Helena Hwy, aka Hwy 29, is a Yountville institution. I first came to this restaurant in the 1980s when I lived in Southern California. Its chef-owner, Cindy Pawlcyn, paved the way for the many "gourmet" restaurants that followed. It's not actually in the town of Yountville, but on the highway that runs parallel to Yountville. You can't beat the "Crazy Good Chicken Wings, blue cheese and BBQ dipping sauce" or the justifiably "Famous Mongolian Pork Chop with sweet & sour red cabbage." The Lemon-Lime Tart, with its "ridiculously tall brown sugar meringue" is not to be missed.

As I said at the beginning, come hungry to the Napa Valley!