

NAPA

LUXURY LIVING IN CALIFORNIA WINE COUNTRY

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SONOMA



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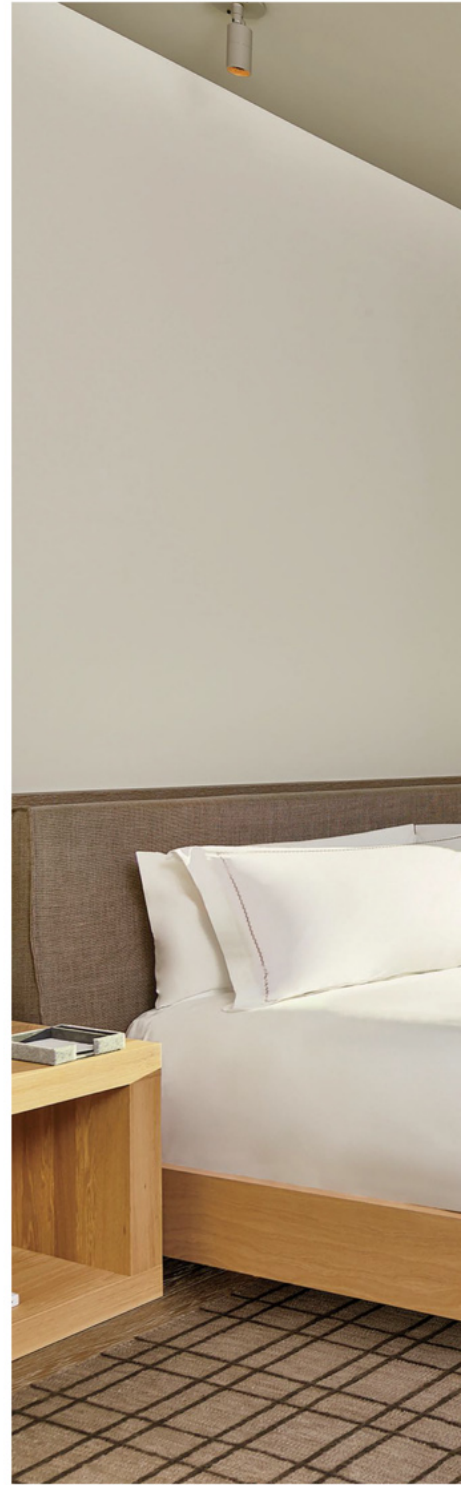
Assistant Winemaker Luke Stanko and Culinary Director Taylr Behnam Cuneo of Ram's Gate Winery. Photography by Nat and Cody Gantz.

Overnight Sensations

— Your guide to the best new and renovated hotels in Napa and Sonoma, for this year and beyond.

By Matt Villano

A VISIT TO WINE COUNTRY is as much about where you stay as it is what you do. Thankfully, the cast of overnight accommodations in Napa and Sonoma Counties continues to evolve. Locals and visitors alike are celebrating two big openings: **Las Alcobas Napa Valley** and the hotel at **Graton Resort and Casino** in Sonoma. Add a host of hotels receiving makeovers and a handful of other projects on the horizon, and there will be plenty of “new” places to rest your head by this time next year. Here is a rundown of the properties we’re most excited about.







The Newcomers

➔ **WITHOUT QUESTION**, the biggest hotel opening in Napa Valley in the past six months has been **Las Alcobas Napa Valley**. This posh 68-room hotel offers luxurious comfort and intimacy, starting at \$695 per night.

On an early tour of the site, Samuel Leizorek, founder and CEO of Las Alcobas Hotel Group, explained that he never planned to develop in Napa until he saw the three-acre plot on the north end of St. Helena.

"Napa chose me," he said. And thank goodness it did.

After months of delays, Las Alcobas (pronounced AL-coh-bahs) opened in March. The rooms are spacious—up to 1,110 square feet—with a minimalist design that makes them feel even bigger. The suites, many of which overlook nearby Beringer Vineyards, are spread across four buildings, with three new structures and one very old one: The Victorian-style mansion dubbed the Acacia House dates back to 1905 and has been restored to its original grandeur. Along with its share of luxury suites, the mansion is home to the hotel's splendid restaurant—also called Acacia House—run by chef Chris Cosentino of Incanto and Cockscomb fame.

Better yet, the boutique hotel is within walking distance of downtown St. Helena and dozens of wineries, so you won't need to use your car. No wonder Leizorek fell in love.

Perhaps the most exciting part of Las Alcobas is its spa, called Atrio. Housed in a barn-style facility, the spa's sky-high ceilings, cedar beams, and outdoor showers evoke the property's charming mash-up of modern and country. lasalcobasnapavalley.com.

On the other side of the Mayacamas Mountains, Sonoma County has expanded its slice of Las Vegas in Rohnert Park, with the late 2016 opening of a hotel at **Graton Resort and Casino**. Owned by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, the 200-room property is operated by Station Casinos, a Las Vegas-based company with more than 15 casinos nationwide.

In other words, these folks are pros at making casino hotels. Rooms in the new digs are ultramodern, with sleek furniture, dark hues, and curtains that open and close at the push of a button. Artwork depicts local flora like grape blossoms and wildflowers, while floor-to-ceiling windows show off the view. Marble bathrooms are resplendent.

If the rooms aren't Vegas enough, the pool transports you to Sin City. Special chaise lounges float just below the surface of the water; cabanas ring one side of the pool; and a bar mixes up house-made cocktails within splashing distance. Hit the outdoor oasis on a busy weekend, and you will be treated to live music. The hotel also has a full-service spa and an expansive salon.

Deals start at around \$200 per night. And if you're lucky, you can win it all back at the casino downstairs. gratonresortcasino.com.

1-3. Graton Resort and Casino: Modern rooms, glamorous bars, and a deluxe pool are just some of the perks at this Las Vegas-style resort. **4. Las Alcobas Napa Valley:** Sit back, relax, and enjoy splendid vineyard views.



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Revamped Lodgings

IN ADDITION to the new arrivals, a number of Napa and Sonoma hotels have refreshed their look—creating new and improved experiences along the way.

In Napa County, perhaps the most notable renovation is the one under way at The Estate Yountville, which includes the **Vintage House** and the **Hotel Villagio**. New owners bought the property in 2016 and are busy modernizing both hotels. At the Vintage House, the brick facade is being replaced by board- and batten exteriors, and rooms will feature natural elements. At Villagio, the Tuscan-inspired architecture will give way to a more contemporary style somewhere between farmhouse and industrial. Renovations for Vintage House are expected to wrap up by the end of summer. vintageinn.com, villagio.com.

Elsewhere in Napa, **Auberge du Soleil** is expected to unveil eight new guest rooms and suites, continuing its contemporary-chic transformation that started a few years back. New features include balconies and larger windows that maximize the hotel's panoramic hilltop views. Meanwhile, **Senza Hotel**, which is owned by Craig and Kathryn Hall of Hall Wines, completed a significant upgrade to its eight-room Parker Mansion, which dates back to 1870. The property underwent a complete interior overhaul, including new modern furniture, oversize showers, a custom amenity line from Novato-based Prima Fleur, and eco-friendly virtual fireplaces. Another amenity that's been rolled out? Heated floors. aubergedusoleil.com, senzahotel.com.

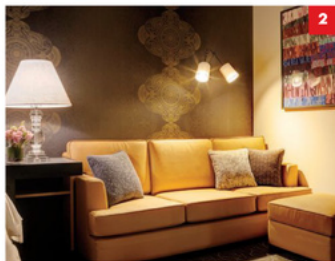
In Sonoma County, the biggest hotel transformation to date this year is at the **Hotel Petaluma**. First opened in 1923, the hotel underwent an extensive renovation that restored some of the building's original look and feel. New rooms are outfitted with modern furniture while the lobby goes for a nostalgic flair, with 16-foot ceilings and old-fashioned tile work. hotelpetaluma.com.

Last but not least, the **Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel** in Santa Rosa is getting a major face-lift with the addition of four stories and 89 rooms. The work is expected to wrap up by early 2018, with plans to renovate the existing 155 rooms along the way. vineyardcreek.hyatt.com.



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1-2: Vintage House: The recently renovated hotel exhibits a modern style with a down-home feel. **3: Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel:** Get the spa treatment at the Santa Rosa resort, which is undergoing a major expansion.



What's Coming

LOOKING AHEAD, a number of pretty spectacular hotels are on the horizon.

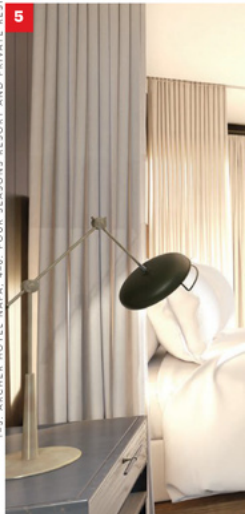
The closest of the bunch to being finished is **Archer Hotel Napa**, a 183-room hotel in the heart of downtown Napa. This property will be notable for its rooftop, which will feature a spa, fitness studio, a pool with cabanas and fireplaces, and bar from chef Charlie Palmer. Palmer also will run Charlie Palmer Steak, the hotel's restaurant and a replica of the chef's übersuccessful steak house concept.

While the hotel was scheduled to open this summer, a rainy winter has pushed back the date to the end of 2017. Undoubtedly, it will be worth the wait.

Other hotels opening in the not-too-distant future include **H3 Guest House**, another Healdsburg hotel from local company Piazza Hospitality; **The Spinster Inn**, a small Santa Rosa boutique hotel from the owners of the Spinster Sisters restaurant; a modest but exquisite inn at The French Laundry in Yountville; and **Calistoga Motor Lodge and Spa**, a resort that will capture the spirit of the American road trip.

Then in 2019, the northern part of Napa Valley (near Calistoga) will welcome the **Four Seasons Resort and Residences**, the luxury hotel brand's first foray into the Wine Country market. When the 22-acre project is complete, the hotel will include 85 rooms and 20 private residences, as well as a 120-seat restaurant, spa, indoor/outdoor fitness center, and walking trails. There will also be a winery overseen by Thomas Rivers Brown, who has received multiple 100-point wine scores from *The Wine Advocate* over the years. Talk about setting the bar high.

Resort rooms will all feature vineyard views, something no other luxury hotel in the region offers. Owners of the residences will also have the option of placing their homes into a curated rental program. Perhaps the only thing the resort won't have is the name Four Seasons. Due to the city's "no formula ordinance," which forbids chain operations, the final moniker will not include the brand name. Whatever they call the place, it's sure to be spectacular. ■



1-3. Archer Hotel Napa: The long-awaited hotel will offer extravagant stays and sweet delights, plus a rooftop that promises to become a must-visit downtown Napa destination. **4-6. Four Seasons Resort and Residences:** The hotel's 120-seat restaurant and private residences will soon set the bar for Napa County's luxury resorts.

1-3. ARCHER HOTEL NAPA; 4-6. FOUR SEASONS RESORT AND PRIVATE RESIDENCES NAPA VALLEY



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