

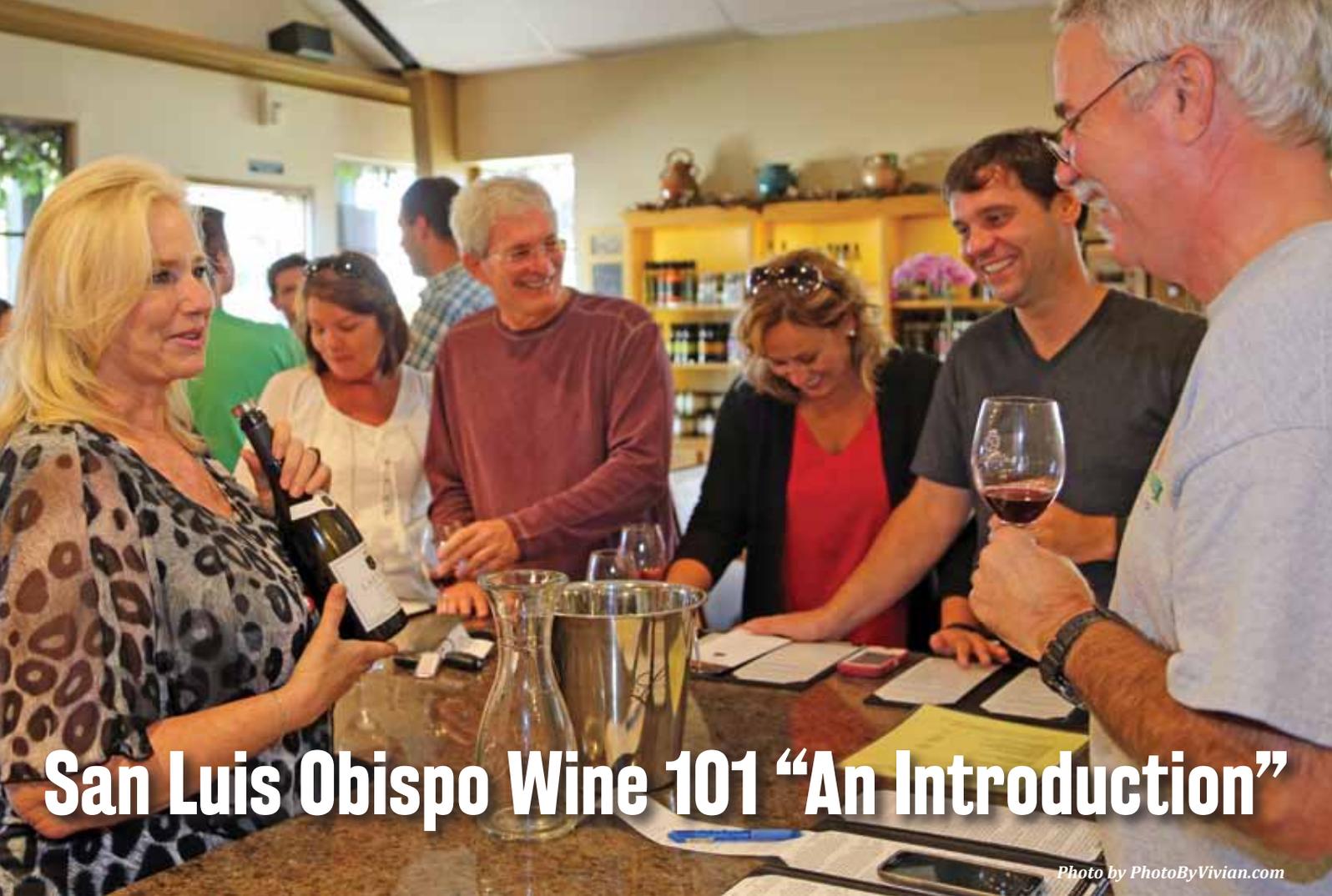
REVEAL

the central coast of ca



INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Find out why the Central Coast of CA is a premium destination spot for world class wineries, galleries, weddings, spas, cuisine and more!



San Luis Obispo Wine 101 “An Introduction”

Photo by PhotoByVivian.com

Being a wine tour owner-operator and sommelier has given me a unique peek behind the scenes of what makes the Central Coast so special. This beautiful area lies just a few hours south of San Francisco, perfectly situated between the City by the Bay and the City of Angels. It contains two distinct wine regions covering more than 32,000 acres of vineyards; each has something exceptional to offer both the novice and serious wine collector. Approachable winemakers and knowledgeable tasting staff throughout the area make for a fun and educational experience.

The diverse Paso Robles wine region has been gaining international recognition, including being named the 2013 Wine Region of the Year by *Wine Enthusiast Magazine*. More than two-thirds geographically larger than the Napa Valley, Paso Robles boasts eleven diverse American Viticultural Areas (AVA's) spread over 42 miles east to west and 32 miles north to south. This area has rainfall variances of up to 30 inches and an elevation that ranges from 700 to 2,400 feet, meaning you can find more than 40 different varietals growing in sand, loam, and calcareous soils. A single region with such a multifaceted climate allows visitors to take a world tour in a single day: Paso Robles varietals range from the Bordeaux Cabernet Sauvignons and Merlots to Spanish Tempranillos and Albariños, with many other stops along the way, including Italian reds (Barbera and Montepuciano) and Rhone styles like Syrah, Grenache, and Viognier.

Some of my most popular stops with tourists and locals alike are the cave tours at Halter Ranch, Eberle, and Justin Wineries, and the architectural gems like Law Estates, Denner, and Shale Oak (a masterpiece in eco-friendly design that captures rainwater and even repurposes corks into purses and bags for sale in their tasting room.) Of course, no wine tour would be complete without lunch, and your options could include a picnic or making a reservation at one of several wineries offering pairings--where chefs create delicious dishes sourced from local farmers' market vegetables, meats, and cheeses. You can't go wrong with the crab cakes at Cass Winery, the garlic soup and seared sea scallops at Niner Wine Estates, or the award-winning mac-n-cheese and house-made chips with bloody mary dip at Grey Wolf Cellars. Be sure to check availability!

If you travel the back roads of Paso Robles on either the east or west side, you will see more than 1,300 acres of planted olive and walnut trees with multiple tasting opportunities to sample and see that what the region does for grapes, it also does for the flavors of local oils.

Continuing south about 40 minutes down Highway 101 is the quaint San Luis Obispo wine region, a cooler wine-growing area where vineyards are influenced by an early morning marine

layer, sunny days, and afternoon breezes--the perfect growing conditions for French Burgundian Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. This allows the grapes to ripen, yet hold their acidity--ideal for Burgundy styles. Quality aromatic white wines including Riesling, Pinot Gris, and Gewurztraminer are planted here, but 100-year-old Zinfandel vines are also alive and well in Arroyo Grande.

SLO Wine is more than a region, however; it's a lifestyle. With hiking trails, no drive-through restaurants, and multiple farmers' markets--the largest one is on Thursday nights in downtown SLO. The area has plenty to do in the evening after a day of wine tasting.

The Central Coast is the perfect getaway, where you can visit large, lavish wine estates and small family-owned wineries in the same afternoon. In fact, around here, it's not uncommon to have a winemaker pour for you and share their passion for handcrafted small lots. Whether you're visiting Paso Robles or San Luis Obispo, you're sure to find outstanding wine in a fun and unpretentious atmosphere. With so much to offer, the only thing the Central Coast is missing is you!

Laura Jeffrey/Sommelier
Owner/Operator/101 Wine Tours

Laura's wine education began at Cal Poly through the extension program and continued with travels to international wine regions like the Swiss Vaud, Alsace, Champagne, and Burgundy, and Northern Rhone in France.

The only thing missing on the Central Coast is *you!*



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