









## The Ten Most Unusual Spots to Sip Wine

Indulge your wine wanderlust with this list of astonishing settings in which to sip vino.

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Ready to traverse the wild world of wine? Buckle up: *Wine Enthusiast* scanned the globe for strange and beautiful places to drink wine, and these gems should make every wine lover's bucket list. From sipping Southwestern wines in the heart of the Sonoran desert—delivered to you in a custom picnic basket by a ranch wrangler on horseback—to tasting Swiss wines in a fondue restaurant (once a secret bank vault for storing gold during WWII), these remarkable spots offer the world's most intriguing settings to sip in the love of wine.

### Under the Sea

Redefining the term "dive bar," Subsix lounge is located in the Maldives, some 1,640 feet off the shore of the supermodern Niyama Resort and 19 feet below the surface of the Indian Ocean. Accessible via boat, it offers wine devotees a host of selections from a 300-label wine list, placing an emphasis on top growers from Champagne, Mosel, Burgundy and Austria, with 16 wines available by the glass. Rotating performances, launched by rappers Tinie Tempah and DJ Poet Name Life, are another hot spot highlight, so expect the bar to be swimming in party atmosphere.

### In a Wartime Hideout

Boasting breathtaking views of the Swiss Alps, Gstaad Palace in Switzerland pours wine lovers Old World sips—some 940 selections are currently on offer from the 25,000-bottle wine cellar—in its wood-paneled, Swiss chalet-style fondue restaurant, La Fromagerie. Previously a storage vault for gold and important documents during WWII—and in case of invasion, a place the executive board of the Swiss national bank had planned to use as a hideout—visitors of the vault today can bank on delicious truffle-Champagne fondue or melty Swiss raclette, alongside a choice of nine wines by the glass.



### Teepee Style

Located on a butte just outside the Western town of Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and overlooking beautiful Jackson Hole Valley, the 1,000-acre Spring Creek Ranch is a secluded mountain retreat with spectacular views of the Teton Mountains. The resort achieves a rugged aesthetic with stone fireplaces and hand-made lodgepole pine furniture, though guests can arrange a personalized wine-tasting experience in the resort's onsite, authentic Native American teepee: A custom-design in the Sioux style by resort owner Stephen Price, who was purportedly moved by the spirit of the buffalo after



drinking quite a bit of wine. Choose from an expansive wine list, which fittingly slants New World, featuring bottles like Pine Ridge's 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon or Zaca Mesa's 2005 Roussanne from Santa Ynez.

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## Amid the Trees

Forget the rum! Guests can arrange for custom wine tastings with an onsite sommelier on the serene Zen Deck that sits atop the Treehouse at the luxurious BodyHoliday Resort at LeSPORT Resort in St. Lucia. Some 25 feet above the ground, this secluded retreat offers oenophiles stellar views of the Caribbean Sea, not to mention the twinkling stars. The resort's 5,000 bottle-strong wine collection, which is housed in a stone cellar reminiscent of a French cave, is partly cultivated by Shawn LaRue, a consulting wine director from California. His high-quality choices include Paul Hobbs's 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon.



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## In a Haunted Brothel

From the late 1850s through the early 1900s, May Baily's Place was one of the better-known bordellos in New Orleans's infamous Red Light District, Storyville, where prostitution remained legal until 1917. Today, it's a 40-seat wine-focused bar in the Dauphine Orleans Hotel, decorated with Victorian wallpaper, portraits of madams by Storyville photographer E.J. Bellocq and even a framed copy of the operating license granted to May Baily in 1857. Alongside custom cocktails, more than 15 wines—most hailing from the New World—are available by the glass. In addition to occasionally playing host to themed parties, this historic bar sometimes serves otherworldly wine lovers: Several ghosts have been reported on the

premises, and the bar was even featured on the Travel Channel's hit T.V. show *Ghost Adventures*.

## Off the Pacific Coast

It's often said that the wines of California's Central Coast boast aromas and flavors of the sea due to the "ocean effect"—when cool coastal air and moisture gets trapped in the valleys—a phenomenon particularly evident in Santa Barbara County. Fittingly, Santa Barbara oenophiles can now taste wines of the region while surrounded by 360-degree views of Pacific coastline, the Channel Islands and the Santa Barbara Harbor. At the Deep Sea Tasting Room, guests sip a selection of Deep Sea and Conway Family Wines in a space that features native oak paneling, tables and benches handcrafted from refinished wine barrels, and floor-to-ceiling glass doors that open to the deck overlooking Stearns Wharf.



rare wildlife.

## Surrounded by Cacti

Sure, anyone can enjoy a glass of wine and take in the sunset, but for an elevated experience, splurge on a private sunset horseback ride that ends with a custom-catered wine picnic delivered by a ranch wrangler. Uniquely located on 60,000 desert acres in Tucson, Arizona, the ruggedly chic Tanque Verde Ranch offers custom horseback rides through the Sonoran desert for couples or groups. After climbing mountain trails on horseback, guests can dismount, then disgorge a bottle of wine from nearby California, Texas and New Mexico while taking in the sunset, towering cacti and glimpses of

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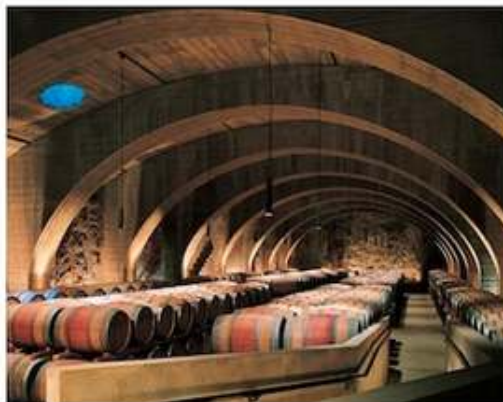


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## In a Hole

Situated on a hill rising approximately 1,200 feet above the floor of British Columbia's stunning Okanagan Valley, Mission Hill Winery's underground barrel cellar and wine vault provides a cave-like setting for sipping the winery's top reds—and depending on the occasion, concerts or art exhibitions can also be arranged for a unique underground wine-tasting experience. Approximately 8,500 cubic yards of volcanic rock were blasted and removed in 1998 to create the 6,600-square-foot underground cellar. The climate-controlled space maintains near-constant humidity (at 80 percent) and temperature (around 55 degrees Fahrenheit) for the 800 barrels of wine maturing in the cave. Even though an above-ground oculus is the only source of natural light, you need not fear—there are no bats in this cave.



## Behind a Bookshelf

Think the speakeasy trend stops at cocktail bars? Think again. Located on the edge of Waikiki, in the lobby of the minimalist-chic hotel The Modern Honolulu, lies a "secret" lounge called The Study. At 6 p.m. nightly, a massive bookshelf gets partially opened by a bar manager, admitting patrons into a modern white-on-white lounge with seating for 150. Grab an ottoman or sit on a comfy leather couch to order from a wine list of more than 20 wines by the glass and bottle, featuring selections largely culled from the New World, including Craggy Range's 2011 Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand or Byron's 2011 Pinot Noir from Santa Barbara, California. Bonus Tip: Sunday through Thursday from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., drinkers

can enjoy reverse happy hour, featuring \$7 wine specials.

## Overlooking a Tomb

While you may not be able to drink a glass of Champagne inside the Taj Mahal, you can sip and stay at the luxurious Oberoi Amarvilas hotel—known for its fantastic views of the monument. At the perennial stop on the 14-day wine tour of India offered by Geringer Global Travel, guests enjoy a leisurely sunset dinner featuring Champagne service on a private, open-air terrace. Other wine-focused stops on the tour include visits to Nashik, the country's largest grape-growing region, Sula Vineyards, makers of one of India's leading wine brands, and Chateau Indage, India's oldest and largest winery.



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