

DESTINATIONS: GETAWY



GOOD SEED COFFEE BOUTIQUE



FIRST & OAK



LOS OLIVOS LEMONS



CHEF PINK AT ROOT

Before getting serious about wine, a little yoga was in order, so following breakfast we headed to **Vineyard Yoga SYV** to get in touch with nature and ourselves. One-hour classes (all levels) are taught at a number of vineyards. In our case, it was **Gainey Vineyard**, which has been producing wine since 1982. In a beautifully relaxing outdoor environment, expert instructor Cori Lassahn, who has been teaching classes in the Valley for 18 years, got us well centered.

Following yoga, it was time for some wine tasting. First, we stopped at **Cailloux Cheese Shop** where they know exactly how to put together a care package for a day at the vineyards. From there it was on to a private tasting just down the road in the Santa Rita Hills between Lompoc and Buellton.

If your idea of a tasting is belying up to a crowded winery bar top and competing for the attention of a busy server, a private tasting at **Spear Vineyards and Winery** (offered by appointment only) will be both edifying and delicious. Sitting on a comfortable leather couch beneath the beamed and vaulted ceiling and looking out massive windows to views of rolling hills beyond, I asked our server who the winemaker was. "Well, I am," said Kat Gaffney, who, it turns out, was promoted to winemaker just last year. From the quality of

her wine to the amazing depth and breadth of her knowledge, it's easy to see why.

Wine tastings are like potato chips: One is not enough. So on we went to the nearby town of **Los Olivos**. What began as a lone train station in 1881 is now a lovely, quiet little town with a population of about 1,200. Within this Western village dominated by Victorian architecture are a number of tasting rooms representing local wineries. **Kings Carey Wines** and **Liquid Farm** share a building and winemaker, the uber-talented James Sparks, and we had a delicious and informative experience at both.

If you're in Los Olivos and thirsty, but not for wine, definitely check out the gourmet lemonades at **Los Olivos Lemons**, housed in a giant lemon. They are immensely refreshing.

Amazingly, we weren't done yet so we headed back to Solvang to check in at the **Hotel Corque**. Owned by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians, who also own the **Chumash Casino Resort**, this luxury boutique hotel is located in the heart of downtown. Transportation to and from the resort is available should you wish to get in a little time at the tables or enjoy a relaxing spa treatment.

Dinner that night was right next door at

Root 246. With a menu created by Crystal "Chef Pink" DeLongpre, the offerings on hand are original and as delicious as they are artfully plated. The service is also impeccable, as patient and informed as I've received anywhere.

The next morning, after coffee and fresh-baked toast at the charming **Good Seed Coffee Boutique**, we did a bit of shopping and strolling around a town. Retailers of all types abound, from the classic Danish design store **The Copenhagen House** to the heady aromas of the **Solvang Spice Merchant** and, the rarest of things, independent bookseller **The Book Loft**.

Lunch was at **Mad & Vin** inside **The Landsby**, a charming downtown hotel that boasts 50 completely remodeled rooms and nine luxuriously appointed guest suites. **Mad & Vin** specializes in locally sourced ingredients and wine country-inspired cuisine. Happy hour is from 4 to 6 p.m. daily; brunch is served on Sundays.

There was still plenty of day left, but it had already been a busy and adventurous weekend and we needed to get back to reality. We were sad to leave, but one of the best things about Solvang is its proximity, and with so much left to discover, we are certain to be returning soon. ■