

National Geographic Traveler – November/December 2011

Best of the World 2012

What places are calling your name for 2012? Whatever your mood, *Traveler* magazine has a recommendation for you—from the romantic hills of Croatia to the perfect beach in Thailand.



Sonoma, California Photograph by Lianne Milton

American as Apple Pie

“I’ve been to Napa and Sonoma,” you hear people say, as if they were one and the same. Sure, Sonoma’s 300-plus wineries, like those of vine-centric Napa, offer peak wine tasting, from Ravenswood’s deep Zinfandels to Gloria Ferrer’s sophisticated sparklers. But if you’ve visited only the county’s wineries, come back to sample the astounding diversity that makes Sonoma one of America’s travel treasures.

Spend some time floating in an inner tube down the Russian River and walking amid ancient giants—one over 1,400 years old—at Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve. Poke around the old Russian stockade at Fort Ross, which turns 200 in 2012, or the Spanish adobe mission, San Francisco Solano, in Sonoma town. **Hunt for antiques along Petaluma’s downtown Victorian row**, and dine on seasonal sake-steamed, aged abalone at Michelin-starred Cyrus in Healdsburg. And don’t miss a flaky, fruit-packed slice of Gravenstein pie from Mom’s Apple Pie, a roadside stop outside Sebastopol. It ranks up there with a Russian River Valley Pinot Noir as a real taste of Sonoma.

