

# Gardens of the California Wine Country

## *A San Diego Horticultural Society Tour \* May 4-8, 2014*

*Join the San Diego Horticultural Society on a 4-day tour of public and private gardens and wineries in world-famous Sonoma County.*

**Sunday, May 4** Make your way to Santa Rosa, California and check into our home for the next 4 nights, the Hyatt Vineyard Creek Hotel and Spa. This Mediterranean style hotel is just a short drive from a multitude of Sonoma County wineries, the gorgeous Pacific Coast, Napa Valley and the Sonoma County Airport. Stroll to a myriad of shops, restaurants and cultural attractions in Santa Rosa, just minutes from the hotel. Meander through lush grounds framed in aromatic lavender, wisteria and roses. Rejuvenate your body and spirit at le Carre spa, relax in the steam room and get energized in the fitness center. Dine alfresco at the Brasserie restaurant, or sip wine by the cozy fire pit. Meet the group this evening for a 6:30 welcome dinner with wine at the hotel. *Dinner.*

**Monday, May 5** After breakfast at the hotel, we depart for nearby Sebastopol and a visit to Hoghill, the garden of Mary and Lewis Reed. One of the finest gardens in Sonoma County, created by a husband and wife team (she is a landscape designer, he is a plantsman). Filling the top of a hill, the garden wraps around the house, with expansive views to the surrounding forests and valleys. A rich collection of woody plants, perennials, bulbs, and grasses. We next visit the garden of Ann Hatch and Paul Discoe. This garden is an Asian-inspired design by Paul Discoe and Ron Herman. It is sited in an apple orchard, following a grid theme throughout with surprise boulders, lavender, raised beds and a totem pole watching over. Our next stop is the private garden of Carol Brant, a small but beautifully landscaped garden with an amazingly diverse and unusual assortment of plants. Carol makes copious use of woody plants, restios and succulents, along with many herbaceous perennials. We then head for Western Hills Garden, described by the San Francisco Chronicle as a landmark garden. Originally opened as the Western Hills Rare Plant Nursery by Lester Hawkins and Marshall Olbrich in 1960, it was a destination for serious gardeners until it closed in 2010. Under new ownership, the garden is undergoing a true renaissance. While still a work in progress, you can enjoy the garden that was described by the New York Times in 2005 as the "Tiffany of plants." The paths and grounds have been tamed again, and the stately zelkova, a spectacular coral tree, and acer pentaphyllums reach to the sky. The hummingbirds and other wildlife are back, including ducks, turtles, fish, and an occasional heron in the big pond. We'll enjoy a boxed lunch in the garden before a private guided tour. After our tour at Western Hills, we will make a stop at the Healdsburg Nursery. This is a complete full service nursery carrying a wide array of bedding plants, dogwoods, bulbs, seeds, citrus, ornamentals, perennials, fruits and vegetables. There is also a good selection of gifts, houseplants, pottery and statuary. After our visit to the nursery, we will continue on to the charming village of Healdsburg, a town renowned for its eclectic offering of all the finest things in life -- gardens, food and wine. We will have time to take a stroll around the square and discover the treasures and treats of small town individuality that make Healdsburg so special. Unique boutiques, renowned art and sculpture, organic locally grown produce and artisanal breads, cheeses, independent bookstores, treasure troves of antiquing and so much more. Naturally there is an ample amount of wine tasting available as well, including one of the finest tasting rooms in the county -- Williamson Winery on Matheson Street -- offering complimentary tastings of exceptional wines paired with tiny bites of what they call "fridge food!" We'll have plenty of time for an early dinner on our own at one of the many restaurants around the square. Everything from delicious juicy burgers and brats to little bistros offering fine dining is available in Healdsburg. Return this evening to the Hyatt. *Breakfast, Lunch.*

**Tuesday, May 6** After breakfast at the hotel, we depart for nearby Petaluma and a visit to the garden of Sara Malone, an expansive garden around her home on a private horse ranch. The emphasis in her garden is on foliage, bark, and form; not on flowers. We'll continue to another private garden before we arrive in downtown Petaluma, offering a little slice of California history to all who come to sample its Victorian delights. As one of the few cities in Northern California spared the ravages of the 1906 earthquake, Petaluma is a rare example of what the citizens saw at the turn of the century. Travel & Leisure Magazine named Petaluma one of the "Nation's Top Ten Getaways near a Major City." Here you can shop for treasures from funky to fabulous in some of the many antique galleries around town and enjoy lunch on your own in one of the many little restaurants downtown and along the revitalized riverfront. After lunch our first stop will be the Cottage Garden Nursery where we will find a large selection of grasses, succulents, trellises, statuary and fountains. Following our visit we will enjoy 2 more private gardens before arriving back at the hotel for an evening at leisure. *Breakfast.*

**Wednesday, May 7** After breakfast at the hotel, depart via private motorcoach for Quarryhill Botanical Garden in Glen Ellen. Founded in 1987, Quarryhill is one of the preeminent Asian botanical gardens in the world, featuring one of the largest collections of wild-collected Asian plants. With 25 acres of mature, flowering Asian trees & shrubs including magnolias, dogwoods, maples, birches, roses, lilies and rhododendrons, the garden is laced with paths and hidden places to sit and relax, while surrounded by ponds, waterfalls, and vistas of the Sonoma Valley. After our tour we travel to nearby Cline Cellars for a picnic lunch amid the gardens. After lunch we will have free time to visit the Mission Museum where models of California Missions are so finely detailed that even the shrubbery is accurate. Real plant material is incorporated into some of the models, acclaimed as an extraordinary depiction of California History. We can stroll the lush grounds where thousands of rose bushes line the drive to the winery's tasting room, an authentic 1850s farmhouse. Expansive lawns on either side of the farmhouse contain rock-walled fresh water koi ponds, an arched stone bridge spanning a stream, a shady flagstone patio rimmed by a lotus pond with a stone fountain and an expansive Great Lawn bordered by ponds and mature willow tree. An assortment of flowers abound throughout the grounds. Wine tasting is a great idea as well as Cline is known for their affordable, well-crafted wines. After lunch we will visit the famous Cornerstone Gardens, an ever-changing series of walk-through gardens showcasing new and innovative designs from 17 of the world's finest landscape architects and designers. The first such gallery-style gardens in the United States, the nine-acre Cornerstone was created as an inspiration and resource for people interested in gardens, garden design and art. Inspired by the International Garden Festival at Chaumont-sur-Loire, Cornerstone celebrates the connection between art, architecture and nature. We'll enjoy a guided tour of the gardens and a visit to some of the shops that feature garden art. Another private garden is a likely stop before we arrive at the Glen Ellen Inn for our farewell dinner with wine. Return to the hotel this evening. *Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner.*

**Thursday, May 8** After breakfast, check out and return home or perhaps continue your exploration of the California Wine Country and beyond. *Breakfast.*

**Tour Price:** \$1095 per person based on double occupancy for members of San Diego Horticultural Society, \$1145 for non-members. \$295 supplement to have a single room. A minimum of 15 guests are required to operate this tour at the quoted price; a maximum of 35 can be accommodated.

**Including:**

- 4 nights accommodation at Hyatt Vineyard Creek, Santa Rosa.
- Welcome dinner with wine, 4 breakfasts, 2 lunches, farewell dinner.
- Transportation by private motorcoach
- Services of Sterling Tours tour manager Scott Borden
- All entrance fees as per itinerary
- Gifts to private garden owners
- \$100 donation to San Diego Horticultural Society
- Driver gratuities
- Taxes and service charges

**Not included:**

- Airfare
- Items and events not listed in itinerary.

Additional nights at Vineyard Creek Hyatt at group rate available upon request.

***To reserve a space on this tour, please contact***

**STERLING TOURS, LTD**

2907 Shelter Island Drive Suite #105-262; San Diego, CA 92106

Tel: 619 299-3010 800-976-9497 info@sterlingtoursltd.com

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