



Wine Country Wonder At Stanly Ranch

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With dazzling, elevated seasonal fare, it's well-being to the max at Napa's stylish and sustainable Stanly Ranch.

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- sauvignon blanc and Thomas Keller's Le French Laundry. Newly constructed on the rolling hills of a former cattle ranch, the sumptuous Stanly Ranch, Auberge Resorts Collection fits right in. Its modern farmhouse structures are set among silvery olive and eucalyptus trees, rows of fragrant lavender, vineyards growing chardonnay and pinot noir varietals, and a garden geared for its innovative farm-to-table restaurant, Bear.

Opened in 2022, Stanly Ranch is where you want to go for the absolute best. It's where I am for a three-day girlfriends' getaway with my pal Sharona. From the moment we pull up at the valet stand and hear the Americana/country playlist with tunes by **Chris Stapleton** and Zach Bryan, we're blissed-out. This opulent and earthy place hits all the right notes. The stand is staffed by valets called ranch hands. They're wearing cowboy hats, denim, and cowboy boots. The guests sport sundresses and suede. Leather-medallioned bracelets serve as the room keys. Not far from the quietly elegant accommodations, steers graze.



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the winding trails, but a hawk walk begins now, and that's where we head. Falconer Rebecca Rosen trains the hawks, falcons, and owls that help to keep pest birds from the property's vineyards. Rosen is at the ready with a big leather glove, some chicken morsels, and a softly feathered brown hawk with a yellow beak named Eddie. I extend a gloved arm toward Eddie, who's perched atop a nearby pole. Rosen calls out "Eddie! Eddie!" He swoops down to scarf up the chicken on my glove. Then he remains there, peacefully perched. He's just bigger than a pigeon and weighs about as much as a can of Coke. "They're trained with positive reinforcement. It's all his decision to come. We need to be very, very calm when they fly to us," Rosen says. Joining us on the Hawk Walk is a well-mannered family with triplet boys, a girl named Blake, and a beautiful blond mom who mutters something about being in Qatar for the World Cup.

Later, I realize she's Aly Wagner, a former World Cup soccer star who's now a television analyst. She's also a prototypical Stanly Ranch guest, along with Tour de France bicyclists and NBA and NFL players. Athletes are drawn to the spa, recovery circuit, and fitness center up on the hill, where there's a monumental infinity-symbol sculpture by Gordon Huether. There's a hyperbaric oxygen chamber for increasing oxygen levels, cold plunge for resetting pain and endurance levels, salt room igloo for purification and negative ions, lymphatic drainage machine, sauna, steam room, outdoor pools, and an array of yoga classes, massages, and facials, along with experiences like mountain lion tracking, fishing on the Napa River, and stargazing at blood moons. Us? Once we leave Eddie and get settled into our fabulous accommodations, we groove on the restorative yoga class, cryotherapy facial, chlorophyll water, candied ginger, and Supergoop! SPF Lip Screen Shine.

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mounted control panels, sliding glass walls opening to private patios with firepits, and expansive bathrooms with luxurious outdoor showers. Polished natural wood abounds, along with leather, glass, and exposed stone. Extended suites are available at the villas, where there's even a partial ownership plan.



COWBOYS INDIANS

Bear. With its studded ceiling, huge tumbleweed-inspired bouquets of dried flowers, and earthy wood-burning stove, the restaurant is the territory of charismatic executive chef Anthony Stagnaro, known for his woodfire grilling, fermenting, and making sure guests — who include celeb couples like Steph and Ayesha Curry (he's with the NBA; she's with the Food Network) — get one of the best meals of their lives. How does Stagnaro characterize his inspired cuisine? "Elemental," he says. "We like to focus on one ingredient. If it's a carrot, we like to focus on the best carrot. The best ribeye. How to make it the best. We do a lot with fermenting."

My craft cocktail dubbed The Wanderer is Bear's take on the Negroni. It has apple-infused gin, thyme-infused Campari, and vermouth. Its smoothness is perfection. Oh, here comes the cuisine! There are delectable preserved baby farm vegetables with cashew-miso dip; Asian-influenced crispy rice with Thai chili; lightly fried maitake mushrooms with an eggplant, fermented pepper, za'atar, and local olive oil accompaniment that's to die for; wood-grilled Mt. Lassen whole rainbow trout; and huckleberry-barbecued quail. For dessert? The only-at-Bear scrumptious sourdough ice cream made from a 78-year-old starter with caramel sauce. It's insane. It's a must.

We stroll back to our Arbor Cottage on a dark country path under starry skies and promptly follow [@bearnapa](#) and [@anthony_nicolas_stagnaro](#) on Instagram. It will have to do until our next visit. And there will be one!

This article appears in our [April 2024 issue](#).

For more information, visit Stanly Ranch, Auberge Resorts Collection at aubergeresorts.com/stanlyranch.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Courtesy Auberge Resorts Collection



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