

INSIDE: A sneak peek at Rachael's new cookbook!



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THE great escape

Monterey

Paso Robles

Solvang

Right now your focus is likely on family—kids, parents, grandparents, cousins, siblings, great-aunts—all of whom you love. But when's the last time you snuck in a little time for yourself? You know, enjoyed good wine and conversation with a friend? Here's your chance: Take a five-minute break from the holiday haze and **book a girls' getaway**. We suggest a road trip along California's Central Coast, abundant with **fantastic restaurants, cozy inns and stunning vineyards**. And because this trip is all about the ladies, we've spotlighted wineries owned by supercool women. We'll drink to that!

BY KARA WILLIAMS

ILLUSTRATIONS BY KRISTINE LOMBARDI

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stop 3 **Solvang**



REVEL IN THE VINEYARD-DOTTED landscape of the Santa Ynez Valley, made famous in the indie film *Sideways*. Stay in Solvang, a community settled by Danish immigrants in the early 20th century and filled with brightly painted windmills and half-timbered houses. The recently refurbished **Hotel Corque** (400 Alisal Road, Solvang, 800-624-5572, hotelcorque.com; book using code MKT_RRAY) defies the kitschy local architecture: The vibe is sleek-meets-rustic, with curvy glass sculptures and wooden coffee-table cubes dotting the rooms. **Every Day with Rachael Ray readers get a special rate: \$139 for weekends and \$99 for weekdays (down from \$179).**

CHILL OUT BESIDE the hotel's outdoor pool before getting gussied up for drinks at the on-site **Root 246** (805-686-8681; *gimlets \$7*). Gather in the Alice Lounge (the oversize high-backed chairs look pulled from the Mad Hatter's tea party) and order a round of herb gimlets—made with locally farmed fresh basil and organic vodka—and platters of cheese and Morro Bay oysters.

COME MORNING, spend a couple of hours in charming Los Olivos, where you can stroll art galleries, antique shops and more than two dozen tasting rooms—all in the two-block downtown radius. Eat lunch amid wisteria-covered trellises at **Los Olivos Café** (2879 Grand Ave., Los Olivos, 805-688-7265; *entrées from \$14*). Nibble on niçoise salad topped with seared fish—whatever's fresh—and save room for the flourless chocolate cake with homemade vanilla ice cream smothered in caramel sauce.

END YOUR TRIP at the beautiful **Rideau Vineyard** (1562 Alamo Pintado Road, Solvang, 805-688-0717, rideauvineyard.com; *tastings from \$10*), where the decor is decidedly feminine, with antique furniture, fleur-de-lis symbols and evocative paintings of jazz musicians—a nod to owner Iris Rideau's New Orleans heritage. Be sure to sample Iris' favorite vintage (currently grenache blanc) and toast to good wine and fun-loving ladies.

Solvang

Day Trip

It's harvest time! Visit your nearest woman-owned winery and watch the action.

Olympic Cellars Winery

Port Angeles, Washington

Home to the Working Girl series of wines, including Go Girl Red and Rosé the Riveter, this winery is owned by three female entrepreneurs, known as the Olympic Women in Wine. They work out of a 19th-century barn on the North Olympic Peninsula. olympiccellars.com

Cinder Wines

Boise, Idaho

Founded by winemaker Melanie Krause and her husband, Joe Schnerr, in 2006, Cinder Wines is named for the layers of volcanic remnants found under the vineyards in Idaho. Visit the tasting room near downtown Boise to sample their refreshing viognier and silky syrah. cinderwines.com

Jowler Creek Vineyard & Winery

Platte City, Missouri

Colleen and Jason Gerke produce affordable wines that pair with their favorite foods—Kansas City BBQ, bratwurst and grilled steaks. Try the Jowler Creek norton, the Missouri state grape that's been dubbed the "syrah of the Ozarks." jowlercreek.com

The Salt Lick Cellars

Driftwood, Texas

For more than 40 years, The Salt Lick has dished up some of Texas' best barbecue. The founder's granddaughter Maile Roberts just opened a tasting room adjacent to the restaurant, set amid 35 acres of vineyards. A house red and white, crafted from neighbors' grapes, are designed to pair perfectly with The Salt Lick's mouthwatering meats. To come: a full estate winery. saltlickbbq.com

Red Tail Ridge Winery

Seneca Lake, New York

Scoter and Shazzam (a yellow lab and a German shepherd) will greet you at Red Tail Ridge's modern, eco-friendly facility and tasting room in the Finger Lakes region of New York. Winemaker-owner Nancy Irelan cultivates grapes on 34 acres of land she and husband Mike Schnelle cleared and planted themselves. redtailridgewinery.com