

Great Wine Capitals - Outbound Knowledge Trip 2025

In early May 2025, Amy Hopkinson-Styles and Holly Girven Russell spent five days in Napa Valley on a research trip, partially funded by the Great Wines Capital network. The purpose was to gather insights to support Hawke's Bay operators, with a dual focus on actionable sustainability and visitor experience.

The trip centred on the RISE Napa Valley Climate & Wine Symposium, facilitated by Napa Green. Napa Green is a comprehensive sustainability and climate action certification program for vineyards and wineries in Napa Valley, providing third-party, soil-to-bottle verification. Its framework emphasises environmental stewardship, regenerative farming, and social equity, offering a model for integrating sustainability into both vineyard management and winery operations.

Itinerary

Winery/Tasting Room Visits		Rise Napa Symposium		Meetings with Industry Figures		
Day	USA Monday 5th	Tuesday 6th	Wednesday 7th	Thursday 8th	Friday 9th	
Activity	Napa visits	Rise Day 1	Rise Day 2 + visit/s	Rise Day 3 + visit/s	Visits	
ACCOM:	Calistoga	Calistoga	BRENNA Q	BRENNA Q	KATE DOUGLAS	
7:00 AM	7:00am arrive in SF,			Coffee Adam from Revino		
8:00 AM						
9:00 AM						
10:00 AM						
11:00 AM	11am Ashes & Diamonds	10am Ridge Lytton Springs	8-1 Rise Napa: SUPPLY CHAIN & WASTE PREVENTION	8-1 Rise Napa: Leadership Pillar: CLIMATE ACTION & REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE	9am Saramentine Bakery Vincent	
12:00 PM	12:30 Matthiasson					
1:00 PM						
2:00 PM	2pm Trefethen					
3:00 PM		1-6 Rise Napa: SOCIAL JUSTICE, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION	Napa Green meeting with Anna Brittain		Mel from Raen in St Helena	
4:00 PM			3pm Quintessa			3pm Tasting/Visit at Flowers
5:00 PM						
6:00 PM			Meeting with Russell Weiss - President & COO of Walsh Vineyards Management			6pm STACEY DOLAN CAPITANI / Napa Vintners & Auctions meeting and Dinner
7:00 PM					Elaine Chukan Brown book reading at Extradimensional Wine Co. Yeah!	
8:00 PM						
9:00 PM						

Visitor Experience - General Analysis

We had the opportunity to visit seven tasting rooms over the course of the week. While all provided free of charge, the majority of the experiences were that of a general consumer rather than an ‘industry insider’. With aims to analyse the entire experience, particular attention was paid to the collateral offered, tasting setting, experiences on offer, management systems, and communication around wine clubs.

Experience Architecture: Pricing, Format, and Perceived Value

An analysis of Napa Valley’s tasting experiences shows clear patterns that can translate effectively to Hawke’s Bay. Across the producers we visited, tastings fall into three price tiers, each carrying its own expectations around storytelling, hosting style, and the level of access being offered.

Entry-level experiences (\$35–\$60 USD) are usually straightforward indoor flights, minimal food, and an emphasis on approachability. Mid-tier experiences (\$60–\$95 USD) start to build more depth through curated bites, vineyard walks, sustainability stories, and guided sessions running 75–90 minutes. At the premium end (\$125–\$225 USD), the shift is obvious: small-group or private formats, vertical or library wines, and focused site-driven storytelling promising education on geology, topography, and history.

For Hawke’s Bay, Napa’s models suggest several transferable principles.

- A stepped pricing structure helps visitors understand what each level offers.
- Estate, site, and farming stories have real value when told plainly and with conviction.
- Small-group or winemaker-hosted formats can lift the experience without major capital spend.
- Culinary elements, even simple but well-curated bites, significantly increase willingness to pay.

Experience matrix for wineries visited (scraped via websites)

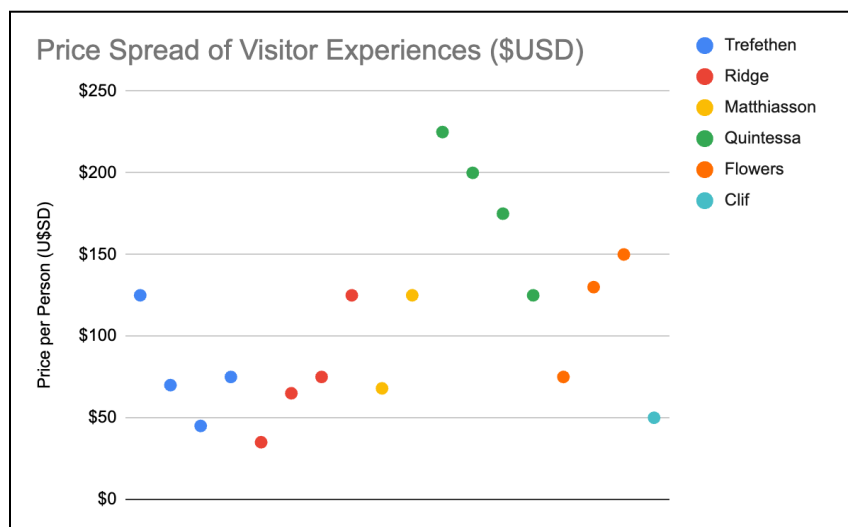
Winery	Experience Name	Price	Timing	Format	Description
Ashes & Diamonds	A&D TEASER	\$45		Tasting - 3 wines	A guided tasting of three wines from our portfolio of club wines offers a “teaser” of Ashes & Diamonds Membership privileges. A&D Teaser showcases a glimpse into the winery’s ethos of terroir-driven and minimal-intervention winemaking as the sun sets over the last seating of the day.
Ashes & Diamonds	A&D WINES	\$60	60-75m	Tasting - 4 wines	A guided tasting of four wines from our portfolio, enjoyed amid the mid-century modern property where they were born. Experience our light-handed winemaking approach: a commitment to producing minimal-intervention wines with a unique sense of

Winery	Experience Name	Price	Timing	Format	Description
					place. This experience is 60–75 minutes long and does not feature accompaniments.
Ashes & Diamonds	A&D WINES + CHEESE	\$75	60 - 75m	Wine + cheese tasting (4 wines, local cheese)	A portfolio tasting of four wines, paired with local cheeses and accoutrements including our sourdough focaccia, cultured butter and seasonal house-made preserves. This experience is 60–75 minutes.
Ashes & Diamonds	A&D Library & Rare Provisions	\$95	75 - 90m	Wine + cheese tasting (4 “off menu” wines + imported cheese)	A guided tasting of four off-menu, single-vineyard and library wines paired with a rotating, curated selection of seasonal provisions. Expect rare aged cheeses, like a 24-month Comté or a decadent triple crème Brie from Champagne, accompanied by 50-year balsamic vinegar, black truffle butter and house-made focaccia. This experience lasts 75-90 minutes.
Ashes & Diamonds	A&D WINES + FOOD	\$175	60 - 90m	Wine & meal (prix fixe menu)	Ashes & Diamonds' Wine + Food experience highlights our Basque-inspired menu, celebrating simplicity, seasonality, and California's fall bounty. Each dish reflects Northern Spain's spirit and local farm freshness, capturing ingredients at their peak. This prix-fixe menu is best enjoyed as a whole, with no substitutions allowed. If you have any food allergies, please contact our concierge with any questions . This experience is 60–90 minutes.
Trefethen	Taste the Estate in The Villa	\$125	90m	Wine & bites from estate garden (5 wines)	Taste the Estate is our quintessential wine and culinary experience, highlighting the amazing synergy of great wine and great food. Enjoy five of our finest wines paired with sublime bites which feature seasonal produce from La Huerta, our vegetable garden located just steps from The Villa. Winery Chef Chris Kennedy is a master with wine pairings and guests walk away with a heightened appreciation of the complex interplay of flavors and textures.
Trefethen	Reserve Tasting in The Villa	\$70	90m	Wine + Charcuterie (option to “upgrade” the tasting to premium collection)	The Villa and its surrounding outdoor garden spaces are home to this tasting of limited-production wines, including our award-winning Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon. The inclusion of a charcuterie board with cured meats, local cheeses, and our own estate grown preserves provides a delightful experience of balanced flavors, enhancing the enjoyment of these special wines. To further elevate your experience, we invite you to explore our Legacy Collection wines: Katie's Acre Chardonnay, The Cowgirl & The Pilot Merlot and H&Lo, our flagship Cabernet Sauvignon—simply select this option at booking.

Winery	Experience Name	Price	Timing	Format	Description
Trefethen	Winery Flights	\$45	60m	Tasting - 5 wines (2 choices of flight)	Upon arrival, guests choose from two distinct flights—Main Ranch or Seasonal flight. Each flight includes a taste of five different wines, collectively reflecting the diversity of the Trefethen portfolio. For Cabernet Sauvignon lovers, we invite you to elevate your visit with a truly special flight of age-worthy wines, including HāLo, our iconic flagship Cabernet Sauvignon—simply select this option at booking. All flights are offered inside our historic winery.
Trefethen	Vineyard Tour and Tasting	\$75	90m	Tour: vineyard, cellar, then tasting	Learn about the journey from vine to wine with our immersive Vineyard Tour & Tasting. Your visit begins with a guided walk among the vines, covering our rich winegrowing history and our award winning sustainability programs. After that, you will head to the cellar for a behind the scenes view into our winemaking operations and the experience concludes with a curated tasting of wines sourced from the very vineyard you walked through.
Ridge	Lytton Springs Estate Tasting	\$35	75m	Tasting - 5 wines	Our Estate Tasting Experience is a seated tasting flight of five of our single-vineyard wines from our estate vineyards in Sonoma County and the Santa Cruz Mountains.
Ridge	Century Tour & Library Tasting	\$65	90m	Tour: vineyard then tasting	This unique experience provides guests with an opportunity to explore our century-old vines and learn, first-hand, about one of the most historic vineyards in all of California. The tour concludes with a seated tasting of current release wines tasted alongside their older vintage counterparts.
Ridge	Beautiful Mountain: A Monte Bello Cabernet Tasting	\$75	75m	Private tasting	This private tasting provides guests a deep dive into the Monte Bello vineyard and the wines produced from it. Taste several wines from our Monte Bello property, including our current vintage of Monte Bello, during this intimate, seated tasting experience.
Ridge	Historic Vineyard Tour	\$125	120m	Tour: multiple vineyards, then tasting of rare wines	Available Seasonally, May through October. The perfect experience for a dedicated wine enthusiast, our historic vineyard tour features an enviable opportunity to go 'behind the scenes' with an extensive visit to rarely seen vineyard sites. Guests will learn first-hand about our stewardship of the land and commitment to sustainable farming practices, while enjoying wines produced from the very vines being viewed. Following the tour of our historic vineyard sites, guests will return to the winery to taste an array of rarely featured wines that illustrate our history and philosophy.

Winery	Experience Name	Price	Timing	Format	Description
Matthiasson	Outdoor Tastings	\$68	75m	Tasting: 5-6 wines	We host a limited number of Outdoor Tastings by appointment at our family-owned winery overlooking the Phoenix Vineyard, 7 days/week. Our tastings are approximately 75 minutes in length and feature 5-6 wines, some of which are only available at our tasting room.
Matthiasson	Reserve Tasting	\$125	75m	Tasting: 5-6 reserve wines	Upgrade to our Reserve Tasting and your host will guide you through a curated array of the most sought-after wines we produce, such as single-vineyard Cabernets, exclusive small releases, and library selections.
Quintessa	Quintessential Experience	\$225	90m	Tasting in private pavillion (current, library, barrel)	OUR QUINTESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE fuses world class wine and the stunning beauty that surrounds us. As your hosts guides you to a private, open-air pavillion surrounded by rolling vineyards, you will explore the nuances of our unique terroir and discover how our rich and diverse soils shape the character of our estate. Your pavillion will offer a breathtaking view of the estate – one of the quintessential vistas in the Napa Valley – while your host presents a flight of current and library vintages of Quintessa and two barrel samples that comprise the final blend.
Quintessa	Collector's Experience	\$200	90m	Tour: winery then tasting (current, library, barrel)	OUR COLLECTOR'S EXPERIENCE begins with a tour of our custom-designed gravity flow winery. Your host will guide you through our fermentation, winemaking, and aging processes, followed by a walk through our 17,000 square feet of caves. You will enjoy current and library vintages of Quintessa along with a barrel sample destined for the final blend of Quintessa.
Quintessa	Estate Experience	\$175	90m	Private Tour: vineyard then tasting in salon	THIS ESTATE EXPERIENCE begins with a privately hosted walk through the natural surroundings of Quintessa. You will enjoy sweeping views of the Rutherford appellation as your host expands on our holistic philosophy around organic and Biodynamic® farming practices. Following your walk, you will explore a lineup of current and library vintages of Quintessa in our tasting salon, where your host will guide you through our winemaking philosophy and the vision of our estate.
Quintessa	Communal Estate Experience	\$125	90m	Group tour: vineyard then tasting	OUR COMMUNAL ESTATE EXPERIENCE brings to life the convivial spirit of wine. Alongside one additional party, your host will lead you on a scenic walking tour of the Quintessa estate. You will enjoy the natural surroundings while learning more about our organic

Winery	Experience Name	Price	Timing	Format	Description
					and Biodynamic farming practices. A seated tasting of current and library vintages of Quintessa will follow.
Flowers	SONOMA COAST JOURNEY	\$75	60m	Wine & bites	A tasting journey through the Sonoma Coast, highlighting distinctive expressions of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay from this acclaimed wine region. Set within our lush gardens or intimate interior spaces, this guided flight of three Appellation wines is accompanied by a seasonal crudité & snack board.
Flowers	ESTATE VINEYARD IMMERSION	\$130	90m	Reserve wine & bites (4 wines)	A focused tasting exploration of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir from our iconic estate vineyards, Camp Meeting Ridge and Sea View Ridge. Hosted in a private space within our lush gardens or intimate interior spaces, this in-depth tasting of four wines from extreme coastal sites is accompanied by elevated food pairing bites crafted by our in-house culinary team.
Flowers	ELEMENTS OF SITE	\$150	90m	Reserve & Library wines (5 wines)	A deep-dive into the geology, topography & organic ecosystems that shape the indelible character of our coastal estate vineyards, and the singular wines they yield. This guided tasting study features a rare flight of five highly collectible estate wines, including library vintage Almar Chardonnay and Cielo & Pietra Pinot Noir "Site Series" bottlings from small, distinctive parcels within Camp Meeting Ridge and Sea View Ridge.
Clif	Clif Family Wine Tasting	\$50	60m	Wine & bites (4 wines)	Select from two menu options: Seasonal Tasting - An exploration of four wines paired with seasonal bites. Cab Drop Tasting - A deep dive of our Estate Cabernet Sauvignons paired with seasonal bites.



Wine Clubs

A review of Napa Valley wine clubs shows a deliberate structure built around scarcity, access, and deepening loyalty. Across the producers analysed, clubs operate less like simple wine subscriptions and more like full brand ecosystems. Members aren't just buying wine; they are buying proximity, priority, and a sense of belonging. Pricing tracks directly with that sense of access, with higher tiers offering more intimacy rather than just more product.

Membership tiers fall into recognisable patterns. Entry tiers (usually 3 to 6 bottles, 2 to 4 shipments per year) keep things simple: modest discounts, occasional customisation, and limited complimentary tastings. Mid-tier and premium memberships layer on private or VIP tastings, priority access to high-demand releases, invitations to member gatherings, and sometimes tier-specific events. At the upper end, collector tiers offer guaranteed allocations of flagship wines, en-primeur purchasing, and highly curated hosting or concierge-style services.

- Scarcity is the key driver of loyalty. Allocation language and limited releases are central to perceived value.
- Complimentary tastings are a fundamental retention tool. The quantity and quality of these benefits scale with bottle commitment.
- Customisation varies. More flexible clubs use it to attract new members, while estate-driven or prestige-focused producers treat a set selection as part of the identity.
- Auxiliary benefits are expanding, from media subscriptions to hotel partnerships, signalling a move toward lifestyle positioning.

Several lessons translate clearly for Hawke's Bay:

- Intentional scarcity works. Vineyard-specific bottlings, limited releases, or small library drops can anchor the higher membership tiers.
- Complimentary tastings are essential, even if offered conservatively.
- Some form of personalised service, even if it is just visit planning or direct access to a winemaker, can lift perceived value significantly.

One clear contextual difference is the basic geography of demand. Napa sits within the gravitational pull of one of the richest urban centres in the world, with a dense, high-value audience close enough to drop in for an afternoon. Hawke's Bay operates under a different set of conditions: a smaller local population and a national consumer base that is geographically spread. Events that rely on members travelling to the region will naturally have limited appeal once accommodation, fuel, and time are factored in.

This creates both a challenge and an opportunity. If regular in-region events won't reach most members, producers may need to think about how to take the experience to them. A portable tasting format, visiting key cities, or hosting satellite member gatherings could deliver the same sense of connection without requiring travel. There is room to experiment with mobile versions of the classic "member party," shifting from a place-based model to a relationship-driven one that meets members where they already are.

Wine Club matrix for wineries visited (scraped via websites)

Winery	Club Name	Bottle Tiers	QTY Ship/ year	Member Event	Free Tasting - Entry Level	Free Tasting - Prem Level	Free Shipping	Member Only Wines	Discounted pricing	Concierge	Other
Ashes & Diamonds	Membership	3, 6, 12	2	A&D Picnic	Yes	Discounted	6 & 12 bottles	Yes	No	Yes	Discounted hotel rates, access to resort pools, discounts on skin treatments and plastic surgery
Trefethen	Club Trefethen	3, 6	4	No	Yes	20% discount	Discount 6+	Yes	20% & 10% on library	No	
Trefethen	H&Lo Circle	3, 6	4	Yes	Yes	Yes	Discount 6+	Yes	20% & 10% on library	Yes	
Ridge	Advance Tasting Program	4, 6, 12	3	Yes	4pax	20% discount	Bay Area only	Yes	10% 1-11 bottles, 15% 12+	Yes	Twelve months of SOMM TV for just \$20. Premium hotel/resort discounts.
Ridge	Monte Bello Collector / Monte Bello Collector Futures	375ml: 4, 8, 12 750ml: 2, 4, 6 1.5L: 1, 2, 3 3L: 1, 2	1	Yes	4pax	20% discount	Bay Area only	Yes	10% 1-11 bottles, 15% 12+	Yes	Access to En Premeur waitlist Twelve months of SOMM TV for just \$20. Premium hotel/resort discounts.
Ridge	Z List	6, 12	2	Yes	4pax	20% discount	Bay Area only	Yes	10% 1-11 bottles, 15% 12+	Yes	Twelve months of SOMM TV for just \$20. Premium hotel/resort discounts.
Ridge	Lights & Brights	4, 6, 12	3	Yes	4pax	20% discount	Bay Area only	Yes	10% 1-11 bottles, 15% 12+	Yes	Twelve months of SOMM TV for just \$20. Premium hotel/resort discounts.
Matthiasson	Wine Club	6, 12	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	12 Bottles	Yes	6 bottle member 10% 12 bottle member 15%	No	Option to upgrade & include home-made products from the fruit orchards. Extra \$58 + shipping. Free 12-month subscription to SOMM TV

Winery	Club Name	Bottle Tiers	QTY Ship/ year	Member Event	Free Tasting - Entry Level	Free Tasting - Prem Level	Free Shipping	Member Only Wines	Discounted pricing	Concierge	Other
Quintessa	Vineyard Circle - Dragon	18	1	6pax, 1 event	Yes - 6pax, premium tasting		Yes	n/a	20%	No	
Quintessa	Vineyard Circle - Corona	12	1	4pax, 1 event	Yes - 4pax, entry level tasting		\$10	n/a	10%	No	
Quintessa	Vineyard Circle - Mesa	6	1	2pax, 1 event	Yes - 2pax, entry level tasting		\$20	n/a	10%	No	
Flowers	Ridgetop	12	3	6pax	Complimentary wine experiences for 6 guests – 6 times annually		Yes	no	20%	Yes	
Flowers	Sea View	6	2	4pax	Complimentary wine experiences for 4 guests – 4 times annually		\$10	no	10%	Yes	
Flowers	River	6	2	2pax	Complimentary wine experiences for 2 guests – 2 times annually		\$20	no	10%	Yes	
Clif	The Wine Drop	3+	4 or 6	No	Yes	Yes	\$20	no	20%	No	
Clif	The Cab Drop	3, 6	4	No	Yes	Yes	\$20	no	30% off Cabernets	No	

Systems and Processes: Bookings and Wine Club Management

An obvious trend across Napa wineries is the use of technology to streamline both visitor bookings and wine club operations. All wineries offering online reservations used Tock, a hospitality-focused booking and table management platform. Tock functions like a ticketing system, allowing customers to schedule and often prepay for tastings, tours, and other experiences.

The volume and complexity of experiences appear to correlate with the sophistication of the booking system, with Tock supporting multiple tiers of experiences and capacity management efficiently. Quintessa was the only winery relying on direct email bookings, a system that limits scale but reinforces exclusivity and allows a highly personalised approach to scheduling and guest management.

Wine club management also follows a clear pattern. Most Napa wineries use either Commerce7 or eCellar, both of which provide direct-to-consumer fulfillment, allocation management, membership tiers, and CRM integration.

- Automate recurring shipments and allocation management
- Offer tiered membership levels with specific benefits
- Integrate with tasting room POS & booking system (Tock) for complimentary or discounted experiences
- Track member engagement and purchasing history

Even Clif Family, which operates smaller-scale clubs and only one tasting experience, leverages Shopify Bundles for subscriptions, highlighting that even simpler operations benefit from platform support. Overall, Napa demonstrates a strong emphasis on systemised operations to maintain consistency, reduce friction, and scale both tasting experiences and membership programs.

Systems matrix for wineries visited

Winery	Booking System	Experiences Offered	Experience Pricing \$USD	Wine Club System	Number of Wine Clubs	Wine Club Members
Ashes & Diamonds	Tock	5	\$45 - \$175	Commerce7	1	3,000
Trefethen	Tock	4	\$45 - \$125	Commerce7	2	1,500
Ridge Vineyards (Lytton Springs)	Tock	4	\$35 - \$125	Commerce7	4	15,000
Matthiasson	Tock	2	\$68 - \$125	Commerce7	2	2,000
Quintessa	Email directly	4	\$125 - \$225	eCellar	3	5,000
Flowers	Tock	3	\$75 - \$150	eCellar	3	
Clif Family	Tock	1	\$50	Shopify - Bundles	2	

Visitor Experience - The Visits

Ashes & Diamonds - 11am 5th May

Our visit was the day after their annual “pick up party” for 800 of their 3,000 members. Their tasting room is a mid-century modern glass space, designed with aesthetic impact in mind. Wine is presented as an accompaniment to the environment rather than as a story of vineyard or winemaking. Information about the wines and wine club was provided in printed materials. Staff were knowledgeable but understated, and overall the experience felt muted, perhaps influenced by the previous day’s large event. We tasted four wines. While the space and presentation were clean and stylish, this was our least engaging tasting of the week.

Collateral provided: Printed wine details, wine club information and sign-up form as inserts.

Tasting setting: Lounge seating, wines served one at a time.

Management systems: Commerce7 & Tock.

Communication around wine clubs: Clear printed information presented at the table. Member pricing shown on the price lists.



Matthiasson - 12:30pm 5th May

Entry to the property is controlled by an electronic gate and buzzer, allowing staff to meet guests in the carpark with a welcome glass of experimental sparkling peach wine—an immediate point of charm.

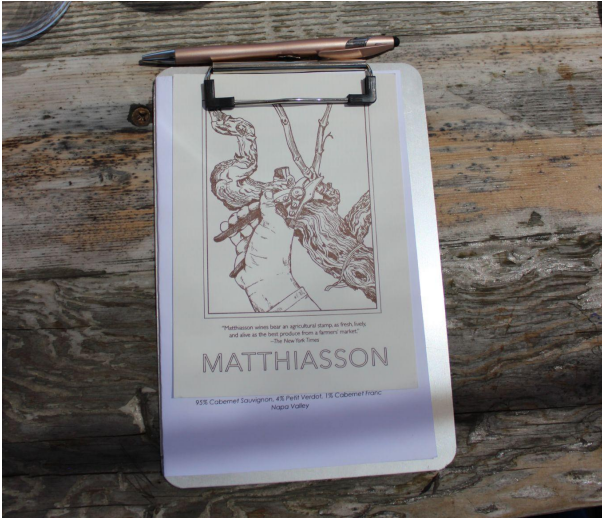
The tasting took place at the top of the vineyard in a purpose-built outdoor structure with picnic-style seating and a canopy. Wines were served in test tubes, with full bottles placed at the head of the table for us to view the labels. Information was provided through printed notes and staff descriptions.

Collateral provided: Clipboard stacked with info card (image one side, info the other, thick card), wine information, tasting line up, menu, wine club information.

Experiences on offer: One format for tastings, can upgrade to “premium wines”

Management systems: Commerce7, Tock

Communication around wine clubs: Clear printed information presented at the table.



Ridge Vineyards - 10am 6th May

Ridge manages its wine club through Commerce7 and has around 15,000 members, with at least 20 percent located within the Bay Area.

Our tasting took place outdoors on a sheltered porch, furnished with low, comfortable seating and overlooking the vineyard. The staff member serving us was highly knowledgeable, providing detailed information while leaving plenty of space to enjoy the wines at our own pace. Five

wines were tasted, served one at a time, with bottles only left on the table upon request. The experience combined expertise and approachability, offering a strong example of how Ridge balances education, hospitality, and a sense of exclusivity.

Collateral provided: Tasting list printed with our name and the date, wine order forms, wine club sign up forms (multiple clubs, one brochure for each club)

Tasting setting: Outdoor, sheltered porch with low, comfortable seating overlooking the vineyard; wines served one at a time.

Experiences on offer: Seated tastings at multiple price points or vineyard tours by foot/golf cart.

Management systems: Commerce7, Tock.

Communication around wine clubs: Brochures presented for each of their wine clubs



Quintessa - 3pm 7th May

This was our one tasting experience that didn't follow a standard format, we were hosted by the winemaker and took a full tour of the winery and vineyard before our tasting. Tastings take place in individual pavilions positioned throughout the property, each one architecturally designed and out of sight of the others, creating a strong sense of privacy. Winemaker Rebekah noted that each pavilion cost around USD \$1 million to build. They were luxurious and beautiful.

After a drive through the vineyard in one of their fleet of golf buggies, we arrived at our pavilion where glasses were already set. Quintessa produces only two wines, so the tasting focused on multiple vintages, with the storytelling centred on site, season, and the evolution of the estate.

We were given a small booklet of photographs from the 2022 harvest and high-quality printed materials outlining the wine club.

The wine club, the Vineyard Circle, offers members access to small, 50-person ticketed dinners at the owners' home, which has a commercial kitchen. The entire experience projected a very polished version of relaxed Californian luxury, delivered with consistency at every touchpoint.

Tasting setting: Appointment-only pavilion tasting in private architect-designed spaces highlighting the views of the property.

Management systems: eCellar, email to book a tasting



Flowers - 3pm 8th May

We were handed a glass of rosé from a magnum on arrival and given a moment in the waiting room before a host walked us through the garden to our table. The garden is ringed with purpose-built tasting shelters that sit neatly in the landscape, each sized for groups of six or a few smaller tastings. Our table was already set with printed menus with our names and the date.

The tasting ran in two flights—two Chardonnays, then two Pinot Noirs—each paired to small but elaborate bites. Our host sat on a small stool at the front of the table to talk through the pairings, the vineyards, and the broader story, then stepped back and checked in frequently but gently. Their wine club offering leans heavily on a rotation of complementary tasting experiences, and it shows—this is clearly something locals build into their seasonal social calendar. The whole experience felt relaxed, elegant, and intentionally put together without being showy.

Collateral provided: Personalised printed tasting menus with guest names and date, vineyard photography cards, menu, order form, and wine club information.

Tasting setting: Garden-based shelters designed for small groups

Management systems: eCellar & Tock

Communication around wine clubs: Club positioned around recurring, high-quality tasting experiences and seasonal engagement.



Clif Family Vineyard, St Helena Tasting Room - 1pm 9th May

We visited the downtown St Helena tasting room, which was casual and busy. The tasting room is in St Helena, a town full of tasting rooms offering visitors an easy way to try wines and access their club benefits without having to travel to an out-of-the-way vineyard or winery. The space accommodated both large groups dining on paired meals and smaller groups focused on

tastings. Staff were knowledgeable and friendly, allowing us to move through the tasting at our own pace.

The room reflected the family's cycling and farm focus, with decor featuring bicycles and shelves of farm-made products, including jams, chutneys, pickles, and sauces. Each wine was paired with a small, carefully prepared bite. The combination of casual environment and precise food pairing highlighted an approach that balances relaxed hospitality with attention to detail, aimed at both local and visiting members.

Collateral provided: A custom “vine” trail map of the region

Tasting setting: Casual downtown St Helena tasting room; mix of bar, dining, and seated tasting areas; small food pairings served with wines.



RISE Napa Valley Climate & Wine Symposium 2025

The RISE Napa Valley Climate & Wine Symposium was held at the Charles Krug Carriage House in St Helena. The programme is held by Napa Green and ran across six half-day sessions over two weeks. This half-day format was intentionally designed to allow attendees to participate in the morning, stay for lunch and networking, and still return to work in the afternoon. Many businesses utilised this structure by sending different team members on different days, depending on relevance.

Each day featured a rotating group of trade sponsors aligned with that day's theme, presented via on-site trade stands. Day four departed from the standard sponsor model and instead foregrounded industry not-for-profit organisations, reinforcing the broader sector-wide focus of the symposium.

The Leadership Pillars are what Napa Green defines as the *Six Pillars of Sustainable Winegrowing Leadership* and shape the certification process making wineries and vineyards work systematically, from soil to bottle, from the farm through production and distribution. These pillars also formed the daily themes for the RISE symposium. We attended days 4-6.

- Day 1: Water efficiency & savings
- Day 2: Energy efficiency & savings
- Day 3: Proactive farming, soil health & biodiversity
- Day 4: Social justice, diversity & inclusion
- Day 5: Supply chain & waste prevention
- Day 6: Climate action & regenerative agriculture

Full program, information and session recordings are available here: napagreen.org/rise-2025

Day 4: Social Justice diversity and inclusion

Strong emphasis was placed on co-creation, mentorship, and the sharing of intergenerational knowledge. A repeated theme was that removing barriers to participation must come before expecting diversity to flourish. Rather than “investing in” diversity as a concept, speakers stressed the importance of building environments where people feel genuinely welcome and supported.

Speaker Highlight: Jermaine Stone, Founder of Cru Luv Media

Born and raised in the Bronx, Jermaine spoke about bridging hip hop and wine culture, guided by his belief that “terroir is not just soil, it's soul.” Rather than code-switching, he practices code-combining, bringing his full cultural identity into wine spaces.

- Inclusion without empowerment is just options.
- Representation without infrastructure doesn't change much.
- “How good is a seat at the table if you don't like the menu?”
- Don't water anything down. Meet people where they are.
- Don't just talk about inclusion. Build the model and scale it.

- Leave the doors open behind you. Help people find their voice.
- Wine is art and a cultural exchange.
- Cultural change also has to work economically: “If it don’t make a dollar, it don’t make sense.”

Day 5: Supply Chain and waste prevention

Closed-loop washable bottle systems were presented as both feasible and scalable, with Revino presenting a working example. A key entry point is ensuring packaging is “washable-ready” with washable labels, alongside clear communication to consumers about why this change matters.

Across sessions, wine was positioned as a powerful conduit for conversations about environmental issues, with a strong emphasis on bringing consumers into the sustainability journey.

A standout perspective came from Dom De Ville’s session describing how the Wine Society UK is shifting the sustainability narrative from guilt to joy, reframing participation as positive and collective rather than corrective.

Day 6: Climate Action and regenerative agriculture

Fish-friendly farming was presented as a regional initiative demonstrating what coordinated change can achieve in practice. Mediterranean wine regions were highlighted as a priority for biological conservation. Speakers repeatedly emphasised the importance of discussing innovations and values while clearly showing the actions being taken..

Full program, information and session recordings are available at napagreen.org/rise-2025

Conclusion

The Napa Valley visit and RISE Symposium underscored that exceptional wine regions combine sustainability, storytelling, and hospitality in equal measure. Structured tasting experiences, clear wine club tiers, and small-group or winemaker-led formats drive engagement and loyalty. Sustainability leadership spanning climate action, regenerative farming, and social equity, is most effective when paired with transparency and consumer inclusion.

For Hawke’s Bay, these insights suggest that thoughtful design of experiences, deliberate communication of values, and accessible yet distinctive offerings can build deeper connections, strengthen brand loyalty, and elevate the region’s profile internationally.