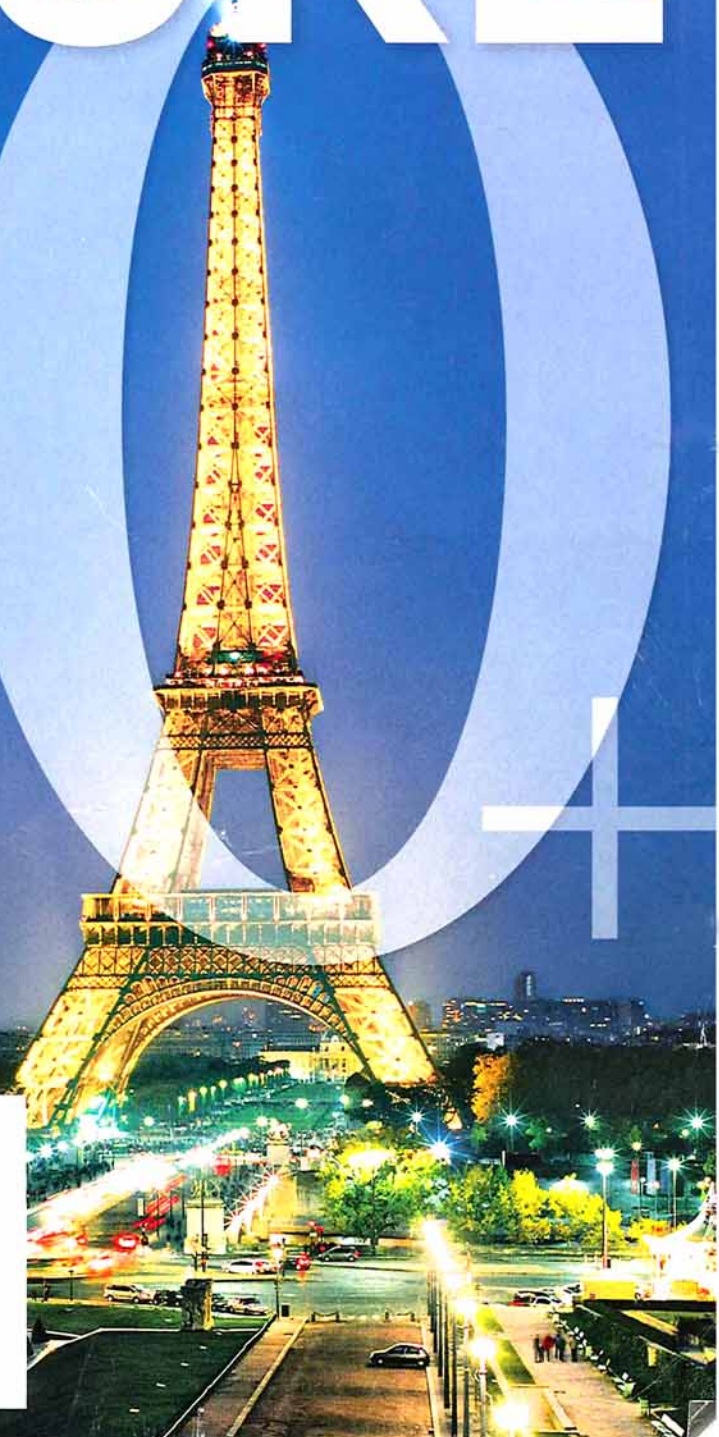


40TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

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TRIPS OF A LIFETIME



THE *Ultimate Napa* ITINERARY

Every state in the U.S. produces wine, but California's iconic grape-growing valley remains the ne plus ultra for travelers in search of rustic-luxe hotels, Michelin-starred restaurants, and cult wineries. Master sommelier Gilles de Chambure reveals how to get it right. **By Jaime Gross**



Looking southwest over California's Napa Valley.

SINCE 2005, BURGUNDY-BORN GILLES DE Chambure, director of wine education at Napa's Meadowood resort, has arranged vineyard visits and tastings for guests and nonguests alike. Arrive during the fall harvest or in early spring for fewer crowds, and don't miss his top picks.

SWEET START The brioches at **Bouchon Bakery** (6528 Washington St., Yountville; 707/944-2253; breakfast for two \$20) lure early risers, but de Chambure goes for the chocolatey *bouchon*. **OUTWARD BOUND** Try the three-hour hike along Calistoga's Oat Hill Mine Trail. "It's especially beautiful in spring, when the lupine is flowering," says the sommelier.

SAFE PASSAGE **Napa Valley Tours & Transportation** (707/251-9463; nvt.net; half-day from \$300) has the best cars—sedans, limos, minibuses—and savvy drivers familiar with the back roads. **SIPS WITH A VIEW** Head to Howell Mountain and swirl a glass of 'V' Petit Verdot at **Viader** (viader.com) or a Cabernet Sauvignon at **Cade** (cadewinery.com). On the valley floor, **Gargiulo Vineyards** (gargiulovineyards.com) is "a magical place dotted with oak trees."

NEW POURS On de Chambure's try-now list? The Albariño from **Hendry** (hendrywines.com), a Charbono from **Robert Foley Vineyards** (



BEST OF NAPA From top: The Michelin three-starred Restaurant at Meadowood; Redd's selection of cold foie gras; the spa deck at Calistoga Ranch.

foleyvineyards.com), and a peachy **Truchard Vineyards** Roussane (truchardvineyards.com). **INSIDER'S LUNCH** How to avoid the crush at pan-Asian **Redd** (6480 Washington St., Yountville; 707/944-2222; lunch for two \$60): "Walk in at noon and sit at the bar for the *hamachi* tartare." **OFF-DUTY DINING** De Chambure is often on hand at the Restaurant at Meadowood, but for a more intimate meal, he opts for **Terra** (1345 Railroad Ave., St. Helena; 707/963-8931; dinner for two \$132). His order?

The cod in *shiso* broth, with Kurikomayama sake.

T+L'S HOTEL TIPS **Meadowood Napa Valley** (900 Meadowood Lane, St. Helena; 707/963-3646; meadowood.com; doubles from \$625) has epitomized Napa's laid-back luxury for decades. **Calistoga Ranch, an Auberge Resort** (580 Lommel Rd., Calistoga; 800/942-4220; calistogaranch.com; doubles from \$750) feels like adult summer camp, with spa treatments and 157 acres laced with hiking trails. Or try **GREAT VALUE Avia Napa** (1450 First St., Napa; 866/644-2842; aviahotels.com; doubles from \$229), in the city's buzzing downtown.

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