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[Home](#) > Yountville CA: Napa Valley's Culinary Hub

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Yountville California embodies many quintessential visions you undoubtedly have when planning a Napa Valley excursion. It all started in 1836 when George Calvert Yount founded the town planting Napa Valley's first official vineyard. Today, vines stretch from the Mayacamas mountains to the Napa River. Yountville now also has the highest concentration of Michelin rated dining in the Valley.

Distinctive dining here dates back to 1977 when Philippe Jeanty opened [Domaine Chandon](#) [1]'s restaurant. Now still in the kitchen but at his own [Bistro Jeanty](#) [2] down the street, top quality dining has mushroomed into Michelin star territory with [The French Laundry](#) [3] and [Bouchon](#) [4] topping the list while Michelin rated eateries like [Lucy Restaurant and Bar](#) [5], and [Redd Wood](#) [6] create year round farm-to-fork dishes. French Laundry's 3 acre edible garden, right across the street from its namesake restaurant, is open to the public and a highly visible example of where all this fresh produce is sourced from.

Redd Wood

Redd Wood, a more casual sister restaurant of Richard Reddington's [Redd](#) [7], is an osteria with ultramodern bar and clusters of tables benefiting from bright outside views thanks to knee-to-ceiling plate glass windows. To the left of the door as you enter, you'll see various cuts of meats aging in a glass door walk-in refrigerator. A lit copper buoy serves as the central lighting feature while their private dining room is flanked with magazine wall-art.

A sure bet among other treats on the menu here is building your own wood fired pizza masterpiece. It all starts with a finely blistered crust with satisfying chew and subtle smokiness topped with Neapolitan-style sauce (whole peeled tomatoes, salt, olive oil) fresh mozzarella, and basil. Next, pick from toppings including their in-house aged pancetta, goat cheese, smoked mozzarella, ham and bacon, Calabrian chili, and just picked arugula.

Dining outside on the terrace is a highly contested seating option where at night you can truly look up into the sky and identify the constellations along with a glass of wine from their impeccably curated 200 bottle list. Although heavily focusing on local varietals, roughly 50% lean Italian including 21 by-the-glass offerings. [Tacos Garcia](#) [8], a city-licensed taco truck sets up in a parking lot across the street alongside a dive bar lending an egalitarian ambiance to Yountville's dining scene on this stretch of Washington Street.

Lucy Restaurant & Bar

Ensnconced within ultra posh LEED Platinum certified [Hotel Bardessono](#) [9], Lucy Restaurant & Bar cultivates an equally inspired menu based on what's available from their kitchen-side garden. Executive Chef Victor Scargle regularly leads garden tours identifying and harvesting herbs & produce like Persian limes, eight different mint varieties, as well as salad greens and other vegetables. And if they don't have it, local farms make up the difference in dishes like *Schmitz Ranch Pork Chop* and *Liberty Farm Duck Breast*. While Lucy does showcase Napa wines, their list specifically focuses on small vintners from around the world committed to organic and biodynamic practices.

Jessup Cellars

Speaking of wines, [Jessup Cellars](#) [10] is a standout among Yountville wineries turning out some stellar small production vintages expertly crafted by winemaker Rob Lloyd. You can explore their bold Cabernets, smooth Bordeaux– style blends, crisp whites, and rich Ports in their Tuscan styled tasting room across the street from Redd Wood. Like many Napa tasting rooms, art takes just as much of the stage as the wines. At Jessup, this is taken a step further with their artist-in-residence program allowing artists to spend time in Yountville performing in their gallery space. Regularly scheduled events include an *Art House Short Film Series* featuring 4 award-winning shorts paired with a Jessup Cellars wine and Chef Mike C's Wok-Popped Flavor-Infused Popcorn.

Rob Lloyd's simple yet crucial wine making cornerstone is sourcing particular grapes from where they grow best in the Valley. This requires an intimate knowledge of micro climates that can only come from years of walking vineyards during all seasons. Pinots, Chardonnay and Merlot grapes from Carneros Bay are a case in point. These cooler climate grapes benefit from ocean breezes which naturally slow maturation allowing proper ripening before they sugar up. "A longer hang time amply softens the skins before the Brix level gets too high," says Lloyd. Conversely, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Zinfandel and Petit Verdot are sourced from "up valley" regions where it's hotter and drier. The best part is that Jessup's wines are richly concentrated and accessible when young yet poised for the benefits of cellaring.

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Links

- [1] <http://www.chandon.com/>
- [2] <http://www.bistrojeanty.com/>
- [3] <http://www.thomaskeller.com/tfl>
- [4] <http://www.thomaskeller.com/bouchon-bistro-yountville>
- [5] <http://www.lucyrestaurantandbar.com/home>
- [6] <http://www.redd-wood.com/>
- [7] <http://reddnapavalley.com/>
- [8] <http://www.yelp.com/biz/tacos-garcia-yountville-2>
- [9] <http://www.bardessono.com/>
- [10] <http://jessupcellars.com/>