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Napa Valley Proposals: Where to Shop For Rings & Pop the Question



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1 of 9 Proposal Weekend: Napa Valley



Photo Credit: Clockwise, from top: Harvest Inn; Auberge du Soleil; author's own (rings)

Updated July 24, 2016.

It's not that getting engaged over the course of a romantic weekend getaway is a novel idea so much as it is a sure thing—why limit the proposal to a single moment when you can surround that happy occasion with a few days' worth of delightful shared experiences? In addition to a sparkling engagement ring, you'll be giving your fiancé an abundance of cherished memories to boot.

Then, once you're engaged, your Proposal Weekend destination automatically becomes a place of deep significance to both of you, making it a natural choice for the location for your wedding.

"Where we got engaged" offers a backdrop with built-in romance; it also provides the perfect "neutral territory" solution if you and your fiancé are having trouble choosing a spot that will make everyone's families happy.

Consider [Napa Valley](#). With its gorgeous scenery (lush vineyards and meadows framed by rolling hills and dusky mountaintops), [world-class wineries](#), [award-winning restaurants and romantic inns](#), the area is a total win when it comes to planning the perfect Proposal Weekend. Skip Napa proper (too many crowds) in favor of one of the smaller towns: [St. Helena](#) is the most charming, with a hidden gem-like vibe despite Napa Valley's rampant popularity with tourists. It also has two excellent fine jewelry stores, perfect for engagement ring shopping, right on Main Street, and a gazillion proposal-worthy spots for when it's time to get down on one knee. Don't worry, we've narrowed them down for you!

Finally, a little PSA for when you pop the question: If the enjoyment of wine figures prominently in your grand plan, consider hiring a limo to drive you around—the last thing you want to worry about is drinking and driving.

From the ring to the restaurant to the prettiest proposal spots, click through to start planning the ultimate Proposal Weekend in Napa Valley...

2 of 9 Shop For Engagement Rings Here: Patina



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A selection of rings from Patina.

A proposal weekend in Napa Valley could involve two scenarios. One has you and your sweetie using your time there to [shop for and buy an engagement ring together](#). The other hinges on the proposal being a complete surprise, the engagement ring having been selected and purchased in advance of the big moment. No matter what approach you take, be sure to make [Patina](#) one of your engagement ring hunting stops.

The intimate boutique, with its macaron-pink interiors trimmed in gold, antique mirrors and crystal chandeliers, feels like an 18th century Parisian salon. Specializing in [antique and estate jewelry](#), the assortment is expertly curated by owners Wayne Armstrong and Marcus Robbins. As such, the engagement ring collection consists of a constantly rotating array of styles spanning a variety of eras and price points. [Art Deco](#) glamazons are in plentiful supply, but there are also a number of petite Edwardian beauties with .5-carat center stones for about \$500. "Estate engagement rings have a true rarity," says Wayne, "and each style has its own juju." And all of the engagement rings at Patina are one-of-a-kind. So if you try on and fall in love with, say, the 7.32-carat Art Deco round diamond solitaire shown above, it may not be available if you decide to think on it! *1342 Main Street, St. Helena, 707-963-5445*

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**Shop for Engagement Rings Here:
 Palladium**

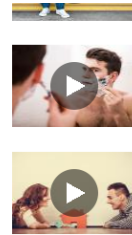


A selection of rings from Palladium.

If you prefer the look of a contemporary engagement ring, or perhaps a design [customized to your specifications](#), Patina's sister store, [Palladium](#), is located right across the street. Here's where you'll find modern takes on classic styles, art-directed by Wayne and his partner, and executed by a European-trained bench jeweler onsite. Wayne reports that rose gold designs are a new favorite among couples who visit the store and that [halos](#) continue to command the spotlight.

You'll also find a number of colored stone engagement rings set with, say, a vibrant oval-sapphire flanked by diamond trillions, or a glittery cushion-cut yellow diamond. Rocks of considerable size are a clear specialty here, too (exhibit A: the magnificent pear-shape design with tapered baguettes shown above). Bonus: A trio of adorable [Havanese](#) split their time between the two boutiques and are happy to provide their unbiased opinion when asked. *1339 Main Street, St. Helena, 707-963-5900*

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Propose Here: The Low-Key Option



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Photo Credit: L&D Photography, LLC/dphoto.com (top & bottom left); V. Sattui Winery (bottom right)

The perfect low-key plan? Proposing over a picnic at [V. Sattui Winery](#), a classic Napa Valley attraction with a rich Italian-American heritage dating back to 1885. The grounds, including two acres of designated picnic area, are pure storybook romance: Crystalline fountains, vibrant rose bushes and magnificent oak trees, all surrounded by fields of grapevines, bright green in spring, golden in fall.

Pick up housemade charcuterie, bread and cheese (there are 200 different types to choose from!) onsite at V. Sattui's Artisan Deli. They even have "picnic packs" (\$149) fitted with plates, cutlery, napkins and wine cups for two. Speaking of, don't forget the bubbly: V. Sattui's [Prestige Cuvee](#), with its toasty notes and hints of apple and pear, is crisp, festive and perfect for a post-proposal toast.

The best part? You can come back and hold your wedding here—just know that Charlie, V. Sattui's resident cat, will be expecting an invite... *1111 White Lane, St. Helena, 707-963-7774*

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Propose Here: Wine With a View



Photo Credit: L&D Photography, LLC/dphoto.com

Napa Valley is so beautiful that, really, you could pull over and propose among the grapevines at any of the no-name roadside vineyards along Highway 29 (or Highway 121, a.k.a. the Silverado Trail) and leave it at that. But why phone it in when there are far more extraordinary settings—and winery staffs willing to handle the details for you? Offering extraordinary scenery, stylish tasting rooms, enchanting wine caves and, yes, the chance to sample some excellent wine, many Napa Valley wineries come tailor-made for proposals, complete with sommeliers and event staff well-versed in the discretion/trickery that popping the question (and keeping it a surprise) requires.

With its impressive art installations, sculpture gardens and fragrant lavender fields, [Hall](#) is a standout option that makes it really easy for you stage something memorable but not too over-the-top. One recommended approach begins with a guided tour of the property and ends with a private tasting of wines from Hall's [Artisan portfolio](#).

Peterson's Loft is the ideal spot for a "private tasting" proposal—popping the question by the enormous west-facing window overlooking the sprawling terrace lawn (pictured above) creates a movie-perfect backdrop for the big moment. (Don't worry, the sommelier will come up with an excuse to leave you two alone.) You can arrange to have one of the bistro tables pre-set with local cheeses and charcuterie, plus a bottle of Hall's incredibly luscious 2012 "Coeur" Cabernet Sauvignon, to enjoy during, or after the proposal. It's a perfect (and aptly-named) libation with which to toast the occasion, or you can bring it home as a memento. Cheers! *401 St. Helena Highway, St. Helena. Proposal packages from \$300; contact mmutrix@hallwines.com for advice and assistance.*

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Propose Here: Top-Secret Seclusion





Photo Credit: L&D Photography, LLC/dphoto.com

"Let's just pop in here for a sec." This is how you can initiate a super sneaky proposal at [Merryvale](#), whose unassuming appearance along Highway 29 will help your cause (cause = subterfuge). Make this small winery specializing in craft boutique wines your last stop on a day of tastings. Upon arrival, the sparkling fountain, palm trees and lush rose bushes immediately transport you to a world of gracious, European-style romance and charm—one that dazzles but won't blow your cover.

And even as your host leads you into the winery's cavernous, Tolkein-esque Historic Cask Room, your sweetie could still be thinking this is all de rigueur for tastings at Merryvale (yes, even amidst all those flickering candles).

But then you take a sharp left into the Tank Room, a giant redwood barrel transformed into an intimate, chandelier-lit chamber that's hushed and secluded and perfectly dim. From there, your host will lead the two of you through a decadent wine-and-cheese experience (\$55 per person) until she conveniently absents herself, leaving the rest to you... 1000 Main Street, St. Helena. Tank Room tastings by appointment only; contact events@merryvale.com in advance to make arrangements or call 707-968-3429.

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Propose Here: The Grand Slam

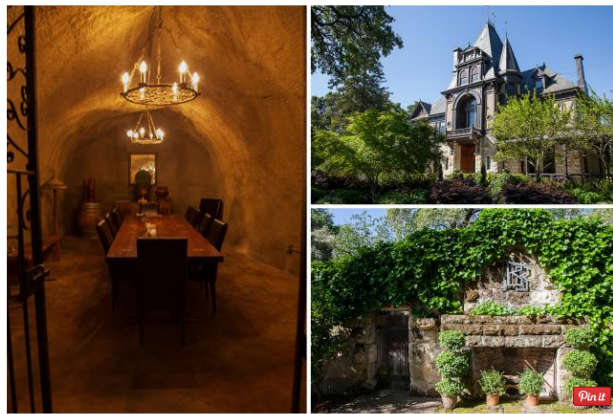


Photo Credit: L&D Photography, LLC/dphoto.com

The only problem with proposing at [Beringer Vineyards](#) winery estate is that the magnificence of its grounds and architecture, all visible when you pull into the parking lot, might be a dead giveaway.

One surprise proposal scenario starts with a private tasting in the estate's famous Rhine House, a Victorian marvel of turrets, stickwork overlays and stained glass windows. Afterward, the host leads you on a tour of the property's wine caves, ending in the darkly romantic Ante Room (pictured above).

Before you walk in, the host will conveniently "forget" the last tasting wine and leave—your cue to reveal the space in all its pre-decorated glory: beautiful flowers, candles, strewn rose petals and last but not least, a bottle of wine with the words "Will you marry me?" on it.

Alternatively you can go rogue and do a quickie proposal while strolling the grounds after a "regular" tasting (\$35 per person); pro tip: the shaded Walt Klenz Redwood Grove is stunning. In fact, you can come back and get married in this very spot, or in one of Beringer's many other gorgeous wedding locations, from a sunken, ivy-clad courtyard to a sweeping croquet lawn and more. Proposal packages from \$550. 2000 Main Street, St. Helena, 707-257-5771

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Celebrate Here: Auberge du Soleil



Photo Credit: Auberge du Soleil

That Napa Valley is foodie heaven goes without saying; the area is of course heavy on very excellent "casual chic" restaurant options, but not all are romantic enough to serve as the site of your post-proposal celebratory dinner. The logical choice? Probably French Laundry, the Yountville-based jewel in Napa Valley's culinary crown. But [Auberge du Soleil](#), with its glorious, sun-drenched terrace, makes for a much more picturesque backdrop.

And the Michelin-rated, award-winning cuisine more than delivers on the promise of an extraordinary meal—a wildly indulgent experience the two of you will never forget.

Start by toasting with a once-in-a-lifetime vintage—the 1996 Dom Ruinart Brut Rosé (\$572) or the 2008 Bond St. Eden Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon (\$705), perhaps? (Both come recommended by the sommelier.) Your four-course dinner will draw on seasonal, locally-harvested ingredients (e.g., spiced local lamb served with sunchokes and Swiss chard, or lobster-asparagus soup swirled with Meyer lemon creme fraiche). And if ever there were an occasion to spring for the [Osetra caviar](#) or [Wagyu beef](#), this would have to be it, no? Bon appétit! *Prix fixe dinners from \$130 per person. 180 Rutherford Hill Road, Rutherford, 800-348-5406*

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Sleep Here: Harvest Inn



Photo Credit: Harvest Inn by Charlie Palmer

A proposal weekend in Napa Valley calls for staying in a romantic retreat, ideally one that's picturesque, secluded, relaxed and luxurious. [Harvest Inn by Charlie Palmer](#) effortlessly meets these requirements and exceeds them with exquisite landscaping (Italianate fountains comeingle with garden roses of every imaginable color and variety, towering black oak and redwood trees and modern art sculptures) and exceptional cuisine (the inn's restaurant, Harvest Table, is helmed by celebrity chef Charlie Palmer who is literally having a field day developing menus that draw on Wine Country's innumerable culinary delights).

Meandering brick-laid paths, archways and courtyards connect a series of fairytale cottage-like accommodations. Each offers unmatched privacy, California chic furnishings, proximity to the property's pools and gardens, plus thoughtful in-room amenities like a bottle of local cabernet sauvignon, lemon-scented bath salts, C.O. Bigelow toiletries and "lightable fire bags" that make enjoying a nightly fireside snuggle a no-brainer. Breakfasts are complimentary but when you see the room service menu, and grow accustomed to the insanely plush, decadently cozy comfort of your king-size feather bed, ordering in is clearly the right call. In fact, "breakfast in bed" is included when you book the inn's [St. Helena Rendezvous package](#), which bundles your room rate with a sparkling wine toast, a 12-piece box of chocolates from local favorite, [Woodhouse Chocolate](#), a couple's massage and rose petal turn-down service (from \$505 per night, two-night minimum). *Standard rates from \$395 per night. 1 Main Street, St. Helena, 707-963-9463*

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