



Hotel Ynez



Santa Ynez General Store

# NORTH BY NORTHEAST

Just beyond Santa Barbara rests a bounty of culinary and leisure delights.

BY CAROLE DIXON

## Santa Ynez and Solvang

Visiting this rolling wine country region off Highway 154 is always a good idea—especially with new hotels, wineries, and restaurants from top hospitality operators.

**STAY:** New from the owner of trendsetting Skyview in Los Alamos, the 18 cabana-style Hotel Ynez opened in March 2021 on a secluded stretch of highway between Solvang and Santa Ynez. The grounds are shaded by ancient oak and pine trees with a slender pool and communal bonfire area for sipping wine in the evening. All rooms have a spacious front porch with a hammock—but for something more intimate, book the garden suite with a private jacuzzi. If you are staying for a few nights, the staff will bring a BBQ grill complete with Santa Maria ribs and veggies for a cookout on your patio. A spa area for massages in an atrium building on the grounds will be completed soon. *From \$179; hotelynez.com*

**DO:** A great way to explore the valley and wine taste is by bicycle (also available through Hotel Ynez) or you can follow the Foxen Canyon Road, which leads to 20 wine-tasting rooms in the tiny town of Los Olivos. Sandwiched in between the two locations is Bob's Well Bread Bakery in Ballard where you can stop for pastries or lunch with house-made pâté and a custom blend of rosé and grenache from neighboring Margerum Winery.



Coast Range & Vaquero Bar



SY Kitchen



Alma Rosa



Industrial Eats

HOTEL YNEZ: MARIYA MILLET; JUSTIN; TIM WILSON PHOTOGRAPHS



White Water Cambria (above and below)



**SHOP:** If you only have time to hit one shop in the area, it should be Santa Ynez General. This cozy space has everything from French fig candles to cookbooks, soaps, jewelry, and the perfect hostess gifts, but you will want to buy everything and keep it for your own home.

**EAT:** The owners of local favorite Italian eatery S.Y. Kitchen have opened Nella Kitchen & Bar alongside the Fess Parker Inn (Los Olivos) where Nonna Nella Meatballs are already a fan favorite. New in Solvang, Coast Range & Vaquero Bar brings an all-star lineup of chefs—Anthony Carron, Lincoln Carson, and Steven Fretz—to make daily crudo and pig-ear “Cheetoz.” Over in Buellton, Industrial Eats owner Janet Olsson and her team cook everything in wood-burning pizza ovens, including Cuban pork confit sandwiches, while also selling gourmet goods from France and Italy. Be sure to book a Pinot Noir wine tasting next door at Alma Rosa Winery, which feels more like an art gallery.

**Cambria/Paso Robles**

Not far from Hearst Castle, this low-key beach town is perfect for a reset. Once you are rejuvenated by the salty air, the Paso Robles wine country is less than 30 miles away, and you have the pick of 250 wineries dotted amid the mustard wildflower fields.

**STAY:** Stay in any of the boutique hotels or Airbnbs that define Paso Robles, but for a more romantic and balanced

WHITE WATER CAMBRIA: JONNY VALIANT; CAMBRIA: JESSICA ALEXANDER



JUSTIN

experience, stay on the beach in Cambria. The new White Water Cambria, which opened in September 2020, was designed by Nina Freudenberger as a chic refuge just across from the picturesque Moonstone Beach. The 25 whitewashed rooms are a nod to the coastal lifestyle of the area, with elements from 1970s Scandinavian designs mixed with art by Block Shop Textiles. Enjoy craft cocktails in the library stocked with vintage *National Geographic* magazines and board games after a day of exploring the revitalizing seaside. Don't miss the on-site boutique and its curated selection of home items. *From \$329; whitewatercambria.com*

**DO:** On the beach, try to spot the 20,000 seals at the elephant seal rookery or view the art of plein air painters at The Vault Gallery. For Paso wine sipping, the tasting room and patio restaurant of JUSTIN are a must stop, and if you drink too much of the famed Isosceles, you can spend the night at the intimate JUST Inn bed and breakfast on the grounds. Don't miss a visit to Daou for the award-winning Soul of a Lion Cabernet, biodynamic vintages at Tablas Creek, or Thacher Winery, which produces négrette and cinsault grapes. For the ultimate art and wine buff, *Sensorio: Light Towers* by artist Bruce Munro opened in April. The exhibit pays homage to the abundant vineyards of the region with 69 towers made from 17,388 wine bottles.

**SHOP:** In Cambria, hunt for one-of-a-kind treasures at Rich Man Poor Man, Antiques on Main, or Home Arts. Paso Market Walk is a new mixed-use development filled with specialty shops from local artisans, sustainable farmers, and vintners, where you will find everything from cheese to cashmere.

**EAT:** For dinner along Moonstone Beach, walk from White Water to the historic Sea Chest Oyster Bar for the best ocean views and its famous Calamari Steak. In Paso, fine-dining Tuscan fare can be found at Il Cortile, while Thomas Hill Organics offers beloved, farm-to-table local options. For a funkier festive night out, hit The Hatch Rotisserie & Bar or enjoy Mexican-inspired seafood dishes and a serious tequila and mezcal list at Fish Gaucho. Don't miss a meal at The Alchemists' Garden, where plant-driven dishes include everything from grilled mushroom steaks to Moroccan spiced lamb, as well as a diverse cocktail list. 📍



Sensorio: Light Towers

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Cambria