Here's Proof that California Wine Country Has Risen from the Ashes

Months after wildfires ravaged Napa and Sonoma last fall, a host of new design-forward offerings underscores the region's enduring allure.

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The fires that swept Napa and Sonoma are last year's news. The rain has fallen, and the wine country is vibrant and green once again. Since last October, not only have many wineries and businesses reopened but several new ones have also sprouted up. Here are some noteworthy spots that have opened just this year.

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The Astro Motel, with its midcentury modern vibe, is a converted 1963 motor lodge boasting great bones and located in the up-and-coming SOFA arts neighborhood of Santa Rosa. The rooms are simple but hip. Every fixture, artwork, and piece of furniture was acquired at auction, and everything is available for purchase. Complementing the vintage pieces are headboards, blankets, sinks, and even picture railings designed by local artists. Guests can hang out in the lounge and spin records or borrow a bike for local explorations.
When it comes to dining, the wine country offers plenty of splurge-worthy restaurants, but sometimes you just need a place to take a break to refresh and refuel. Just open in Healdsburg is Duke’s Common, a casual and affordable spot from Chef Shane McAnelly of The Brass Rabbit and Chalkboard restaurants. The menu is composed of fun and creative snacks, including disco fries, barbecue pork bahn mi, and the falafel-ritto, a Mediterranean and Mexican mash-up. The menu tops out at $10 for the “family meal,” a riff on what’s served to staff before service.

If you’re looking for something in between a bike tour and a jeep, the new tuk-tuk tours from Laces and Limos are just the thing. You’ll take a spin around the city, visit a couple of boutique tasting rooms, and depending upon the tour you choose, you’ll enjoy an interactive tour and tasting at Napa’s favorite...
distillery or head into the vineyards. Your ride is the eco-friendly and adorable tuk tuk, a kind of motorized rickshaw frequently seen in parts of Asia. Other custom options are available.

The only ashes making news in Napa right now are at Ashes & Diamonds, a stunning winery that recently opened to the public. The winery takes its inspiration from Napa in the 1960s, both in terms of winemaking, which is more old-world in style, and California modernism, which is evident in the architecture and furnishings in the tasting room. The winery offers tastings with food pairing as well as tours, and will offer music and cinema events later in the season.
The Culinary Institute of America has breathed new life into the Copia campus in downtown Napa. Located next to the popular Oxbow Public Market, CIA at Copia is home to extensive culinary gardens, a restaurant, state-of-the-art kitchen classrooms, event spaces, and also houses the wonderful Chuck Williams collection of vintage cookware. Classes are geared toward nonprofessionals and include topics such as Flavors of the New Spanish Table, How to Taste Wine in 90 Seconds, and Napa Valley in Eight Glasses.