

## On the Trail of America's Best Tasting Rooms

THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO EXPLORE WINE COUNTRY THAN FROM THE SNUG COMFORT OF A TASTING ROOM. TRY WINES, SOME AVAILABLE NOWHERE ELSE, VIEW SPLENDID VINEYARD PANORAMAS AND ENJOY THE HOSPITALITY OF PEOPLE WHO KNOW THE WINES FROM THE GROUND UP.

**NICKEL & NICKEL, OAKVILLE.** Appointment-only tastings are intimate, not intimidating. Gather in the cozy parlor of the 1880s farmhouse for crisp Chardonnay (no malolactic here), check out the cellars and transplanted New England barn, then sit down to a leisurely lesson in terroir. Winemaker Darice Spinelli makes 25 small-production wines from vineyards across the valley, including 11 Napa Cabs. Officially, you

can taste four, but your charming host will happily pop extra corks. **Tip:** Bring carrots for Star, Penny and Pearl, the friendly equines in the paddock out front. (8164 St. Helena Highway; 707.967.9600; [www.nickelandnickel.com](http://www.nickelandnickel.com); \$40, allow two hours) —BETTY TELLER

