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I did a Napa wine tasting. At home. Here's how it went

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Connect with California's wine country from the comfort of home with virtual tastings. (Banana Pancake / Getty Images)

By TERRY GARDNER

MARCH 24, 2020 | 10:14 AM



Hate sipping wine alone ... at home? Here's an antidote: virtual wine tasting. (I confess I was a virtual wine tasting virgin until recently.)

During the coronavirus crisis, a number of California wineries have turned to the internet to help you experience what you can't do right now in person. And you'll feel like you've made a quick trip to wine country.

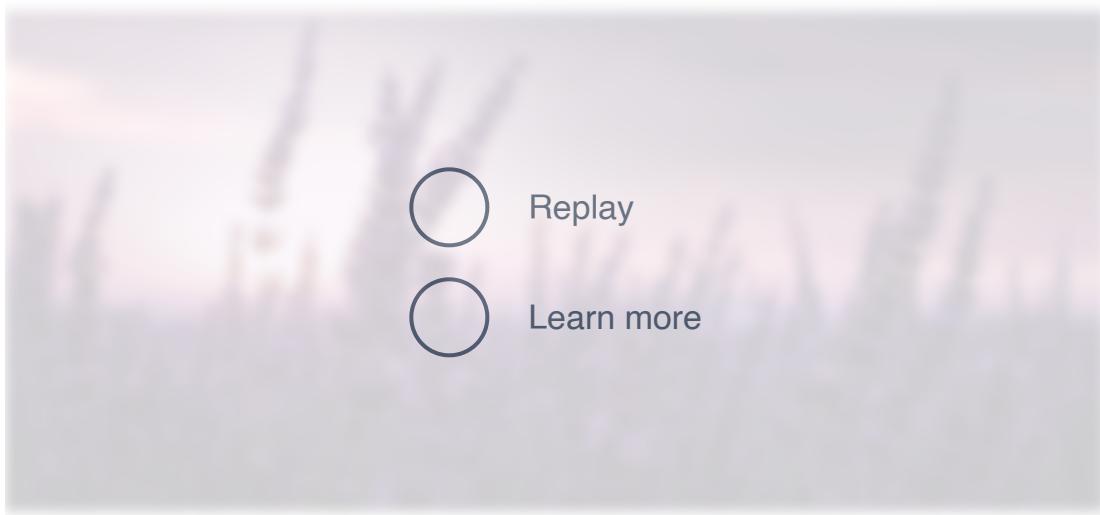
Last week I participated in a [26-minute wine tasting of a Sauvignon Blanc at St. Sunérv](#)

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day in the neighborhood. And won't you be my neighbor here, sharing a glass of wine with all of us?" (And yes, I poured myself a glass to be a good neighbor.)

Watching the video (which had been live-streamed and then posted), I learned about [Dollarhide Sauvignon Blanc](#) and saw the tasting room and the [vineyard](#), but I had time to enjoy "meeting" Michael Scholz, vice president of winemaking as he educated me about the grapes. More than 60 people attended.

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Around the state, wineries are offering virtual tastings, specials and/or wine education opportunities (here's a list from [the Visit Napa Valley blog](#)). Just order the wine in advance (shipping may be discounted or free). Then at tasting time, let the internet or Facebook Live transport you to Napa, Sonoma, Paso Robles, Buellton or Temecula.

Napa and Sonoma

[St. Supéry Estate Vineyards](#), a [sustainable](#) Napa winery whose [wines include Single](#)

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Swain said the company has offered [virtual tasting kits](#) for years. For the six-week program, it chose St. Supéry wines that are widely available around the country. On Thursday, the tasting will feature a [2015 Rutherford Estate Vineyard Merlot](#). Wine fans can order a [specially priced six pack of the wines to be tasted](#) for \$267 (discounted to \$210 for [wine club members](#)).

[Robert Biale Vineyards](#), famous for its [Zinfandels](#), began offering weekly wine tastings via [Facebook Live on Friday](#).

Sonoma County Vintners have created a list of [Sip From Home options](#), including wineries offering promotions as well as virtual wine tastings. For example, [32 Winds](#) has a tongue-in-cheek “Quaran-Wine” promo code offering \$1 shipping on six or more bottles.

Wineries offering virtual tastings include:

[Balletto Vineyards](#), a family-owned [sustainable estate vineyard](#) in the Russian River Valley. Wine fans can save 22% off a [Mystery Case](#) that will include wines that will be tasted in a [Facebook Live](#) happy hour tasting on April 1 from 5 to 6 p.m. Winemaker Anthony Beckman will host.

[Rombauer Wines](#), whose Chardonnay made [Forbes Top 9 list of wines to give as a gift this year](#), will host a [Facebook Live virtual wine tasting](#) at 4 p.m. Thursday featuring six wines, including a [2018 Carneros Chardonnay](#) and a [2016 Diamond Selection Cabernet Sauvignon](#). Rombauer wines can be ordered online from [wine.com](#), [BevMo!](#) or the [vintner](#).

[Francis Ford Coppola Winery](#) emailed to say it will begin offering virtual wine tastings in the next two weeks. Tastings will be announced on its website, [Facebook](#) and

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The winery offers short educational [wine videos](#), including [wine tasting tips with associate winemaker, Francoise Cordesse](#), as well as wine hacks that include [how to decode a wine label at the grocery store](#) and [what's in my wine?](#)

Kendall-Jackson Wines, famous for its [Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay](#), which [President Ronald Reagan brought to the White House](#), is using its [Facebook page](#) to offer [virtual wine tastings with its winemaster, Randy Ullom](#).

During its inaugural video last week, Ullom tasted a Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay, a Pinot Noir and a Zinfandel over the course of five minutes. There's a [link for 20% off](#) (valid through March 31) on web orders of \$75 or more. Kendall-Jackson wines are widely available at local markets or can be ordered from your armchair through [Instacart](#) or [Drizly](#).

Paso Robles

Most [Paso Robles Wineries](#) are offering free or discounted shipping rather than virtual tastings. But [Sextant Wines](#) will have a [Facebook Live online tasting](#) of a special [three-bottle virtual kit](#) at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday.

The kit includes a [2017 X-Series Caladoc](#), a [2017 Estate Tannat](#) and a [2017 Kamal Cabernet Sauvignon](#). Although the wine won't arrive in time for Tuesday's tasting, it will be recorded for customers to enjoy once their kit arrives.

Brian Terrizzi, co-founder of Italian winemaker [Giornata](#) in [Tin City](#), mentioned in my [November Paso Robles escape](#), said his wine and Italian groceries can be ordered online through [Etto](#). At this point, he didn't know whether it will be able to offer virtual tastings.

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Discover Buellton has created a page where it will post [virtual tasting experiences](#) as wineries create them. [Alma Rosa Winery](#), in the Santa Rita Hills, is creating a virtual tasting for next week. Details will follow on [its Facebook page](#).

[Visit Temecula Valley's website](#) has a [three-minute virtual wine tasting](#) with [Akash Winery](#) as well as a [wine tasting lesson](#) by Walter Carter of [Danza Del Sol Winery](#).

So raise a glass to your health — at home.

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