

Our Weekend in Sonoma and Napa

We traveled north on February 17. Our main objective was the **Spire Collection tasting of wines from [Maggy Hawk](#)**. A full review will be coming shortly. This is the overview of our weekend in Sonoma and Napa counties.

The **Spire Collection tasting was in Calistoga**. We stayed at the Hampton Inn and Suites in Windsor, about half an hour from there. And we were very happy with the Maggy Hawk wines. We were especially intrigued with **two versions of Maggy Hawk's "Jolie" 2013 vintage**. One was in a standard 750 ml bottle. The other was a 3 liter double magnum. We'll publish our tasting notes in the full review. For now we'll just say the two were very different. An added bonus was meeting winemaker Elizabeth Grant-Douglas.



Tony With Winemaker Elizabeth Grant-Douglas

Since we were in Calistoga we made two more local stops. Neither of us had ever visited the justifiably famous Chateau Montelena (featured in the movie [Bottle Shock](#)). We brought

home three bottles of their zinfandel. If we had the patience to wait 20 years we might have picked up a bottle of their cabernet sauvignon.

Our third stop was [Picayune Cellars](#). We've [written about them before](#) and looked forward to dropping by their new tasting room. **Claire Ducrocq Weinkauff is now the sole proprietor** of the enterprise, having bought out co-founder Jennifer Roberts a few years ago. Claire works in the spirit of a French négociant, buying wines from different sources and blending them. **The quality today is just as good as the first time we tasted their wines.**

Sunday we started with an appointment at [Lynmar Estate](#). We have [written about them many times before](#) and are long-time members of their wine club. The **tasting room is now appointment only**, so call ahead if you want to be sure to get a seat. As always, the staff was friendly and efficient.



Lynmar Tasting Room In the Rain

After Lynmar we headed toward Healdsburg, intent on visiting Hartford's new tasting room. (We were reluctant to go to the winery because the heavy rains had caused flooding in the

Russian River Valley). En route we passed a sign for [Balletto Vineyards](#). Some quick work on the iPad revealed that they make several pinots. A quick u-turn got us back to the new find of this trip.



Balletto Tasting Room

Balletto mainly grows grapes. They keep some (presumably the best) for their use. And their wines are pretty terrific. **If you don't want to wait for the full review, we can recommend them right now with no reservations.**

On to Healdsburg where parking was a major problem. But the spot we finally found put us next to the new [Siduri](#) tasting room. We spent an enjoyable half hour sampling some of our favorites. Notably, Siduri is now making a **Parsons Vineyard pinot**. It's been a few years since we saw that name on a Siduri label. The hosts told us that Parsons had run into some difficulties, but was now straightened out again.



Siduri Tasting Room

Finally, the [Hartford](#) tasting room about two blocks north of Siduri. One chardonnay, one zinfandel, and one pinot noir were being poured. All three were excellent. But if you want the full Hartford experience, visit the winery.

Time permitting we'll get the first two reviews out this month. The Spire Collection and Balletto will be the featured wineries. As for the rest, we'll do our best.