

WineRelease.com's Readers Choice: Napa Valley

March 2006

WineRelease.com informs wine enthusiasts about upcoming North American wine release dates and publishes a free monthly newsletter. We recently surveyed our subscribers on their Napa Valley recommendations for wineries, accommodations and activities and below are their responses (in order of popularity).

Best winery for a picnic:

Over 20% recommended V. Sattui, a popular Napa Valley spot well known more for their picnic accommodations than for their wine. Their two acre picnic area and fully stocked cheese shop and deli is located right off highway 29 in St. Helena and jam packed during the tourist season. To avoid the Highway 29 crowd, try the following; Pride Mountain, Rutherford Hill, Chateau Montelena, Chappellet Winery, Joseph Phelps, Pine Ridge, and Rutherford Grove.

Best value lunch:

Over 20% voted for Taylor's Refresher which was recommended by Robert Parker of The Wine Advocate a few years ago. Immediately after Mr. Parker recommended Taylor's they received calls for reservations, which was funny since it is an outdoor burger stand. Oakville Grocery came in a close second, then in order of popularity; Mustard's, Buster's BBQ, Dean & Deluca, A&W Root Beer and La Luna Market.

Best lunch (regardless of price):

This question received almost equal responses for Mustard's Grill, Oakville Grocery, Rutherford Grill, Taylor's Refresher, Tra Vigne, Auberge du Soleil, Bistro Jeanty, Bouchon, Domaine Chandon, French Laundry and my favorite, Bistro Don Giovanni.

Best value dinner:

Over 5% voted for Bistro Jeanty followed by Bouchon, Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen, Bistro Don Giovanni, Foothill Café, Mustard's Grill, Rutherford Grill, Taylor's Refresher and ZuZu.

Best dinner (regardless of price):

Over 35% voted for French Laundry with one person humorously adding "big surprise". Thomas Keller's restaurant is very often refereed to as the best restaurant in the world. Reservations are near impossible as they take reservations two months ahead and the phone line is jammed each morning with hopefuls hitting redial on their phone in hopes of scoring a table. Other fine establishments include La Toque, Terra, Tra Vigne, Martini House, Auberge du Soleil, Mustard's Grill, Bistro Jeanty, and Cole's Chop House.

Best romantic restaurant:

Over 17% of you voted for French Laundry and Auberge du Soleil. Auberge du Soleil is a hotel/restaurant/spa mentioned the most in this survey. Other places to romance your date include Terra, La Toque, Martini House, Domaine Chandon and Meadowood.

Best bar to grab a cocktail and relax:

Over 16% of you voted for Martini House, restaurateur Pat Kuleto's and Todd Humphries new restaurant in St. Helena. Other places to pull up a stool include Tra Vigne, Bouchon and Auberge du Soleil

Best bakery and/or breakfast:

Over 17% of you voted for Bouchon Bakery with mentions of “the best bread outside of Paris” and delicious coffee. Other bakeries/breakfast places include Model Bakery, ABC, Gordon’s, Gillwoods and Buttercream Bakery.

Best winery for the first time Napa Valley visitor:

Over 27% of you voted for Robert Mondavi Winery, by winery that made Napa Valley. Others include Beringer, Sterling, Niebaum-Coppola and Cakebread.

Best winery tour and/or wine educational event:

Over 15% of you voted for Robert Mondavi Winery which has a wide selection of tours, tastings and events on a regular basis. Beringer, St. Supery, Shafer, Opus One, Joseph Phelps, Jarvis, Del Dotto, Domaine Chandon and Cakebread. Copia, which is not a winery but a “Center for Wine Food and The Arts”, is a delightful place located in the town of Napa, to learn about wine and food.

Best winery for the advanced visitor (unknown winery gem):

To get out of the rut of visiting the same wineries try David Arthur, Duckhorn, Jarvis, Nickel & Nickel, PlumpJack, Pride Mountain, Vineyard 29 and Elyse.

Best winery to visit when you have non-drinkers in your group:

Over 11% voted for Niebaum-Coppola, a winery where you can view the original desk from the Godfather and the Tucker automobile as well as the Oscars received for Mario Puzo’s famous story. Other wineries to visit include V. Sattui, Beringer, Clos Pegase, Hess Collection and Sterling.

Best new winery to visit (less than two years old):

Over 14% voted for Darioush, a beautiful Persian style winery that has garnered positive press for their Bordeaux blends. Four other recommendations include Paraduxx, Biale, Provenance and Revana.

Winery that offers most variety of wines to taste:

Over 10% voted for Robert Mondavi Winery which has tastes of their regular label as well as a tasting for reserve and library wines. Other wineries with a variety include V. Sattui, Beringer, Franciscan, Napa Wine Company and Merryvale.

Best small winery where you will meet the winemaker and/or owner:

Over 5% voted for Prager Port Works followed by Barnett, David Arthur, Elyse, Lewelling, Neal Family Vineyards, Truchard, Ladera, Vincent Arroyo and Saddleback.

Best bed and breakfast on a budget:

Over 6% voted for Bordeaux House followed by El Bonita. A B&B not mentioned but one I recommend is Petit Logis Inn in Yountville. A small Inn located within walking distance of The French Laundry, Bouchon and Bistro Jeanty.

Best bed and breakfast (regardless of price):

Over 8% voted for Auberge du Soleil followed by, Harvest Inn, Meadowood, Milliken Creek, Wine Country Inn.

Best hidden gem to stay (small unknown place):

Over 5% voted for Calistoga Ranch followed by Rancho Caymus.

Best hotel/motel:

Over 9% voted for Meadowood, a beautiful resort complete with golf and crochet. Other recommendations include El Bonita, Auberge du Soleil, Calistoga Inn, Yountville Inn, Vintage Inn, Villagio and Napa River Inn.

Best shopping in the Napa Valley:

Over 9% voted for Napa Premium Outlet, a perfect place to drop off the non wine enthusiasts while you visit your favorite spots in the city of Napa. St. Helena Outlets is located up the Valley and is smaller but with equally nice shops.

Best Spa in the Napa Valley:

Over 10% voted for Auberge du Soleil followed by Calistoga Spa, Dr. Wilkenson's, Meadowood, Silverado Country Club and Indian Springs Spa & Resort,

Favorite Golf Course:

Over 21% voted for Silverado followed by Chardonnay and Meadowood. Since Silverado requires a stay at their resort in order to make a preferable tee time, if you have a gift certificate you qualify for the preference. Do you get where I am going here?

Best activity when you aren't tasting wine, eating, golfing, shopping or visiting a spa in the Napa Valley:

Over 12% voted for hiking followed by ballooning, biking, sleeping and of course, sex.

What other wine areas do you recommend we survey:

Over 42% voted for Sonoma followed by Paso Robles, Oregon, Santa Barbara and Washington. We will work on those regions next.

Best winery for a picnic:

V. Sattui Winery 1111 White Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7774 http://www.vsattui.com	Chappellet Vineyard 1581 Sage Canyon Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7136 http://www.chappellet.com
Pride Mountain Vineyards 4026 Spring Mountain Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4949 http://www.pridewines.com	Joseph Phelps Vineyards 200 Taplin Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-2745 http://www.jpvwines.com
Rutherford Hill Winery 200 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1871 http://www.rutherfordhill.com	Pine Ridge Winery 5901 Silverado Trail Napa, CA 94558 707-252-9777 http://www.pineridgewinery.com
Chateau Montelena Winery 1429 Tubbs Lane Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-5105 http://www.montelena.com	Rutherford Grove Winery 1673 St. Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-0544 http://www.rutherfordgrove.com

Best value lunch:

Taylor's Refresher 933 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3486	Dean & DeLuca 607 South Saint Helena Highway St. Helena, CA 94574 707-967-9980 http://www.deandeluca.com
Oakville Grocery 7859 Highway 29 Oakville, CA 94562 707-944-8802 http://www.oakvillegrocery.com	A&W Family Restaurant 501 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4333
Mustards Grill 7399 St. Helena Highway Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2424	La Luna Market Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-3211
Buster's Southern Barbecue 1207 Foothill Blvd Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-5605	

Best lunch (regardless of price):

Mustards Grill 7399 St. Helena Highway Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2424	Bistro Jeanty 6510 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-0103 http://www.bistrojeanty.com
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<p>Oakville Grocery 7859 Highway 29 Oakville, CA 94562 707-944-8802 http://www.oakvillegrocery.com</p>	<p>Bouchon 6534 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-8037</p>
<p>Rutherford Grill 1180 Rutherford Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1792</p>	<p>Domaine Chandon One California Drive Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2892 http://www.chandon.com</p>
<p>Taylor's Refresher 933 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3486</p>	<p>French Laundry 6640 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2380</p>
<p>Tra Vigne Restaurant 1050 Charter Oak Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4444</p>	<p>Bistro Don Giovanni 4110 Howard Lane Napa, CA 94558 707-224-3300 http://www.bistrodongiovanni.com</p>
<p>Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com</p>	

Best value dinner:

<p>Bistro Jeanty 6510 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-0103 http://www.bistrojeanty.com</p>	<p>Mustards Grill 7399 St. Helena Highway Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2424</p>
<p>Bouchon 6534 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-8037</p>	<p>Rutherford Grill 1180 Rutherford Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1792</p>
<p>Cindy's Backstreet Kitchen 1327 Railroad Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-1200 http://www.cindysbackstreetkitchen.com</p>	<p>Taylor's Refresher 933 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3486</p>
<p>Bistro Don Giovanni 4110 Howard Lane Napa, CA 94558 707-224-3300 http://www.bistrodongiovanni.com</p>	<p>ZuZu 829 Main Street Napa, CA 94558 707-224-8555 http://www.zuzunapa.com</p>
<p>Foothill Café 2766 Old Sonoma Road Napa, CA 94559 707-252-6178</p>	

Best dinner (regardless of price):

French Laundry 4110 Howard Lane Napa, CA 94558 707-224-3300	Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com
La Toque 2766 Old Sonoma Road Napa, CA 94559 707-252-6178 http://www.latoque.com	Mustards Grill 7399 St. Helena Highway Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2424
Terra 1345 Railroad Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-8931 http://www.terrarestaurant.com	Bistro Jeanty 6510 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-0103 http://www.bistrojeanty.com
Tra Vigne Restaurant 1050 Charter Oak Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4444	Cole's Chop House 1122 Main Street Napa, CA 94559 707-224-6328 http://www.coleschophouse.com
Martini House 1245 Spring Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-2233	

Best romantic restaurant:

French Laundry 6640 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2380	Martini House 1245 Spring Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-2233
Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com	Domaine Chandon One California Drive Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2892 http://www.chandon.com
Terra 1345 Railroad Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-8931 http://www.terrarestaurant.com	Meadowood Napa Valley 900 Meadowood Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3646 http://www.meadowood.com
La Toque 2766 Old Sonoma Road Napa, CA 94559 707-252-6178 http://www.latoque.com	

Best bar to grab a cocktail and relax:

Martini House 1245 Spring Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-2233	Bouchon 6534 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-8037
Tra Vigne Restaurant 1050 Charter Oak Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4444	Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com

Best bakery and/or breakfast:

Bouchon 6534 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-8037	Gordon's Cafe & Wine Bar 6770 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-8246
Model Bakery 1357 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-8192	Gillwoods - St. Helena 1313 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-1788 http://www.gillwoodscafe.com
ABC (Alexis Baking Company) 1517 Third Street Napa, CA 94559 707-258-1827	Butter Cream Bakery 2297 Jefferson Street Napa, CA 94559 707-255-6700

Best winery for the first time Napa Valley visitor:

Robert Mondavi Winery 7801 St. Helena Highway Oakville, CA 94562 707-226-1335 http://www.robertmondavi.com	Rubicon Estate Winery (Niebaum-Coppola) 1991 St. Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-968-1100 http://www.rubiconestate.com
Beringer Vineyards 2000 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4812 http://www.beringer.com	Cakebread Cellars 8300 St Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-5221 http://www.cakebread.com
Sterling Vineyards 1111 Dunaweal Lane Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-3344 http://www.sterlingvineyards.com	

Best winery tour and/or wine educational event:

Robert Mondavi Winery 7801 St. Helena Highway Oakville, CA 94562 707-226-1335 http://www.robertmondaviwinery.com	Joseph Phelps Vineyards 200 Taplin Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-2745 http://www.jpvwines.com
Beringer Vineyards 2000 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4812 http://www.beringer.com	Jarvis Winery 2970 Monticello Road Napa, CA 94558 707-255-5280 http://www.jarviswines.com
St. Supery Vineyards & Winery 8440 St. Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-4507 http://www.stsupery.com	Del Dotto 1291 West Zinfandel Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-2134 http://www.deldottovineyards.com
Shafer Vineyards 6154 Silverado Trail Napa, CA 94558 707-944-2877 http://www.shafervineyards.com	Domaine Chandon One California Drive Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2280 http://www.chandon.com
Opus One 7900 St. Helena Highway Oakville, CA 94562 707-944-9442 http://www.opusonewinery.com	Cakebread Cellars 8300 St. Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-5221 http://www.cakebread.com
Copia 500 First Street Napa, CA 94559 707-259-1600 http://www.copia.org	

Best winery for the advanced visitor (unknown winery gem):

David Arthur Vineyards 1521 Sage Canyon Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707.963.5190 http://www.davidarthur.com	PlumpJack Winery 620 Oakville Crossroad Oakville, CA 94562 707-945-1220 http://www.plumpjack.com
Duckhorn Vineyards 1000 Lodi Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7108 http://www.duckhorn.com	Pride Mountain Vineyards 4026 Spring Mountain Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4949 http://www.pridewines.com
Jarvis Winery 2970 Monticello Road Napa, CA 94558 707-255-5280 http://www.jarviswines.com	Vineyard 29 2929 Highway 29 North St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-9292 http://www.vineyard29.com

Nickel & Nickel 8164 St. Helena Highway Oakville, CA 94562 707-967-9600 http://www.nickelandnickel.com	Elyse Wine Cellars 2100 Hoffman Lane Napa, CA 94558 707-944-2900 http://www.elysewinery.com
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Best winery to visit when you have non-drinkers in your group:

Rubicon Estate Winery (Niebaum-Coppola) 1991 St. Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-968-1100 http://www.rubiconestate.com	Clos Pegase Winery 1060 Dunaweal Lane Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-4981 http://www.clospegase.com
V. Sattui Winery 1111 White Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7774 http://www.vsattui.com	The Hess Collection Winery 4411 Redwood Road Napa, CA 94558 707-255-1144 http://www.hesscollection.com
Beringer Vineyards 2000 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4812 http://www.beringer.com	Sterling Vineyards 1111 Dunaweal Lane Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-3344 http://www.sterlingvineyards.com

Best new winery to visit (less than two years old):

Darioush Winery 4240 Silverado Trail Napa, CA 94558 707-257-2345 http://www.darioush.com	Provenance Vineyards 1695 St. Helena Highway Rutherford, CA 94573 707-968-3633 http://www.provenancevineyards.com
Paraduxx 7257 Silverado Trail Napa, CA 94558 707-963-7108 http://www.paraduxx.com	Revana Family Vineyards 2930 St. Helena Highway North St. Helena, California 94574 707-967-8814 http://www.revanawine.com
Robert Biale Vineyards 4038 Big Ranch Road Napa, CA 94558 707-257-7555 http://www.robertbialevineyards.com	

Winery that offers most variety of wines to taste:

Robert Mondavi Winery 7801 St. Helena Highway Oakville, CA 94562 707-226-1335 http://www.robertmondavi.com	Franciscan Oakville Estate 1178 Galleron Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7111 http://www.franciscan.com
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V. Sattui Winery 1111 White Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7774 http://www.vsattui.com	Napa Wine Company 7830-40 St. Helena Highway Oakville, CA 94562 707-944-8669 http://www.napawineco.com
Beringer Vineyards 2000 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-4812 http://www.beringer.com	Merryvale Napa Valley 1000 Main Street St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7777 http://www.merryvale.com

Best small winery where you will meet the winemaker and/or owner:

Prager Winery & Port Works 1281 Lewelling Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7678 http://www.pragerport.com	Neal Family Vineyards 716 Liparita Road Angwin, CA 94508 707-965-2800 http://www.nealvineyards.com
Barnett Vineyards 4070 Spring Mountain Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7075 http://www.barnettvineyards.com	Truchard Vineyards 3234 Old Sonoma Road Napa, CA 94559 707-253-7153 http://www.truchardvineyard.com
David Arthur Vineyards 1521 Sage Canyon Road St. Helena, CA 94574 707.963.5190 http://www.davidarthur.com	Ladera 150 White Cottage Road South Angwin, CA 94508 707-965-2445 http://www.laderavineyards.com
Elyse Wine Cellars 2100 Hoffman Lane Napa, CA 94558 707-944-2900 http://www.elysewinery.com	Vincent Arroyo Winery 2361 Greenwood Avenue Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-6995 http://www.vincentarroyo.com
Lewelling Vineyards 1951 Olive Avenue St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-1685 http://www.lewellingvineyards.com	Saddleback Cellars 7802 Money Road Oakville, CA 94562 707-944-1305 http://www.saddlebackcellars.com

Best bed and breakfast on a budget:

Bordeaux House 6600 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-2855 http://www.bordeauxhouse.com	El Bonita Motel 195 Main Street St. Helena, California 94574 707-963-3216 http://www.elbonita.com
Petit Logis Inn 6527 Yount Street Yountville, CA 94599 877-944-2332 http://www.petitlogis.com	

Best bed and breakfast (regardless of price):

Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com	Milliken Creek 1815 Silverado Trail Napa, CA 94558 707-255-1197 http://www.millikencreekinn.com
Harvest Inn One Main Street St. Helena, CA 95474 707-963-9463 http://www.harvestinn.com	Wine Country Inn 1152 Lodi Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7077 http://www.harvestinn.com
Meadowood Napa Valley 900 Meadowood Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3646 http://www.meadowood.com	

Best hidden gem to stay (small unknown place):

Calistoga Ranch 580 Lommel Road Calistoga, CA 94515 707-254-2800 http://www.calistogaranh.com	Rancho Caymus 1140 Rutherford Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1777 http://www.ranchocaymus.com
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Best hotel/motel:

Meadowood Napa Valley 900 Meadowood Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3646 http://www.meadowood.com	Yountville Inn 6462 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-5600 http://www.yountvilleinn.com
El Bonita Motel 195 Main Street St. Helena, California 94574 707-963-3216 http://www.elbonita.com	Vintage Inn 6541 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-1112 http://www.vintageinn.com
Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com	Villagio 6481 Washington Street Yountville, CA 94599 707-944-8877 http://www.villagio.com
Calistoga Inn 1250 Lincoln Avenue Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-4101 http://www.calistogainn.com	Napa River Inn 500 Main Street Napa, CA 94559 877-251-8500 http://www.napariverinn.com

Best shopping in the Napa Valley:

Napa Premium Outlets 629 Factory Stores Drive Napa, CA 94558 707-226-9876 http://www.premiumoutlets.com/Napa	St. Helena Premier Outlets 3111 North St. Helena Highway St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-7282 http://www.sthelenapremieroutlets.com
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Best Spa in the Napa Valley:

Auberge du Soleil 180 Rutherford Hill Road Rutherford, CA 94573 707-963-1211 http://www.aubergedusoleil.com	Meadowood Napa Valley 900 Meadowood Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3646 http://www.meadowood.com
Calistoga Village Inn & Spa 1880 Lincoln Avenue Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-0991 http://www.greatspa.com	Silverado Resort 1600 Atlas Peak Road Napa, CA 94558 707-257-0200 http://www.silveradoresort.com
Dr. Wilkinson's Hot Springs Resort 1507 Lincoln Avenue Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-4102 http://www.drwilkinson.com	Indian Springs Spa & Resort 1712 Lincoln Avenue Calistoga, CA 94515 707-942-4913 http://www.indianspringscalistoga.com

Favorite Golf Course:

Silverado Resort 1600 Atlas Peak Road Napa, CA 94558 800-362-4727 http://www.silveradoresort.com	Meadowood Napa Valley 900 Meadowood Lane St. Helena, CA 94574 707-963-3646 http://www.meadowood.com
Chardonnay Golf Club 2555 Jamieson Canyon Road Napa, CA 94558 707-257-1900 http://www.chardonnaygolfclub.com	

This survey brought to you in part by a sponsorship from QPRwines, a wine buying guide that groups the major critics' average wine ratings, then lists them by price to determine overall value – the Quality Price Ratio for wine.

