

# A Rare World.

THE TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE AUTHORITY



**Northern  
California**

**Callistoga Ranch The Carneros Inn Cavallo Point  
Four Seasons San Francisco Bardessono Solage Callistoga  
Auberge du Soleil Meadowood**

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••• DECEMBER 2011

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# THE CARNEROS INN

*California cottage at its very best.*

**F**OR YEARS GOING BACK, the only luxury hotels in the valley were those set alongside the stretch of Silverado Trail between Yountville and Calistoga. The Carneros Inn changed all of that when it opened in 2003. Though a bit of a hike to the trail, Carneros has its own location appeal in being squarely between the Napa Valley and Sonoma regions. Would this location be a burden or a blessing? We were eager to find out for ourselves.

If you're driving yourself, it's forgivable if you miss the turn for Carneros. For us, we were distracted by the breathtaking scenery of endless vineyards at sunset so much that we completely tuned out the repeated beckoning of our GPS. Once we came to, however, it was easy enough to find the gate and make our way up the hill to reception for check-in. Inside, we met a couple members of the hotel's staff

and were instructed to follow our bellman down the hill to our home for the night. Once we pulled into our parking space, he assisted us inside with our things and initiated us to the space and property with a masterful balance of relaxed professionalism.

Though there are distinguishing characteristics within each of the categories, accommodations are effectively divided between Cottages, Suites, and Homes. Regardless of choice, the clean and modern California cottage motif never looked so good. Cottages are good enough for a couple's weekend retreat, though we would suggest opting for the upgrade to a Vineyard View or Harvest Cottage for the best vantage points and uses of space. For families, multi-couple get-aways, longer stays, or even if you just desire more space and privacy, we really recommend starting your consideration with the Carneros Two-Bedroom Suites. With two master suites, an expansive area for

outdoor dining with a private jacuzzi, and a full kitchen with all of the whistles, these are effectively small private homes. Even still, the premier accommodations on property are the two to three-bedroom private homes. With their exceptional décor and spectacular indoor-outdoor blend, these homes would be a worthwhile consideration at any price. At their starting rate of about \$1,750 in peak season, however, they're a steal.

Farm is the signature dining experience on property. We didn't mean to hit a soft spot when we asked Chef de Cuisine Andrew Budnyj how many stars he had earned for the establishment. After a late Sunday night dinner here, where the house was packed with smiling diners, we confirmed our previous assumption that zero stars can be as meaningless of a snub in this region as one star can be an honor. Ignore the lack of praise in the Michelin guide, and dine at Farm for Napa Valley cuisine executed at its very best. The Boon Fly Café is the property's answer to more casual dining for three meals a day. At breakfast, squeezed juice is just the start. You won't want to leave without trying their famous homemade donuts. As it was closed for a private event, we didn't have a chance to dine at Hilltop, which is open seasonally for breakfast and lunch, but we did see the view. One word: spectacular.

In addition to the obvious amenities beyond the property borders, Carneros offers just as many reasons for visitors to stay inside the gates. Two pools are offered, one for families and the other for those seeking a quiet spot. We prefer the quiet pool, which takes full advantage of its hilltop location in offering a view that is absolutely breathtaking. The property's spa is a superior wellness facility complete with a spotless relaxation area and a roster of well-trained and competent therapists and attendants. An enormous fitness barn of over 3,000 square feet and an inventory of complimentary bicycles means there are no excuses for interrupting your workout, unless of course you just don't feel like it.

The Carneros Inn was quick to become one of our favorite properties in Napa Valley. Its staff, décor, amenities, and cuisine all come together in a harmony that is casual, easy, effortless, and fun. If these things appeal to you, we would implore you to disregard the challenges that the property's location might seem to present. Instead, consider the benefits of such a lovely retreat. ●●●●

### The Carneros Inn

Napa, California

General Manager: Philip Kendall

thecarnerosinn.com



## DOs & DON'Ts

- DO** make plans to dine at Farm for a casual yet refined dinner at home. Though the restaurant doesn't have a star in Michelin's book, it's a star in itself to us.
- DO** give yourself time to enjoy the property. It's worth sitting out a day of wine tasting to take some time relaxing at home.
- DO** consider the private homes regardless of the size of your party. They're an exceptional value even in peak season and a worthwhile step up.
- DON'T** be deterred by the location. Carneros is conveniently located between Napa and Sonoma. Both regions are an easy drive from the property, and there are even a number of wineries just a skip from the gate.
- DON'T** be fooled by their casual demeanor. This staff may seem easygoing on the surface, but each and every person we met was at the ready to deliver on our every whim.