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**HOLLYWOOD'S  
FUTURE:**  
THE FEMALE  
PERSUASION

**L.A.'S  
MUSEUM**  
OF NEON  
'EXPOSED'

**QUIET RIOT**  
LUNCH  
WITH THE  
WORKAHOLICS

MIRANDA  
JULY

PETER  
FACINELLI

JOHN  
BENJAMIN  
HICKEY

ROSE  
BYRNE

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FILM REVIEWS  
MUSIC REVIEWS  
FOOD & DRINK LA / NYC  
AND MORE!

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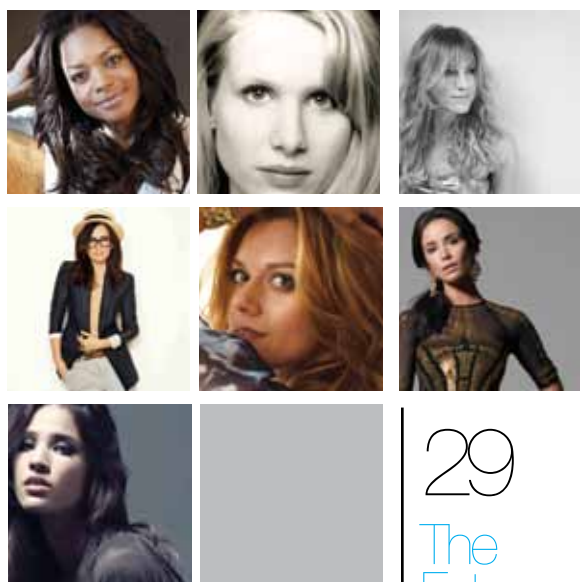
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Workaholics

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FOOD & DRINK WINE DOG

THE WINE DOG PRESENTS

# Nuevo Napa 3

words by Bob Ecker



**Finally, after many years of fits and starts the City of Napa can proudly claim to be worthy of the respected “Napa Valley” moniker.**

No longer simply the county seat and place where locals work, shop, and live, the “City” of Napa is thriving - both for residents and its many visitors. Don’t worry, Up Valley is still alive and well with exemplary wineries, Michelin starred restaurants, world-class architecture and vineyards as far as the eye can see. But now Napa, particularly downtown, is the place to visit, eat, drink, and be merry. Believe it, the Wine Dog speaks from experience: You won’t have time to take a nap-a in Napa!

**NAPA DINING:**

Set in the waterfront, Napa’s newest place to see and be seen, Morimoto, has brought dining in Napa to another culinary level. World famous “Iron Chef” Chef Masaharu Morimoto delivers his unique East-meets-West menu *Morimoto* style, and foodies can’t wait to sample his wild creations. Try his “deconstructed” Gyoza, Foie Gras Takoyaki, or his daunting “Chef’s choice” if you dare. This upscale restaurant (and cool bar) has a real urban feel and can be expensive, but it’s worth the experience. *Hint* - Morimoto’s Rock Shrimp tempura appetizer with Wasabi Aioli is the best appetizer — ever! Scrumptious and filling, combine this dish with a glass of wine or one of Morimoto’s specialty beers and you’re done! [www.morimotonapa.com](http://www.morimotonapa.com)







MILLIKEN CREEK INN & SPA



TUNA AT FISH STORY



THE UPTOWN THEATRE

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## You won't have time to take a nap-a in Napa!

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Fish Story, overlooking the restored Napa Riverfront is another one of the new dining establishments along the downtown waterfront (near Morimoto) and a pleasure for all. From the Lark Creek Dining group, Fish Story serves up fabulous clam chowder, lobster, local crab, and sumptuous ahi tuna tartare, as well as seafood and meat combos. The Day Boat Scallops with Kurobuta pork belly is delectable yet moderately priced. Fish Story is an exciting addition to the Napa scene with a very cool interior plus they now brew their own beer. [www.fishstorynapa.com](http://www.fishstorynapa.com)

Grace's Table is a local find, packed nightly with folks seeking global comfort cuisine at moderate prices. Offering great service, friendly atmosphere, and quirky combos, Grace's is an underground hit. Plus their Sunday brunches are already legendary, particularly with the cheese and egg crowd. [www.gracetable.net](http://www.gracetable.net)

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### NAPA STAYING:

Unlike in years past, Napa's hospitality scene has evolved and today there are many fine hotels right in town for the discerning traveler. One hidden gem, abutting a higher portion of the Napa River is the gorgeous, bucolic Milliken Creek Inn & Spa ([www.millikencreekinn.com](http://www.millikencreekinn.com)). Twelve refined, lovely rooms look over balconies onto the meandering river, tailored gardens, and lawns. Like a sculpted scene from Provence, visitors are transported to another time and place yet within walking distance (or a quick drive) from numerous sights and spots around town. Superb breakfasts, exclusive wine hours, and a tranquil spa make Milliken Creek the Napa destination for those lucky enough to have heard the news. This spot is a haven for in-the-know Brits.

Other fine Napa hotels include: Westin Verasa, ([www.westin.com/VerasaNapa](http://www.westin.com/VerasaNapa)), The cool AVIA Hotel: ([www.aviahotels.com/hotels/napa](http://www.aviahotels.com/hotels/napa)), and Napa River Inn ([www.napariverinn.com](http://www.napariverinn.com)) along the downtown Riverfront.

The Meritage Resort & Spa ([www.themeritageresort.com](http://www.themeritageresort.com)) in the lower part of Napa Valley. In the midst of a \$40 million expansion, by next summer, the Meritage Resort will be the second largest property in Napa Valley. Plus it offers a wonderful underground spa cave.

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### NAPA DOING:

The Uptown Theater ([www.uptowntheatrenapa.com](http://www.uptowntheatrenapa.com)) a former movie house turned topnotch live entertainment venue offers big named musical and comedy acts in a sensational yet comfortable venue, including cup holders for their fine beer and wine selection for every seat. Located in the western part of downtown and walkable from everywhere, upcoming acts include: Seth Myers, Joan Rivers, Robert Cray, Boz Scaggs, Sandra Bernhard, and many others. *Locals Hint* – Grace's Table is half a block away and very popular pre-show.

The Napa Valley Opera House ([www.nvoh.org](http://www.nvoh.org)), originally constructed in 1880 and fully restored to its former glory, presents all sorts of musical, theatrical, comedic, and cultural shows. A lovely venue turned modern, the Opera House is an important and central cog in the revitalization of Napa. *Local Hint* - Stop at the Bounty Hunter ([www.bountyhunterwinebar.com](http://www.bountyhunterwinebar.com)) nearby for excellent pre- or post-wine (or amazing beer) selections. Not bad charcuterie plates either.

Now entirely filled with delicious, well known, artisan, and specialty purveyors, the Oxbow Public Market ([www.oxbowpublicmarket.com](http://www.oxbowpublicmarket.com)) is Napa's true gourmet ghetto. Vendors include The Hog Island Oyster Company, C Casa, Tillerman Tea, Kara's Cupcakes, (the amazing) Three Twins Ice Cream, and tasty Ca' Momi Enoteca. Bands appear on Friday nights and a local Farmer's Market operates Tuesday and Saturday Mornings. Some merchants join in on Tuesday's "Locals Night" offering all kinds of specials. This is one incredible market and there's always something new to see and taste. *Local Hint* - The Fatted Calf ([www.fattedcalf.com](http://www.fattedcalf.com)) on the north side of Oxbow offers the most amazing meats, pâtés, salumi, sausages, and more. Pick up some Spanish style chorizo, buy a fresh baguette at the Modern Bakery next door and you're all set for anything.

Dressed in spiffy period costume, resident George Webber leads a lively walking tour of downtown ([www.napawalkingtour.com](http://www.napawalkingtour.com)). Webber brings Napa's past (and there is real history here) to life in an engaging and informative fashion. For something different and an inexpensive way to walk around downtown, check out the Downtown Wine Tasting Card ([www.napadowntown.com](http://www.napadowntown.com)). For \$25 (good for an entire year) visitors can check out various spots and sample wines for ten cents a pour. Places include Uncorked at Oxbow, the Bounty Hunter, and 11 others. It's hard to beat this deal.

Last but certainly not least - it is mandatory that you visit at least one winery when in Napa. So don't miss the amazing Quixote Winery ([www.quixotewinery.com](http://www.quixotewinery.com)) located off the Silverado Trail in the nearby Stags Leap District. Designed by famous Viennese architect/philosopher Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Quixote is a fascinating, eccentric, whimsical, and stimulating winery that turns the tables on what you might think about architecture - or wine. Unlike many of its posh neighbors, Quixote is serious about Petite Syrah and features perhaps the most impressive example of this varietal on Earth.

I'm very pleased to report that the City of Napa has come into its own - with plenty to see, taste, and explore. At long last, the City offers an urban wine country experience worthy of the word, Napa. 