



California Crush



Have you ever seen those Visit California commercials where a who's who of the best that California has to offer ask you, tell you why you should visit their great state? Truth be told, California is probably the only state that could gather a diverse spectrum of celebrity royalty for such a promotion, but that doesn't mean they're not right. California does have a lot to offer and is perfect for a Fall Getaway. In fact, one of the items on my to-do list is to visit during the wine country crush. Crush is harvesting season in Napa and Sonoma counties and vineyards are busy picking grapes, crushing grapes, and storing them in oak barrels to create the wine that has made California competitive with France and other wine regions around the world. Sure traffic will be a bit tedious, but you'll be touring, and tasting, and dining, so why not get into the swing of things and join the celebration?!

If you decide to visit during Crush and need a quiet respite from all of the excitement, plan a visit to the Kenzo Estate which offers the opportunity to tour, taste and dine in style 1,500 feet above the valley.



From Napa's Silverado Trail, take the long and winding road up the slopes of Mount George to the 4,000-acre countryside estate where owner and Japanese video game magnate, Kenzo Tsujimoto, has spared no expense in creating a lush and serene wine tasting experience complete with food pairings by chef Thomas Keller of French Laundry and Per Se.



The estate is currently producing three red wines made in the French style: the *Rindo*, the estate's signature Red blend, the *Murasaki*, another Red blend, and the *Ai*, a Cabernet Sauvignon. Kenzo Estate also produces *Asatsuyu*, the first Sauvignon Blanc crafted by Heidi Peterson Barrett, of Screaming Eagle fame, who is the consulting winemaker at Kenzo Estate.



Of course, of great interest to me are the interiors at Kenzo Estate which has a rustic Napa Valley meets modern Japanese farmhouse aesthetic. Designed by Napa Valley's most in demand architect, Howard Backen, the decor was kept simple to emphasize a welcoming hospitality and contemporary elegance.



If you're interested, tastings at Kenzo Estate are by appointment only, so be sure to call ahead, but guided tours include the 20,000 sq. ft. wine cave and the winemaking facilities.