



The Carneros Inn of Napa Valley | Locally Sourced Luxury



Usually I can pick out a few great things to say about a particular luxury resort or hotel. For the **Carneros Inn**, however, a "few" would be a list of more than a dozen reasons why this retreat is so sublime. It is one thing to read about this serene, romantic destination, and quite another to experience it for yourself.



"Authentic thought" is what epitomizes Carneros Inn. Each detail, down to the soap bars and rocking chairs, has a story of why it was chosen or developed to be an element of the Carneros Inn. This 27-acre resort is quietly placed in wine country, with both Napa and Sonoma nearby. Nothing is "thrown in" or typical at this property. It's the exceptional love of detailing that makes the Carneros Inn such a place of comfort and genuine luxury.

The Inn's spa, a "Top 55 Spa in North America" by *Condé Nast* magazine, is meticulously perfect. Soaking in goat's milk, in a bath laid with rocks to mimic that of a riverbed, I gazed at the rolling hillsides of vineyards and cow speckled grass fields and thought, "Now, someone surely thought this out." Indeed, the Carneros Inn's Spa Director, Jeanne Jarnot, started with just the patch of land the Carneros Inn rests on.



From the grass beneath her feet, Jarnot, along with her Carneros Inn team, unfurled a spa experience reflecting the region's best gifts from nature. Years before the Inn commenced its construction, Jarnot invited the neighbors to a BBQ, encouraging them to bring mason jars of the "land's scents." Four dozen stuffed jars later, the Carneros team commissioned a scent that would embody all the essences of the region, the Carneros Wine Blossom.

After my Huichica Bath, infused with scented salts, I was treated to an invigorating scrub with wine blossom oils followed by a full body massage. This was the Redflower Carneros Wine blossom Tribute treatment, and after the service, I hoped the sweet aroma of the earth I now emanated could radiate from my pores for weeks on end. Although I've been treated to exotic and rich spa services over the years, this elaborate treatment at the Inn is one where I felt my body soak up the land, in a rich, profound way. What a delight.



The Carneros Inn's two restaurants, the FARM and the Boon Fly Café, are favorites of locals. That's always a good sign, in my book, because restaurants that are adored by those living just two blocks down the street needn't cater to transient sets of "tourists." I'm not surprised, however. The Plumpjack group spent nearly 10 years courting and developing the support of neighboring farms and vineyards. A bustling bar area and delighted sets of comfortable diners clinging glasses outdoors on the FARM's charming grassy patio indicate a true local fare.

One aspect of Napa I love so much is the honest-to-goodness commitment to farm to table dining, not because it's so feasible to do in this region, but because there's just such an authentic culture for it. The FARM, so aptly named, is a sterling example of the region's style of cuisine. Chef de Cuisine Andrew Budnyi buys most ingredients for his rich menu within a 10-mile radius of the Inn, many from farmers who stroll into the restaurant to eat and enjoy the products they grew themselves.



By the Inn's lobby, a pastoral half-acre garden is where the Inn's Culinary Gardener, (yes, a proper title is needed here) Peter Stonebreaker nurtures a plethora of plants Andrew picks daily. One night, Andrew spoiled my guest and I with the Carnaroli Risotto, a Liberty Farms duck breast, and a Superior Farms lamb rack, complete with lamb bacon among other culinary delights.

My ambivalence about risotto was conquered by this velvety masterpiece. I'd now hesitate to order risotto at another restaurant for fear of a disappointing comparison. If you can manage to pull yourself away from the Inn, a must-do escape is the CADE Winery, one of PlumpJack's two wineries. Tucked in the pine filled hillside overlooking the entire (read that again: ENTIRE) **Napa Valley**, CADE Winery is unlike any other winery I've toured. It holds title as Napa's first organically farmed, LEED Gold Certified Winery.



We learned from the engaging manager and partner, John Conover, that solar panels power the winery and recycled jeans form the insulation. Modern and minimalistic, the winery's natural materials, clean lines, and epic views had me believe I was overlooking an architect's private retreat, rather than an actual working winery. No wonder private events are held often on the property, particularly in the solid concrete, curvaceous wine vault. Reservations are required for touring, and the front desk staff back at the Inn make arrangements easy. Visit TheCarnerosInn.com to learn more.