

Condé Nast Traveler

REVIEW:

The Madrona

This historic mansion-turned-boutique hotel could double as an art gallery as well as Sonoma's most exclusive social club.

HOT LIST 2023



Matthew Millman/The Madrona

HOURS

Wed-Sun 6:00 PM-9:00 PM

AMENITIES

Credit Cards

Wine

Reviewed by **JEN MURPHY**

Set the scene The family that owns [Healdsburg](#)'s M.C. Harris art gallery and tasting room are dining on fresh-from-the-chef's-garden salads and oysters and the Palm Terrace. Local winemakers are debating the nuances of vintage spirits over craft cocktails at the downstairs bar. And Bay Area techies here for a wine country weekend are sunning and sipping Spritzes at the black-and-white umbrella-lined saltwater pool.

The backstory Originally built in 1881 as a private residence for the globetrotting Paxton family, the home was respectfully restored and reimaged as a modern-day boutique hotel by San Francisco-based designer Jay Jeffers. The home came with 750 pieces of art and furniture and Jeffers selected 250 pieces (30 from the Paxton's travels) to compliment contemporary touches, including art curated by San Francisco gallerist Lisa Dolby Chadwick and a Milo Baughman-designed sofa updated with whimsical animal-print fabric manufactured by Morris & Co. Jeffers used the Aesthetic Movement—the pursuit of beauty and art for the sake of art—that was popular when the estate was built as his design muse.

The rooms The 24 accommodations include guest rooms located in the original mansion and carriage house as well as more secluded bungalows spread across historic buildings. Many rooms have soaring 12- to 14-foot ceilings and every accommodation features an original piece of furniture or artwork; many have period fireplaces, bay windows, and spacious balconies overlooking the hills of Dry Creek Valley. The owners' loft in the Ranch House is Jeffers' personal favorite. The design of each room is slightly different but all feature carefully curated amenities like Flamingo Estate toiletries.

Food and drink The hotel's namesake restaurant is helmed by Michelin-starred chef Jesse Mallgren. There's always a loyal local crowd for brunch on the heated terrace (the table waffle to share and salmon gravlax pizza with poached eggs are must-orders). And the Instagram-worthy canary yellow dining room decorated with heritage-breed chicken portraits makes any meal feel glamorous. Keep an eye out for special culinary series like fried chicken Wednesdays and globally-inspired salon dinners. The wine list, no surprise, is exceptional, but the downstairs bar has earned a following (even among local winemakers) for its craft cocktails and vintage spirits collection. The house martini, spiked with an estate olive, is a favorite.

The spa There isn't a spa but the gym has Peloton and Tonal equipment and there's an outdoor saltwater pool.

The neighborhood/area The Madrona sits just a mile from Healdsburg's main square, home to stellar restaurants like Little Saint, the Matheson, and Barndiva and tasting rooms such as Marine Layer, Banshee, and M.C. Harris Gallery. The surrounds of Sonoma boast over 425 wineries and the

concierge at the Madrona can get you in for tastings at boutique cellars.

The service The super plugged-in staff will make you feel like a wine country insider, scoring last-minute reservations for top tables like SingleThread or tastings at boutique wineries like Reeve.

For families While families are welcome, the Madrona does not have any specific programming or amenities catered to children. The Madrona's Bungalows, standalone suites that offer a more private, residential feel, are ideal for families as they include their own private outdoor deck spaces, and select Bungalows can be joined to form a two-bedroom suite.

Eco effort The eight acres of grounds include a half-acre of regenerative gardens created in partnership with Aris Curtis, a passionate voice for the regenerative farming movement. The restaurant directly sources ingredients from the gardens.

Accessibility One Bungalow Studio is ADA accessible and the main building is accessible via a ramp.

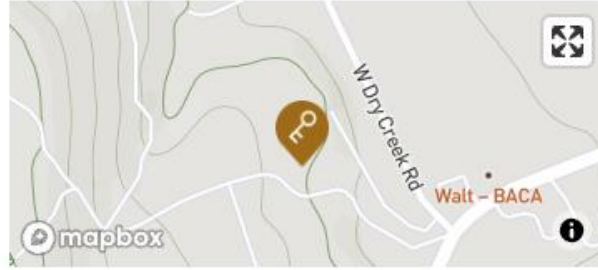
Anything left to mention? Complimentary Van Moof electric bikes make it safe and easy to explore the tasting rooms in town. If you're wondering why each room has earplugs, some guests have complained that the birds sing too loudly in the mornings. Art connoisseurs can scan a QR code to learn about the hotel's collection.

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LOCATION MAP



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