

The Westin Verasa Napa in California Wine Country

By Beverly Stephen



The lobby is a setting for wine tastings.

The Westin Verasa Napa in a Nutshell

The Westin Verasa Napa, a full service resort in Napa's revitalized Oxbow district, is an ideal setting for celebrations big or small. About an hour north of San Francisco, it's a perfect jumping off point for a tour of the Napa Valley wine country. Its convenient downtown location artfully combines urban amenities with proximity to the scenic countryside.



A deluxe studio suite has a spacious feel.

Guest Rooms at the Westin Verasa

The hotel's chateau-style exterior projects an Old World charm, but the 180 guest rooms are sleek and modern, most with balconies overlooking the Napa hills (ours had a less bucolic street view).

Even the smallest rooms are bigger than most New York studio apartments. We could have moved right in with nothing more than our toothbrushes. Earth tones inspired by the local Napa landscape and striking black and white photos of the wine country lend a sense of place. There are 90 one-bedroom suites and 19 two-bedroom suites with fully equipped kitchenettes that inspired renovation fantasies. Who doesn't want granite counters and stainless steel appliances?

The signature "Heavenly Bed" is a king size cloud of plush white pillows and a duvet so inviting we dove right in. We were also seduced by the "Heavenly Bath" which offers White Tea Aloe amenities, a rain shower, and plush bathrobes. Wi-fi is free. Complimentary valet parking and shuttles to town are also offered.



The Solera courtyard all dressed up for a wedding.

Romantic Dining at the Westin Verasa

In 2008 chef/owner Ken Frank moved his acclaimed Michelin-starred La Toque restaurant from Rutherford to the Westin Verasa Napa and also took on the responsibility of running the hotel's all day restaurant as well as its catering operations.

Dining at La Toque is the epitome of romance, a perfect setting for a proposal or to celebrate a special anniversary. In spring it's not uncommon to see a man on bended knee, especially at one of the terrace tables.

Hopeful grooms have been known to hide a ring in all the usual places—desserts, Champagne glasses, even in an olive in a Martini. But one particularly creative gent arranged an oyster shucking for his bivalve loving girlfriend at the chef's table and cleverly tucked the ring inside an empty shell.

The restaurant also has a loyal following of couples that got engaged there and return every year for their anniversary. Some of those happy husbands have been known to ask the restaurant to serve up an important piece of jewelry such as a diamond bracelet with the dessert.

Award-Winning Food and Wine

The modern French cuisine, replete with truffles and other luxury ingredients is paired with selections from some 2,000 wines in the Grand Award winning cellar.

I believe a romantic dinner should always start with a Champagne toast. Following that, a dish I particularly enjoyed was truffle sheathed tai snapper with cabbage and truffled chicken essence paired with a 2010 Fiddlehead pinot noir. A grilled lamb heart was also surprisingly tasty.

Open to the lobby, the more affordable and casual BANK Café & Bar, named for the hotel's location near the banks of the Napa River, stars vibrant California produce, soy glazed pork belly, and roasted chicken. Alfresco dining on the patio is a romantic option. In the evening, we enjoyed sipping a cocktail around the fire pit. The description of the Bank Martini as "very, very, very cold" immediately won over my gentleman friend. I fell for the Femme Fatale #2 that tempered gin with St. Germain, Meyer lemon bitters, Roederer rosé and Silverado Trail strawberries.

Breakfast is served here but guests can also walk down the block to a branch of St. Helena's Model Bakery, which is famous for its breakfast sandwiches and house-made English muffins.



Newlyweds share a toast

Weddings at the Westin Verasa Napa

On a balmy evening, vintage lights illuminate the Solera Courtyard, where tables and chairs are dressed in their best wedding white. Against this stunning backdrop, the bride and groom and their guests dine and dance under the stars.

The hotel has been lauded as one of the prettiest places for a wedding in California. It 's also one of the most popular, hosting four to five weddings a month and welcoming 10 to 20 honeymooning couples in the same time period, many of whom take advantage of a special wine tour or [romance package](#).

A number of [wedding packages](#) are offered for both indoors and the outdoor Solera Courtyard. Wedding specialists are on hand to help arrange details. Smaller receptions and rehearsal dinners, up to 45 guests maximum, can be held on the terrace at La Toque.



The pool area glows romantically at night

Activities at the Westin Verasa Napa and Nearby

A heated saltwater swimming pool with poolside cabanas and oversized hot tub are popular attractions year round.

The hotel partners with the Gloria Curry Day Spa offering massages and other spa treatments in the privacy of guest rooms or in the poolside cabanas. I chose to have my massage in the room. Housekeeping delivers a massage table a few minutes before the therapist arrives. A polite young man arrived to administer my Swedish massage and discreetly stepped into the bathroom to give me time to arrange myself on the table modestly.

And then it was an hour of pure relaxation.

A gear lending program makes workout wear available to guests who forgot theirs if they wish to use the fitness studio or go for a run outdoors.

Wine tastings, hosted by a variety of local vintners, are held in the lobby nightly from 5 to 7 p.m.

Nearby Attractions

It's a short walk to the [Oxbow Public Market](#), a 40,000-square-foot marketplace housing cafes, carefully curated shops, wine merchants, and food vendors purveying everything from organic juice to olive oil to heirloom beans.

And bitters! The Napa Valley Distillery stocks enough artisanal bitters, shrubs and syrups to keep the entire state of California supplied with craft cocktails for years to come.

In the nearby downtown area, some 15 wine tasting rooms and a number of restaurants are within walking distance. The hotel is conveniently located right across the street from the Napa Valley Wine Train station. That's a big plus since guests can enjoy sumptuous meals and wine pairings with no worries about appointing a designated driver.

The Napa Valley Wine Train rolls through 36 miles of the picturesque wine country from Napa to St. Helena and back in three hours. A variety of lunch or dinner packages, some including a tour at a specially designated winery, are offered.



A two-bedroom suite provides all the comforts of home.

More About the Westin Verasa Napa

The Westin Verasa Napa is suitable for couples of all ages and will appeal to those who prefer a large resort hotel with all the bells and whistles to a small bed & breakfast. Although the Westin Verasa Napa is not billed as a family hotel, it can get noisy if children are splashing in the pool.

The Westin Verasa Napa

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[Official Hotel Website](#)

The nearest airport is SFO, about an hour away.

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