So, you want to go wine tasting, but you don’t want to burn your day inching along behind an endless line of red taillights along Highway 29 only to elbow your way through tipsy tourists five bodies deep to get a sip of Sauvignon Blanc...

There is another way: Highway 128.

This stretch of highway begins in Winters, a little gem of a town nestled at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountain Range of Yolo County, and runs all the way through Calistoga in Napa Valley to Mendocino County.

Bay Area trekkers can get there by jumping onto the Silverado Trail (Highway 121) at the south end of Napa. On your way through the City of Napa, take a café break at Oxbow Public Market on First Street, where you can check out their expansive selection of artisanal foods (seasonal farmers markets every Tuesday and Saturday). Before heading into the hills, as you continue north on Highway 121 (turns into Monticello Road), take some time to visit some of the truly unique attractions of the Atlas Peak area, including Jessel Gallery, Gordon Huether Studio, and the wine caves of the Del Dotto Vineyards and Jarvis Winery.
Back on the road, Highway 121 winds through pristine hills and woodland, ending at Highway 128 where you'll turn right and keep going until you reach Winters. Along the way, you'll enjoy lush oak groves adorned with pale Spanish moss, foraging wild turkeys and deer, and hawks doing lazy circles in the sky. You're getting close when you pass emerald green Lake Berryessa (be sure to pull off at Monticello Dam and try your hand at throwing a stone over the fence into the Glory Hole), then continue on right next to the "Green River" of Creedence Clearwater Rival fame — Putah Creek.

Leaving the rolling hills, located on some of the most fertile ag land in the country, sits Terra Firma Farms, a 200 acre certified organic farm that delivers fresh produce year-round. A couple of more miles down the road, your first stop will be Berryessa Brewing Company and Berryessa Gap Winery. The brewery is usually filled with smiles, good cheer, live music and glasses of crisp IPAs, Saisons and craft beer. The winery next door, specializes in small lot, estate grown wines, including Verdelho, Tempranillo and Malbec.

Further along (Hwy 128 turns into Grant Avenue), turn right at Railroad Avenue and just four blocks past Lester Farms Bakery you'll find historic downtown Winters situated along Putah Creek. Park anywhere - everything will be within walking distance. If you need to stretch your legs after the drive, the entrance to the Putah Creek Nature Park is next to the historic trestle bridge where trains once transported locally grown apricots, peaches and cherries to the Bay Area in the 1900s.

Instead of the fruit-packing sheds of days gone by (that brewery and winery you just visited was one of the last standing packing sheds in the area — Tufts Packing Shed), downtown Winters features a world-class steakhouse, the Buckhorn Roadhouse, as well as comfy, cozy Putah Creek Café, which serves up juicy bacon cheeseburgers, brick oven pizza and house-baked goodies (featured on the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-ins and Dives").

Berryessa Gap Winery has a second tasting room on downtown Main Street, located right across from RootStock, which offers wine tasting from both the Winters and Capay Valley areas, as well as local crafts, artisanal oils, vinegars and honey, and other eclectic and unusual gifts. They also host live music, open mic poetry and art classes in their back room “Alley Gallery.” There are plenty of other cute little shops to discover too.

Speaking of music, the Palms Playhouse is also right there, offering blues, bluegrass, folk, country — often with names you'll know, like Maria Muldaur, Joe Lewis Walker and Dan Hicks.

Along Railroad Avenue, you'll find Preserve Public House, offering a respectable selection of beer and wine, both local and otherwise, as well as sandwiches, salads and pizza. If you're in the mood for Mexican, you'll love Chuy's Taqueria right next door. The walls are adorned with intricately stitched Mexican fiesta skirts, made of velvet and satin, glittering with sparkling stitchery, and the carnitas burrito is to die for.

You'll also find Turkovich Family Wines' tasting room, featuring wines made from locally grown grapes, particularly those that love a hot climate like Syrah and Albariño. Under the same roof is the Winters Cheese Company featuring a nice selection of locally made cheeses to pair with the wine. Next door is ARC Guitar, attracting musicians nationwide and beyond who come to craft their own guitars right there in the shop. You needed to make your own guitar, right?

The Winters Express office is nearby, featuring Newt Wallace, the Oldest Paperboy in America. The Express has documented the local news since 1884, and the walls are covered with historical photos of Winters and even still has a Linotype press.

The Winters Chamber of Commerce is next to the Express, where you can get the scoop on everything going on in town, including agri-tours to local vineyards, farms and ranches, the town's annual "big bashes" — like the Earthquake Street Festival in late
August and the annual Harvest Festival in October (complete with a Scarecrow Contest, farmer’s market and music) — and information on other festivities, such as the monthly Fourth Friday Feast and the Second Tuesday Classic Car Show, both held on downtown Main Street.

If you’re into stitchery, Cloth Carousel specializes in quilting materials and sponsors the annual Outdoor Quilt & Textile Arts festival each June, drawing folks from all over to view hand-stitched artwork in every color and style imaginable. Just across the street is Spin a Yarn and Brass Tacks, selling a wide selection of yarn and knitting classes.

A trip to Winters wouldn’t be complete without sampling tasty tapas at Ficelle, lattes at Steady Eddy’s, browsing handmade ceramics at the Clayground, and spending some time with the one and only Michael Petersen at Main Street Cellars, specializing in craft beers, unique wines and local banter.

And yes, you might be tired by now. Too tired to turn around and head home. Not to worry — the Abbey House Inn is a block from downtown, and if you’re feeling a little more extravagant or want a rural setting, you’ll be delighted with the Inn at Park Winters just down the road.

Just make the reservation. Once you get to Winters, you’ll want to stay awhile.

For information about California State Route Highway 128, check out Wikipedia’s listing.

Fun Facts: Winters, California

• Downtown Winters Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Places.

• Things to do: sightseeing, dining, winetasting, art, music, fishing, hiking, biking and more.

• The diverse farming community in Winters produces field crops, including sunflowers, tomatoes, olives, sunflowers, onions, alfalfa, rice and vineyards, as well as walnut, almond, apricot and peach orchards. The local Mariani Nut Company is the world’s largest independent nut processor (almonds are the largest U.S. horticultural export).

• Places to stay: Abbey House Inn, Park Winters Resort, Lake Solano Campground.

For more information about Winters please visit these websites

VisitNapaValley.com
DiscoverWinters.com
VisitWinters.com
The Buckhorn Steakhouse, housed in the old De Vilbiss Hotel in historic downtown Winters, is renowned for our beef. Not just any beef: Certified Angus Beef: offered up in a variety of cuts and preparations, from tri-tip, sirloin and rib eye to prime rib, filet mignon and New York; all prepared your way, from very rare to char-roasted well. Our menu offers other fine meats, including pork, lamb, buffalo and elk, along with chicken and fish, and everything in between. Try our award-winning Roadhouse Onions! Come early and stay late so you can enjoy the great, old fashioned Buckhorn bar festooned with vintage pictures, real buck heads and plenty of good humored locals sharing tall tales.

The Putah Creek Cafe welcomes daily diners with the aroma of applewood bacon and freshly brewed roasted coffee. Here you’ll meet regional farmers and early morning folks as they start their day. Lunches are also served daily, featuring hearty fare like Santa Fe Mexican corn pie, Em’s chicken fried steak, wood fired pizza, and burgers and fries. You can tell great food by how the locals and out of town visitors line up on the weekends for comfort food at its finest for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Good ingredients, simply prepared is the Buckhorn Catering motto that showcases our food and makes every occasion special—from elegant vineyard weddings to corporate barbeques and family celebrations. We started in 1980, carting around our custom-built portable wood-fired smoke oven and grill to regional farmers’ markets, serving up tasty char-roasted tri-tip. Demand for parties and functions grew—today our catering company, housed in a 10,000 square-foot facility with a commercial kitchen on the edge of Downtown Winters, maintains a fleet of delivery vans and wood-fired smoker ovens and grills. Check out our seasonal and farm-to-table menus.

Through our extensive network of local farmers, ranchers, and vintners, we can offer a custom menu for any occasion based wholly on in-season, locally grown ingredients.

The Buckhorn Restaurant Group, including the Buckhorn Steakhouse, Buckhorn Catering and the Putah Creek Café, is family owned and operated by John and Melanie Pickerel who take pride in offering great food at friendly prices.

We are immigrants and pioneers, farmers and entrepreneurs. We make our wine and homes in the small farming community of Winters, California. Our vineyards lie on the east slope and beneath a break in California’s Coastal Range known to locals as the Berryessa Gap, a prominent and beautiful landmark. As we work to grow our grapes and make our wine, a breath of coastal influence greets our mornings and brilliant sunsets end our days. The wine in bottles completes our work and now is yours to enjoy.

Five generations of California farming and nearly five decades of wine industry experience, starting with the creation of a grapevine nursery established in Winters in 1969 and still active today.

Winery & Tasting Room
Tues -Thurs 11am-4pm · Fri - Sun 12pm-6pm
27260 Highway 128 · Winters, CA 95694

Located in historic downtown Winters, RootStock celebrates who, where and why we are through unique specialty goods, wine and art. We carry gifts for all occasions, including local award-winning olive oils, balsamic vinegars and honey, as well as other hand-crafted local products, and fine imports from Spain, France and Italy. Our tasting bar represents four local wineries, and our designated art gallery features local and regional art, along with monthly Cork & Canvas art classes. Check out our online calendar. All are welcome!

Surrounded by rich agricultural land and soaked in the warm California sun, Turkovich Family Wines produces quality small-lot wines from the best vineyards in Western Yolo County. After traveling the world making wine, winemaker and third-generation farmer Christopher Turkovich returned to his hometown to make wine with his family. Their tasting room, located in historic downtown Winters, is the perfect place to relax and enjoy their family’s fine wines and cheeses. They invite you to join them for complimentary tastings daily, and wine flights and cheese & food plates on weekend evenings.

Every Day, 11:00am-5:00pm
Thurs-Sat evenings, 5:00pm-9:00pm
304 Railroad Avenue
Winters, CA 95694
530-795-3842
www.turkovichwines.com

Tasting Room in Downtown Winters
Wed - Thurs 1:00pm- 8:30pm
Fri & Sat 11:30am - 8:30pm
Sun 11:00am- 5:30pm
15 Main Street
Winters, CA 95694
(530) 795-3201
www.berryessagap.com

RootStock
Wed & Thurs, 10:00am-5:30pm
Fri, 10:00am-8:00pm
Sat, 10:30am-8:00pm
Sun, 11:00am-4:00pm
(check website for special events and hours)
22 Main Street
Winters, CA 95694
530-794-6008
www.rootstockgifts.com

Turkovich Family Wines
WWW.DISCOVERWINTERS.COM