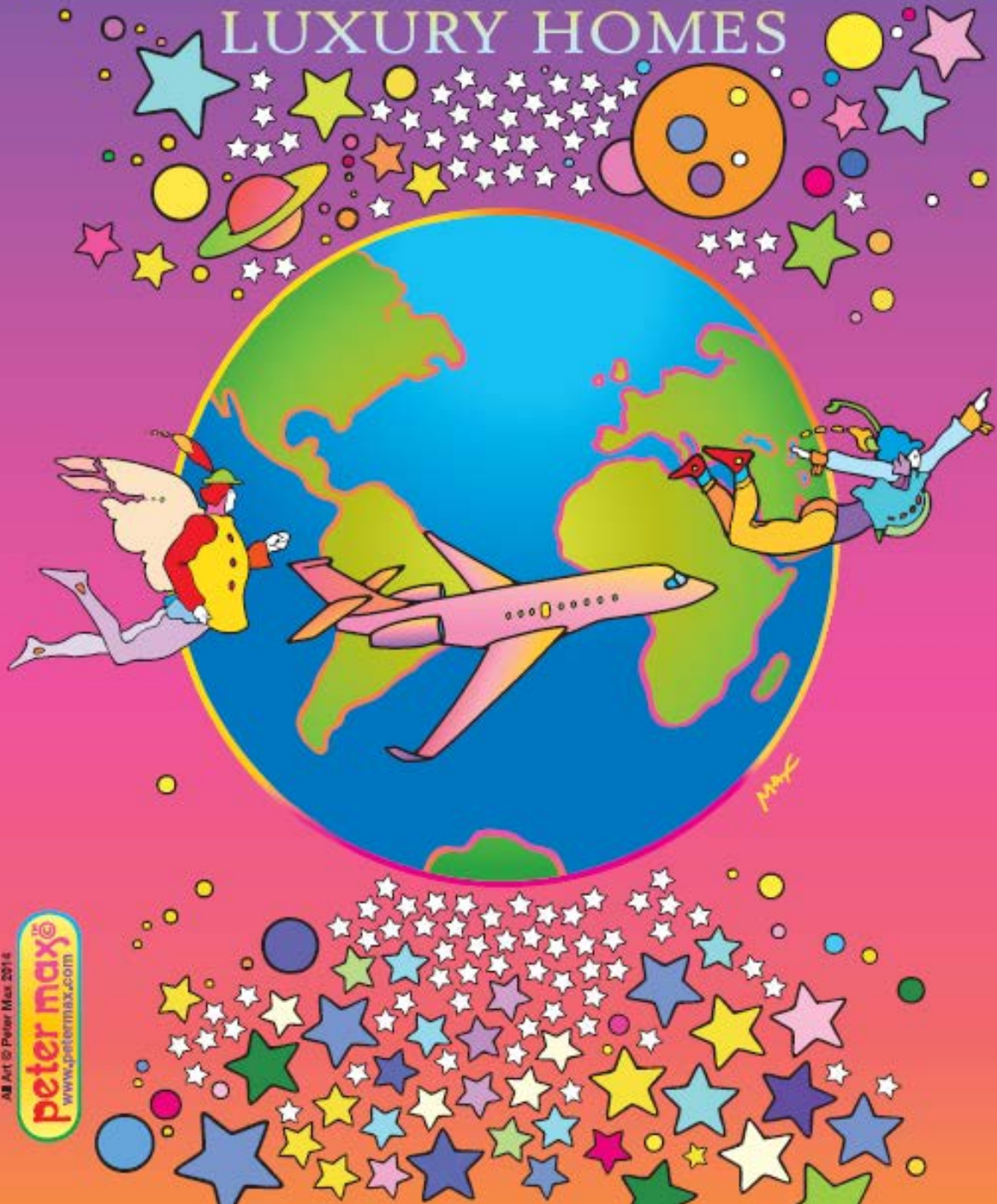


# PRIVATE AIR

## LUXURY HOMES

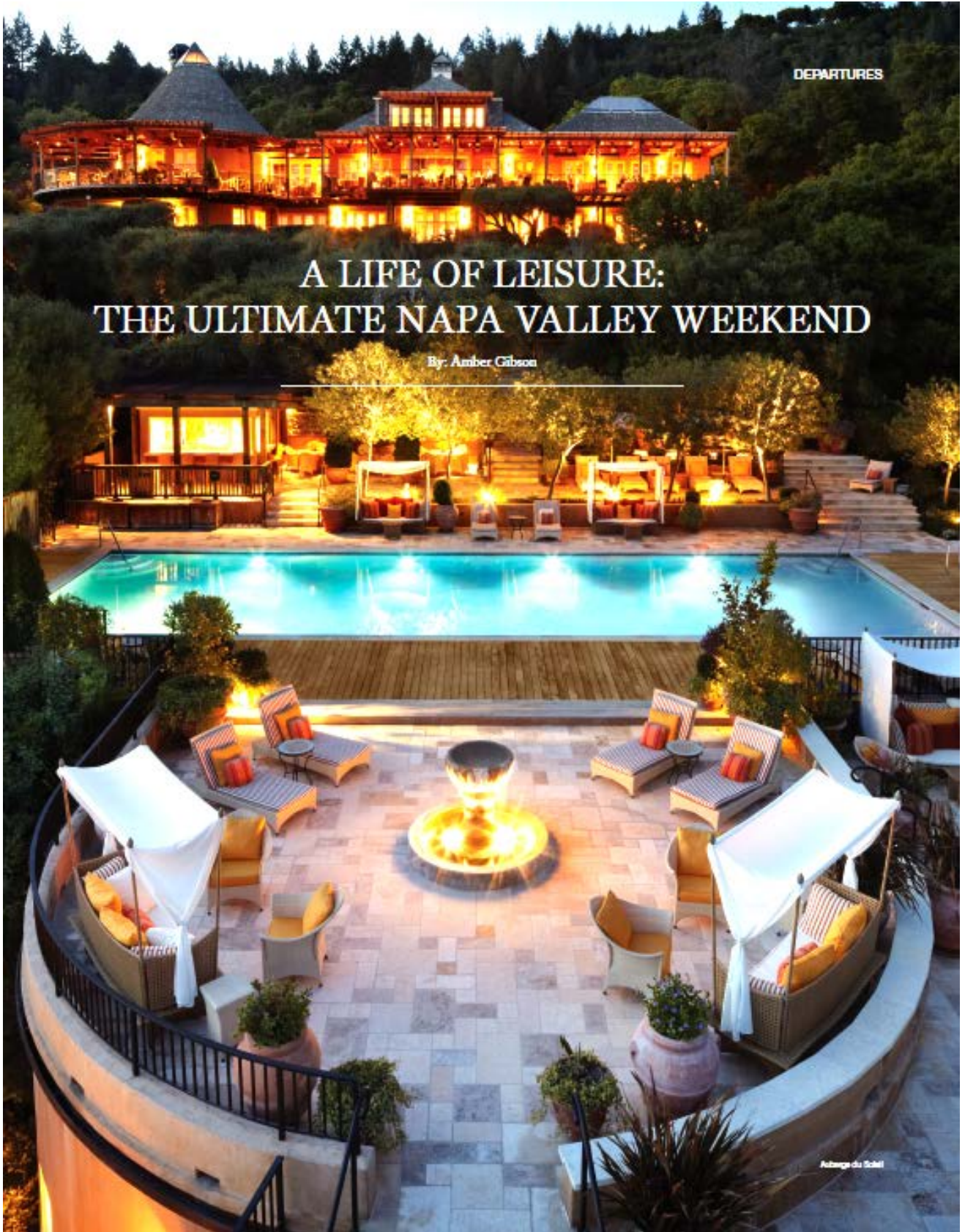


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DEPARTURES

# A LIFE OF LEISURE: THE ULTIMATE NAPA VALLEY WEEKEND

By: Amber Gibson



Auberge du Soleil



WITH SOME OF THE FINEST HOTELS, FOOD AND WINE IN THE COUNTRY AT YOUR FINGERTIPS, YOU CAN'T BEAT A LUXE BREAK IN NAPA VALLEY. SO SIT BACK, RELAX AND INDULGE WITH THE BEST OF THIS CALIFORNIAN NIRVANA.

#### WHERE TO STAY

There's not a bad room at The Carneros Inn, where every cottage has its own private garden and patio. This hideaway blends effortlessly into its wine country surroundings, with apple, fig and quince trees dotting the impeccable landscape. A better-than-Botox collagen facial or outdoor massage will counter any aging effects of alcohol. Unparalleled service anticipates every need and the outrageously lavish pillow top beds are exceedingly difficult to rise from.

Further north, Auberge du Soleil offers an adults-only getaway, with sweeping views of vineyards and olive groves around every corner. Soak in three temperate springs before a signature attunement spa treatment, which combines hot stone, deep tissue and Thai massage techniques to stretch and knead tight muscles to putty.

If you're staying a night in San Francisco before heading to wine country, the St. Regis offers a prime location and comfortable rooms.

#### WHERE TO DRINK

Start your day with Vinyasa yoga in the vineyard at Domaine Carneros or Pilates and a tasting on the terrace at Vineyard 29. Here, grapes are hand-sorted twice before they are gently pressed and transferred via gravity, as opposed to pumps, into barrels for aging. At Domaine Carneros, you can also create your own sparkling cuvee with founding winemaker Eileen Crane.

With just 25 acres of Cabernet Sauvignon vines, including two acres planted in 1945 by J. J. Cohn, Scarecrow is one of the most elusive wines in the valley. Each vintage sells out within hours of its release and Scarecrow's lot breaks the Premierie



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The Vineyard at Domaine Carneros, Private Dining at Meadowood Restaurant, Wine Tasting at Vineyard 29 and The Tanks at CADE Winery.

ABOVE: The Carneros Inn and Spa



LEFT: The Old Men at Scarecrow! Cabernet Sauvignon vines with an unusually distinguished pedigree, planted by J.J. Cohn in 1945.

Napa Valley wine auction record every year. Tastings are by appointment only for those on Scarecrow's list.

Realm Cellars is another small producer fast becoming a cult favorite. They cherry-pick grapes from the valley's best vineyards, including To Kalon, to blend in several Bordeaux varietal wines. Next spring, look for the 2012 vintage of Absurd, a wine that hasn't been released since the 2005 vintage. This time there will only be a hundred cases.

For robust Napa Valley single-vineyard Cabernet alongside breathtaking views, both Cade and Ovid are musts. Ovid is a mission to find, but worth the drive up the winding mountains. This boutique winery only accepts two appointments a day, so plan in advance.

#### WHERE TO EAT

Guests checking in at Meadowood receive a box of chocolates specially designed by chocolatier Chris

Kollar using the property's herbs and honey. Stop by Kollar Chocolates in charming Yountville to hand-roll truffles in a private chocolate-making class or even design a custom flavor. Just don't ruin your appetite for dinner. The Restaurant at Meadowood may be the best meal in the country. Chef Christopher Kostow captures the soul of Californian wine country cuisine, with a book to prove it. A seat at the kitchen counter includes more than 15 courses, an intimate look at the choreography behind cooking and plating, and witty banter with different chefs presenting each course.

Visit La Toque for a truffle extravaganza. Chef Ken Frank incorporates fresh French, Italian and Australian truffles into a plethora of rich dishes and even offers a truffle tasting menu. For a lighter meal focused on fresh produce, Archetype is a great local hangout for both lunch and dinner. Wicker chairs, white-washed wooden walls and an open kitchen create a spacious and welcoming environment to whittle away an entire afternoon. ➤