

# THE PICKY EATER

BITES, SIPS, TIPS AND MUSINGS ON ALL THINGS FOOD

## Spelunking for wine-lovers



No, you don't get to rappel down into them, nor do you need to wear your forehead flashlights, but in my mind, the cave-exploring you get to do at the brand new CADE winery burrowed into the side of Howell Mountain in Napa Valley is just as engaging.

Nestled in the hillside and barely visible to those who pass by, CADE is what I'd call the hottest new stop on the wine trail. It just opened on April 1, 2009. Yes, the wines are incredible. Beware: reds are \$50 per bottle and up, but worth it if you can afford it. But what blew me away about this place is the way it was built with such purpose and passion. It's LEED-certified, which means it adheres to a set of all-green guidelines. Every single element in the design of this PlumpJack project is green. It is built into the side of a hill to limit impact on flora and fauna. The materials used are all either recycled or pulled directly from nature. The tasting patio is pebbled and outfitted with leather and natural fiber seating. The stone fountain and infinity pool offer a phenomenal view of the valley.

Oh, yes. And the caves. To maximize space and minimize impact on the mountain, the architects designed a maze of gothic-ceiling caves that house the wine at just the right temperature -- without need of heating or cooling systems.

Even the fermentation room is built with the environment in mind -- it has glass walls so that the solar-powered lights rarely need to be turned on, and its roof is designed to suck in cool air at night, which means no energy needs to be expended to keep the room at optimum temperature.

There are many more details about the place I could share, but I won't. The next time you are in the area, I encourage you to explore it yourself. Technically, the winery can only host visitors with appointments, but I'm guessing they would not slam the door on your face if you just show up.

CADE is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. It's located at 360 Howell Mountain Road. Tastings are \$10 per person, private tours followed by a food and wine pairing are available at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. daily (\$25 per person.) For appointments, call 707-965-2746 or go to <http://www.cadewinery.com/>

