

# staycation

by Stephanie Schulte



Last month I decided to indulge in a staycation. With the abundance of cool things to do in our verdant valley and the flinching fact that it costs \$60 to fill up my beetle, I decided to poke about our resort-y area and have some fun. Off the beaten path became my modus operandi. With ribbons tucked under my hat, off I went into the wild blue wine country yonder.

My first plucky adventure was a back road wine country tour of delicious good entertainment. A bright yellow Jeep Wrangler 4x4 met me at Stuart Cellars Winery and we commenced our journey. Sunrider Jeep Tours takes a funky twist on the traditional limo/bus tour. We hopped along



dusty back roads from winery to winery all the while learning about all things winemaking. Our driver/tour guide, Adam grew up in the area and has extraordinary knowledge of Temecula's enchanting wine country.

We made a stop at Briar Rose Winery; a newer winery I have been hearing lots of positive chatter about. The hidden away winery is modeled after Snow White and the Seven Dwarf's home complete with thatched roof and oodles of

charm and whimsy. We showed up at our appointed time and were ushered into a cozy room to taste. The wines were scrumptious; my favorite being the peach Muscat. Delish! The owner told us of the Disney lore influence; be sure to ask about it when you go (fascinating). We ended our tour atop Glen Oaks taking in the multi hued sunset view towards the ocean.

Next I put my inner nervous Nelly to the test and hopped a ride in a hot air balloon. Although I have previously ridden air currents via Sunrise Balloons my stomach still turned all topsy-turvy in the moments before take off (mimosa. Check). Of course all was fine, smooth and serene. The morning was perfectly perfect with cool air literally glowing in the glistening morning sunlight. Our pilot Dan Glick put us all at ease with his gentle candor and stellar flying abilities. We were up in the sky for about an hour floating to and fro marveling at the pretty lay of the land. We made a cushy soft landing, high fived and were all wrapped up by 8:00 a.m.



The cherry on top of my staycation took place at The Churon Inn and Winery.

The three musketeers from Golden Crown Productions put together a groovy concert featuring The Legends of Surf Music. The Dual Tones are pioneers of true balmy surf music and boy did they jam! Wine was flowin', people were singin' and dancin', and everyone seemed to be having a fantastic time swaying to the sea loving music.

My wee staycation barely touches on the wealth of fun things to do here in our region. I am all for hopping a jet plane and venturing off to exotic places, however, with jeep loads of interesting things to do right under our noses why not take a staycation?

