

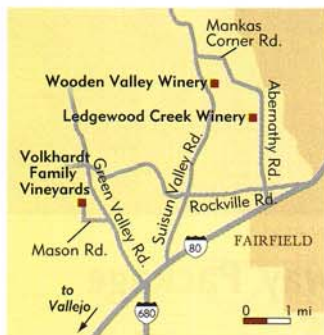
Hidden wine country

Just minutes off I-80, wind past the family wineries of Solano County

BY DAVE WEINSTEIN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GARY CRABBE

Wild turkeys waddle across Mason Road as a single car makes its way toward Green Valley's Volkhardt Family Vineyards. Behind the winery, the hills rise steeply, leading to busy Napa Valley. But here in rural Solano County, the only other vehicle in sight is a tractor working the vineyards.



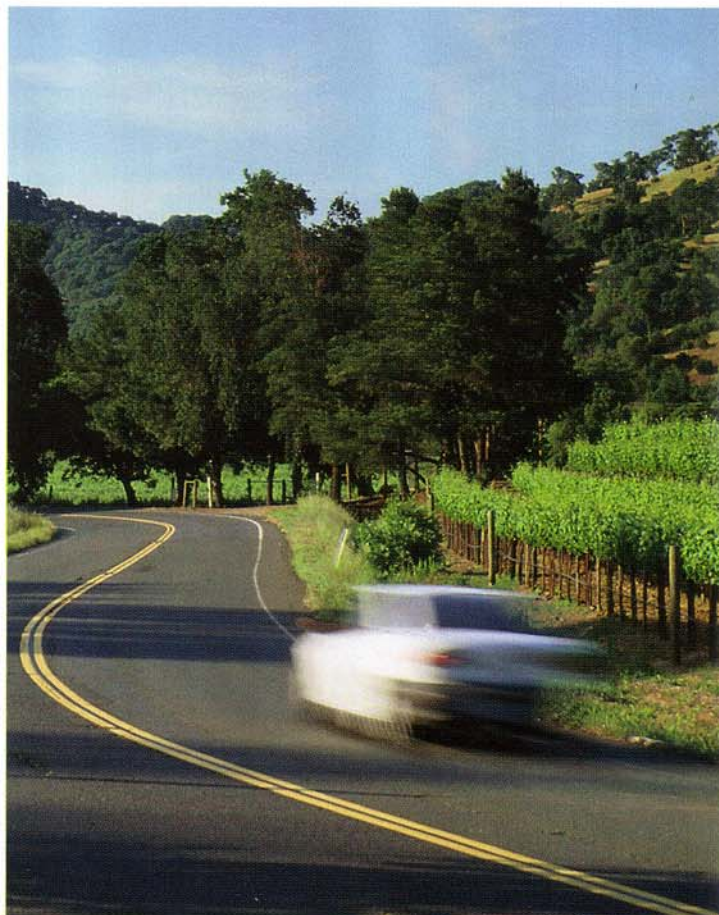
Valley finder

Take I-80 to Green Valley Rd., head north, and turn left on Mason Rd. Contact the Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce (www.ffsc-chamber.com or 707/425-4625).

Wooden Valley Winery (10–5 Tue–Sun; 756 Suisun Valley Rd.; 707/864-0730). On your way, you'll pass 610-acre Rockville Hills Regional Park (\$2 per person; 707/428-7614) and the quiet, oak-shaded cemetery at the 1856 Rockville Stone Chapel.

At Wooden Valley Winery, which dates back to the end of Prohibition, vice president Ron Lanza boasts that hot days and cool bay breezes provide ideal conditions for growing wine grapes. The win-

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The area's newest winery, Ledgewood Creek (11–5 daily; 4589 Abernathy Rd.; 707/426-4424), has a tasting room nestled among the vines, where you can taste not only Chardonnay and Merlot, but also Roussanne and Viognier.

At nearby Cal Yee Farms (8–5 Mon–Fri, 10–5 Sat–Sun; 5158 Clayton Rd.; 707/425-5327), they've been drying fruit for 80 years. Take the advice of Eva Yee Palm, matriarch of the Cal Yee family, and finish your day at the Vintage Caffé (\$\$; lunch Mon–Fri, dinner Tue–Sun; 2522 Mankas Corner Rd.; 707/425-3207). "It's like one of those fancy restaurants in Napa or Sonoma, only better," she says. *

Farm country scenes: rural Suisun Valley Rd., the Rockville Stone Chapel, and vineyards stretching to the hills.