

Santa Maria Weekend Wine Tour - 2014

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CALIFORNIA WINE TOUR FLY-IN

Golden Gate Flyers organized a fly-in to the California Central Coast wine country the weekend of April 11-13. Twenty folks from Golden Gate Flyers and Unusual Attitudes convened at the Santa Maria Radisson Hotel located right next to the airport (KSMX) ramp.

There's nothing quite like waking up in the morning, looking out your hotel room window, and seeing your plane tied down 150 feet away on the ramp. Eight aircraft ranging from a Cessna 152 to a Falcon 900 flew in for the event. Aircraft flying in Friday besides the 152 and Falcon 900 included a Piper Arrow, a TBM 700, a Commander 114, and a Cirrus SR22. A Cessna 172 and a Cessna 182 arrived early Saturday morning making the ILS approach through the marine layer.

Twenty of us boarded a 30 passenger chartered bus mid-morning Saturday to begin our wine tour. The first winery was Presquile, a new winery with a gorgeous building and a tasting room with incredible views of the Santa Maria Valley vineyards. The architecture was very modern and perfect in its detail. We continued on to the Cambria winery where we had an excellent box lunch on the patio while enjoying samples of their wines.

The tour continued in the afternoon to the Riverbench Winery for tasting in their outdoor gardens. A fourth winery visit was scheduled, but had to be dropped due to time constraints. Having the chartered bus for transportation ensured a safe trip for all back to the Radisson after sampling an ample variety of exquisite Santa Barbara County wines. The group enjoyed a wonderful gourmet dinner on Saturday evening was at the historic Santa Maria Inn.

The Sunday morning fixed price brunch at the Radisson was a cornucopia with a huge assortment of menu items and bottomless champagne. It was a good deal for the hotel since the pilots abstained, as did most of the passengers.

The four planes from Unusual Attitudes in Southern California and the four planes from Golden Gate Flyers in Northern California all arrived home safely by mid-afternoon Sunday. Kudos and a huge THANK YOU to David Clarke for organizing and orchestrating the whole weekend (It's quite a chore keeping Type A Pilots on time). It was a fantastic weekend with good friends and new friends.