



•art CITY FOCUS

HEALDS BURG

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Healdsburg, California

by Kelly Skeen

When it comes to describing Healdsburg, California, the encapsulating word that comes to mind is “taste.” Located 65 miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge in the heart of Sonoma Valley wine country, Healdsburg is a charming yet chic getaway for Bay Area locals and tourists alike. The city, whose population is less than 12,000, has organically evolved and is largely homegrown by locals who have migrated from San Francisco over the past 20 to 30 years. Drawn to its natural visual beauty, relaxed pace and small town charm, Healdsburg residents and business owners are committed to preserving the agricultural roots of their town while adding an evolving air of sophistication. A blend of fine wine, farm to table food, arts and culture characterize the city, as tastemakers from each industry carefully curate their offerings with a commitment to

quality, creativity and distinct sense of place.

Healdsburg is nestled at the intersection of three stellar wine regions, the Russian River Valley, Dry Creek Valley and Alexander Valley; and is also surrounded by rich agriculture and sustainable farms. Subsequently, chefs, winemakers and restaurant owners are drawn to Healdsburg and were some of the first to revolutionize the area. Don't miss Jordan Winery, Healdsburg SHED and Barndiva Gallery Bar & Bistro. Sonoma Valley, however, has also long been considered an artist's haven as makers, craftsmen and plein air painters in the 1970s sought more affordable lifestyles and inspiring natural beauty outside city limits. Today there are 27,000 registered artists living in Sonoma County, resulting in regional events such as *Sonoma County Art Trails*. This open studio event occurs every October, aligning with the fall grape harvest and wine releases.





Where there are artists, there are art galleries. Healdsburg is home to the largest concentration of galleries in Northern California with more than 20 privately owned art spaces within walking distance of the city's central plaza. **Erickson Fine Art Gallery**, located in a stunning three-story Palladio-style building on Healdsburg Avenue, was one of the first. "Twenty years ago Healdsburg was a pretty sleepy town and it was hard to make a living here," says gallery owner Sandy Erickson, who formerly operated a space in San Francisco for 25 years. "But it was a bud ready to open."

Erickson's aesthetic is Northern California contemporary; many of the gallery's artists have been with her since the beginning of her 35-year career. Some of these long-standing artists include Joe Draegert, whose contemporary landscapes are in the permanent collections of SFMOMA and the Oakland Museum of Art; Susan Hall, who studied under Mark Rothko and David Hockney and was the subject of a one-woman exhibition at the Whitney Museum in New York; and 94-year-old kinetic sculptor Jerome Kirk, who has work in the Museum of Modern Art in

New York. Erickson Fine Art Gallery celebrated its 20th anniversary in January with an exhibition, *Brazil*, for Bob Nugent, whose large-scale abstract paintings have been in over 900 exhibitions worldwide. *Brazil* will remain on display through February 13. The gallery also fosters the careers of emerging talent.

Also celebrating a 20th anniversary this year is the **Upstairs Art Gallery**, a collaborative artist-owned space located above Levin & Co. bookstore on the Healdsburg Plaza. The gallery has offered "local art by local artists" since 1997; their anniversary celebration will take place on February 11 with an all-day open house. Carolyn Wilson, Phyllis Rapp and Dan Scannell are three out of 16 resident artists at the gallery, which shows a variety of styles but emphasizes landscape.

Just across the plaza is **The Harris Gallery**, which opened 15 years ago as a family-run establishment. M.C. Harris and his son A3L3XZAND3R Harris are second- and third-generation painters who show distinguished interpretations of modernism, cubism and abstraction. A3L3XZAND3R was born in Healdsburg and returned to the area even after traveling to Florence, Italy, for



SIP



JORDAN WINERY

www.jordanwinery.com

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TRATTORE FARMS

www.trattorefarms.com

Trattore means “tractor” in Italian; don’t miss their antique tractor collection on display in the tasting room, where you can sip wine and sample olive oil while overlooking the spectacular Dry Creek Valley.



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www.sonomacider.com

This father-son partnership is the only all-organic cidery in the country. Coming from 30 years in the wine industry, David Cordtz brings the class while son Robert Cordtz brings the spunk. Try The Jax, inspired by the flavor of Apple Jacks cereal.

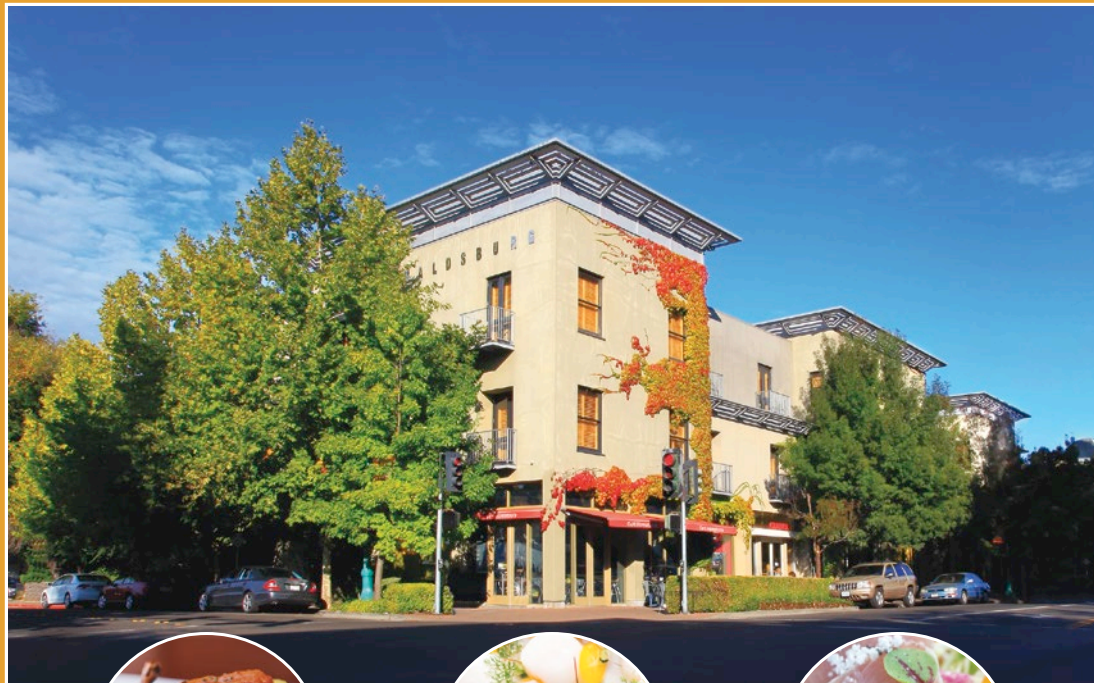
art school. “The people who are cultivating this community are all supporters of the arts,” he says about being an artist in Healdsburg.

Bob Johnson, book illustrator, wine label designer and cartoonist, is another stronghold in the gallery community who offers a wealth of history and insight for the Healdsburg visitor. He can be found at the **Bob Johnson Art Gallery**, a cross between studio, gallery and art library located on the Healdsburg Plaza. “We’ve got wineries here, too, but this is art country,” he says proudly of the local gallery scene.

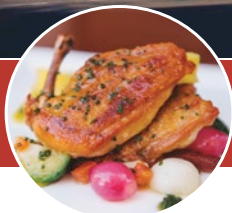
Newcomers to art country include **Paul Mahder Gallery**, **ÆRENA Galleries & Gardens** and **Stafford Gallery**, who bring new energy and value to Healdsburg’s

now thriving arts community. Paul Mahder transitioned to Healdsburg from San Francisco in 2014 and owns one of the largest galleries north of Los Angeles. Because of its size, Paul Mahder Gallery acts as a community center hosting cultural events from concerts to film festivals to wine tastings. “There’s nothing like this in the Bay Area,” says Mahder of his 8,500-square-foot gallery space. “It’s a dream space for showing art.” Skylights in the gallery’s 30-foot ceilings illuminate the interior while the outdoor sculpture garden features among the largest moss walls in the United States. The gallery represents about 45 artists—half international, several local and the rest from around the country.

ÆRENA Galleries & Gardens opened about three-and-



EAT



BARNDIVA
GALLERY BAR & BISTRO
www.barndiva.com

The art, food and wine experience culminates in Barndiva's Gallery Bar next door to their fine dining restaurant. Sip spirits and order from classic French bistro menus surrounded by an eclectic art collection.



HEALDSBURG SHED
www.healdsburgshed.com

Winner of the 2014 James Beard Award for Best Restaurant Design, this café, pantry and housewares shop is one of the best places to enjoy the bounty of the region both visually and tastefully.



VALETTE

www.valettehealdsburg.com

Owned by two brothers, chef Dustin Valette and manager Aaron Garzini, Valette restaurant is dedicated to showcasing the roots and wine of Sonoma County in an elegant yet friendly atmosphere.

a-half years ago as the third gallery for the Bespoke Collection, its parent company that also owns gallery locations in Napa, Yountville and St. Helena, as well as Blackbird Vineyards, Recuerdo Wines and Resolute Wines. ÆRENA Galleries & Gardens is an art collector's dream; not only do they represent a variety of reputable painters, sculptors, jewelers and contemporary furniture makers, but they cater to their clients with indulgent "Bespoke Gallery Experiences." These include private gallery tours, personal artist meetings and art collection wine pairings. Collectors can also earn "Bespoke Points" when they purchase art or wine, which are redeemable for experiences that range from custom winemaking to overnight

stays at luxury properties. ÆRENA Galleries' vision is expertly curated and they are highly committed to their collectors as well as their 65-plus local, national and international artists.

Christina Stafford, who previously managed a contemporary gallery in Charleston, South Carolina, is one of the newest gallery owners in town. Stafford Gallery opened less than a year ago and specializes in eclectic curated collections. "I fell in love with Healdsburg," says Stafford of her first encounter with the town seven years prior. "I knew this is where I wanted to put my gallery." Stafford Gallery celebrates a grand re-opening in an expansive new Plaza Street location on February 9 and 10.

HEALDSBURG TOWN PLAZA

- 1 AERENA Galleries & Gardens**
115 Plaza Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 603-8787, www.aerenagalleries.com
- 2 Andy Katz Photography**
10 D Plaza Court, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 433-9396, www.andykatzphotography.com
- 3 Art & All that Jazz**
456 Moore Lane, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 433-7900, www.artandallthatjazz.com
- 4 Bob Johnson Art Gallery**
314 Center Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 529-3755
- 5 Bourne Photography Studio and Gallery**
14 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 486-9420, www.bbourne.com
- 6 BradfordBrenner**
101 Plaza Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 324-9022, www.bradfordbrenner.com
- 7 Capture Fine Art Gallery**
105 Plaza Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-7030, www.capturefineart.com
- 8 Dovetail Collection**
407 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-0111, www.shopdovetail.com
- 9 Erickson Fine Art Gallery**
324 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-7073, www.ericksonfineartgallery.com
- 10 Gallery Lulo**
303 Center Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 433-7533, www.gallerylulo.com
- 11 The Hand Fan Museum**
219 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-2500, www.handfanmuseum.org
- 12 The Harris Gallery**
320 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 385-1888, www.theharrisgallery.com
- 13 Hawley Winery Tasting Room and Gallery**
36 North Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-2705, www.hawleywine.com
- 14 Healdsburg Art Atelier**
126 North Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 791-4028, www.healdsburgartatelier.com
- 15 Healdsburg Center for the Arts**
130 Plaza Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-1970, www.healdsburgcenterforthearts.org
- 16 Hammerfriar Gallery**
132 Mill Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 473-9600, www.hammerfriar.com
- 17 J Howell Fine Art**
101 Plaza Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-2684, www.jhowellfineart.com
- 18 Paul Mahder Gallery**
222 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 473-9150, www.paulmahdergallery.com
- 19 Stafford Gallery**
119 Plaza Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 385-1048, www.staffordgallery.com
- 20 Studio Barndiva Gallery**
237 Center Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-7404, www.barndiva.com/studio-gallery
- 21 Upstairs Art Gallery**
306 Center Street, Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 431-4214, www.upstairsartgallery.net
- 22 WH Studio**
Healdsburg, CA 95448
(707) 695-4730



BEST TIMES TO VISIT

Year-round, but especially in the fall during the wine grape harvest season for striking natural beauty and lively art and wine events.



STAY



HEALDSBURG INN ON THE PLAZA

www.healdsburginn.com

Built in 1901, this inn blends modern luxury with historic charm with rooms that overlook the downtown plaza.



HOTEL HEALDSBURG

www.hotelhealdsburg.com

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HOTEL LES MARS

www.hotellesmars.com

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In addition to commercial galleries are community arts spaces such as the **Raven Performing Arts Theater**, the **Healdsburg Center for the Arts**, who sponsors *Art after Dark* in the summer months, and the **Healdsburg Art Atelier**, owned by local painter Nella Rubinstien. Rubinstien's community-driven space provides opportunities for local artists to take studio classes, for women to gather for "Ladies Paint Night," and for children to foster creativity through imaginative art projects. "We're adding a new color to the Healdsburg palette," says Rubinstien of her Art Atelier, which opened less than two years ago and is becoming a center for community creativity in the heart of downtown.

Whether you're seeking plein air landscapes, abstract painting, innovative sculpture or conceptual work, Healdsburg satisfies a variety of tastes. The

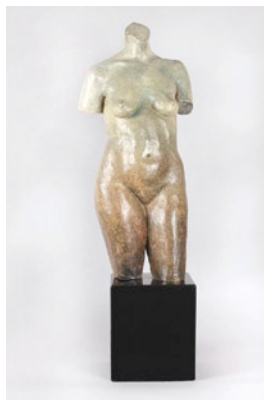
more modern, adventurous collector may be drawn to **Gallery Lulo**, whose sleek contemporary space features jewelry designers, painters and sculptors who explore their mediums in diverse ways and appeal to a minimalist aesthetic. **Hammerfriar Gallery**, located off the main plaza but within walking distance, shows cutting-edge conceptual work by emerging to established Bay Area artists.

Healdsburg tastemakers are setting a new standard for small-town art destinations, one that caters to visitors while upholding the values of the local community. The combination of food, wine, arts and culture will have art seekers savoring their Healdsburg experience.

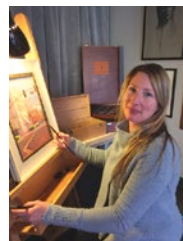
Healdsburg was luckily untouched in the recent California wildfires and acted as a safe haven and support system for wider Sonoma County evacuees and victims.



"AVA" by Nella Rubinstein, 14 x 20" Oil



"Torso" by Cynthia Berg Polson, 24 x 9 x 7" Bronze on marble, Ed 5/9



Artist, Nella Rubinstein

Featuring Workshops in:
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Relief Sculpture
Figure Drawing
Plein Air Painting



Experience Art at the Downtown Healdsburg Art Atelier

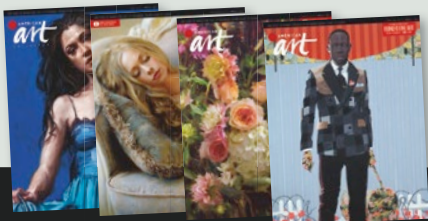
healdsburgartatelier.com | Info@healdsburgartatelier.com | (707) 791 4028

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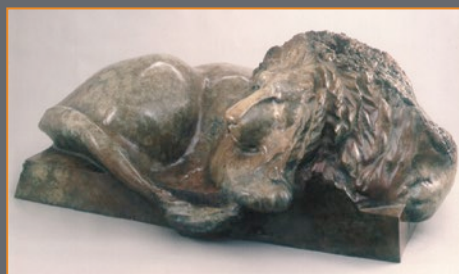
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Cynthia Jackson-Hein, Glad to be Home, oil 8"x10"

Upstairs Art Gallery

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www.upstairsartgallery.net
Open daily 11-6



Taste.

Erickson Fine Art Gallery
sculpture by Jeffrey Van Dyke



Makers.

Danielle Elins and Sandy Erickson
Owners/Erickson Fine Art Gallery, Inc.

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Plan your stay at healdsburg.com