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# Sacramento

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## BEER & WINE ISSUE

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# SACRAMENTO "OLD VINE"



# RIVER TRAIN'S EXPRESS

A fun and rollicking way to taste Yolo County wines



#### LOCATION:

400 N. Harbor Blvd, West  
Sacramento, CA 95605

#### WEBSITE:

[SacramentoRiverTrain.com](http://SacramentoRiverTrain.com)

#### RESERVATIONS:

800.866.1690

#### ARTICLE GARY BAKER | PHOTOGRAPHY PAMELA BAKER

Board at a train station that doesn't look like a train station, but don't let that fool you. Once you get on, the wine starts flowing and the band starts playing, and the train keeps a rolling all afternoon. Welcome to the Sacramento River Train's "Old Vine Express." This fun and entertaining excursion features a three-hour train ride with wine tasting and live music also on board!

Premium tickets sell for \$65 per person and include a souvenir glass, 10 tasting tickets, three premium tasting tickets, a meal and priority boarding. General tickets sell for \$45 per person and include 10 tasting tickets.

The wine train features a selection of both red and white wines (23 in total) from 11 different Yolo County winemakers. Each passenger, before boarding, is provided a list of wines available for

tasting, organized by location on the train and identified by vintner and varietal. Once on board, passengers can move from car to car to taste wine at one of five wine stations spread over the length of the seven car train.

Wine tasting starts as soon as you board and the atmosphere quickly becomes

festive. Wine makes friends and standing in close proximity in the narrow rail cars allows you to easily make a new acquaintance while waiting for the attentive wine train staff to pour your tasting.

Live music plays at one end of the train in an open air gondola-like car and premium wines are served in a more traditional, enclosed passenger car with comfortable couch seating around small tables at the other end of the train. Cars in between, all with ample windows, have more traditional table and bench style or table and chair seating. But the real draw was the "band car" attracting interest from just about everyone on the train. At one point in the trip, the dance floor in front of the band seemed constantly filled with a raucous group of folks more interested in dancing than in wine tasting, justifiably, as the band called "Fox Trot Mary" was really playing their musical hearts out.

Because there is so much to see and do on this on this rollicking train ride, it's hard to know where to start, but, here's a suggested strategy. Get on board, get your first tasting, get seated in the style of car that most appeals to you, and, once the train gets rolling, move about by traversing from car to car, tasting station to tasting station.

The train departs from West Sacramento and runs along the Sacramento River westward through newly planted vineyards,



orchards along the Garden Highway, under the I-5 bridge and past Swabbies on the River, then along I-5 into Woodland. The train tracks are, in most places, high enough along the levee that from both the enclosed cars as well as the open air ones you get some beautiful views of the river and the fertile Yolo county farmland.

Food is available for purchase in the Food Car, located in the middle of the train. But a premium adult ticket also includes a meal, along with seating in the exclusive VIP car.

Staff at the various wine stations are pleasant, polite and quite skilled at pouring wine into small glasses on a moving train. Comically, for most folks, the more wine tasted, the more difficult it became to move about the train, navigating the steps between cars, walking down narrow passages or past others you may encounter going the opposite way towards you, swaying like drunken sailors to the slow mambo-like rhythm of the train.

Although there is a parking lot for a few cars, safety would dictate and the wine train company suggests that a taxi or designated driver should be used to return to town once you disembark the train. In fact, a list of various transportation providers and their corresponding phone numbers is posted on the train.

In my experience, the "Old Vine Express" is a great way to sample several different Yolo County wines in one place, relatively convenient and safe, without driving miles around the county to visit each winery.

Bring your friends, bring your family and enjoy an exciting afternoon adventure of music, dancing and relaxing transportation.





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