

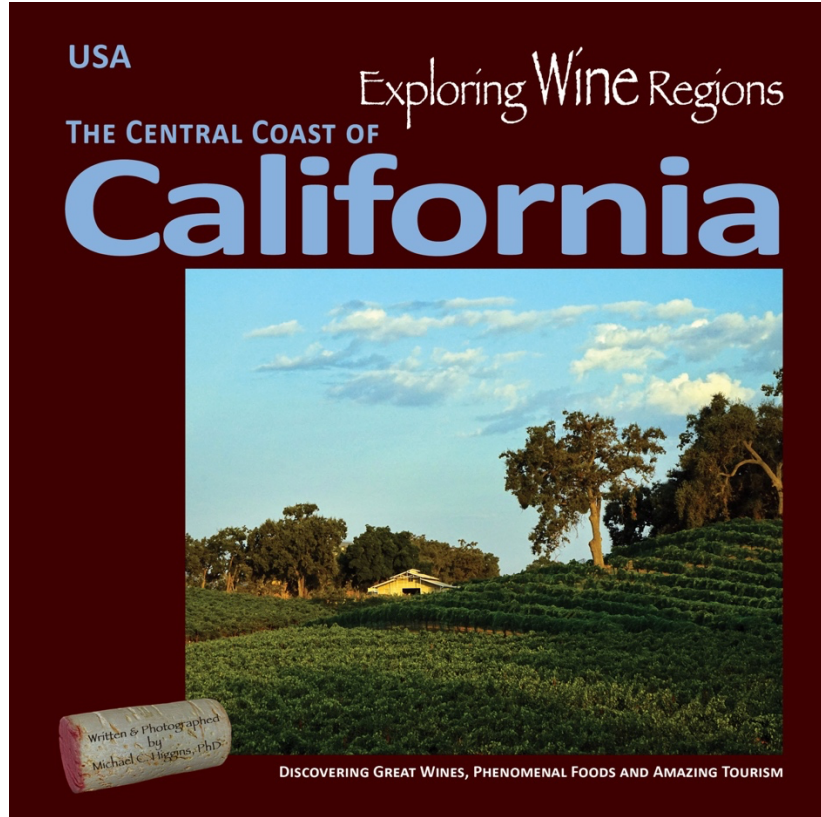
Santa Barbara Independent

Food & Drink > Drink

Your Next Central Coast Wine Tour Book

Santa Barbara County Stars in the Latest Exploring Wine Regions Edition by Michael Higgins

By Matt Kettmann





From 'The Central Coast of California: Discovering Great Wines, Phenomenal Foods and Amazing Tourism' by Michael Higgins | Credit: Courtesy

Given the confluence of beautiful landscapes, colorful characters, and wines that compete globally in quality while overdelivering in affordability, you really can't say enough about the Central Coast these days.

When photographer, magazine publisher, and airplane pilot Michael Higgins realized this, the lifelong Southern Californian decided to showcase this area in the latest edition of his *Exploring Wine Regions* series, which previously touched on Bordeaux and Argentina. Just released in October, the 431-page, full-color *The Central Coast of California: Discovering Great Wines, Phenomenal Foods and Amazing Tourism* is a personal tour through the tasting rooms, restaurants, and hotels of Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties.

“Throughout my life, I’ve always mixed art and business in every endeavor,” said Higgins, who’s proud of having traveled to 33 countries so far. “I am someone who loves trying and doing everything, and I try to engage in as many activities as I can at home as well as when I’m traveling.”

He tells us more about the book below.



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How did aviation lead into wine? In becoming a pilot and aircraft owner, I developed *Flying Adventures* magazine to fill a missing need for this market who seeks destinations to fly to versus the hardware magazines common in aviation. My second editor-in-chief did not drink, so I needed to cover the wine experiences for the magazine. The lifestyle of an aircraft owner is very much about the food and wine experiences, so every issue of the magazine needed to cover this topic. When I moved on from the magazine business, it was very easy to create and love a wine book series.

How did the Central Coast show up on your wine radar? I have been traveling to the Central Coast like you for at least the last 25 years. I love the wine regions here. Initially, though, I thought about creating a California *Exploring Wine Regions* book. Then I refined this thinking that the Central Coast really needs people to discover the wine regions here. With the huge success of Napa, as well as Sonoma, the Central Coast is many times hidden in their shadow when in fact, the Central Coast produces excellent wines, has great restaurants, and amazing tourism. I want this book to bring to life the Central Coast as it deserves.

How does the Central Coast stack up to the other regions you've covered? What's great about this little area of the Central Coast is that it has terroir conducive for growing all types of grapes. So, whatever wines people love, there are places to go in the Central Coast to make them very happy. Everything can be found in the Central Coast. People do not need to go elsewhere in California or the world to find wines they love.

How should readers use your book? The books make the perfect gift. Sometimes you don't know what wine to get someone, while the book offers wine topics to appease everybody. And for its low price, it really makes a very impressive gift. And it is an insider's travel guide. People can use this book to go have amazing experiences in the wine regions. It helps them know how to get what they want and gives them the insider scoop to special things they can do.



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What's next? The next books are Mexico and Greece. *Exploring Wine Regions: Mexico* will be published next year and will include Valle de Guadalupe, Guanajuato, and Querétaro wine regions. It will be a very exciting book that will open people's eyes to Mexicans making excellent wines, and to include beautiful tourism and awesome cuisine.

See ExploringWineRegions.com.

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