In the afternoons, as the inland California sun beats down on the wide, fertile floor of Napa Valley, guests of Meadowood resort meander to the main house to sample local varietals. But I'm even more interested in the white bowl of smooth, speckled plums set on the reception desk. The whimsical plum and apricot hybrid ranks as my favorite fruit. Hands down. And now these hands are sticky with sweet juice. I ask where the fruit is grown.

"Frog Hollow Farm in Brentwood," a young staffer says with a ready smile. I know the name. I've seen its farmstands at the San Francisco Ferry Building and at the farmers market in the Castro. I linger long enough to snap another photo: I kind of love how the name doesn't feel quite real and always looks like it's misspelled. Other hotels may offer a bowl of green apples; in Napa, you have organic stone fruit so good it makes you feel like you're getting away with something.

Supporting local producers is Napa's religious, and Meadowood is especially devout on this point. The truffles on the pillow are from the family-run Woodhouse Chocolate in St. Helena; the locally crafted artisanal English muffins at breakfast are startlingly good. (So good, in fact, that when I visit Model Bakery, also in St. Helena, to buy some to take home with me, the proprietress swiftly informs me that they sell out quickly—and that they were featured on a Food Network show called The Best Thing I Ever Ate, on which Michael Chiarello, the owner/chef of Bottega, the acclaimed Yountville restaurant, praises them lavishly.)

Meadowood, which rests on 250 of St. Helena's coveted acres, enjoys a kind of reverence reserved for few other places in the Valley (or perhaps just one: Auberge du Soleil). The big news is the opening of the Howard Backen–designed spa. Built around a central courtyard, it's a discreet spot...
Napa Vino Voyages

Somerset Wine Co

Two scenic valleys—the 660-acre Priest Ranch and the 955-acre Lynch Ranch combine to make Somerset a must-see and must-taste property for its two brands Priest Valley and Somerset—the latter is the winery’s estate-grown, limited-production line. Among Priest Ranch’s finest bottles are the cabernet sauvignon ($48), petite sirah ($40), zinfandel ($40) and sauvignon blanc ($36), but perhaps its biggest surprise is the melon-knockout 2013 Grenache Blanc. Kudos to winemaker Craig Beck: Somerset Wine Co also boasts a balanced and resonant 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon ($120), somerstonwineco.com

Frank Family Vineyards

With over 380 acres of the finest vineyard land in Napa Valley, Frank Family Vineyards, founded in Calistoga in 1992, has become a favorite of lovers of premium Napa Valley cabernet sauvignon and chardonnay. The halls are bedecked with photos of celebrities and politics of all stripes posing with owner Rich Frank. Winemaker Todd Graff’s nationally available Napa Valley wines include chardonnay ($35), cabernet sauvignon ($50), zinfandel ($37) and pinot noir ($35), while Reserve wines are available locally: Winston Hill red wine ($150), Patriarch Cabernet Sauvignon ($225), Rutherford Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon ($85) and Reserve Sangiovese ($65), frankfamilyvineyards.com

Cain Vineyard & Winery

This St. Helena property, which clings to a spectacular bow overlooking the Napa Valley from the crest of the Spring Mountain District, varies in elevation from 1,400 to 2,100 feet, and its owners are passionate about the production of three cabernet blends: Cain Five, Cain Cuvee and Cain Concept. Winemaker Christopher Howell, who studied viticulture and enology at the National Superior School of Agronomy in Montpellier, France, is intellectual about wine yet has an unassuming manner: a winning combination. For the past 20 years, he has been discovering the terroirs of the Napa Valley and of Cain’s mountain vineyard. Prior to that, he honed his craft at Martin Pinot, Peter Michael and Mouton Rothschild. Among his creations are the 2010 Cain Five Cabernet Sauvignon ($125) and the NVII Cain Cuvee ($36), cainfive.com

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with 14,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor space. Yet with all of its outstanding amenities, Meadowood is a low-key place with a rustic, luxurious charm. It offers 85 rooms in 16 room categories, with the rooms and suites tucked into the hillside. The pitched-roof structures are set among snaking trails— trails that give me a bit of a workout as I climb the leafy hillside that rises up sharply from the sun-splashed croquet lawn and lap pool. Where you stay depends on your preferences among small differences, but I’m quite happy with my stone fireplace, romantic raffia and windows you can actually open. I could write an ode to the underrated amenity of fresh air in a hotel room: Few places besides California, with its cool jasmine and eucalyptus nights, offer it up so easily. Clear valley air; all the better to swirl into a Riedel glass of something local. From $1,125 per night, meadowood.com

SIP & SPLASH From top: The vineyards at nearby Somerset Wine Co produce award-winning wines, including a sleeper-hit grenache blanc variant; in addition to a new spa, Meadowood features ample outdoor spaces to enjoy, including sun-splashed terraces and a pool area.