

Historic Healdsburg slaughterhouse slated for winery's new tasting room

After 15 years in downtown Healdsburg, Cartograph Wines is relocating to a historic, former slaughterhouse in Dry Creek Valley.



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Cartograph winery owners Serena Lourie and Alan Baker are remodeling a former slaughterhouse and studio for an artist, who left a giant pink poodle sculpture in their future tasting room Wednesday, July 9, 2025 in north Healdsburg. (John Burgess / Press Democrat)



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A former slaughterhouse wasn't the first location that came to mind when Alan Baker and Serena Lourie envisioned their new tasting room.

As the owners of [Cartograph Wines](#), the couple had spent nearly a decade searching for the ideal property to replace their modest tasting room in downtown Healdsburg.

So when they learned a highly unique property in Dry Creek Valley had come up for sale, their interest was piqued.

A slaughterhouse and meat processing facility believed to date back to the 1920s, the industrial building on Chiquita Road most recently served as an art space owned by Peter and [Pat Lenz](#).

The Lenzes, who purchased the 6-acre property from Van Der Boon Meat Company in 1997, operated Duchamp Winery on site before transforming the main building into an art studio, gallery and performance venue called SlaughterhouseSpace.

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Fortunately for Cartograph's owners, the Lenzes understood the value of preserving the former abattoir's historic — and quirky — details.

"The building has 30-foot ceilings and in the rafters you can see the original mechanical gears used for moving livestock through the space," said Baker, Cartograph's winemaker. "It also has these concrete walls, huge handcrafted metal doors with big old latches — and there are plenty of meat hooks hanging around. We think it's the coolest, funkiest environment."

A solid beginning

Founded by Baker and Lourie in 2008, Cartograph Wines has gained a loyal following for its ethereal Pinot Noirs and Alsatian-style whites, which total about 1,500 cases per year.

In 2010, the couple opened their first tasting room on Healdsburg Avenue in downtown Healdsburg, later relocating to Center Street in 2013.

Throughout their tenure downtown, they've treasured the community atmosphere and camaraderie of their neighbors. But their tasting room's small size has felt limiting.

"When we first opened, it was a great because it gave us a brick-and-mortar presence in the community," said Lourie, who handles the business side of the brand. "But after a while, we really wanted more space to stretch out. We'd kept our eyes open for a larger place we could really make our own."

A sea of competition

With tasting room visitation down across Sonoma County, Baker acknowledges Cartograph has not been immune to the dip in foot traffic in downtown Healdsburg, where around two dozen tasting rooms vie for attention.

According to Silicon Valley Bank's 2025 Direct-to-Consumer Report, high tasting fees, shifting consumer preferences, economic pressures and travel patterns are among the key factors responsible for the decline.

In Healdsburg, the downturn has forced several downtown tasting rooms to close or relocate in recent years, including Thumbprint Cellars, Williamson Wines, Banshee Wines, the Alpha Omega Wine Collective, The Society: Healdsburg and Montagne Russe. (Cohn Cellars is slated to relocate soon.)

"Competing for limited traffic in an area with high rents and not enough space to differentiate ourselves has been difficult," said Baker. "Instead of creating something gimmicky to attract customers, we really want to create a beautiful new place that gives them a reason to return."

A new chapter

In August 2023, Baker and Lourie purchased the Chiquita Road property, where the former slaughterhouse boasts 6,000 square feet of possibility.

An expansive outdoor space will allow them to have the kinetic sculpture garden they’ve always dreamed about, and there’s plenty of room for wine tasting, rotating art exhibits and community events.

Recently, they began “ambitious” renovations on the main building, which included rehousing the colonies of honeybees that moved into the walls while it sat vacant. A brand-new roof, insulation, heating/cooling system and new wraparound deck are next on the list.

“We love the shape of the building and interior concrete walls, so that will largely stay the same,” said Baker. “We’re also going to keep some of the art pieces Peter and Pat put in place — including the 7-foot pink poodle named F.I.F.I.”

On Aug. 16, Cartograph Wines will close its downtown Healdsburg tasting room.

While the Chiquita property is undergoing construction, wine tasting will be available for wine club members starting Sept. 2. The new tasting room is expected to open to the public either late spring or early summer 2026.

“We’re a little sad to leave our community of shopkeepers and hospitality folks in downtown Healdsburg,” said Baker. “The health and prosperity of downtown is key to all of western Sonoma County. So we’re going to work really hard to stay involved and offer support however we can.”

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