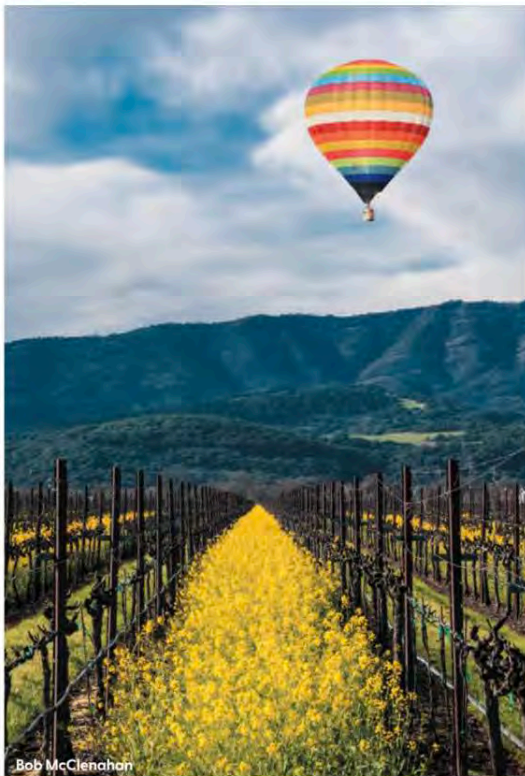




MUSTARD

Napa Valley's Best Kept Secret



Bob McClenahan

There is a beautiful little secret about Napa Valley, one to which many a local resident has been privy for decades. One that most every local resident will share with a sense of joy and ease and wonder. Welcoming and warm as they are, you won't need to wait on befriending a Napa Valley resident to discover this secret because every year, like clockwork, this pretty little secret springs to life and announces itself in a flourish of dazzling yellow for all the world to see, as if to say, "Well, hello there. I know I've kept you guessing but I know you're glad I'm here."

The secret, you know, is mustard flower. And, if Napa Valley is known far and wide for its iconic world-class wines, the mustard flower that covers the vineyard rows while the vines are sleeping through winter is certainly iconic in its own right. Peeking through the earth just at the tipping point of spring, the mustard flower bloom truly manifests into a vivid bright carpet of yellow petals canvassing the vineyards.

Trust us, you will want to see this and, you will quickly determine that no two seasons in Napa Valley are the same and yet they are ever incredible. Sure, there is magic in the summer with fabulous wines flowing freely and music

Look for activities at
visitnapavalley.com/events/wild-mustard-season
or napavalleymustardcelebration.com

This hidden gem should be added to your list of things to discover about Napa Valley.

festivals galore in Napa Valley, and yes, yes the autumn brings the much anticipated harvest and that next incredible vintage of Napa Valley blends. But, just as the tail-end of winter gives way to spring, another kind of magic happens.

You will be inspired. The residents of Napa Valley are and continue to be year after year. Marking and commemorating the annual mustard bloom, a small and growing group of artists and artisans coalesced to share with everyone how this spectacular little flower has inspired them.

Offering everything from beautiful paintings (peep the cover of this issue) to spectacular photography to sculptures to skincare products, the makers and craftsmen in Napa Valley make it point to share their wares and their wonder during the growing Mustard Celebration season. This evolving celebration, the brainchild of longtime local artist, Jessel Miller, has begun to grow (no pun intended) in momentum. Every year, for the last many, Miller has faithfully wrangled more folks to join in the fun, with businesses in all five towns of Napa Valley – Calistoga, St. Helena, Yountville, the City of Napa, and American Canyon – offering special activities, discounts, tastings, and gift items. Try out a guided acrylic painting class inspired by mustard blooms or perhaps sample wines with a pairing of light bites made with a flare of gourmet of mustard, walk through the various towns and experience the many galleries throughout Napa Valley, or commemorate the mustard season via a self-guided road trip.

But, be sure to catch this beautiful cover crop before its ephemeral display passes. View the mustard fields in full bloom, usually starting sometime in late February and lasting through March. It really is quite the spectacle. If this best kept secret wasn't enough, here's another insider's tip to add to your arsenal. Mustard Season is one of the best times to visit Napa Valley. With generally fewer people in the region, late January through March is the ideal time to explore the plethora of wineries in Napa Valley, when the pace is even slower than usual, allowing you to spend a little extra time at your favorite wineries, restaurants, and spas.

If your Instagram feed needs an infusion of wow, there is no shortage of photo-worthy spots featuring mustard flower in the vineyards. Come sip and sample your Cabernet Sauvignon, meander to edge of the vineyard with your wine in hand, and capture your memory-making moments. Mustard season in Napa Valley, the best kept secret you've just uncovered.

Sign up for our email newsletter at WineCountryThisMonth.com

Download this map to find the best mustard views, visitnapavalley.com/events/wild-mustard-season



Poster Art

This beautiful painting, by Napa Valley artist, Michael Fitzpatrick, is up for silent auction. The auction ends March 31, 2024. More details and bidding information may be found online at napavalleymustardcelebration.com.