

A Symphony for All Senses

TAKING IN THE
SIGHTS, SOUNDS,
AND TASTES OF
PASO ROBLES'
**ALLEGRETTO
VINEYARD RESORT**

by Emma Roberts

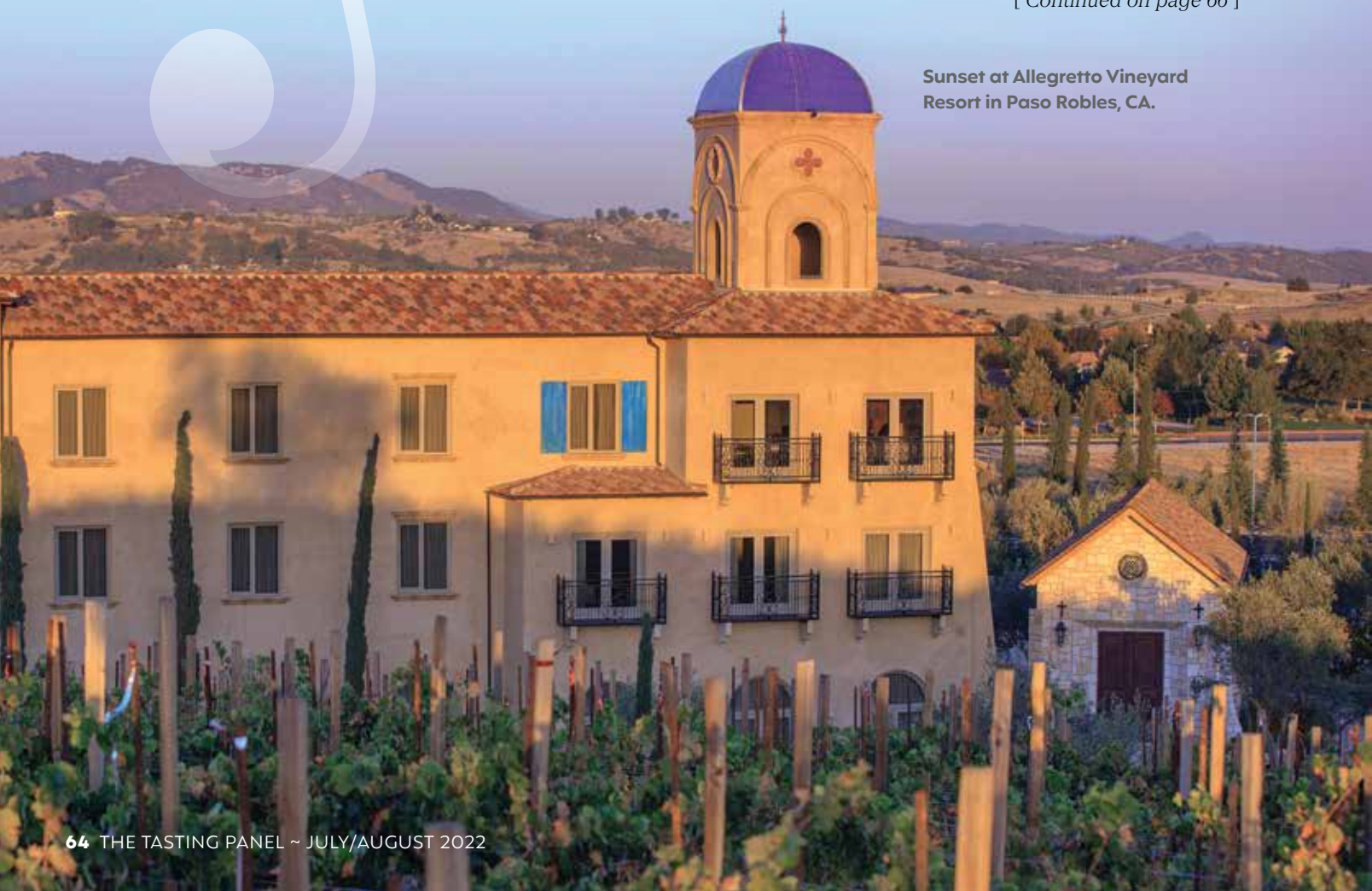
Before spending a few days at Allegretto Vineyard Resort in beautiful Paso Robles, I imagined it to be this majestic property where I could frolic through the vineyards, happily sipping wine.

The reality was exactly that—multiplied by 100. The range of experiences Allegretto offers is reminiscent of Beethoven's Symphony No. 7: ambient and tranquil at times, joyful and playful at others. After a family tragedy in 2006, Allegretto's proprietor, fourth-generation hotelier Douglas Ayres, developed a new appreciation for spirituality. In mindfulness he found joy and was inspired to share it with others. The vineyard was planted in 2011–2012, and after construction on the resort broke ground in 2013, it opened its doors in 2015.

Visits to the Hollywood Bowl with his mother stirred a passion for music deep within Ayres, who worked in the recording industry as a sound engineer; observing elements from the violins painted on the elevator doors to the soloists performing in the lobby, one cannot help but feel a sense of peace stemming from the musical motif. Meanwhile, other forms of art and artifacts are thoughtfully placed throughout the property. For instance, behind the entrance is a cross-section of a fallen sequoia tree whose rings show a timeline from the building of the Great Wall of China through to World War II. One of Ayres' favorite locations on the property is a "sonic labyrinth" filled with wind instruments activated by motion sensors, providing guests a tranquil space to sit and listen. One of my

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Sunset at Allegretto Vineyard
Resort in Paso Robles, CA.





Hotelier Douglas Ayres speaks with author Emma Roberts.

own was the Abbey, which I visited early in the morning. The small chapel's decor is thoughtfully curated from the Gothic windows to the 66 stars on the ceiling representing the 66 books of the Bible. No wonder art tours are popular among guests, as are vineyard walks, weekend yoga classes, and spa services. But no visit is complete without meeting George, the alpaca whose grazing helps maintain both the vineyards and the resort grounds.


A rendezvous in the tasting room on the property is also a must. I tried the Allegretto Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon and found it elegant: It had a chocolate creaminess with a touch of violets and subtle tannins. Of course the wines can also be sampled in the resort restaurant, Cello Ristorante + Bar, which plays into the aforementioned musical motif in ways beyond its name: Viewed from above, it's shaped like the instrument.

Resort food and beverage director Thomas Humphrey explained to me that the Tuscan-inspired Mediterranean menu is focused on local, sustainable products. Popular items include the prime rib, filet

mignon, chicken carbonara, cornmeal-crusted calamari, and tasteful salads. Food service extends to the tasting room, the pool area, and the courtyard in warmer seasons, when there's live entertainment (and, of course, to the guest rooms themselves). While changing seasonally, the bar program also supports many local producers: I was delighted to see vodka from Paso's own Tin City Distillery.

Humphrey believes in developing close relationships with neighbors. "[It's] the key to success for an operation like ours," he said. "We've really embraced the local community, providing them with a resort where they can come in and grab a cocktail or some charcuterie while listening to music in the courtyard on a beautiful summer night."

From sampling fabulous wines and petting alpacas to walking the labyrinth at midnight and gazing at the pristine stained-glass windows of the Abbey, Allegretto stole my heart every step of the way—or every note of the symphony, to continue the metaphor. I can hardly wait for a return visit.

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Artworks of all kinds can be found throughout the property.