



### AVANT TAPAS AND WINE

Open Monday, Thursday, and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

(with live music from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.)

Friday and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

(with live music from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.)

35 Industrial Way in Buellton, just off Highway 101

(805) 686-4742 | [www.avantwines.com](http://www.avantwines.com)

# I VANT AVANT!

BY MICHAEL CERVIN

The Santa Ynez Valley is chalk full of wine tasting rooms, but what's always been lacking has been a spot with tons of hard-to-find wines to sample, while also being an excellent restaurant. Well, that's now changed. Avant Tapas and Wine is everything Santa Barbara food and wine under one roof.

It's fitting that Avant is not located in some fancy building, but rather at the end of a cul-de-sac in a business park overlooking the Santa Ynez Mountains. Part restaurant, part wine tasting room and part winemaking collaborative, it's the ideal spot for a full meal, a light snack, a taste of wine or a bottle to share. "We offer 52 wines and guests can choose a taste, a half glass or a full glass," says Joe Padilla, proprietor. Many of the wines are rotated weekly so there's always something new and nearly 90 percent of all the wines served in Avant are made in the Terravant Wine Company, a custom crush facility, which you can see from the second story restaurant. In fact, Avant represents the only tasting room opportunity for many boutique wines which don't have tasting rooms. Avant promotes a "local Centric" attitude meaning that all wines you sample are from the Central Coast.

"We offer tours of the facility, winemakers visits, lots of music nights and other special events," says Padilla, a native Californian with more than 20 years of experience in both the wine and hospitality industries. But wine without food is like a day without sunshine. Avant's classically trained culinary chef, Brooke Stockwell, who is a native of Santa Barbara, crafts new menu items each week (along with die-hard favorites like the Yuppie Crack which is applewood smoked bacon wrapped figs and goat cheese drizzled with balsamic reduction) using locally grown and produced foods that pair with the wines from Avant's collection. "The major point of differentiation about us is that we have a full restaurant for guests to enjoy while they are wine tasting. We also offer two very unique wine clubs," Padilla says.

Being a wine producing facility with two dozen wineries sharing the space, winemaking happens year round but the most action can be seen September through October during crush and there are a few different options to see it all first hand. Complimentary tours are offered daily at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. and special Barrel Tasting tours are offered for a \$20 per person though reservations are required since you're able to sample wines not yet bottled, and, who knows, you might run into a winemaker on the production floor.

Running every other Saturday now through October 27th, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. is a Meet the Winemakers night where you can sample a flight of up to five wines from one Central Coast winemaker. The cost is just \$10 per person and any of their wines you purchase that night are 20% off. Also on October 27th will be Avant's Harvest Dinner which celebrates another concluded growing season. It will be held in the barrel warehouse and served by candle light. Check the website as more details become available. Don't dare miss Avant when you visit Santa Barbara wine country.