

The Farm at Carter Hill in Marlborough featured in:



7 Wineries and Farms That Will Let You Camp on Their Grounds

At these lesser-known locations, camping comes with wine tastings, farm animals, and more.

By Sarah Kuta

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I opened my eyes and peeked out the window of our Ford Transit camper van just in time to see the sun rising above the rows of grapevines, grabbing my phone to snap a photo before the light changed.

My partner and I had spent the night under the stars at Ponderosa Valley Vineyard & Winery on the outskirts of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Though we love all kinds of [camping](#), we wanted to stay away from the huge crowds at traditional campgrounds and RV resorts during the [coronavirus pandemic](#). At the winery, it was just the two of us, plus the owner's three huge friendly dogs.

We were able to have the nearly private experience because campsites are popping up in new places these days, thanks to platforms like [Hipcamp](#) and [Harvest Hosts](#), which allow landowners to rent out their land to campers for a nightly rate or through an annual membership fee.

For these small businesses, like wineries, farms, distilleries, and breweries—many of which [have had to modify their offerings lately](#)—it's a chance to bring in some extra income. In recent months, Harvest Hosts has added more than 100 new locations where self-contained RVers can reserve stays, all included with their \$80 annual membership fee (you'll also need to pay the fee to browse Harvest Hosts' listings). Additionally, campers are expected to spend at least \$20 per night at the host's business and limit their stay at any particular location to one night unless they get permission from their host to stay longer.

Hipcamp, which operates more like [Airbnb](#), is now helping wineries, farms, and other places with unused outdoor space earn money through nightly camping fees. "We're sending three times as much money to our hosts right now as we were this time last year," says Alyssa Ravasio, founder and CEO of Hipcamp. "They're [also] giving people that access to fresh air, fresh water, open space to really relax and find healing, which is really meaningful."

It's a win-win for campers and small businesses. Campers get a private (and legal) place to sleep, plus the opportunity to explore local businesses they may have otherwise overlooked. Hosts get an income boost from nightly camping fees and purchases that campers make while visiting, as well as the added long-term benefit of word-of-mouth referrals.

Because it is such a different experience than say, a state park, this may also draw a new set of campers. Taking a walk in a vineyard while enjoying a bottle of wine, getting close to some adorable farm animals, and watching the sunset without another soul in sight are perks most campers don't get.

Forestville Vines, River Falls, Wisconsin

Hickman Family Vineyards, Bangor, California

► [The Farm at Carter Hill, Marlborough, Connecticut](#) ***Book through: Harvest Hosts***

Mitch and Hazel Lichatz have created a dreamy country paradise at the Farm at Carter Hill, a historic property in central Connecticut. For now, it's open to RV campers only, but the couple is in the final stages of creating a tent campground, too. While camping at the farm, you can interact with ducks, chickens, sheep, peacocks, as well as a particularly spunky goat named Jethrow. On-site, you'll find a taproom and beer garden, an ice cream shop, a restaurant, and a bed and breakfast. Restrooms and picnic tables are available, and the campsites are dog-friendly. www.thefarmatcarterhill.com

4R Ranch Vineyards & Winery, Muenster, Texas

The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey, Cañon City, Colorado

Four Lanterns Winery, Paso Robles, California

Southern Grace Lavender Farm, Southport, Florida