ARIZONA WINE COUNTRY & AN AFTERNOON AT THE LAKE

Sierra Vista Arizona DAY TRIP
TOTAL TIME: 6 HOURS

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast in Sierra Vista, then pack a cooler for a late lunch at Parker Canyon Lake. Be sure to pick up a bottle of wine along the way to enjoy as the Arizona sunsets over the Huachucas.

WINERIES: Head north on Hwy 90 to Hwy 82, turn left (west), and enjoy mountain pass views as you approach Upper Elgin Road. Make a stop at Rune Wines [Friday - Sunday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM, (520) 338-8823] just 1.1 miles past the Upper Elgin Road intersection. Sample the reds and whites from one of the region’s newest wineries. Go back (east) to Upper Elgin Road, turn right (south), and head toward the small village of Elgin. Continue south on Elgin Canelo Road to reach Sonoita Vineyards [daily except holidays, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM, (520) 455-5893], the oldest commercial vineyard in Arizona. Sample their award-winning wines, or plan your trip to coincide with one the vineyard’s events like the spring Blessing of the Vineyards or HarvestFest, with barefoot grape-stomping and horse-drawn vineyard tours. Continue south on Elgin Canelo Road to the Hwy 83 junction, turn right (west, 2.2 miles) to reach Lightning Ridge Cellars [Friday - Sunday, 11:00 AM - 4:00 PM, (520) 455-5383]. Here you can sample classic Italian varietals grown in Arizona’s clay soils under warm summer sun. Allow 3 hours.

PARKER CANYON LAKE: From Lightning Ridge, head back the way you came and continue south on Hwy 83 to reach Parker Canyon Lake, nestled in the Canelo Hills east of the Huachuca Mountains. This 21-mile drive will take you from wine country’s rolling hills to the hardy western foothills of the sky islands. Surrounded by mature trees and bathed in Arizona’s sunshine, 125-acre Parker Canyon Lake offers picnicking, hiking, boating, and even fishing for anglers. Boat rentals and snacks are available at the marina. Allow 3 hours or more.

You’ll find more wineries in the Elgin/Sonoita American Viticultural Area (AVA), as well as in the Willcox AVA, in the Sierra Vista Adventure Guide.