

Adobes in North San Luis Obispo County

At Clayhouse Wines, we recognize that great wines start in the vineyard, and, more specifically, in the soil. Grape and wine flavors develop in a complex interaction between climate, soil, water, and numerous other variables. It's the blending of those parts that makes a consistently great wine.

Similarly, early California settlers found an abundant local building material that they could make and blend, for free, right next to their construction sites. Adobe bricks were simple to produce, and with a bit of trial and error to come up with the right blend of materials, they lasted a long time and sheltered settlers and animals alike.

Choosing a building site for an adobe structure was almost as important as making the bricks. Early settlers preferred a rise, or mound that drained well. Water could flood a building constructed in a low spot. Builders used plaster made of lime mixed with sand to cover the outside walls of an adobe and keep the rain at bay.

Adobe bricks are made by blending soil (adobe clay) with sand, straw and water. The blended mud is put into forms and left to dry and harden in the sun, and finally stacked to make walls.

Each component plays an important role in the finished brick. In addition to the soil itself, straw acted as a binder, like steel rebar, to hold the bricks together. Finally, sand provided material for the adobe clay to "stick" to; the sand made the adobe brick stronger than the mud itself. Too much sand made the bricks crumble and fall apart, so brick-makers always had to make a

few test bricks to ensure they'd end up with the correct ratios of sand, straw and mud.

Once the adobe was ready and the forms were filled, it took about a month for the new bricks to harden in the sun. California's long, dry summers aided adobe brick makers.

Even a small adobe structure requires many bricks. A one-room building could use as many as 5,000. Some of the original California missions contained as many as 36,000.

Adobes Near Paso Robles

Many of California's missions have been restored and are open to visitors. But like most of the adobe structures built in the 18th and 19th centuries, many missions have fallen into disrepair or disappeared completely. Near Paso Robles, some beautifully restored adobes can still be visited. Groups like the Friends of the Adobes and other local historical societies have played a big role in making sure our early heritage is preserved.

The Friends of the Adobes was formed in 1968 to promote restoration and maintenance of adobes, specifically to restore and preserve the Rios-Caledonia Adobe in San Miguel (State Historical Landmark No. 936). They continue to maintain the building, and they operate the museum and gift shop on site. Additionally, they care for the Estrella Adobe Church (State Historical Landmark No. 542), just northeast of Paso Robles. The church is used for weddings and services throughout the year.

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Brought to you by Clayhouse Wines
849 13th Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446
(805) 749-0447

Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa: California's 5th Mission

Dedicated to St. Louis, Bishop of Tolosa in 1772. The first mission to use tiles extensively on the roof due to repeated attacks by Indians who used flaming arrows to ignite the original thatched roof. The mission was restored in the 1930s.

782 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 543-6850

Dallidet Adobe, San Luis Obispo

The home of Pierre Hypolite Dallidet, a native of France, who settled in San Luis Obispo and built his home in 1853. His son, Paul Dallidet, gave it to the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society in 1953. Open every second Sunday, 1:00-4:00pm.

1185 Pacific St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 543-6762

Red Cedar Vineyard Adobe (Private property)

Restored two-story adobe off State Highway 46 West near Shandon, east of Paso Robles. The property is managed by Clayhouse Wines and can be visited as part of Clayhouse vineyard tour (small fee).

To visit, contact: Clayhouse Wines
849 13th Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805) 749-0447

Estrella Adobe Church, Paso Robles

Built in 1878, it was the first Protestant church constructed in northern San Luis Obispo County. It fell into ruin, but was restored by the History and Landmarks Committee of the Paso Robles Women's Club and rededicated in 1952. Located on Airport Road, 2.5 mi North of Hwy 46.

Contact: Friends of the Adobes,
P.O. Box 326, San Miguel, CA 93451 (805) 467-3357

Rios-Caledonia Adobe, San Miguel

Located on the original San Miguel Mission property and first constructed in 1835 by Mr. Rios with Indian labor. Restored by the Friends of the Adobes, it was formerly rededicated in 1972. Open 11:00am-4:00pm, Friday through Sunday. 700 Mission Street, San Miguel, CA

Contact: Friends of the Adobes,
P.O. Box 326, San Miguel, CA 93451 (805) 467-3357

Mission San Miguel: California's 16th Mission

Founded in 1797, the lands were purchased in 1846 by Mr. Dorries and Mr. Reed from Mexican Governor Pio Pico. Original Native American murals are preserved in the church.

801 Mission St., San Miguel, CA 93451 (805) 467-3256

Mission San Antonio de Padua: California's 3rd Mission

Located 45 miles north of Paso Robles in the San Antonio Valley. Dedicated in 1771 by Father Serra. (Note: the mission is located on the Fort Hunter-Legget Army base and visitors must show identification, vehicle registration and proof of insurance at the main gate in order to visit.)

Fort Hunter Liggett Mission Creek Rd., Jolon, CA 93928
(831) 385-4478

Other Adobes in the County (not listed)

Santa Margarita de Cortona (Private property: not open to the public)

This was a sub-mission of Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa. It was established around 1787 and some of the original walls still stand, protected by a ranch barn. The asistencia sits on private land and is not available for public viewing.

Ruins of the Dutton Hotel

Old nucleus of the town of Jolon, which disappeared after the railroad bypassed the town on the way to San Miguel in 1886. Placed on the National Register of Historic places in 1976. Ruins are now covered by a roof.

Lockwood-Jolon Road, County Route 18

