

# Sunrise Ranch Experiences

*At Sunrise Ranch, we also offer some amazing options to add to your experiences.*



## GRAPES & GAMES

CORPORATE AND PRIVATE EVENTS

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### **WHAT TO EXPECT**

*20-50 guests: \$200 per guest*

*50-150 guests: \$150 per guest*

*150 +: \$110 per guest*

This fun team-building event involves no dress code, other than bare feet and casual attire. Divided into teams, guests must christen their group with a clever name, devise a witty cheer, each team donning different colored kerchiefs. Creativity points are awarded at the staff's discretion before each team decides who will stomp or swab and the relay begins. Merriment ensues, the whole exercise lasting about 90 minutes and there's still plenty of time to enjoy a glass or two of wine. The team-focused competition also highlights individual effort. Each participant is encouraged to experience the sensuality of the grapes squishing between your toes while fellow team members push the grapes through the filter and into the one-gallon jugs. The team with the most juice wins custom medals and wine awards, while individuals showing unique talent receive prizes as well. Join the elite ranks of those lucky individuals who have left the wine country with this unforgettable "GRAPE EXPERIENCE".

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### **ABOUT THE OWNER**

When Lucille Ball tucked her skirt up into her belt and climbed into a barrel of grapes in 1956, she set the American perception of Italian winemaking back a good century. She also inadvertently jump-started a grape-crushing craze among Americans that largely hasn't abated. Machines were already crushing fine Italian grapes in 1956, but the concept of a "team-building exercise" was yet undiscovered. Italian wine's reputation eventually recovered from Lucy's pizza-sized feet and the tumble they took in the vat, but it has evidently been the diligence of corporate America that's kept grape stomping alive and well, particularly in Northern California Wine Country.

Not that Sally Mertes-Stone intended for it to be a career. It just happened that way. The owner of the Grapes & Games event company, based in Sonoma, Mertes-Stone was a flight attendant with a degree in physical education when her husband's father moved his company to town in 1979. The wine industry was just beginning to bud and Mertes-Stone had a savvy girlfriend helping to invent the winery tour business. Could Sally help? Well, she could promote the wineries by hosting "Wine Country Olympics" that included events such as cork tossing and obstacle courses with filled wine carafes. Then, one fine September day when she was at the Sonoma Vintage Festival's famous grape stomp, she had an epiphany. She could lead paying customers into barrels of grapes for fun! A trim, vivacious woman of a certain age, Mertes-Stone now puts on more than 40 grape stomps all over the Wine Country and beyond each year, lugging barrels, prizes and grapes with her as she goes.

Mertes-Stone explains, "The way we do it is a little bit like Lucy, and a lot more like controlled chaos. You can do it in nice clothes and go right to dinner. It's not as messy as most people think." In fact, the juice of the grapes is always clear, even using a red grape. In the winter, she uses Chilean table grapes; during harvest time she takes unwanted fruit from an overabundant harvest or uses her own Cabernet Franc from her small vineyard. No one will be making wine from her grape stomp grapes—or, really, from anyone's grape stomp (unless you're in Europe where they still stomp grapes during harvest time. It's just a bit of innocent fun!

*Prices are subject to 7.75% tax and 23% service charge.*



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