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Discover These Five Hidden Treasures in Carson Valley, Nevada

*Explore a Northern Nevada Destination Deserving of its Own Superlatives
in this Round-Up of Highly Rated Recs*

CARSON VALLEY, Nev. (Sept. 28, 2023) – Visitors to the scenic and spectacular Carson Valley, Nevada, routinely rave about finding unexpected treasure while exploring the diverse destination – whether it’s a jaw-droppingly memorable meal, an out-of-the-blue adventure, or a secret spot just dripping with delicious Old West history. Here is a quintet of quaint and memorable destinations below, all worthy of discovery for their unique contributions to the northern Nevada region.



Daniel's Fine Dining in Genoa, Nevada

1. Soaking the Day Away: David Wally's Hot Springs

Mark Twain was a visionary indeed, but few know that he practically invented the Yelp 5-star review. Here's evidence, in his own words, about the very springs on the very grounds of [David Wally's Resort and Spa](#):

“These springs, without a doubt, have no equal on this coast for the cure of rheumatism and all afflictions that necessitate me visiting them. I now leave without crutch or cane, entirely well, not only relieved from pain but gained in spirit.”

—Mark Twain, 1887

David Wally's Resort and Spa in Genoa features legendary vistas, luxurious mineral baths, and a [fascinating history](#). And visitors can take the experience up a notch with a fine-dining experience at the resort's [1862 Restaurant and Saloon](#). Cozy up by the fireplace, or lounge outside around the fire pit while soaking in the views.

[Book a hot spring adventure](#) to see what Mark Twain was raving about — no FOMO necessary!

2. Weird and Wacky Edition: Jacobsen's Rusty Rancho

It's not often that one is welcomed to a region by a 16-foot metal dragon sentinel, but such is the greeting (a non-fire-breathing one, we might add) at the entrance of this metalworking mecca in the heart of Gardnerville.

Locals and tourists alike routinely stop for selfies next to the appropriately named Gardnerville Dragon who invites guests inside [Jacobsen's Rusty Rancho](#). But don't stop there — if the gates are open, enter a perfectly peculiar forest of metal sculptures spreading far and wide across a panoramic pasture. Treat it like a “Where's Waldo” scavenger hunt, but instead of searching for a stocking-capped boy wearing stripes, search for cleverly repurposed ranching materials made into a variety of unexpected finds. There's a pink flying pig made from a 7-gallon propane tank; a dinosaur made from an old Volkswagen engine and transmission; and “Red Fred” — a 7.5-foot-tall sculpture made of an old wheelbarrow and a flat tire. And of course, life-size alien chess pieces dressed in John Deere green and yellow hues sit atop an art installation that first debuted at Burning Man's Black Rock City.

Owners Terry Jacobsen and his wife Linda are lifelong Carson Valley residents and will often serve as personal guides. And be sure to visit on a weekend to browse Rusty Rancho's on-site gift shop, where there are one-of-a-kind jigsaw puzzles and other wonderful woodwork made by Jacobsen himself.

3. Sips & Scenery: Minden Mill Distilling

Revel in new beginnings and unforgettable spirits at Minden Mill Distilling, a newly reopened destination on a heritage distillery estate that's making its dramatic mark on the Carson Valley wine and spirits scene. Foley Family Wines, the Sonoma County-based, family-owned wine company, [is now in the spirits business](#) with the recent re-opening of this distillery. At [Minden Mill Distilling](#), find an American Whiskey and white spirits distillery housed in a 100-year-old creamery, as well as an American Single Malt Whiskey distillery housed in a 100-year-old flour mill — which also includes multiple tasting areas and is the guest experience center. Both buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.

Locally sourced, sustainable grains and pure Sierra Nevada water combine to produce exceptionally crafted spirits using custom-built production equipment. Inside the facility guests are surrounded by warm woods and metals punctuated by shades of jade and turquoise.

Current offerings include a curated wine selection from Foley Family Wines, distilled gin and vodka, and recently released whiskey spirits; the facility also boasts an existing inventory of bourbon, single malt whiskey, rye, and whiskeys still in the aging process. Unveil the art of distillation with engaging tours; walk-ins are welcome. The hours of operation are currently Thursday to Sunday, 2 to 8 p.m. weekly.

4. Treasure Hunting Through Time: Carson Valley Antiques

Carson Valley is the perfect place to explore Wild West history through its own relics and remnants. With several antique shops in the communities of Minden, Gardnerville and Genoa, treasures are waiting to be discovered in every nook and cranny. Be sure to stop at these two antique haunts, and more if time permits.

- [RED BARN Antiques](#) is family-owned and specializes in repurposing local barn wood, transforming it into exquisite home furnishings that tell a unique story. The locally inspired handcrafted items embody the essence of Carson Valley heritage, showcasing its rustic beauty in every piece. Stop by to enjoy the beauty of handcrafted nostalgia, then browse an impressive selection of unique antiques with Nevada and Carson Valley historical significance.
- Spend some time in [Cheshire Antiques Inc.](#) — with over 12,000 square feet and two stories of store to explore, find more than 50 vendors offering unique antique, vintage and collectible finds. And here's an insider tip: Fuel the fun with a 5-star latté from [DST Coffee](#) right next door.

5. Ambiance & Culinary Experience: Daniel's Fine Dining

A list of treasures must surely include exquisite food and libations. [Daniel's](#) in Genoa earns this stellar designation with its blend of country French cuisine, modern sensibilities, and Old Nevada hospitality. Everything here screams (or rather, whispers) "intimate" with its eight-table interior exudes romance with a side of cheery charm, while a cozy patio draped with dreamy string lights makes for a perfect date-night destination on temperate northern Nevada evenings. Next door is a standalone bar that can only accommodate 20 guests called the [Ice House](#), so named because that's exactly what it used to be: The original building that stood in its place was used for ice storage in the days before refrigeration, and the owners repurposed large stone boulders from the original building to construct the current bar.

Ready to book a getaway to explore these local treasures? For more information about Genoa, Minden, Gardnerville and Topaz Lake [click here](#), or call the Carson Valley Visitors Authority at 775-782-8145.

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Straddling the California-Nevada state line 1.5 hours south of the Reno-Tahoe International Airport, discover the four communities—Genoa, Minden, Gardnerville and Topaz Lake—that comprise spectacular Carson Valley. Beholding some of Nevada's first and oldest establishments, visiting Carson Valley means authentically interacting with Nevada's many histories while experiencing world-renowned outdoor recreation Nevada, and the American West is known for. From legendary forefathers who paved the way to Nevada statehood, to wild horse bands, eagles, and other wildlife, to premiere air sports, American Indian, Basque, and Western Ranching histories and cultures, and distinctive dining experiences that all exist here and only here, Carson Valley offers an adventure for everyone. For more information about lodging, special events, and more trip planning tools, see [VisitCarsonValley.org](#) or dial (775) 782-2555. The Visitor Information Center is located within the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center at 1477 U.S. Highway 395 N, Gardnerville, NV.