



## **Drink in the History in Carson Valley, Nevada** *Immerse Yourself in Old West Heritage in Nevada's Oldest Settlements*

**CARSON VALLEY, Nev. (July 19, 2024)** – Travelers are increasingly finding inspiration in the history of the places they visit; in fact, Forbes points to "[heritage tourism](#)" — the act of traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the past — as one of the fastest-growing travel trends, totaling \$171 billion in annual spending.

Another popular component of travel: imbibing. The BLS's Consumer Expenditure report (as reported in travel research) reveals that food and alcohol total about 27% of domestic trip expenses, and those who indulge spend an average of \$380 on beer, wine, and liquor per vacation.

With those facts in mind, travelers to Carson Valley, Nevada, which encompasses the region's four communities of Genoa, Gardnerville, Minden, and Topaz Lake, have a unique opportunity to meld heritage tourism with their interest in raising a glass. Visitors can create their custom historic crawl, traveling from bar to saloon to wine shop while exploring the region's storied past.



Below, find a handful of must-visit destinations for those looking to drink in history with a cocktail in hand.

### **Visit Nevada’s Oldest ‘Thirst Parlor’: Genoa Bar and Saloon**

Just down the eastern slope of Lake Tahoe is the oldest bar in Nevada, the [Genoa Bar and Saloon](#). Built in 1853 — this saloon is steeped in history and opened more than a decade before Nevada even became a state.

Famous visitors have traversed the brick façade and wooden porch, including Mark Twain, Carole Lombard, Ulysses S. Grant, and Teddy Roosevelt. The site has also served as a movie set on more than one occasion, including for the John Wayne classic “The Shootist” and the more modern “Misery” with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

Visitors will [drink in the historic details](#) surrounding them — many are original elements, including the medallions on the ceiling above the lights and the saloon’s one red oil lamp which is lit every New Year’s Eve. The lamps are also original to the bar; they were oil but converted to electricity at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Make a Toast to Legends at Shoe Tree Brewing Company**

Featuring house-made root beer, [Shoe Tree Brewing Company](#) in Minden is another stop worth making. In addition to the non-alcoholic, handmade soft drink options, the site also has a huge selection of beers, wine, canned cocktails, and hard seltzers.

While the building itself isn’t historic, the name pays homage to one of Nevada’s most storied legends: In the middle of the state — east of Carson Valley on Highway 50, known as the Loneliest Road in America — there stood a lone tree for decades adorned with shoes. Travelers lobbed shoes onto the tree, thus conferring its “shoe tree” name. The story goes that the first shoes tossed at the tree were from an angry groom who was arguing with his new bride right after their wedding in Reno. During the fight, he allegedly pulled off the road and tossed his bride’s shoes at the tree, inviting her to walk home.

### **Distill the Historic Details at Minden Mill Distilling**

Just down the road from Shoe Tree, visitors will spot the silos on the grounds of [Minden Mill Distilling](#) — an unmistakable landmark along Highway 395. Originally built in 1906 to mill flour as part of the Minden Flour Milling Co., the site now celebrates a different kind of grain: those that mash up to create Minden Mill Distilling’s bourbon, rye, American single malt, and white spirits. Visitors can take a [tour](#) to dive deep into the [world-class operation’s heritage](#), then saddle up to the bar to partake in the fruits of history’s labor.

While the distillery is housed in century-old buildings that have held a spot on the National Register of Historic Places since 1978, the Gold LEED-certified campus is a study in modern technology and awe-inspiring architecture and design. Visitors won’t want to miss the towering copper stills or breathtaking chandelier and artistic touches in the second floor tasting room.

The surrounding Bently Ranch grows over 600 varieties of grain on 6,000 acres including heritage corn, oats, barley, and rye, with everything milled on site in the malt house.

### **Uncork History at Battle Born Wine and Whiskey**

In a [historic building](#) at the epicenter of quaint downtown Gardnerville, visitors can step back in time while surrounded by more than 3,000 bottles of wine, whiskey, and unique spirits. [Battle Born Wine and Whiskey](#) is likely one of the oldest “mobile” homes in existence, considering it was built in Virginia City in 1880 and moved to Gardnerville by wagon. It was the home of John and Mary Gardner — namesakes of the town of Gardnerville — but is now owned by Certified Sommelier Troy Phillips.

The fine retail wine shop specializes in niche wines and hosts events that pair tastings with Gardnerville's cultural heritage. Visitors can follow them on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) to learn about their famous “Snobs Whisk(e)y” classes, Vino & Vinyl events, and more.

### **‘Basque’ in the Glow of the Past at JT Basque Bar and Dining Room**

Travelers looking to learn more about the region’s past will find the historic [JT Basque Bar and Dining Room on Hwy 395](#) in downtown Gardnerville. The [building is more than 125 years old](#), originally a boarding house where Basque sheepherders — who spent months in isolation in the mountains of the Great Basin — came to rest, restock supplies, dance, eat, and find community.

A further nod to heritage at the JT is to order a Picon Punch, an Old-World drink originally created by the very Basque immigrants who were housed there over the years. The modern version is a potent combination of Torani Amer liqueur and brandy, served with a lemon twist in a tulip glass — sometimes with grenadine-coated ice or a soda floater, depending on your bartender. But when you order it “Gardnerville-Style,” you’ll get a short highball glass instead of a tulip; seasoned Picon-imbibers swear the shape of the glass makes the drink smoother.

The Carson Valley region offers a bold shot of nostalgia at every turn. There’s even history in the making, with Nevada-grown establishments like [Great Basin Brewing Co.](#) bringing their independent craft beer and sustainably made local food to a new location in Minden.

Carson Valley visitors can explore the region’s historic [eat and drink destinations](#) and customize their journey. Learn more about Genoa, Minden, Gardnerville, and Topaz Lake [here](#), or call the Carson Valley Visitors Authority at (775) 782-8145.

###

*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, go to [VisitCarsonValley.org](http://VisitCarsonValley.org) or dial (775) 782-8145. The Visitor Information Center is located within the Carson Valley Museum and Cultural Center at 1477 U.S. Highway 395 N, Gardnerville, NV.*

Media interested in a visit to Carson Valley, Nevada, should fill out the [Media Request Form](#).

**MEDIA RESOURCES:**

[Click for photos](#)

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

Amy Demuth, RAD Strategies Inc.

[media@radstrategiesinc.com](mailto:media@radstrategiesinc.com) / 775-323-6333