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# Sipping Stars

Melt back into the universe at this remote biodynamic winery

If you plan to join the trek to Patagonia before the glaciers are gone, end your trip with a stay in Chile's idyllic central valley at Alexandra Marnier-Lapostolle's Clos Apalta Winery and Casa Lapostolle Guest Houses. The gracious and inspired Marnier-Lapostolle adventured away from her famous family (owners of Grand Marnier and Château de Sancerre) to start this biodynamic winery, which uses gravity rather than pumps to move the grapes from vine to vat, and horses rather than tractors to till. Stay in one of four houses nestled in the preserved woods, eat fresh salmon, horseback ride, or just absorb the quality of light and night. "The stars," says Marnier-Lapostolle, "are incredible." With Amy Trubek's *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir* and *The Battle for Wine and Love*, or *How I Saved the World from Parkerization* by Alice Feiring, out this month, Casa Lapostolle will elucidate all the fuss over *terroir* (local flavor in wine) and remind you that at least the Milky Way is still there.—M.P.



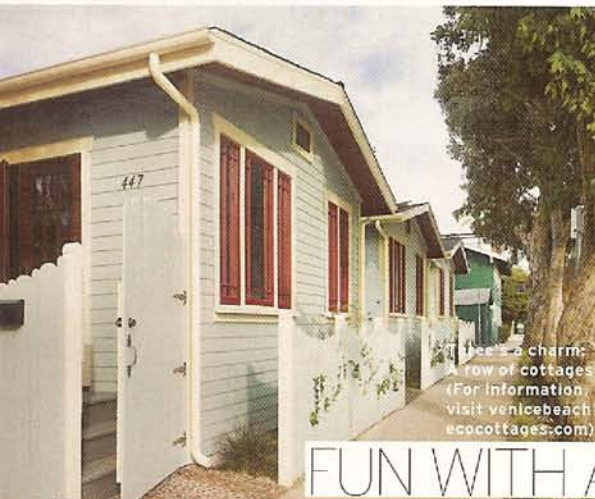
My head is swimming: The pool at the magical main house (For information, visit [closapalta.cl](http://closapalta.cl))

For your viewing pleasure: A bathtub in the Casita Petit Verdot

Start at the top: The six-story gravity-led winery

**WHERE I HIDE** On a 12-foot Carolina Skiff in the Potomac. I can see the Capitol, but aside from the jets, it's just me, the eagles, ospreys, herons, and a couple of NASCAR fishermen. In winter, I go to White Grass ([whitegrass.com](http://whitegrass.com)) in West Virginia, the East's backcountry ski hub (meaning no chairlifts). It's going to the source: Why do I do this work? Wild areas and spirited people. Sweet stuff.—John Passacantando, Greenpeace executive director

Clos Apalta Winery and Casa Lapostolle: courtesy of Casa Lapostolle Guest Houses; Passacantando: courtesy of subject; Venice Beach Eco-Cottages: © 2007 Eric Staufenmaier



Cage-free: LaPlante perched in her birdcage chair

It's all about charm: A row of cottages (For information, visit [venicebeachecocottages.com](http://venicebeachecocottages.com))

## FUN WITH A REPURPOSE



Eat your greens: Le Bébé's energy-efficient cooking space



All alliter: Le Bébé's bedroom

We laud large hotel chains' recent greenlining attempts (go Fairmont, with your smart composting and water conservation), but for a truly tiny (and pretty) footprint, we love the Venice Beach Eco-Cottages. The three former crack houses turned solar-powered retreats represent the three r's at their best. Each one-bedroom cottage (Papa Hemingway, Aunt

Zoe's Place, and Le Bébé) is filled with married co-owners Cynthia Foster and Karel Samsom's flea market finds: Pots and pans dangle from bugle stems, crystal doorknobs act as finials, and wine corks line the bathroom floors. Kelly LaPlante of Organic Interior Design, whose book *Ecologique* (Organic Interior Design) hits

this July, created Le Bébé's cozy, surrealist 1930s look. She particularly cherishes the retired birdcage she turned into a chair, using antique chair legs and a lazy Susan. "I can actually fit my whole body in there and curl up," LaPlante says. "It's surprisingly comfortable." Summer rates are \$240 to \$260 per night, with a two-night minimum.—JULIE VADNAL

Cherry-pick: Hand-painted (with nontoxic paint) checkerboard floor