As wineries along the Santa Clara Valley Wine Trail begin to reopen in the coming weeks, you may be wondering if it’s safe to visit. We can assure you that our wineries will be adhering to the latest health and safety protocols doing everything possible to reduce the transmission of the virus.

When you do choose to spend a day or weekend in Santa Clara Valley Wine County, just know that your visit will look a bit differently. To help you navigate the new winery experience, here are a few key guidelines and things to expect.

**Tastings by Appointment or Monitoring of Capacity Limits**
Many wineries will be shifting to an appointment-only model that will include time limits, while others may choose to monitor their space capacity limits and as customers depart, you will be allowed to enter. These models will help the wineries and customer flow to ensure they’re operating at a reduced capacity for safety reasons.

**Small Groups Only**
Time to book that long-awaited party bus with your friends? Not so fast. Your group size for a tasting will now be restricted to six people.

**No Symptoms Allowed**
It goes without saying, but if you expect businesses to follow the necessary health and safety protocols, you are required to exercise the same precaution. If you’re showing any signs of coronavirus whatsoever, you will be turned away. Some wineries may even perform temperature checks (on employees and, in some cases, on guests) to further foster a safe environment.

**Expect Reduced Interactions**
Less contact with tasting room hosts will become the norm moving forward. Don’t be surprised if hand-held menus are replaced with those posted on a chalkboard, wine is prepoured before your arrival, and other measures like contactless ordering from your phone are put in place to limit interactions between customers and tasting room hosts. Many wineries will also have contactless payment systems available for tastings, food purchases, and bottles to-go.

**Masks Required, Unless Sipping**
While it’s expected for tasting room employees to wear masks, just know that you will also be required to wear face coverings. You will be allowed to remove a mask once seated and wine service begins. Just note that if you need to use the restroom or walk around the property, you’ll be required to put your mask back on.

**Wine Tasting While Social Distancing**
Crowded tasting rooms with standing-room only are a thing of the past. A visit to a Santa Clara Valley winery will now be all about social distancing. Tastings will take place in personal tasting areas at least six feet from other groups and more tastings will take place outdoors to keep customers at a safe distance from each other. Some wineries have also started establishing private tastings areas for guests. You might also see someone greeting you when you arrive at a tasting room and walking the property to help manage customer flow and monitor social distancing.

**So Patient & Stay Flexible**
The Covid-19 environment is new to all of us and the wineries are operating under new processes and guidelines. It’s best to be patient and flexible when it comes to venturing out and about on the Santa Clara Valley Wine Trail.

**Wine Trail Passes / $75**
Our year-long Wine Trail Pass can be purchased at any winery and is the most convenient and economic way to wine taste on the Santa Clara Valley Wine Trail. Use your Wine Trail Pass to contact each winery to make your reservations or check space availability, then jump in the car and redeem your 3 tastings at each winery. Take up to a full year to visit all 34 wineries or sooner, we’ll leave it all up to you.

Need to buy a wine lover a gift? Choose the Wine Trail Pass that gifts them all year long. Order online at https://winetrailpass.eventbrite.com