

▶ A corollary: if you only get four tastes from a big list for \$10, make sure to choose what you like. If the person pouring the wine really thinks you should try the Syrah, maybe she'll throw that in for free at the end.

▶ Ask which wineries nearby are good. Most tasting room employees live in the Wine Country and their opinions of the places that don't issue their paychecks are often more candid.

— *W. Blake Gray*

atmosphere

coupon for a free wine tasting. On Fridays from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. there's a small farmers' market outside, with live music and glasses of wine available for purchase.

Nearby: Options abound. Ridge Lytton Springs (650 Lytton Springs Road, 707-433-7721) and Mazzocco Winery (1400 Lytton Springs Road, 707-431-8159) are one exit south on Highway 101. Downtown Healdsburg, just 6 miles south, has many tasting rooms including big names like Kendall-Jackson (337 Healdsburg Ave., 707-433-7102), Gallo of Sonoma (320 Center St., 707-433-2458) and Rosenblum Cellars (250 Center St., 707-431-1169).

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Creamy Blue Cheese Polenta

This rich polenta is a good foil for many types of roasted and braised meats, and is also good on its own. The blue cheese adds a little saltiness, so taste before making final seasoning adjustments.

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INGREDIENTS:

- 4 cups low-salt or unsalted chicken stock or broth**
 - 1 cup medium grain polenta**
 - 1 cup heavy whipping cream**
 - 1 teaspoon minced garlic**
 - 2-3 ounces blue cheese, crumbled**
 - Kosher salt and pepper to taste**
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INSTRUCTIONS: In a medium saucepan, bring chicken stock to a boil. Slowly sprinkle in the polenta, stirring constantly. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 25 minutes, stirring frequently. Add cream and cook for 5 more minutes.

Remove from heat and add garlic, cheese and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to incorporate. Serve immediately.

Serves 6

PER SERVING: 265 calories, 7 g protein, 18 g carbohydrate, 19 g fat (12 g saturated), 64 mg cholesterol, 226 mg sodium, 1 g fiber.