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The Charles  
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THE CHARLES NAPA VALLEY





# Stylish and Inclusive

By Rebekah Moan | Photos by Manny Espinoza

Building on the success of his boutique inn, The Charles Pacific Grove, award-winning designer Charles Gruwell launched his second property, The Charles Napa Valley. This eight-room bed-and-breakfast (B and B) mirrors the Charles Pacific Grove in that it is stylish, masterfully designed, and welcoming to the LGBTQI+ community and their friends, families, and allies.

“Our climate right now, with the current administration, is not inclusive. It’s divided, and people are asking, ‘What about us?’” says Gruwell. “People are skittish about all kinds of things, these days, because they are unsure of what could happen to them. Our goal is to provide a safe haven for all our guests to be themselves and know that they are welcome and safe.”

That desire was born from Gruwell’s personal experiences as an openly gay boutique hotel designer. After staying in hotels worldwide—from charming B and Bs to the grand luxury of St. Regis Hotels and Resorts, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, and Peninsula Hotels—he often found that true inclusivity and warmth were rare. His B and Bs were created to bridge that gap.





Guests will not only feel safe at The Charles Napa Valley but will also have a stylish experience. “Our boutique hotel has style, grace, and art everywhere,” he says. “It’s not your average, run-of-the-mill bed-and-breakfast.” Each room tells a story, and the timeless furnishings, elegant accents, and architectural charm invite guests to rest, reconnect, and feel at home in luxury.

Gruwell and his business partners, Don and Jay Desai, updated a Victorian home that was built in 1906 by E. W. Doughty. In the 1970s, the home was converted into a B and B known as the Cabernet House, an Old World Inn. The original home featured hand-carved woodwork, which Gruwell enhanced while adding Victorian wallpaper, draperies, and original light fixtures.

Part of that enhancement included changing a small back patio, expanding it to five times its size and creating a grand courtyard that includes three fountains, lounge seating, fire pits, Japanese maple trees, and wine-barrel planters filled with seasonal flowers. “It’s a very special outdoor experience for people to enjoy on sunny days and at night,” says Gruwell.

The Charles Napa Valley opened in February, but Gruwell isn’t slowing down. He and his partners plan to buy a property in San Francisco to create a full-service hotel, replete with a restaurant, bar, and, of course, stylish rooms. “Our grandiose plan is to have a Charles hotel in every California destination location,” he says.

*For more information, visit [thecharlesnapavalley.com](http://thecharlesnapavalley.com).*