



# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

**2013**  
SONOMA  
COUNTY



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## **Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report**

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# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

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## June 2013

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), in partnership with Sonoma County Tourism, is pleased to bring you the 2013 Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report.

This report summarizes the results from our annual event, Sonoma County Restaurant Week. The seven-day celebration of the county's farm fresh food and premier wine featured Sonoma County's top restaurants offering special three-course meals at \$19, \$29 or \$39.

In its fourth year, the event has also made a significant impact on the restaurant industry by encouraging locals and tourists to dine out during a typically slow time of the year:

- The total impact of the event grew by 42% to \$2.20 million. Almost \$145,000 in sales tax was generated and more than \$195,000 was purchased in local products for use in Restaurant Week menus.
- More than 15,000 meals were served directly from the prix-fixe menu, and more than 60,000 meals were served over the week at participating restaurants.
- The event was popular with diners and restaurants alike. Almost all diners rated their restaurant week experience as good or excellent. More than 98% of participating restaurants indicated that they were satisfied with their involvement and 99% indicated that they will participate again.
- New to this year's event was sponsorship by the Jackson Family Wines who were instrumental in encouraging restaurants to participate and to use locally produced wine. Coupled with efforts by the Petaluma Visitors Center, restaurant participation grew by 27% in this year's event, with the number in participating restaurants in Petaluma doubling over 2012.
- Diners came from all over the County to enjoy Sonoma County Restaurant Week. Almost 18% of total diners were from outside of Sonoma County.

Because of its success, the event will return for its fifth year in March of 2014.

Thank you for your interest in the Economic Development Board's research. For additional information, questions, comments, or suggestions please contact us at (707) 565-7170 or visit [www.sonomaedb.org](http://www.sonomaedb.org).

Sincerely,



Ben Stone  
Executive Director



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# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

## Restaurant Week Experience

The inaugural Sonoma County Restaurant Week was held in 2010 and was well received; 85 restaurants participated, 15,000 meals were served, and the event had a total economic impact of almost \$900,000 to the local economy. Each of the subsequent years has seen the number of meals served and the economic impact of the event grow. The fourth annual Sonoma County Restaurant Week event was held in March of 2013. The event built on its highly successful first three years; 124 restaurants participated, a 27% increase over 2012, and more than 60,000 meals were served.

### Total Economic Impact of Restaurant Week

The total economic impact of the 2013 Sonoma County Restaurant Week is valued at \$2.20 million. This includes restaurant revenue, taxes and the value of local ingredients purchased for Sonoma County Restaurant Week prix-fixe menus. This is a 42 percent increase over 2012.

### Meals Served

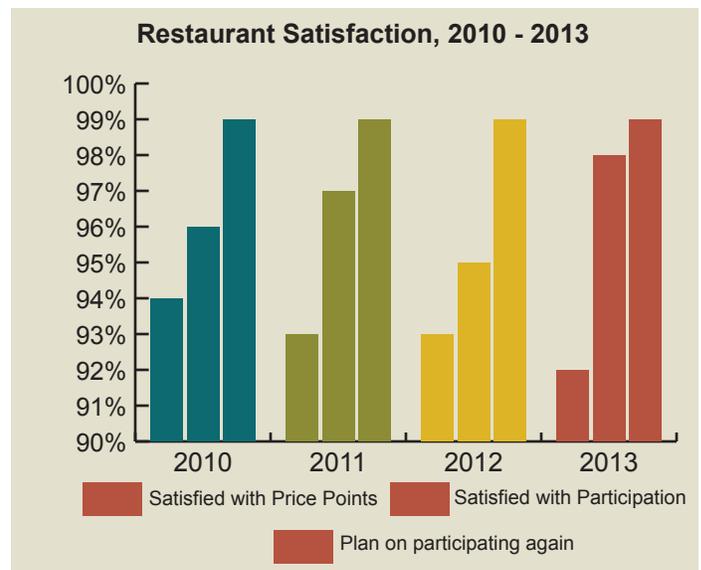
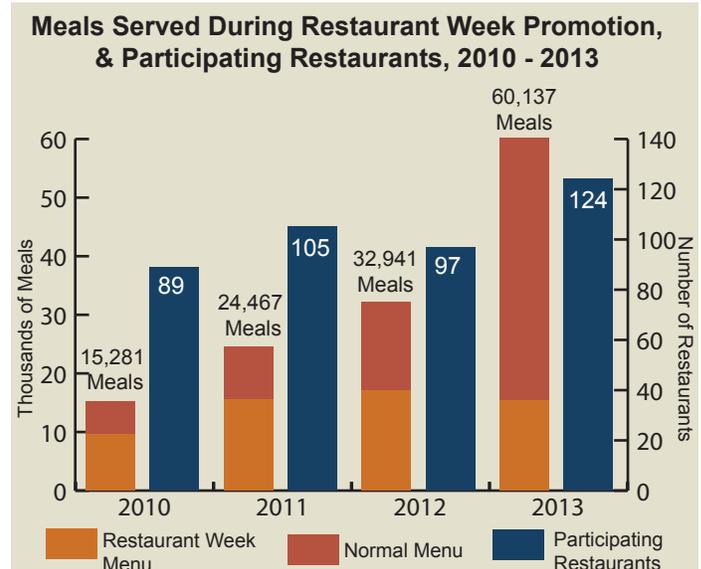
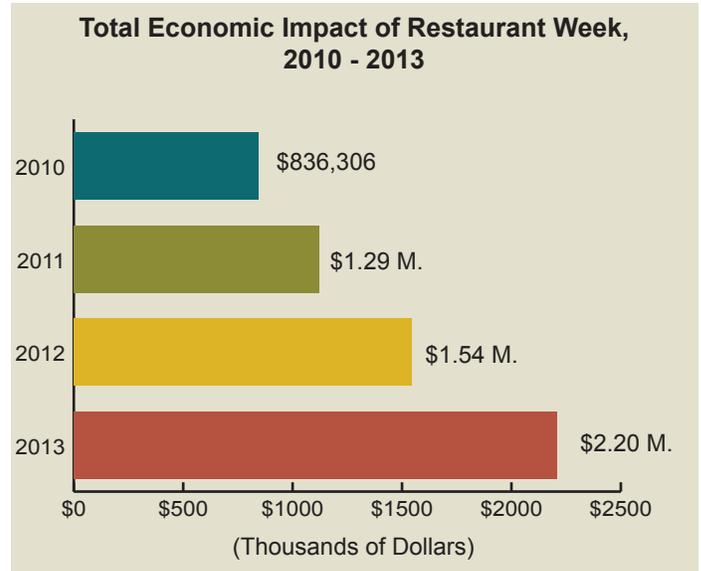
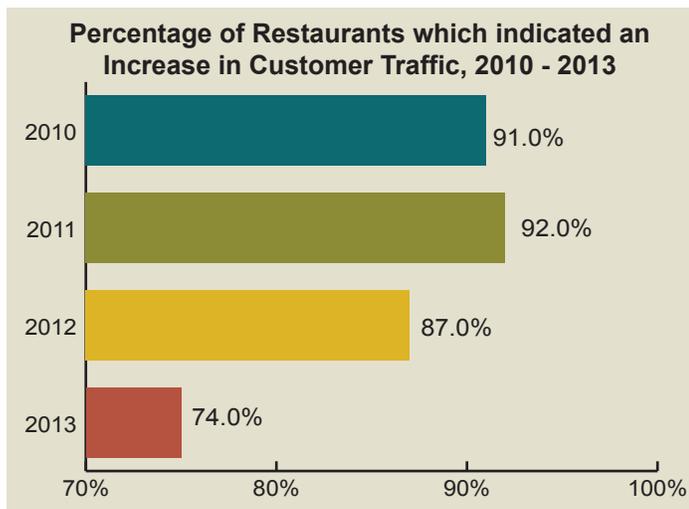
More than 60,000 meals were served during the 2013 Sonoma County Restaurant Week; over 15,000 meals were ordered off of the prix-fixe Restaurant Week menu. Despite a 9% decrease compared to 2012 in the number of meals served off the Restaurant Week menu, there was an 82% increase in the overall number of meals served during Restaurant Week.

### Restaurant Satisfaction

Restaurant participation was the highest ever in 2013, there was a 21% increase in participation over the 2012 event. And restaurants continued to be satisfied with the program: 98 percent were satisfied with their participation in the event, 92 percent were satisfied with the price points, and 99 percent of participants indicated that they would like to participate again.

### Customer Traffic and Restaurant Revenue

Almost 75 percent of restaurants indicated that their customer traffic had increased as a result of Restaurant Week. This indicates that the event was successful in helping restaurants generate business during the off-season.



# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

## Customer Feedback

Participating restaurants are asked to pass out customer comment cards during Sonoma County Restaurant Week. Comment cards are given to all diners during the week as a way to measure the effects of the event. Diners are asked a variety of questions including where they are from, whether or not they had eaten at the restaurant before, whether the promotion encouraged them to dine out and if they ordered from the special menu. In 2013, more than 4,000 comment cards were received. Some of the results are summarized below.

### Restaurant Week Encouraged Customer to Dine Out

Almost two thirds of Sonoma County Restaurant Week survey respondents indicated that they had chosen to go out because it was Restaurant Week. Only one third indicated that they had not been encouraged by the event. This suggests that the event successfully motivates people to dine out.

### Ordered Off Special Menu

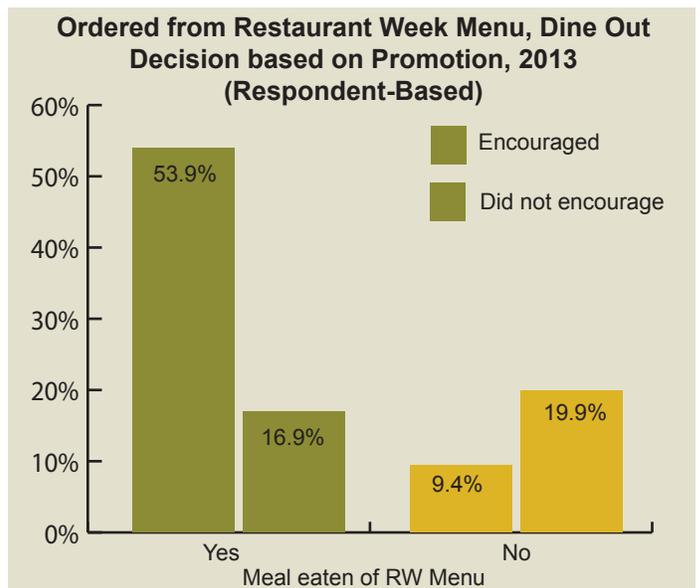
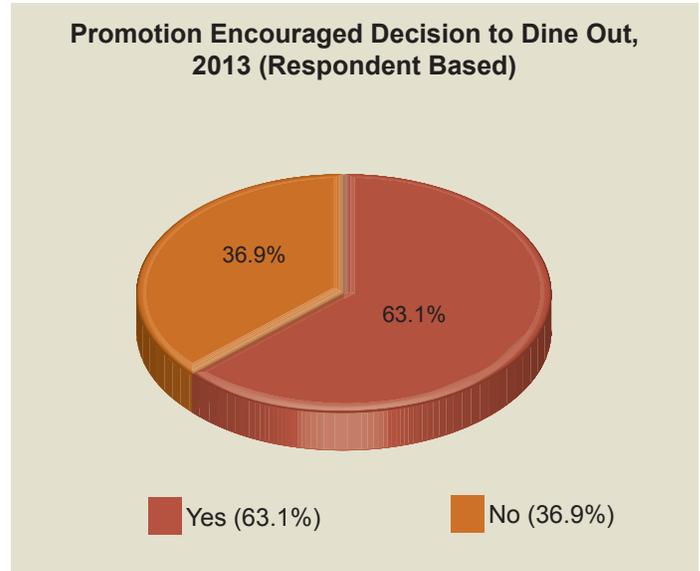
Of the 70% of respondents who ate off of the Restaurant Week menu, almost 54% were encouraged to dine out because of the Sonoma County Restaurant Week event. Of the 29% of diners who did not order from the special menu, 9.4% were encouraged to dine out because it was Restaurant Week.

### New Patron to Restaurant

More than half of the respondents indicated that they had not been to the restaurant before Restaurant Week. Along with the data indicating that customers were eating out specifically because of the promotion, this suggests that Sonoma County Restaurant Week succeeds in helping restaurants get new customers and generate revenue during a typically slow time of year.

### Point of Origin

Customers originated from all over the county and outside of it. The majority of the diners were from Santa Rosa (40.2%), which is also where most of participating restaurants were located (33.9%). Almost 18% of diners were from outside Sonoma County. This includes customers from the rest of California and diners from 38 states and 5 countries. Many restaurants located in Petaluma, unincorporated county and the city of Sonoma also participated in 2013.



**Point of Origin, 2013 (Respondent-Based)**

| Area           | Diners | Restaurants |
|----------------|--------|-------------|
| Santa Rosa     | 40.2%  | 33.9%       |
| Out of County  | 17.9%  | -           |
| Sebastopol     | 9.7%   | 8.1%        |
| Sonoma         | 8.2%   | 10.5%       |
| Unincorporated | 6.6%   | 19.4%       |
| Petaluma       | 6.5%   | 11.3%       |
| Windsor        | 4.0%   | 4.0%        |
| Rohnert Park   | 3.2%   | 1.6%        |
| Healdsburg     | 2.6%   | 9.7%        |
| Cloverdale     | 0.6%   | 1.6%        |
| Cotati         | 0.6%   | -           |



# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

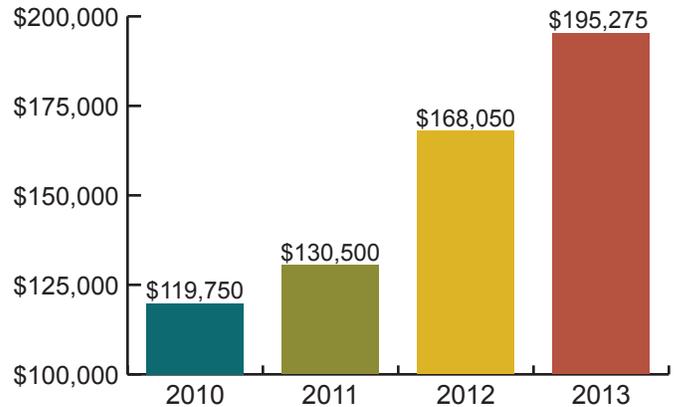
## Economic Impact

Sonoma County Restaurant Week has a significant economic impact to the local economy; these figures are discussed below.

### Value of Local Ingredients

As Sonoma County has so many great local food producers, more and more restaurants are turning to local ingredients for use in their menus. We asked participating restaurants to indicate what was the value of the local ingredients purchased specifically for their special restaurant week menu. More than \$195,000 worth of local food products were used for Restaurant Week. **This is a 16 percent increase in the value of locally purchased goods used in the special Sonoma County Restaurant Week prix-fixe menus in 2013.** This amount does not include restaurants that declined to indicate the value of local products used in their Restaurant Week menu.

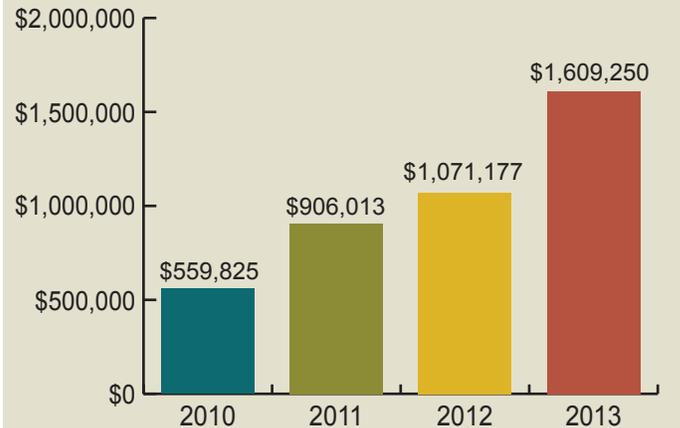
Value of Local Ingredients, 2010-2013



### Total Restaurant Revenue

Total customer expenditure during Restaurant Week is valued at \$1,609,250. This number is reported by restaurants directly through surveying.

Total Restaurant Revenue, 2010-2013



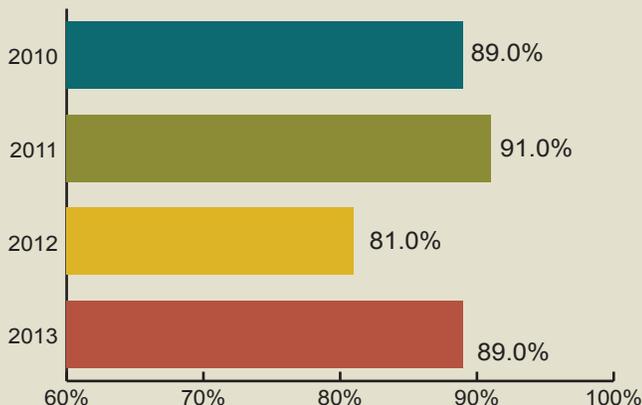
### Tax Revenue Generate from Restaurant Week

The sales tax revenue from the event was \$144,362 in 2013. This is a 45% increase over 2012 revenues.

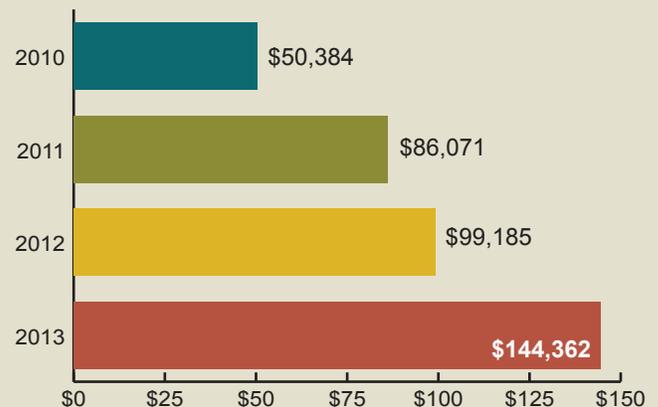
### Restaurants Indicated an Increase in Revenue

A larger percentage of restaurants indicated that they experienced an increase in restaurant revenue in 2013. The average reported increase in revenue was 10%.

Percentage of Restaurants which Indicated an Increase in Revenue, 2010-2013



Tax Revenue Generated from Restaurant Week, 2010-2013 (Thousand of dollars)



# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

## Sponsors and Online Marketing

Restaurant Week was successful largely because of our sponsors. These include Sonoma County Tourism, The Press Democrat, Maverick Media, The Northbay Bohemian, Jackson Family Wines, local Visitor Centers and Chambers, and OpenTable. We also utilized Google Adwords and used social media platforms to promote the event.

### Sonoma County Restaurant Week Sponsors

With the help of our sponsors we were able to publicize the event and give the public access to many of our online resources. Maverick Media created specific Restaurant Week pages on each of their stations sites, and featured the event on their Facebook accounts. The Press Democrat was instrumental in our print ad campaign by featuring advertisements for several weeks. The Northbay Bohemian featured print and online ads which drove people to the official website. OpenTable also hosted a designated Restaurant Week page so diners could make reservations at their favorite participating restaurants.

### Jackson Family Wines

New to the 2013 Restaurant Week was sponsorship by the Jackson Family Wines. Event posters and bookmarks were handed out in tasting rooms in Sonoma County. Jackson Family Wines also promoted the event via their social media platforms and with e-blasts to wine club members.

### SonomaCountyRestaurantWeek.org

The website was revamped in 2012 with the goal of being more streamlined and user-friendly. Search functions allow diners to search for restaurants by location and price point. And menus, photos, addresses, phone numbers, hours of operation and OpenTable links where applicable allowed diners to easily find information about all of the participating restaurants.

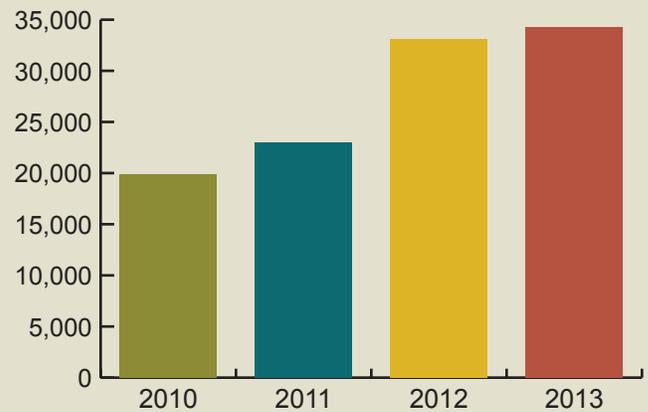
### Sonoma County Restaurant Week on Facebook

The Restaurant Week campaign grew on Facebook in 2013. There was significant traffic to the site, which included comments and likes by unique visitors. During the week of Restaurant Week, our Facebook posts reached 34,400 users and each post had an average reach of 1,350 people. Overall, we had 3,754 likes in 2013. We also ran several giveaways on our Facebook page, which allowed us to increase our engagement with users and the number of photos we had on the Facebook profile.

### @SoCoRestWeek

Twitter was utilized as an active part of the Sonoma County Restaurant Week promotional campaign. Followers were driven to both Facebook and the official website. The number of people following SoCoRestWeek increased to 1,062 in 2013.

Website Traffic from the week prior through Restaurant Week, 2010 - 2013



Website, Facebook and Twitter, 2013

### Website

20,285 Unique Visitors

9.68 Pages per Visit

7 min 29 sec Average length of visit

### Facebook

3,754 people like Sonoma County Restaurant Week on Facebook

34,400 the total unique "reaches" during Restaurant Week

1,350 the average "reach" of each post during Restaurant Week

### Twitter

1,062 the number of SoCoRestWeek followers

458 the number of SoCoRestWeek tweets

## Sonoma County Restaurant Week Sponsors



www.sonomaedb.org

# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

## Comments from Participating Restaurants

In addition to asking participating restaurants about their business figures for Restaurant Week, we ask them to provide us with feedback about the event. This way we can determine what we are doing well and how we can improve. Here are some of the comments we received from this year's participating restaurants:

Our first Restaurant Week. The week was a great way to promote our restaurant to many new guests. Very good turn out and many guests were asking for the Restaurant Week menu. Overall a great week for Thai Time. Thank you for all the effort to make the 2013 Restaurant Week a success.

**-Anders, Owner**  
**Thai Time Asian Bistro**

I think it is a great program! We had positive feedback about the food and diners were excited and eager to share their dining experiences from other local restaurants. On behalf of all of the staff here at the Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, thank you for all of your hard work.

**-Arun Malik, Food and Beverage Manager**  
**The Big 3 at Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn**

We appreciated the efforts of the staff at the SCRW in helping local restaurants generate much needed business in this tough economic climate. Thank you! Great job!

**-John Frenzel, Marketing Director**  
**Cattlemens**

This is a very neat and beneficial program to our industry and county. I hope you continue to keep it running.

**-Diana Thomawong, General Manager**  
**Tomi Thai Restaurant**

There is a noticeable lift in business... And more than one person stated they had never heard of us before and were in for the first time.

**-Tina Jackson, Owner**  
**El Coqui Puerto Rican Cuisine**

Great job at promoting this event!

**-Tess Ostopowicz, Owner**  
**GTO's Seafood House**

We are thrilled with the number of first time guests who came because of restaurant week.

**-Debbie Espinosa, General Manager**  
**French Garden Restaurant**

Overall very happy with the event. It was well coordinated, well publicized and easy to reach someone with questions.

**-Mirjam Bolmer, Owner**  
**Barley and Hops Tavern**

This was our first year; we were happily surprised by how many people made it out for the first time! Love new customers!!! Thank You! Your team did great!!!

**-Jen Warfel, General Manager**  
**Underwood Bar and Bistro**

Great marketing to out of town guests.

**-Lisbeth Holmefjord, Owner**  
**Baci Café & Wine Bar**

## Methodology

This report outlines the event and the results from the last four years. This includes restaurant experience and event outcomes, customer feedback, economic impact data and the Sonoma County Restaurant Week web presence.

Data for this report is collected directly from diners and participating restaurants during the event, and with follow-up surveys given immediately after the week of the event. More than 4,000 diners filled out our comment cards, and 77% of participating restaurants filled out ex-post surveys. Their feedback allows us to track the success of the event.

### Notes on Calculations:

Economic Impact Data: we use a multiplier of 1.16 to determine the overall economic impact of spending at eating & drinking establishments per National Restaurant Association. Economic impact figures from 2010-2013 have been adjusted to reflect this multiplier and explains any discrepancies in previously reported figures.

Because some restaurants did not report, we believe the economic impact, the value of local ingredients and overall restaurant revenue figures to be understating the effects of Sonoma County Restaurant Week in 2013. However, we have chosen not to project the value of these figures in order to have an accurate and conservative figure.

## Acknowledgements

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The fourth annual Sonoma County Restaurant week would not have been possible without the contribution of many individuals.

Most of the credit for the success of this event belongs to the local restaurants that participated in this week-long event. Their hard work and dedication to serving the outstanding food that Sonoma County is known for provided the inspiration and the purpose behind continuing this event. Furthermore, Sonoma County restaurants provide over 15,000 jobs in Sonoma County and the Sonoma County EDB is proud to highlight the importance of this industry to our local economy.

Special acknowledgment is also due to the sponsors of Sonoma County Restaurant Week. The Press Democrat, Northbay Bohemian, Maverick Media and Jackson Family Wines all donated significant time and resources to promote this year's event. Acknowledgement is also due to staff at Sonoma County Tourism for their assistance with press releases, website management and support and to the Petaluma Visitors Center in their assistance with promoting the event to Petaluma restaurants and visitors.

Finally, Audrey Bendowski, Tourism Project Coordinator with the EDB, contributed a significant amount of time and effort to the organization of this event, including restaurant contact, managing social media and advertisement and the updating content on the official Restaurant Week website. Audrey Bendowski also updated and tracked the results of the fourth annual Sonoma County Restaurant Week to create this comprehensive report, and deserves special thanks.

Ben Stone  
Executive Director



With acknowledgement and appreciation to local key businesses supporting Sonoma County Economic Development:

**Director**



**Executive**



**Sponsors**



American AgCredit



ZAINER RINEHART CLARKE

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS • APC  
AN INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF DFK INTERNATIONAL



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