



# Sonoma County Restaurant Week Report

2014  
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 2014

The Sonoma County Economic Development Board (EDB), in partnership with Sonoma County Tourism, is pleased to bring you the 2014 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 beer and wine featured Sonoma County's top restaurants offering special three-course meals at \$19, \$29 or \$39.

New to Restaurant Week in 2014 was the addition of an advertised lunch option, giving diners the chance to experience \$10, \$15 and \$20 lunches.

In its fifth 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 27% to \$2.8 million. Almost \$163,000 in sales tax was generated and more than \$145,000 was purchased in local products for use in Restaurant Week menus.
- More than 16,000 meals were served directly from the lunch and dinner prix-fixe menus, and more than 58,900 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 96% of participating restaurants indicated that they were satisfied with their involvement and 96% indicated that they will participate again.
- Showing support again for this year's event was Jackson Family Wines, which was instrumental in encouraging restaurants to participate and to use locally produced wine. Coupled with efforts by the Press Democrat and North Bay Bohemian to provide co-op advertising, restaurant participation grew by 10% in this year's event.
- About 25% of total diners were from outside of Sonoma County. Additionally, diners came from all over the county to enjoy Sonoma County Restaurant Week.

Because of its success, the event will return for its sixth year in March of 2015.

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



Pamela Chanter  
Chair



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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 fifth annual Sonoma County Restaurant Week event was held in March of 2014. The event built on its highly successful first four years; 137 restaurants participated, a 10% increase over 2013, and nearly 59,000 meals were served.

### Total Economic Impact of Restaurant Week

The total economic impact of the 2014 Sonoma County Restaurant Week is valued at \$2.8 million. This includes restaurant revenue, taxes and the value of local ingredients purchased for Sonoma County Restaurant Week prix-fixe menus. This is a 27% increase over 2013, showing a continually growing interest in the program, and the success of adding the lunch option.

### Meals Served

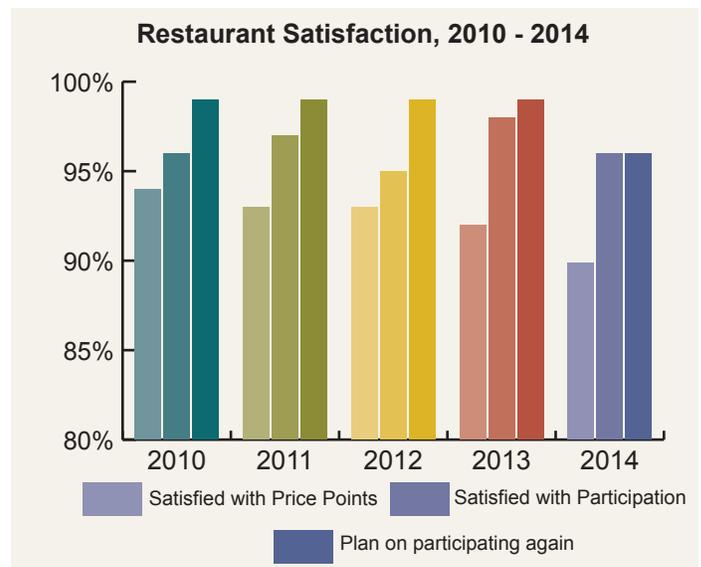
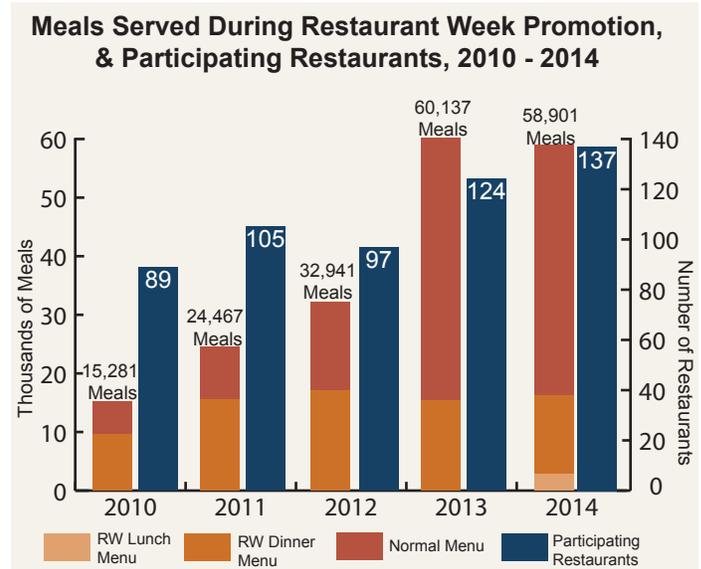
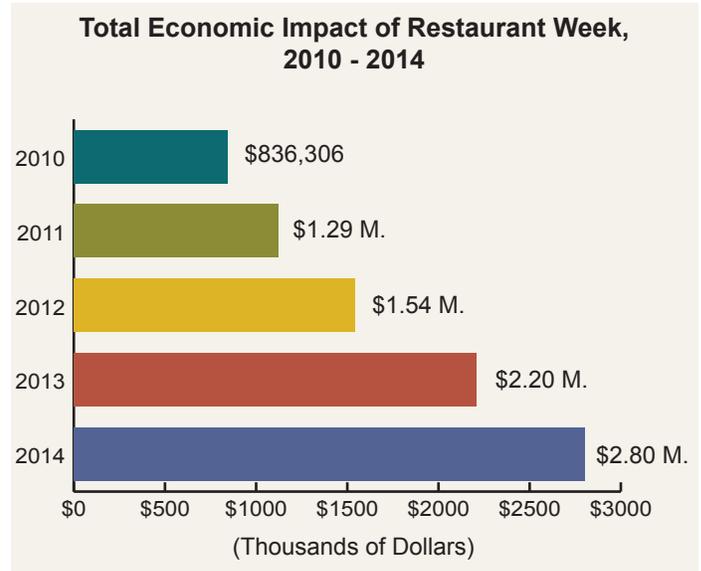
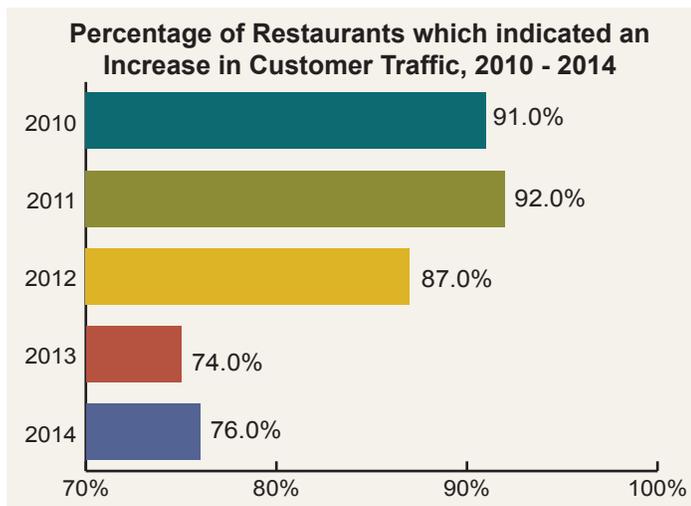
More than 58,900 meals were served during the 2014 Sonoma County Restaurant Week based on reporting from restaurants; over 16,000 meals were ordered off of the prix-fixe Restaurant Week menu. A 6% increase compared to 2013 in the number of meals served off the Restaurant Week menu can be attributed to the addition of Lunch, along with an increase in overall participation.

### Restaurant Satisfaction

Restaurant participation was the highest ever in 2014 with a 10% increase in participation over the 2013 event. Restaurants continued to be satisfied with the program: 96 percent were satisfied with their participation in the event, 92 percent were satisfied with the price points, and 96 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 2014, more than 4,500 comment cards were received. Some of the results are summarized below.

### Restaurant Week Encouraged Customers to Dine Out

Over one half of Sonoma County Restaurant Week survey respondents indicated that they had chosen to go out because it was Restaurant Week. While 48% indicated that they had not been encouraged by the event, 23% of those people had heard about the event from a friend, and another 14% had heard about it in the newspaper. This suggests the event is gaining popularity and recognition throughout the greater Sonoma County community.

### New Lunch Option Participation

Nearly 32% of all diners took advantage of the new lunch event. Although only 26.9% ordered from the prix-fixe menu, the overall participation highlights a vested interest in the lunch event by patrons. Looking ahead, simplifying this option as well as more directed marketing of this event will increase participation for diners going out to lunch.

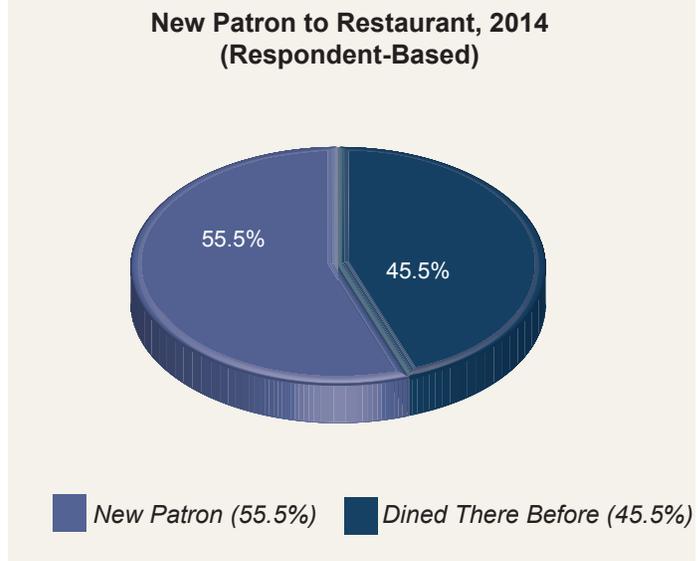
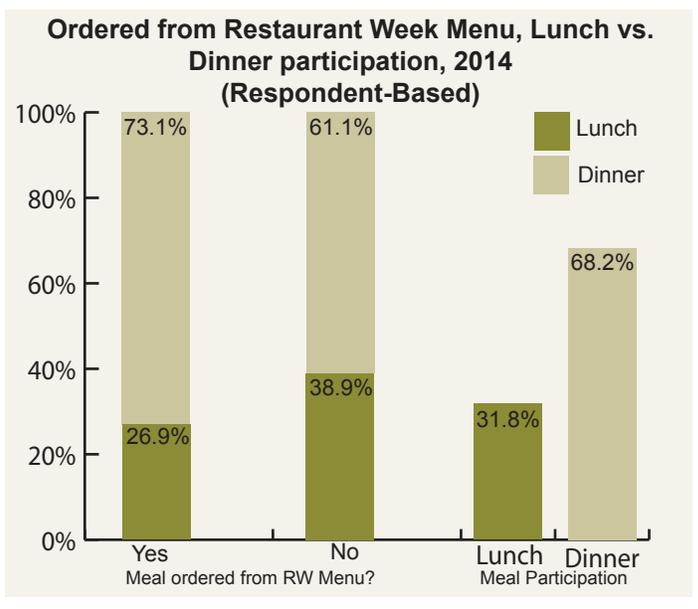
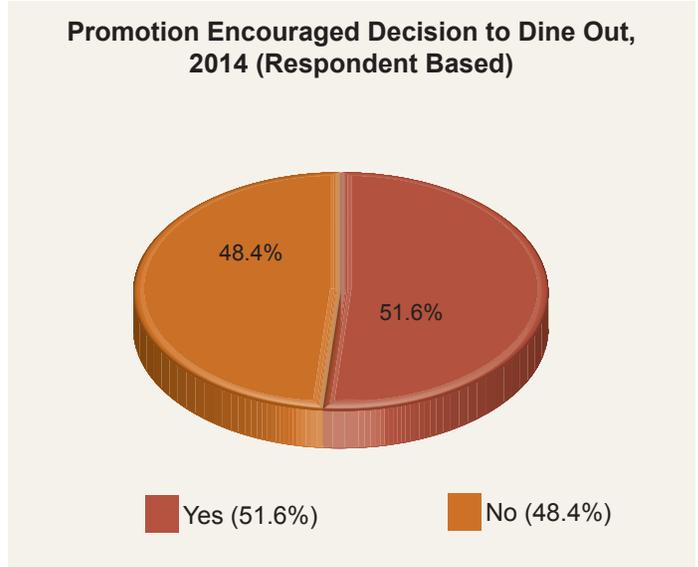
### New Patron to Restaurant

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 attract 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 (32%), which is also where most of participating restaurants were located (31.4%). Over 24% of diners were from outside Sonoma County. This includes customers from the rest of California and diners from 40 states and 9 countries. Many restaurants located in Petaluma, unincorporated county and the city of Sonoma also participated in 2014.

Area	Diners	Restaurants
Santa Rosa	32.0%	31.4%
Outside of County	24.3%	-
Sonoma	10.3%	12.4%
Petaluma	9.0%	11.0%
Sebastopol	8.0%	8.0%
Unincorporated	6.4%	19.7%
Windsor	3.8%	3.7%
Healdsburg	2.8%	9.5%
Rohnert Park	2.3%	2.9%
Cotati	-	-
Cloverdale	-	-



# 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 \$145,000 worth of local food products were used for Restaurant Week. This amount does not include restaurants that declined to indicate the value of local products used in their Restaurant Week menu.

### Total Restaurant Revenue

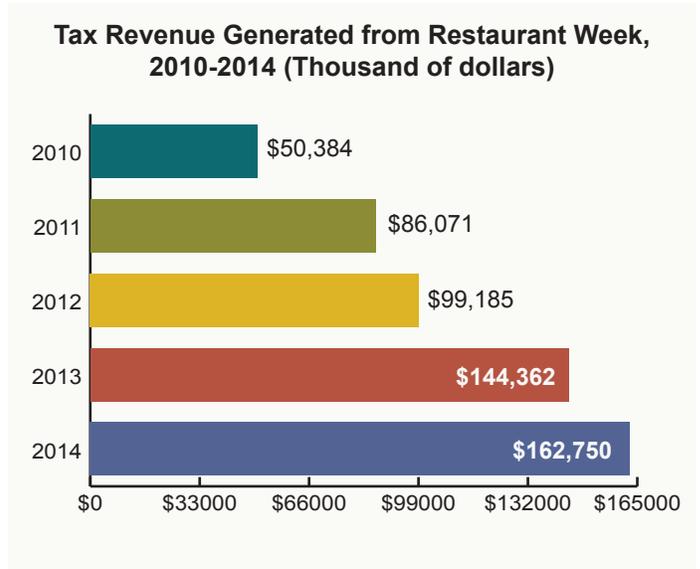
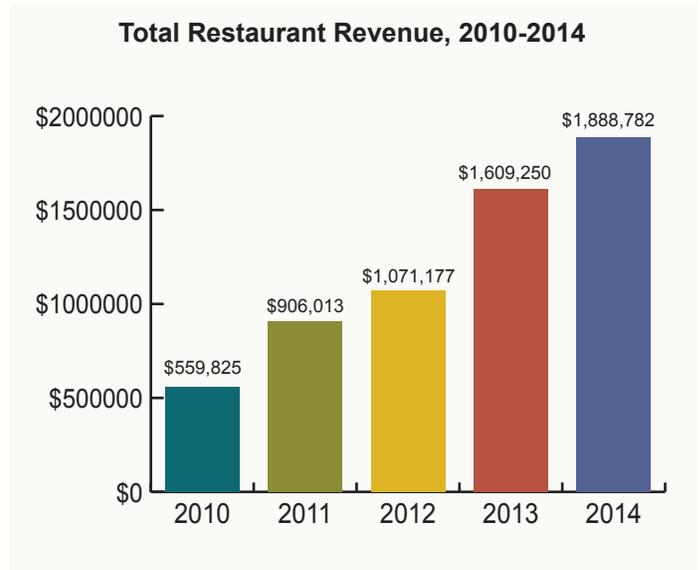
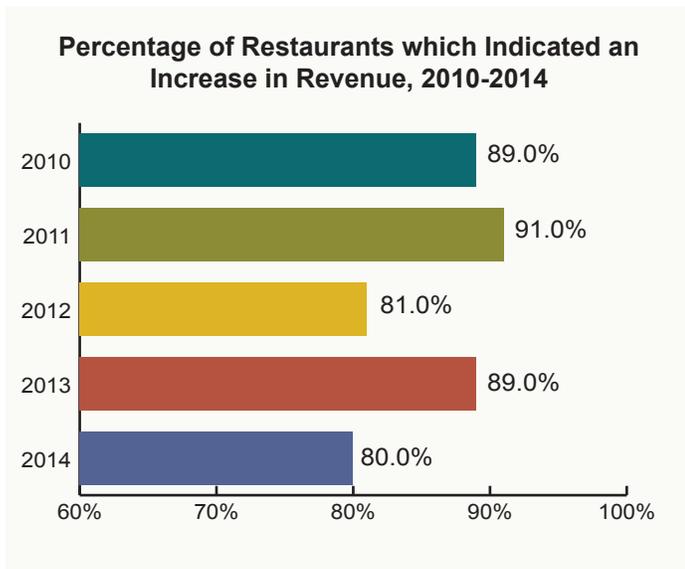
Total customer expenditure during Restaurant Week is valued at \$1,888,782. This number is reported by restaurants directly through surveying.

### Tax Revenue Generated from Restaurant Week

The sales tax revenue from the event was \$162,750 in 2014. This is a 13% increase over 2013 revenues.

### Restaurants Indicated an Increase in Revenue

A larger percentage of restaurants indicated that they experienced an increase in restaurant revenue in 2014. The average reported increase in revenue was 10%.



# 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, Sonoma Media Group, 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. Sonoma Media Group created specific Restaurant Week pages on each of their station's 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, and also creating a co-op advertising opportunity. 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

2014 Restaurant Week was sponsorship by the Jackson Family Wines for the second year. 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. New this year, Kendall-Jackson hosted a launch event for the restaurants to thank them for their participation. We look forward to another such event in 2015.

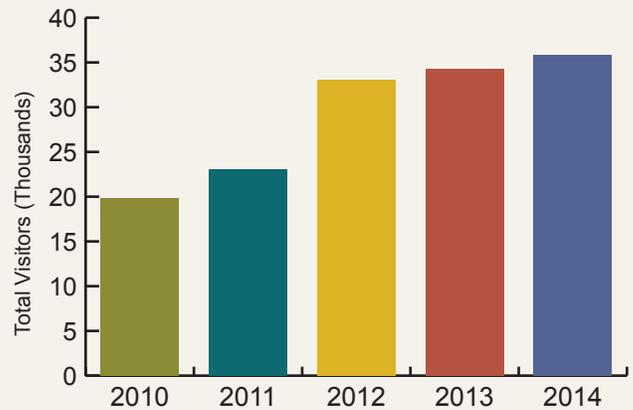
### SonomaCountyRestaurantWeek.org

The website was revamped in 2012 with the goal of being more streamlined and user-friendly, and again in 2014 to improve restaurant's experience. Search functions allow diners to search for restaurants by location and price point. 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 2014. 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 32,026 users and each post had an average reach of 4,575 people. Overall, we had 4,631 likes in 2014. 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.

Website Traffic from the week prior through Restaurant Week, 2010 - 2014



### Website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, 2014

#### Website

21,785 Unique Visitors  
9.67 Pages per Visit  
7 min 23 sec Average length of visit

#### Facebook

4,631 people like Sonoma County Restaurant Week on Facebook  
32,026 the total unique "reaches" during Restaurant Week  
4,575 the average "reach" of each post during Restaurant Week

#### Twitter

1,189 the number of SoCoRestWeek followers  
525 the number of SoCoRestWeek tweets

#### Instagram (New in 2014)

132 the total number of followers  
20 the number of pictures posted  
10 the number of pictures tagged by others

#### @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 1,189 in 2014.

# 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:

Thank you for your great work in promoting the 2014 Restaurant Week.

**-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. It is great for the community. 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**

I am grateful for this week and all the work you do to put it on. It truly helps all of us as January, February and early March are really slow...it helps to kick off the season again. Thank you!

**-Marianna, Owner**  
**Backyard**

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 very pleased overall with Restaurant Week and appreciate all of your marketing efforts to get customers interested and aware.

**-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 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**

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 five 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 4,500 diners filled out our comment cards, and 40% 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 2010-2014 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 2014. However, we have chosen not to project the value of these figures in order to have an accurate and conservative figure.

# Acknowledgements

## Sonoma County Restaurant Week Sponsors



The fifth 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 17,000 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, Sonoma Media Group 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, Hanna Berglund, Tourism Project Coordinator with the EDB, contributed a significant amount of time and effort to the organization of this event, including restaurant sign-up and contact, managing social media and advertisement and the updating content on the official Restaurant Week website. Ms. Berglund also updated and compiled the results of the fifth annual Sonoma County Restaurant Week to create this comprehensive report, and deserves special thanks.

Ben Stone  
Executive Director

With acknowledgement and appreciation to key local businesses that support economic development in Sonoma County

**DIRECTOR**



**EXECUTIVE**



**SPONSOR**



**Sonoma County Board of Supervisors**