

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **Sonoma Valley, an Epicurean Destination for Food Lovers**

### **Visitors Enjoy Culinary Experiences, Cooking Classes and World Class Restaurants that Showcase Local Artisans**

SONOMA, Calif. (September 2009) – Sonoma Valley has become known as much for its cuisine and epicurean experiences as for its award-winning wines. Fresh produce, local wines, cheeses, olive oils and breads are delicious staples of the Sonoma Valley culinary experience, while throughout the 17-mile valley, visitors can take part in a range of culinary experiences -- from wine blendings and farm excursions to cooking classes.

Sonoma Valley dining ranges from casual bakeries and cafes to celebrated wine country restaurants with extensive wine lists. Restaurants throughout the valley adapt their menus to suit the season, offering fresh, local agricultural products and ingredients. With its wines and homegrown produce harvested at the peak of freshness, Sonoma Valley is a food enthusiast's haven. While dining in Sonoma, customers encounter fare from such local growers and purveyors as *Oak Hill Farms*, *The Patch*, *Vella Cheese Co.*, *Artisan Bakers*, *The Basque Boulangerie*, and *The Olive Press*, among others.

A sampling of acclaimed Sonoma restaurants that continually feature menus emphasizing local, fresh seasonal items include: *Café La Haye*, *Carneros Bistro & Wine Bar*, *the girl & the fig*, *ESTATE*, *El Dorado Kitchen*, *Santé*, *Glen Ellen Inn* and *Saddles Steakhouse*.

Beyond the delicious cuisine, food fanciers also can enjoy a range of culinary inspired activities as well as year round farmers markets and produce stands found throughout the region. Guests looking for interactive epicurean experiences while in Sonoma, have many options to choose from, including:

- *Ramekins Culinary School* offers a range of group and private cooking classes in two kitchens led by notable chefs and Ramekin's instructors. [www.ramekins.com](http://www.ramekins.com)

- *From Farm to Table* offers culinary field trips, including full day farm tours, farm and vineyard dinners, winemaker for a day experiences and more. [www.fromfarmtotable.com](http://www.fromfarmtotable.com)
- Cooking Classes at the *Depot Hotel's Scuola Rustica* are a light-hearted and relaxed event that includes a complete, lavish four- or five-course lunch or dinner with three or more vintage wines, all while guests learn new cooking skills. [www.depothotel.com](http://www.depothotel.com)
- Blend your own wine at *Ravenswood Winery* - Guests have the chance to blend their own Zinfandel, and then take home a 375-ml bottle of the results. [www.ravenswood-wine.com](http://www.ravenswood-wine.com)
- Learn about olive oil and, during the fall olive harvest, see olives being pressed into olive oil at *Figone's Olive Oil Company* and *The Olive Press*. [www.figoneoliveoil.com](http://www.figoneoliveoil.com); [www.theolivepress.com](http://www.theolivepress.com)
- For private or group wine excursions customized to meet guests needs, local companies such as *Valley Wine Tours*, *Artisan Wine Tours* and *California Wine Tours* work with visitors to offer personalized wine experiences. [www.valleywinetours.com](http://www.valleywinetours.com); [www.artisanwinetours.com](http://www.artisanwinetours.com); [www.californiawinetours.com](http://www.californiawinetours.com)
- For a delectable tasting experience, visit *Wine Country Chocolates'* Chocolate Tasting Room, where guests can taste chocolate and watch chocolatiers work in the viewable kitchen. [www.winecountrychocolates.com](http://www.winecountrychocolates.com)

For information on Sonoma Valley's epicurean and culinary offerings, visit [www.sonomavalley.com](http://www.sonomavalley.com).

The Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau is a membership organization consisting of more than 350 hospitality related businesses. The Bureau coordinates the collection and dissemination of information about Sonoma Valley to visitors, local residents, travel writers, publications and other interested parties. The Bureau operates two visitor centers, which are open year-round seven days a week to welcome visitors to Sonoma Valley. For maps, guides, and touring instructions, stop by the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau (23570 Arnold Drive at Cornerstone Sonoma or on the Sonoma Plaza at 453 First Street East).

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