

The Sonoma Index-Tribune

Kathleen Hill: Restaurant Week, Chili Bowl, Snail of Approval

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KATHLEEN HILL

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Our contributing food and wine editor is back with an array of tasty tidbits this week. | 



Salt & Stone in Kenwood is one of several Valley restaurants offering special meal deals for Restaurant Week. (photo by John Burgess/The Press Democrat)

KATHLEEN HILL

CONTRIBUTING FOOD AND WINE EDITOR

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Every winter some counties around the country have a “restaurant week” to help boost business, which often slows in February. [Sonoma County Restaurant Week](#) runs Feb. 20 to 26.

Restaurant Weeks also helps customers try restaurants they haven't experienced before and helps people who don't usually go out for meals enjoy special culinary adventures for a slightly discounted price.

It's a great chance to explore our restaurants.

This year, the meal prices tend to be a little higher (isn't everything) and range from \$10 to \$25 for lunch, dinner from \$25 to \$55, and sweets from \$5.

Sonoma Valley restaurants participating through the end of this week include (alphabetically) B&V Whiskey Bar & Grill, Benicia's at The Lodge at Sonoma, Glen Ellen Star, Layla at MacArthur Place, Salt & Stone, Santé at Fairmont Sonoma Mission Inn, Spread, and Wit & Wisdom at The Lodge at Sonoma.

Check with each restaurant for their special menus and be sure to make a reservation.



The pizza at Il Fuoco is wood-fired with salt in the crust. (Kathleen Hill/for the Index-Tribune)

Il Fuoco pizza deal

Il Fuoco owner/chef Rob Larman called to say he is offering a deal right now of two pepperoni pizzas for \$20. But to take advantage of this you need to dine in before 6 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Remember Il Fuoco's pizzas are all one-size and feature great crust made with organic flour and formulated by local breadmeister Mike the Bejkr. 707-522-7778.

Seder wines

Should you happen to celebrate Passover with a special meal on April 5 and 6, or if you are simply interested in pure wines, you might consider kosher wines from some California producers such as Hagafen, Herzog, Shirah, Covenant and One Hope wineries.



Sonoma's Sunray Farm is one of several to get a 2022 Snail of Approval from Slow Food.

Snail of Approval

Slow Food in Sonoma County, a joint project of two local Slow Food chapters, Sonoma County North and Russian River, will honor eight Sonoma County restaurants, farms, ranches and producers at its annual awards ceremony, including two from the Valley. This international program recognizes food-related businesses that excel in sourcing, environmental impact, cultural connection, community involvement, staff support and business values.

Sonoma Valley used to have our own chapter of Slow Food International, which was started by Margarita Ramirez Dalton. It grew to include Sonoma as one of the first Slow Cities (Citta Slow) in the United States.

This year's Snail of Approval awards will be presented during a ceremony and celebration at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 14, at the Sebastopol Grange. The new award winners from Sonoma County will join a growing group of hundreds of winners from across the country.

Slow Food in Sonoma County's newest 2022 Snail of Approval awardees include:

- **Americana, Santa Rosa**
- **COOKIE...take a bite!, Santa Rosa**
- **Corner Project Ales & Eats, Geyserville**
- **Gold Ridge Organic Farms, Sebastopol**
- **Lunchette, Petaluma**
- **Maison Porcella, Windsor**
- **Sunray Farm, Sonoma**
- **Taub Family Outpost, Sonoma**

In 2022, the following 14 previous Snail of Approval recipients continued to provide good, clean and fair food in Sonoma County and their Snail awards have been extended for another two years. They include Bernier Farms, Black Pig Meat Co, Black Piglet Food Truck, DaVero Farms & Winery, Diavola Pizzeria and Salumeria, Estero Cafe, Handline, Laguna Farm, Seven Moons Farm (formerly Lantern Farm), The Naked Pig Cafe, Red Horse Pizza, Tierra Vegetables, Tilted Shed Ciderworks and Single Thread.

Since only Taub Family Outpost and Sunray Farm in Sonoma made this list, Slow Food Sonoma County might consider Haystack Farm, Paul's Produce, Ovello Salumeria, Baker & Cook, Spread Kitchen, El Molino Central and Il Fuoco, all of which use the best processes

and ingredients and give generously in the community.



Beautiful bowls are made every year for the annual Chili Bowl at the Sonoma Community Center. (Photo by Robbi Pengelly/Index-Tribune)

Chili Bowl (Express) Saturday, Feb. 25

The Sonoma Community Center's much touted Chili Bowl, formerly known as Chili Bowl Express, is this Saturday, Feb. 25, at the center.

Ticket holders get to choose their own bowl made by local ceramicists, take it to choose their own chili, both meaty and vegetarian and made by one of 10 local chefs to fill that bowl, and then take the bowl home. You can sit with a group or not but get tickets ahead for seatings at 11 a.m. or 2 p.m. (\$40) or at 5 p.m. for cocktails and chili, plus a ceramic cup to take with you. To-go bowls and chili are \$35.

This event benefits ceramics and other programs at the community center. Maybe I should re-start my Sonoma Writers Group that actually launched some successful careers in writing.

Get Chili Bowl tickets right away at sonomacommunitycenter.org/events/chili-bowl.



Dan Kahn, executive chef at Sonoma Overnight Support, prepares to roast chicken which has been marinated in lemon zest and juice, thyme and pureed shallots on Monday, Feb. 6, 2023. (Robbi Pengelly/Index-Tribune)

Hot meals for unhoused and people in need

Local families or individuals living in cars or elsewhere can get free warm meals for breakfast and lunch on weekdays from Sonoma Overnight Support (SOS) at the Grange Hall across from Mary's Pizza Shack in Boyes Hot Springs.

In fact, since Homeless Action Sonoma opened its temporary shelter on West Napa Street, SOS has provided and delivered 320 breakfasts and 320 lunches (640 meals) to people finding shelter there.

Each meal costs \$6.25 to produce, including staff wages, and SOS has not asked for nor received any payment for this food. There are ways we can all help. (Full disclosure: I sit on the SOS board).