# Barbera Festival tickets about to be released

Tickets for the June 8 3rd annual Barbera Festival at Cooper Ranch in Plymouth go on sale March 1.

The first two years were sellouts, with more than 2,000 attendees taking part each year.



This summer's alfresco event, scheduled from 11am to 4pm, will include more than 80 wineries from the Sierra Foothills, Paso Robles, Napa, Sonoma, Lake County, the Santa Cruz Mountains, Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, Lodi, Livermore and the Bay Area, as well as many of the region's top restaurants and catering companies.

Also consistent with the first two events will be the works of artists and artisans, including jewelry, paintings, pottery and metal work – all displayed in tents throughout the festival and adjacent to participating wineries.

Today, nearly 200 California wineries produce Barbera wines.

Tickets will be available March 1 and are $40/person in advance. Ticket price includes admittance, wine tasting, commemorative wine glass and free on-site parking. Food is sold separately. This is a non-smoking event and can accommodate service pets only at this time. There is also a special Designated Drive ticket for $20/person in advance, which includes event admittance and free non-alcoholic beverages.

For more information about the event or to buy tickets, go

online.

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# Lower calorie fast foods gaining in popularity

**By Nancy Shute, NPR**

Lower-calorie foods are driving growth and profits for chain restaurants, according to fresh research, suggesting that people are making smarter choices when it comes to burgers and fries.



We're still ordering the burger and fries, mind you. But we're going for smaller portions and shunning sugary drinks. French fry sales dropped about 2 percent from 2006 to 2011, while sales of lower-calorie beverages rose 10 percent, the study found.

That should make for happy restaurant chains, which have argued that Americans really don't want salads and other healthy offerings pushed by public health officials.

The report, from the Hudson Institute, analyzed sales at 21 restaurant chains, including McDonald's, Applebee's, Burger King, Cracker Barrel, IHOP, Panera Bread and KFC.

Restaurants that offered more lower-calorie services saw a 9 percent increase in food and beverage sales from 2006 to 2011, while restaurants that didn't saw sales drop by 16 percent.

The researchers defined lower calorie as a main item with fewer than 500 calories, a side dish with fewer than 150 calories, and a beverage below 50 calories for an eight-ounce serving.

“You go to McDonald’s and get a plain old burger, and you don’t get many calories,” says Hank Cardello, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and author of the report. It was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

A former food industry executive at companies like Coca-Cola and General Mills, Cardello is of the belief that badgering people about eating healthy isn’t necessarily the only way – or the best way – to solve the nation’s obesity crisis.

“We found some good performance in restaurants that were selling smaller-portion chicken sandwiches,” Cardello says. Even if that’s a fried chicken sandwich, he notes, smaller means fewer calories. And for the restaurants, “You don’t give up profits by doing that.”

New federal regulations requiring chain restaurants to post calorie counts will take effect next year, but some, including McDonald’s, already provide that information. Earlier studies have found that posted calorie counts don’t drive people to make better choices, and that they can actually be so confusing as to be useless. But this study suggests that people are starting to pay attention.

Cardello hopes the dollar figures will get restaurateurs to pay attention, too.

“The restaurant industry as a whole is a very show-me industry; show me why I should change.” He knows he’s not going to convert the chains to being public-health advocates. But now, the chains will know that they should “get with the program, or you leave money on the table.”

# Farm conference recognizes growing microbrews in Nevada

Hops and local beer will return to the annual Nevada Small Farm Conference with a pre-conference workshop on Feb. 21 from 10am-4pm at John Ascuaga's Nugget in Sparks.




The conference is Feb. 22-23.

Featured speaker Ron Godin of Colorado State University brings expertise from 10 years of hops research and production with western-state producers. Jay Davison of the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, will highlight new hops production in Northern Nevada. New processing techniques, producer challenges and market development are also on the agenda.

Local brewery owner and conference sponsor Tom Young of Great Basin Brewing Company will host a brewery tour and beer tasting at his Sparks restaurant at the conclusion of the workshop.

For details and registration information, contact Ann Louhela, (775) 351.2551 or ann.louhela@wnc.edu.

# Abundance of snow can be turned into food

**By Sarah Zielinski, NPR**

Two feet of snow can be a major inconvenience. We feel for you, friends in the Northeast. To help you work through that serious snow surplus, we shuffled through our virtual recipe box for snow cuisine.

It's like being given lemons and making lemonade, though you definitely don't want to be doing anything with lemon-colored snow you find outside.

Cultures around the world have created dishes made with shaved ice, for which snow is an easy substitute. There's the classic snow cone, Hawaiian shave ice, Guatemalan granizada covered in condensed milk and fruit, or Thai Nam Kang Sai, which has the ice on top, to name a few.



Sugar on snow is a Vermont favorite.

For a "Cooking With Snow" class that Willie Shubert taught through Knowledge Commons DC in January, he picked one snowy dish he remembered from his time living in China: baobing. "You get this huge amount of ice and cover it with whatever you want," he says, such as syrup, red beans, tapioca pearls or fruit. "It's an erupted volcano of sweetness."

Snow can also be used in recipes where it becomes invisible, a secret surprise. There's the simple snow cream, and snow pancakes made with a handful of the white stuff. In his class, Shubert also made a Korean cold soba soup, with chicken and beef broth, black rice vinegar, Asian pears and cucumbers. Cold soup is probably more of a summertime dish, though.

"Cooking is really about transforming flavor and texture, color and shape," Schubert says. "You can do a lot of the same transformation with cold."

In the Knowledge Commons DC class, participants made candies by playing with flavored syrups on dry ice. Enlarge image

Inspired by a New England maple syrup classic, sugar on snow, he brought to class several syrups of various flavors – sweet maple, sour cherry, spicy mango – as well as vodka and hot sauce. He then set up a trough of supercold dry ice and carved depressions with a wood burner to hold his concoctions.

"When you pour [the syrups] onto dry ice, they start to transform," Shubert says. A short stay on the ice creates something with the texture of caramel; longer, it's like hard candy.

Shubert, a self-professed "salad evangelist," usually teaches classes on salad-making, using the form to experiment with flavors and mixtures. The hardened syrups and alcoholic lollipops made in his snow class were "an extension of that flavor alchemy," he says.

In places where there is no snow, like this winter in Washington, D.C., or if you just need a good party trick, Shubert suggests substituting this setup: dry ice sitting atop a bed of shaved ice. It's easy to make if you've still got your Snoopy Sno-Cone Machine.

But we have to admit, there's nothing quite like real snow.

# California dairy industry gives N.Y. a sour taste

**By Kristen V. Brown, Times Union**

A few months ago, a new product appeared in the aisles of Price Chopper supermarkets. The store's plainly-packaged private-label butter now also bore a seal heralding its primary ingredient, "Real California Milk."

This new item – California-made butter in a Northeast supermarket chain – is only a more visible expression of a longstanding issue for New York dairy farmers: Even on home turf, California's super-sized dairy industry presents some hearty competition.

"It's so hard for us to compete," said Jeff Wysocki, 50, a dairy farmer in Hoosick Falls.

California has long been the nation's largest producer of milk. But with a milk pricing system that offers up California milk cheaper than many other states and an aggressive national advertising campaign spending millions annually to promote the value of "real" California dairy, some New York farmers like Wysocki worry that California's competitive edge may one day shut New York dairies out of more than deals for private-label butter.

"Competition from California has traditionally been a problem for New York farmers," said Laura Ten Eyck, senior manager of New York projects and outreach for the American Farmland Trust. "Dairy is a particular issue as the western states have recently gotten into it in a very big way."

Wysocki owns Wysocki Farm, a small, 70-cow dairy farm that has been in the family since the 1930s. In the back of his mind, Wysocki said he stresses constantly that California dairy's strong presence in the Northeast will make it hard for New York state dairy farms to stay in business in the future – especially small family farms like his own.

"We just won't be competitive," Wysocki said, referring to California's ability to produce dairy products more cheaply. "We'll be out of business."

A large part of California's dairy edge stems from its milk pricing system, which is set by the state, rather than using the federal milk pricing system that most states utilize, including New York. Dairy farmers in California are often paid up to several dollars less per hundred pounds – about 12 gallons – of milk than farmers in New York. In December, preliminary average milk prices paid to farmers were $18.80 per hundred pounds of milk in California, according to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service. Farmers in New York received $22.20 per hundred pounds of milk in the same month.

Those milk prices often result in California-made dairy products that are sold at a lower cost than dairy produced in other states, giving California a competitive advantage nationally.

At Schenectady-based Price Chopper, spokeswoman Mona Golub said "quality comes first, cost comes second" in considering bids from suppliers for private-label products. Recently, Price Chopper advertised a pound of its private-label butter as retailing for $1.99; coupons from the California Milk Advisory Board (CMAB) were available on the Web to slash an additional 55 or 35 cents off any products carrying the "Real California" seal.

"We always feel a push from California," said Doug DiMento,

spokesperson for Agri-Mark, the New England dairy cooperative which makes Cabot brand dairy products. DiMento said that Price Chopper's California-made private-label butter is "a blow to Northeast dairy farmers."

Agri-Mark declined to bid on the Price Chopper butter contract, though DiMento said it does supply other supermarket private labels in the Northeast.

"Expanding markets for our California products is part of our charge," said Jennifer Giambroni, spokeswoman for the CMAB, which began using the "Real Califonia" seal in 2007 as a way to increasing awareness of California dairy.

"The Northeast is a big area for us," she said. "That's really happened over the past few years."

According to the CMAB, Northeast supermarkets that carry the Real California product seal include Price Chopper, Big Y, Market Basket and Giant Eagle. While New York has a good hold on the local fluid milk market and the national yogurt market, nationally California far surpasses New York in production of products such as butter and cheese.

Eric Sheffer, of Sheffer Grassland Dairy in Hoosick Falls, said California dairy's ability to market its products vigorously is one of the biggest threats to dairies in the Northeast.

"When it comes down to it, their marketing is out-competing ours," he said. "We can make quality products."

The CMAB's award-winning advertising campaigns have included the original Got Milk? slogan, developed in 1993, as well as the now ubiquitous "Happy Cows" ads first aired in 2002. The CMAB's national advertising budget is about $20 million annually.

Rick Naczi, CEO at the American Dairy Association and Dairy

Council in Syracuse, said Northeast dairy promotions instead tend to focus on marketing products in supermarkets and at schools rather than advertising them, partially due to lack of funding.

ADADC performs similar functions to the CMAB for New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Though the organization does market and promote generic dairy products, like the CMAB, it does "almost no" advertising, Naczi said.

National ad campaigns for milk do run in New York, such as the Milk Processor Education Program's 30-second spot planned to air on CBS during Sunday's Super Bowl and the national Got Milk? campaigns featuring celebrities with milk mustaches (the slogan is licensed from CMAB).

"California is an anomaly," said Naczi. "Most states don't do that kind of state advertising."

Northeast dairy operations, said DiMento, of Agri-Mark, are left with one option going forward.

"We just have to step up and continue," he said.

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# Nevada looking at small farms being economic engine

**By Anne Knowles, Northern Nevada Business Weekly**

Small farms need to flourish if Nevada's new emphasis on agriculture is to produce results.

Gov. Brian Sandoval said he is revising the state's economic development plan to focus on farming as one of several

industries vital to Nevada’s future.

“Agriculture is a primary economic engine for the great state of Nevada,” Sandoval said at a Carson City breakfast hosted by the Northern Nevada Development Authority last month. “Agriculture is going to be part of the huge growth the state will see.”

Many large farms and ranches dot Nevada’s landscape, especially in Elko and Eureka counties, where the average-size operation is 4,573 acres and 9,110 acres, respectively, according to a new state report on agriculture.

The report estimates the economic impact of agriculture in the state at $5.3 billion. Northwest Nevada accounted for $2.2 billion of that total; northeast Nevada for $235.1 million.

But due to nature’s constraints, expansion will have to emanate largely from farms ranging in size from one acre to 500 acres.

“Almost all the valleys, the hydrologic basins, are closed basins,” says Jay Davison, specialist, alternative crops and forage, University of Nevada, Reno, Cooperative Extension. “You can’t start a large farm because of these limitations on water.

You can’t go from sagebrush to alfalfa.”

A peek at the future of agriculture in the state will come during the Small Farm Conference Feb. 21-23 at John Ascuaga’s Nugget in Sparks.

The conference highlights crops new to Nevada – hops, for instance – and technologies such as hoop houses to bolster high-desert farming. Hops is being tested right now in northern Nevada by Neal Workman, a Fallon farmer, who with the help of UNR’s Cooperative Extension, planted more than 600 hops plants of multiple varieties on about one acre of his

300-acre farm.

“My dad and I talked about it, doing something different, diversification,” says Workman. “We have our necks out a little bit, but it is sort of fun. It should be interesting.”

Workman has spoken to Great Basin Brewery in Reno and sees some interest from Northern California breweries that prefer a locally-grown crop. But, like grapes, hops takes three years to assess, says UNCE’s Davison, who is working with Workman and is also planning on planting some hops at the Main Station UNR farm in Reno.

Workman says his brother is successfully growing teff, another crop highlighted in the state report.

Desert Oasis Teff, owned and operated by Dave Eckart and John Getto in Fallon, has seen demand for the grain double to more than a million pounds last year. The company farms its own grain and works with interested farmers to grow teff as a rotation crop on existing farms. According to UNCE’s Davison, Desert Oasis Teff recently purchased property in which to begin milling and processing the teff, one of the gaps in the state’s agricultural industry identified by the state’s report.

One of the biggest hurdles for small producers is finding a market for their product because lower their smaller volumes can sometimes mean less interest from the distribution channel and buyers.

“If you’re going to supply somebody and tell them I’ll give you X amount of cantaloupe, for example, you better be able to supply them with it,” says UNCE’s Davison.

Some small farmers sell a specialty crop such as carrots directly to other larger farms, such as Fallon’s Lattin Farms, says Davison, or directly to local restaurants and consumers through farmer’s markets and so-called community-supported

agriculture subscriptions.

Grow For Me Sustainable Farm takes the community-supported concept a step further, or a step backward to its roots. The 97-acre farm on the California border 25 minutes outside Reno offers tomatoes, lettuce, okra, apples, pears and other produce, as well as chicken, lamb, pork and beef to about 25 members who come on Sundays to pick their own food.

The farm's subscribers, who apply for membership, also have a say in what gets grown.

"I've been doing it five years now and most of the families rejoin," says Wendy Baroli, owner of the farm dubbed Girlfarm by one of its restaurant customers, Dish Café. "They have a commitment to how you eat and prepare food. I manage your farm for you."

Baroli and others hope the state stands by its stated commitment to agriculture by helping to nourish the small farmers it needs to grow the industry. She's waiting to testify before the Reno City Council in March when it considers whether to rezone the UNR farm near Mill Street and McCarran Boulevard for commercial development.

"When you think about the governor's statement, it is almost counterintuitive to look at the extension station as an ATM," says Baroli, who says the UNR farm is vital for the training of new farmers and providing a place for them to experiment. But she says the governor has the final say in whether the property is developed no matter what the City Council decides.

The Nevada Legislature may also have a say in helping small farmers when it considers two bills that would let farmers use home kitchens to turn their crops such as raspberries into value-added products such as raspberry jam.

"A small farm can't compete on prices due to economics of scale," says NevadaGrown's Louhela. "This opens up their

opportunities.”

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# Creating whole wheat bread at home

**By Mark Bittman, New York Times**

Those of us who cook believe that you have to cook to eat; baking bread is different. With so many relatively decent loaves readily available in stores, bread-baking is more of a hobby.

The result, of course, will be eaten and enjoyed — and bakers know the rewards of blowing people’s minds with a good loaf: “You made that?” — but baking is not mandatory. (I say that having just paid four bucks for a “baguette” that would serve better as a kitchen sponge.)

As with any practice, baking gets better over time. But the odd thing about bread-making is that any epiphanies you have along the way are only temporarily gratifying. You always make progress, but then your standard rises, and in the end baking provides that oddly addictive combination of satisfaction and frustration.

Producing a great baguette is an art, but whole-grain bread is real sustenance, and I wanted good ones in my repertory. So over the past few years, I’ve challenged myself to make 100 percent whole-grain bread, and to make it delicious.

There are three reasons that my whole-grain breads have become better: the food processor, the overnight rise and the sourdough starter. And they all involve abandoning kneading.

Kneading dough by hand for 20 minutes — as was the practice when I first started baking — was never actually necessary (few home bakers knew that), but a requirement of a particular kind of bread made in a relatively hurried fashion using a relatively large amount of domesticated (that is, store-bought) yeast.

That hurried method was, as far as I can tell, perfected (I say this in the sense that it truly cannot get any better) by Charles Van Over in his book, "The Best Bread Ever," published in 1997 and set to be revised as an ebook this fall. Van Over makes the best home baguettes of anyone I've ever met. In any case, both the "not-quite-whole-grain bread" and whole-wheat focaccia recipes are adaptations (by me, not Van Over) of his technique. The key "ingredient" in Van Over's method, aside from his precision, is the food processor, which "kneads" the dough in 45 seconds, developing gluten in much the same way an overnight rise does.

The overnight rise is at the heart of my second revelation, a result of my well-known (to bread bakers, anyway) encounter with Jim Lahey of Sullivan Street Bakery in SoHo. Lahey slowed the process down, reducing the yeast and combining a slow rise and an oven-within-an-oven baking method described in his book, "My Bread" (written with Rick Flaste, a former *Times* editor). This method essentially replaces kneading with time and takes at least 12 hours. (For further discussion, consult "No-Knead Bread," which ran in the *Times* in November 2006, along with the hundreds of blog posts, comments and wonderful, thoughtful variations it spurred.)

Finally, I came to the realization that great 100 percent whole-grain bread can be made only with sourdough (it's about the difference between how whole grains respond to store-bought yeast and how they respond to acid, or a combination of acid and wild yeast), and I discovered that via a combination of driving other people crazy with questions and a recipe from "The Scandinavian Cookbook," by my friend Trine Hahnemann.

When I visited Hahnemann just over a year ago, I requested a lesson in Danish rye and got one. That plus her recipe has propelled me at least halfway up the mountain.

The recipe here is, again, an adaptation, though it's close to her original. The sourdough method, which I have found to be the most reliable way to produce a starter, is from "Bread Alone," by Daniel Leader and Judith Blahnik, a fine bread-baking book that gets a bit technical for me. (If you find my route overly simplistic, buy "Bread Alone.") Sourdough rye requires time: a few days to make the starter, and 12 hours or so every time you want to make bread. But kneading? No.

For those who like a dense, chewy, flavorful loaf, Hahnemann's rye is the find of a lifetime. You can make it lighter in texture and color by using a touch of white flour in place of whole wheat, though to me that defeats the purpose. You can make it darker in color — gorgeously so — by adding roasted malt powder. Seeds — fennel, caraway, anise — add flavor. If it's too chewy for you, use flour in place of cracked rye. Finally — and this may be hard to believe — it's best when wrapped in plastic and cured for a day before eating.

The other two breads here are based on Van Over's technique, and the not-quite whole grain includes a fair approximation of his original recipe. If ever there was a reason for you to splurge on a kitchen scale, this is it: there is real precision here, and if you follow the instructions to the gram, you will produce very good bread.

So why don't all baguettes incorporate the complexity of whole grains? The problem is that there is a limit to how much whole grain you can add to a bread and still make a light loaf with a crisp, shattering crust and an interior that pulls pleasantly. Whole grain has benefits and charms of its own, but it does not respond to yeast the way white flour does. Adding something like 10 percent of whole wheat or rye or barley flour to a white dough gives you something like what

the French call pain complet, but it’s not complet at all; it’s just white bread with a little whole wheat in it, like the stuff they sell in stores. Adding 20 or 30 percent gives you a distinctive loaf that has the benefits of both, and it has become my standard. Adding 50 percent or more pretty much robs you of the reasons you started with white flour in the first place. If that’s what you want, make sourdough, or cheat.

The last recipe here, the whole-grain focaccia, is the cheat. I won’t apologize for it — I make it often — but it’s not in the same league as these others. By upping the amount of yeast, using the food processor and incorporating relatively large amounts of fat (in the form of olive oil), you can make a 100 percent whole-wheat focaccia (other shapes, including baguettes, will also work, but I like it best as a puffy flatbread) in a minimum of time. Really, the best treatment for whole grain is sourdough. But if you’re in a hurry, greatness takes second place.

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# Fair Play vintners pairing wine with soup

Six wineries of south Fair Play have united for Soups of the World.

On Feb. 16 soups will be paired with wines from Bechard, Chateau Routon, Golden Leaves, Mellowood, Mount Aukum and Sierra Oaks.

The $35 event includes sampling wines, artisan breads and snacks, soups, souvenir glass, and recipe booklet.

A “culinary” guide will accompany participants throughout the day, beginning at 10:45am and ending at 5pm.

Advanced purchase required by Feb. 12. Purchase tickets at any participating winery or online.

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# Beaver Creek scores with days of culinary riches

**By Kathryn Reed**

BEAVER CREEK – Unfamiliar aromas waft through the room, dozens of corks are coming out of wine bottles, chefs usually only seen in magazines or on television are milling about. This weekend is all about eating and drinking, and a little about getting on the mountain.

It’s definitely not your ordinary ski vacation. Talk among guests proved that. People were not chatting about which runs they went on or how the snow conditions are or even past ski experiences – it was all about what was on the other end of the fork or spoon or what was being swirled in a particular glass.

Instead of flying all over the country to taste the delectable dishes of seven well-known chefs, Beaver Creek assembled the culinary geniuses in one place. John Besh, Anthony Giglio, Tim Love, Spike Mendelsohn, Alex Seidel, Gail Simmons and Sam Talbot were the stars.

The Jan. 24-27 annual Beaver Creek Food & Wine Weekend is an experience for those who enjoy food that is off the charts good, wines not found in all restaurants or store shelves, and

a camaraderie among foodies that has conversations turning to: “What was in that pumpkin puff?” “How did they get the beets sliced like that?” “Was the pasta sautéed in rabbit au jus?”



No shortage of wine at the Beaver Creek Food + Wine Festival. Photos/Kathryn Reed

It would have been impossible to attend all of the events during the four-day affair, but it’s easy to pick one event or put a package together. A couple from Denver opted for the Snowshoe & Gourmet lunch – it was her birthday present from her husband. (This event often sells out.) Last year people met at the event and said they wanted to come back – so that’s what the new group of friends did. A couple from Key West picked a package stacked with events – so much so they had to skip one they were so full. One couple mentioned how they have been to 70 countries and each trip revolves around food. A couple from the Houston area wanted an adult vacation.

While Beaver Creek is known for being a family-friendly resort, the food and wine event definitely caters to a different crowd – one that doesn’t even have to touch the snow.

The first night was an opportunity for the chefs of Beaver Creek (Christian Apetz, David Gutowski, Daniel Joly, Jay McCarthy, David Walford and Kirk Weems) to wow the group.

Walford took an animal familiar to those in Colorado – lamb – and turned it into a stew that some called “magnificent.”

When it came to the foie gras stuffed Twinkies the reactions were mixed – from “oh, ya” they are worth having to “Twinkies should only be filled with something sweet”.

The celebrity chefs had the night off from work in the kitchen, but they worked the crowd so guests could ask for a tip or two.

Events like this are also an opportunity for wineries to get in front of people who might not be familiar with their label. Paula Schweiger of Schweiger Vineyards and Winery in St. Helena says only family members or employees pour so customers can get information “right from the source”. This was not true of all the wineries at this event.

For Ed St. John at Pedroncelli in Geyserville the thinking is an event like this attracts people from all over the country, so he is reaching a broader demographic than if it were a locals-only event.

Matt Jones, who is on the national board of directors for Slow Food USA, looks over the assembled celebrity chefs and says, “There are killer purveyors here tonight. Alex Seidel is a terrific chef and former *Food + Wine* top new chef.”

(*Food + Wine* magazine is the other main player besides Beaver Creek in putting on the event.)

Seidel owns Fruition restaurant in Denver. Vail visitors may remember him when he was the chef de cuisine at Sweet Basil. He’s all about cooking with local ingredients. So much so that he has a 10-acre farm that in addition to fruit and vegetables being grown, sheep are raised for their milk that is turned into cheese.

**Gourmet lunches**

Seidel was the featured chef with Grouse Mountain Grill Executive Chef Gutowski at the Snowshoe & Gourmet Lunch. The day started with a trek through Beaver Creek's McCoy Park Nordic Center. It ended at Gutowski's restaurant inside the Pines Lodge.

To take the chill off from the lift ride down, hot cocoa is served – made with Lindt chocolate. It was like having dessert before the main course.

Then the glasses of Schweiger 2011 Sauvignon Blanc came around. (Stella, Leffe and Hoegaarden beers were available at most of the events as well.)

"I wanted to do as much as I could from Colorado," Seidel told the diners as they started in on the roasted beet salad.

The pumpkins used for the puffs that were served with the first wine came from a farmer in Boulder. The rogue blue panna cotta for the salad is from Seidel's sheep.

The salad, which also came with poached pear and almond vinaigrette, and pickled pearl onions was so pretty it was hard to ruin it with a fork. But it was too inviting not to want to devour.

"It's like a rock concert for your mouth," Jude Mansur of Fair Hope, Ala., said of the salad.

This was paired with a 2009 Schweiger Merlot.

Winemaker Andy Schweiger said they bottle the Merlot after 36 months "to give the tannins more time to obliterize." This is twice the amount of time some wineries wait to bottle.

"I make wines to complement food," he told the group.

Only 300 cases of the Merlot were bottled; with a good number of those opened in Beaver Creek last weekend.

The 2008 Schweiger Cabernet Sauvignon was chosen to go with the braised rabbit pappardelle. The rabbit had caramelized cauliflower, clamshell mushroom conserva, with truffled rabbit jus.

Superlatives ran off the tongues of those at the table as they barely paused between bites.

The house-made crème fraiche cake with vanilla cream, lemon curd and huckleberry sorbet was paired with the Schweiger Port X.

The port is 100 percent Cab grapes that are blended with brandy.

The dessert was so incredible that the table wanted seconds.

The next day diners got a little exercise via the slopes of Beaver Creek before the exquisite lunch that was prepared at the Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch. Chef John Besh, who was also on the slopes, admitted the first course was prepared by his team.

His Southern roots did not necessarily inspire Besh's dishes for the day. He served elk as the main course. This is a common item on menus in Colorado.

He told *Lake Tahoe News* he prepares the foods he grew up with – like gumbo, etouffee and jambalaya – when he is at home.

Besh owns six restaurants in the New Orleans area. He's participated in nine Iron Chef competitions and was runner-up on Food Networks' "Next Iron Chef".

Besh said he tries to ski two weeks a year, with the food and wine event his adult week.

Walking into the dining area guests are handed a glass of Capture 2010 Chardonnay. Slippers are also provided so ski boots don't have to be worn during lunch.

The first course is cauliflower and lobster bisque with quail and brioche toad-in-the-hole and shaved white truffle. This is paired with Hoegaarden beer. The thick broth is poured tableside onto the ingredients already in the bowl. Chunks of lobster are in the soup so there is no mistaking what is being served.

The main course was chestnut cavatelli, a ragout of elk shoulder and wild mushrooms. It was paired with a Capture 2009 Cabernet.

“It’s like filet mignon,” Gary Mathews of Key West raved.

Dessert was a warm gateau Basque with red wine preserved berries. It was served with a Capture 2008 Port.

(The Healdsburg winery poured a Sauvignon Blanc at the Grand Tasting that they said is the No. 1 Sauvignon Blanc at the French Laundry in Yountville.)

**Grand Tasting**

For the signature event, the Grand Tasting is about nibbling on culinary treats from the celebrity chefs as well as Beaver Creek’s chefs, all the while pairing the food with mostly California wines, but a few Colorado ones as well. (Two Rivers in Grand Junction, Colo., was a nice find.)

Jay McCarthy, corporate chef for Group970 Restaurants, is taking a breather from his station. He’s letting Chris Foley of Beaver Creek Chophouse handle the jalapeno and cheddar elk mac and cheese. McCarthy has been up since 7am getting ready for the tasting that started at 7pm at the Park Hyatt.

McCarthy says it’s a tight brotherhood of chefs in Beaver Creek. After all, the enclave only has 400 residents, while the county has 30,000. With a million skiers hitting the slopes, the multitude of restaurants has a lot of hungry people to feed.

Many of those restaurants came out to show off what they can do. Dishes ranged from smoked trout parfait to slow roasted guinea hen breast to toast with ricotta.

But that wasn’t any ordinary toast with ricotta. Chef Sam Talbot used Korean style figs and braised scallions. It was just the right balance between the sweetness of the figs with the cheese.

Bryan Simonsen at Blue Moose Pizza created what he called autumn pizza. It was crimini mushrooms, truffle oil, parsley, Parmesan, garlic, olive oil and goat cheese on a whole wheat crust.

The mini ding dongs from Christina Apetz and Janielle Hultberg at 8100 Mountainside Bar & Grill brought back fond childhood memories for many people. Their more adult dessert was beer floats. Chocolate ice cream for a dark beer like Leffe, lemon for the Stella.

**Other events**

There were three other events on the Friday for a total of five. The Burgers & Beers will be featured in an upcoming *Lake Tahoe News* story.

And there were four events people could partake in on Saturday.

Sunday was the Celebrity Chef Ski Race & Brunch.

While the 2014 dates and events have not been announced, the Beaver Creek website will have details when available.

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# Vegetarians less likely to die from heart disease

**By Huffington Post**

Now this is a finding Bill Clinton can attest to.

In a new study confirming the heart-healthy benefits of a plant-based diet, researchers found that vegetarians are 32 percent less likely to die or be hospitalized because of heart disease.

The findings, which are published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, show that vegetarianism's positive effects on the heart largely lie with its cholesterol- and blood pressure-lowering abilities.

"The results clearly show that the risk of heart disease in vegetarians is about a third lower than in comparable non-vegetarians," study researcher Tim Key, deputy director of the Cancer Epidemiology Unit at the University of Oxford, said in a statement.

The study included 45,000 people from England and Scotland who were part of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC)-Oxford study. Of those people, about 34 percent were vegetarian. They all had their blood pressure taken and blood samples drawn to measure cholesterol levels for the study.

The participants began the study in the 90s and were tracked until 2009; by that time, 1,235 had developed heart disease. Of those people, 1,066 people were hospitalized for heart disease, while 169 people died from heart disease.

After taking into account outside factors like age, exercise, socioeconomic background, smoking status, alcohol consumption and education level, researchers found that vegetarians had a 32 percent lower risk of being hospitalized or dying from heart disease over the study period.

And when taking body mass index into account, they still had a 28 percent lower risk of developing heart disease than their meat-eating peers, the researchers found.

Of course, plant-based eating has also been linked with other health benefits, including living a longer life and having a lower risk of cancer.