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Marin, just a little out there



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A FRIEND

## The Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau August Newsletter

The goal of the Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau is to keep you informed of local events, green businesses, travel trends and membership. Every issue of our newsletter is also posted on our website, [www.visitMarin.org](http://www.visitMarin.org)



### Have fun in Marin County!

The MCVB staff: Mark, Christine, Deborah, Gina and Anuschka.

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**Do you like our new look?** We have switched to a new Email Service Provider to better connect with the community, our members and partners. For any feedback and if you would like to join our newsletter, email us your contact information and comment to [info@visitmarin.org](mailto:info@visitmarin.org)



## MCVB Member of the Month

**Originally founded by Horst Dannecker in 1972 as Corporate Media Systems, Inc., CMS has undergone a substantial evolution.**

**Over the years CMS evolved from a one-client company to providing audio-visual rental services for thousands of customers throughout the Bay Area.**

**Today CMS serves the Bay Area as the premier provider of audio-visual rental services, providing a comprehensive range of solutions, equipment, and support for companies or individuals wishing to conduct successful events. They specialize in basic meetings, corporate meetings and special events.**

**Let CMS help you with your event the first time out and take advantage of their special discount for first-time customers: \$100.00 off equipment orders over**

**\$1,000.**

**Corporate Media Systems is located at 1261-K Andersen Dr. in San Rafael  
Contact them any number of ways:**

**Phone:**  415-457-9550

**Fax: 415-258-9616**

**Toll:**  800-239-7602

**Email: [cms@cmsrents.com](mailto:cms@cmsrents.com)**

[Corporate Media Systems, Inc](#) has been a member of the MCVB since June of 2007

## Event Highlights for August

### Saturday, August 15: San Rafael Food and Wine Festival

[The San Rafael Food & Wine Festival](#) is back again at the Falkirk Cultural Center!

The Festival showcases a myriad of local artists from Art Works Downtown, a fine arts collective. The artists will show finished work and provide hands-on demonstrations of their artistic process. While viewing the artwork and tasting the gourmet fare, attendees will hear smooth jazz and classical music by Marin's best musicians. The Falkirk Cultural Center provides the perfect backdrop for this celebration of the region's food, wine and art.

The location is on Mission Street between E and D Streets in San Rafael from 11:00am to 5:00pm.



### Saturday and Sunday, August 22 and 23: Tiburon Art Festival

Get ready for the 3rd Annual [Tiburon Art Festival](#) on Historic Ark Row in downtown Tiburon. There will be 64 juried artists, live music, family entertainment, activities, wine, beer and champagne, all steps away from the waterfront of the San Francisco Bay. Both days are from 11:am to 6:00pm.

*If you are a member/partner of the MCVB, please continue to send us any event you would like to have listed on our [Event Calendar](#) web page. We will highlight a few county events each month in this section.*

## End of Summer Dining Sizzle



A handful of our restaurant partners are ending summer with some sizzling offers. Check them out by community:

### **Corte Madera**

*Izzy's Happy Hour:* Daily from 4pm to 6pm - half price bar appetizers along with drink specials, as well as an early dining menu. We are pleased to announce that kids are complimentary on Tuesdays.

### **Novato**

*Rickey's* is on fire with the new summer menu and "Dine & Dip". With the summer upon us, Rickey's features al fresco dining with a poolside, garden setting. However, it's the new menu that takes center stage, featuring fresh, seasonal summer products; lower prices; more options (both in terms of size & variety); and lighter tapas-style items. Prices start as low as \$5.95 and feature everything from Pulled Pork Tostadas and pan seared Crab Cakes to



sesame seed crusted Ahi Tuna, grilled Lamb Chops and Chicken Saltimbocca. Rickey's is also home to "Dine & Dip," a tradition that local advocates look forward to year after year and featuring a special kids' menu, which provides family friendly options which can be enjoyed before, during and after a dip in the pool or a lounge in the Jacuzzi. Rickey's COOL Jazz "Club" is taking the concert series outside for the summer with a sizzling line-up of free performances: appearing poolside, every Friday and Saturday night from 7:00 - 10:00 p.m.



*Black Point Bar & Grill* at StoneTree Golf Course: August Promotion from 4pm to 6pm, 7 days a week, and expires August 31, 2009:

Choose between Housemade Mini Burgers: three burgers served with cheddar cheese and sautéed onions or BBQ Pulled Pork Sliders: three slow roasted pork sliders served with barbecue sauce, with a draft beer for only \$10.

### **West Marin**

*The Farm House at The Point Reyes Seashore Lodge* is pleased to announce that our dining room renovations are complete and our new chef, Scott Dammann, formerly of Eastside West in San Francisco, has developed a sophisticated California bistro cuisine menu featuring fresh daily dishes, many with locally produced and organic choices. A selection of oysters from our local oyster companies is a great start to any one of our meals, whether you are here for lunch or dinner, we have a little bit of everything. It is believed that our crab cakes and fish & chips are the area's best! And don't forget to try the Three Twins organic pumpkin ice-cream with hot fudge and whipped cream - one of our favorite desserts!

*The Station House Cafe:*

ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS! Summer dining al fresco in the beautiful Station House Cafe garden. Enjoy fresh oysters, local and organic produce, summer cocktail treats, live music in the Lounge every Sunday. Ask about our banquet room for special events.



## **Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau: E-Commerce for Corporate Meetings and Wedding Destination Travel**

The MCVB has implemented e-commerce marketing strategies for inbound travel to Marin County. We are sending out information about Marin hotels to corporate meeting and association meeting planners to help plan their next meeting in Marin. Any meeting planner who books a meeting in a Marin CVB hotel with a total of 75 room nights will be awarded a "complimentary weekend stay" of their choice with any Marin CVB hotel partner. We have also sent e-commerce information to over 2,000 brides highlighting Marin County for their destination wedding. Just in the month of May we sent out over 6,000 e-commerce emails.



## **Travel Trends**

## Technology can make or break the entire traveler experience

For many travelers the first step of every journey is the one towards the keyboard to research the travel options according to Robert Bailey, President and CEO of Abacus, Asia's leading travel facilitator. "Today's economic environment has prompted leisure travelers to search harder for the best pricing to cut travel costs. Corporate travelers are also constantly sourcing for best fares as they come under pressure from management to trim expenditure," says Bailey.



Unfortunately, while online travel sites have proliferated, finding the right information from reliable sources can still be a tedious process, particularly if the customer is not traveling point-to-point or is searching for domestic flights, which can still be difficult in some countries.

According to a recent Microsoft survey, 52 percent of potential travelers search three or more sites before booking their airfare, 42 percent of travelers spend between one and four weeks weighing their travel options, while 17 percent spend more than one month.

Looking at the quality of online experience for travel buyers, a different survey by Frommers Unlimited found half of all those surveyed struggled with poorly constructed, confusing and inaccurate travel websites. Fifty per cent of those surveyed were dissatisfied with content, lamenting insufficient information about the destination, hotel, cruise, airline or ferry companies. Respondents claimed information was hard to find on many sites and they were frustrated by sites that did not respond to email inquiries or did not allow online booking.

"To really improve the pre-trip experience for online travel buyers, websites should include pictures of accommodation and facilities, adequate descriptions of the destination, images and maps," said Brett Henry, Vice President Marketing, Abacus International, referring to the two-thirds of those surveyed who wanted these elements available on booking websites.

Smart agents, hoteliers and other tourism players know how to extend the positive experience travelers have even after their trips are over. Anything from a simple 'welcome back' phone call, to a hotel email informing them of upcoming promotions or special privileges for returning guests, can extend the customer experience. Actively seeking feedback from clients is also important. "Most clients respond well when properly approached and many welcome the opportunity to share their thoughts. Post-trip surveys are a great way to gather insights for future business and product development," Henry added.



Wilderness Travel, a specialist travel agent in Berkeley, offering cultural, wildlife and hiking adventures around the world, surveys clients after each journey. The data helps them evaluate their products and services. Guest comments are featured in the testimonial section of their website, helping to provide independent, third party endorsements.

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