



Just a little out there.

Marin's Convention & Visitors Bureau

May 2009

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The MCVB Monthly Newsletter

The goal of the Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau is to keep you informed of local events, green businesses, travel trends and membership.



Have fun in Marin County!
The MCVB staff:
Mark, Christine,
Deborah, Gina and
Anuschka



MCVB Member of the Month

Town Center Corte Madera

is a premier Marin County shopping destination known for an eclectic collection of eateries, unique home furnishings, personal apparel and specialty retail stores. Crate and Barrel, one of the most recognized brands in kitchen



ware and home furnishings, has signed a lease with Town Center Corte Madera to bring one of its lifestyle stores to Marin County this Spring. The store, which will comprise 18,887 square feet of space, will not only offer its table top and kitchen ware that had been the staple of its previous Marin County location, but will also now offer furniture, bedding and bath ware, rugs and curtains and home

accessories. The second store to open by this Summer is The Counter. At The Counter, diners will be able to create gourmet concoctions of their very own. The Counter has been featured in GQ magazine as "One of the 20 Hamburgers to eat before you die" and was listed on OPRAH's "Best Burgers" list.

Town Center Corte Madera, located on the West side of Highway 101 at the Tamalpais exit, has become a smoke-free environment this past February.

For information, call 415-924-2961 or visit the web site at www.shoptowncenter.com

The Town Center Corte Madera has been a member of the MCVB since January 2006.

Event Highlights for May

May Maddness - Classic Car Parade

Saturday, May 9th from 1:00 to 9:00pm

The streets of Downtown San Rafael will come alive once again as the tradition of "cruising" and 50's and 60's nostalgia comes to Fourth Street for the 22nd consecutive year. Hundreds of classic automobiles, custom hot rods, and vintage roadsters will be on display as thousands of spectators come from throughout the Bay Area to view these classic street machines of yester year, cruise the main drag of Fourth Street, and enjoy food, the "May Madness Beer Garden" (hosted by local Marin County breweries), and listen to some of the best dance bands in California. For detailed information, visit the [Downtown San Rafael](http://DowntownSanRafael.com) website.

Bike to Work Day

Thursday, May 14th - all day



May is National Bike Month and Thursday, May 14, is the Bay Area's 15th Annual Bike to Work Day presented by Kaiser Permanente and 511.org. The Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) invites you to join thousands in celebrating bicycling as a fun healthy way to make your local trips - to work, school, the store, library, or movie. The month of May also features many exciting bike-related events in Marin: Bike Safety Checkup, MCBC Group Ride, Bike Month Sweepstakes, Team Bike Challenge, Energizer Stations on May 14. Read inspiring stories by Marin bike commuters. Enter to win regional prizes at www.511.org. For more information, visit www.marinbike.org.

Marin Sonoma Concours d'Elegance

Sunday, May 17th from 10:00 to 4:00pm

The first Marin Sonoma Concours d'Elegance, a benefit for Hospice by the Bay, is scheduled to be at the Marin County Fairgrounds this Sunday. Marin's classic car enthusiasts are invited to congregate this month at a new

event designed to showcase chrome-plated beauties and high-tech "green" vehicles while raising funds for the nonprofit Hospice by the Bay. Modern and future models will be part of the "green" exhibit as well. The line up hopes to include alternative fuel vehicles such as the Tesla, the GM Volt and some cars owned by local celebrities such as rocker Sammy Hagar. More than 200 vehicles are expected to be on hand at Marin Center's Lagoon Park.



Please visit www.marinsonomaconcours.org for additional information.

If you are a member 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.

Agritourism in Marin

Marin: Amazing But True!

- Today, it is estimated that the fruits and vegetables found in the typical grocery store travel an average of 1600-2100 miles; at the Marin Farmers Markets, the average is 100 miles.
- Approximately 167,000 acres in Marin are farms or ranches. This amounts to 50 percent of the land in Marin. Of the 276 agricultural operations in Marin, 72 are considered large farms and 204 are considered small or mini-farms.
- Livestock production is the second largest agriculture industry in the county, with 159 beef cattle, cow/calf, and sheep grazing operations producing livestock, replacement heifers for dairies and breeding stock.
- While milk and livestock products dominate Marin's agricultural activities, a growing number of organic operations (52) produce organic fruits, vegetables, and pasture on 18,858 acres.

For more detail on Marin Agriculture, visit the [UC Davis/Marin County Extension](#) website.

Did you know...

- Agriculture in Marin contributes over \$49 million annually to the local economy, with milk production dominating at 55 percent.
- There is no nutritional difference between a brown egg and a white one.
- The label "free range" or "cage free" may or may not mean that the birds are permitted to roam freely within the farmyard. There are no legal standards defining what free range means in the U.S.
- A six-ounce steak from a grass-fed cow has 100 fewer calories than one from a cow that was fed grain.

Travel Trends

Softening the Summer of Discontent

"The economy is not being very helpful this year ... and thanks to swine flu, we will lose a lot of clients," says Sargoni, President of Super Sightseeing Tours. Even before swine flu came to town, the hotel industry was suffering from revenue declines between 20 percent and 30 percent citywide.

"Our occupancy in San Francisco is still over 70 percent. The issue is that the rates have been really decimated," said Karl Hoagland, chairman and founder of Larkspur Hotels and Restaurants, which has three newly-renovated San Francisco properties and the Lodge at Tiburon in Marin.

Making matters worse, economic uncertainty has created a fundamental shift in consumer behavior, people in the industry all agree. Whereas summer vacations used to be booked well in advance, now they are last minute and deal-driven.

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Seeking a silver lining, Joe D'Alessandro, president and CEO of the San Francisco Convention & Visitors Bureau, said hotel rate drops and new flights from Orange County by low-cost carriers Virgin and Southwest mean that the city is suddenly affordable in a new way.

"For the first time in a long while, there are good deals getting into San Francisco," he said. "We have a lot of strategies for the summer. ... With travel and tourism, you can employ strategies that impact the short term."

The bureau's board of directors has approved an additional \$200,000 to help market San Francisco now, including a new "Escape to the City" promotion done in partnership with American Express. It's marketing more regionally to capitalize on the last-minute nature of this summer's trips, and an expectation that more Californians will stay close to home. In the week since, Joie de Vivre Hotels introduced its summer promotion, a "passport" contest in which 25 winners will receive free two-night stays at all 35 Joie de Vivre hotels (three located in Marin!), the 8,000 people who have entered the contest have also booked over \$25,000 in hotel stays.

Hotels, too, are crafting special California-focused promotions. Visit our Coupon page on the visitmarin.org website.

There are other hopeful signs:

Demand for Alcatraz tours during the usually quiet period post-spring break meant that MCVB member, Hornblower Cruises, is running 14 boats a day to the island, not the typical 10. Every boat is sold out daily, and Hornblower expects that to continue through the summer. It sold 30,000 more tickets this April than it did last year.

2009, for the travel industry this summer, will be a challenge nevertheless~

MCVB News

Bi-Annual General Managers and Sales Team Reception

The Marin Convention & Visitors Bureau would like to thank everyone who

attended our sales reception on April 28th at the Inn Marin Hotel in Novato.



A special thank you is extended to John and Robert Marshall, Kris Hillard and Lora Salfi of the Inn Marin and to their wonderful staff for being our hosts at the event. The food and the company were fabulous as always, and if you didn't make this reception please plan on attending our next event in the fall of 2009.



Our Mission: *To develop a sustainable visitor base to Marin County, enhance the local economies, and protect the natural resources through responsible promotion.*

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