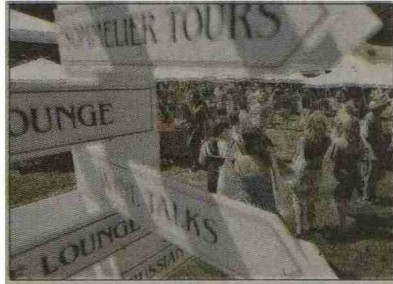


**BITE CLUB**

HEATHER IRWIN



KENT PORTER / The Press Democrat

Taste of Sonoma at MacMurray Ranch near Healdsburg.

# Time for the big event

**W**ine Country Weekend is Coming: Sonoma County is no slouch when it comes to putting on world-class events.

But the one that's on everyone's annual to-do: Wine Country Weekend. The three-day event starts with winemaker dinners and barbecues throughout the county and a gala dinner at Francis Ford Coppola Winery on Friday, Aug. 29 from 6:30 to 10 p.m.

Locals know that the poolside stage and million-dollar vineyard views make this Geyserville destination worth the drive, but with Chef John Toulze of the girl & the fig in the kitchen and more than 25 wineries pouring, this kick-off sets the tone for a weekend of indulgence.

Saturday's Taste of Sonoma at MacMurray Ranch is gastro-overload with 65 restaurants and more than 150 wineries offering gourmet bites with Sonoma's best wines. Let's just say you have to work very, very hard to get to even half of the goodies on hand.

Other activities include wine and food pairings with Kendall Jackson, wine tours with Sonoma's sommelier stars, a self-guided tour of the MacMurray estate, a Steel Chef competition (BiteClub will be judging!) and plenty of bubbly in the Bubble Lounge.

If you're still upright by Sunday, the Sonoma Harvest Wine Auction is worth a go. It raises some serious cheddar (last year it was \$700,000) for literacy, mentoring, health and housing, arts

and nutritional programs right here in Sonoma County.

Auction items include an 82-bottle collection of iconic Sonoma County wines, a luxury tour of Hong Kong with winemaker Jean-Charles Boisset, a once-in-a-lifetime vertical tasting of exclusive Sonoma County pinot noirs and a private fly-fishing excursion at the ultra-exclusive Teller Wildlife Refuge in Montana.

Details and tickets online at [sonomawinecountryweekend.com](http://sonomawinecountryweekend.com).

**Pop Up Ramen:** Okay, so I almost don't want to tell anyone about the ramen pop-up, Ramen Gaijin, happening on selected Mondays at Woodfour Brewing (6780 Depot St, Sebastopol, at the Barlow).

Almost. But we're so starved for good ramen in the North Bay, that word-of-mouth is traveling fast and BiteClubbers just gotta be in on it.

In July, Chefs Moishe Hahn-Schuman

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and Matthew Williams quietly started an every-other-week slurp-n-burp shindig featuring incredible bowls of handmade ramen with pork belly, bonito flakes, mushrooms, and lightly poached eggs.

To boot, the curated menu also includes karaage (Japanese fried chicken) or donburi, an Asian-inspired salad and sorbet with yuzu curd, depending on the chefs' whims.

They sold out the first two, and are expecting a fairly large crowd this Monday, for the third edition, which runs from 5:30 to 10 p.m. (First come, first served with the waiting list opening at 4:30 p.m.)

But these ramen boys are just warming up, with another Ramen Gaijin slated for Sept. 8 at Woodfour, and are in the midst of planning several others at Sebastopol's Forchetta and SHED in Healdsburg.

I'll have more details and some mouth-watering pix next week, but meantime, you can get this week's menu and more details online at [facebook.com/RamenGaijin](http://facebook.com/RamenGaijin).

Speaking of Forchetta, the Italian menu of Sebastopol's Forchetta/Bastoni (6948 Sebastopol Ave, Sebastopol) will be going away, while the Southeast Asian offerings continue. Owner Jamilah Nixon plans to use



**the larger dining room, which was reserved for the Italian menu diners, for special events, private parties, pop-ups (the space has incubated several recent pop-ups) and commercial kitchen applications.**

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*Still hungry? Check out Heather's food and dining blog at [Bite-ClubEats.com](http://Bite-ClubEats.com)*