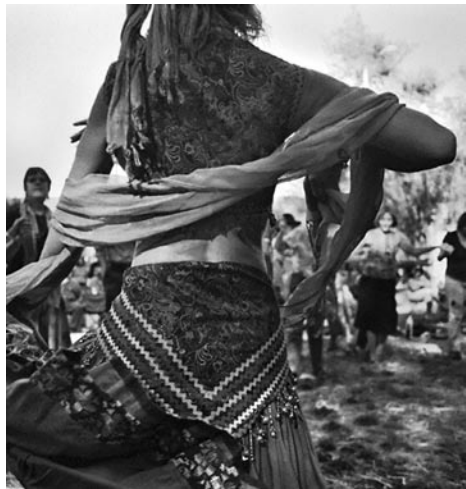


12th Annual Roma Festival



This year's Romani (Gypsy) springtime celebration of renewal, nature, music and dance, called Herdeljezi will be held on Friday evening, **May 2nd** at the Sebastopol Vet's and Saturday, **May 3rd**; daytime program from 1-8pm in Ives Park, and the evening program from 9pm – 1am at the French Garden Restaurant. Come rain or shine – the daytime program can move indoors to the Sebastopol Vet's Hall if the weather is bad.

The event is produced by Voice of Roma (VOR), a locally based international nonprofit that works to educate people in the U.S. about Romani culture and the plight of Roma in Europe, and to assist in humanitarian efforts and advocacy work on behalf of the Roma of Kosovo, who are still barely surviving, contrary to the picture painted of postwar Kosovo as a "success story", and the misperception that all is well there with the recently declared independence. You can learn more about the current situation of Kosovo Roma at the May events.

The Friday night program will be of particular interest to young people as it features Eugene Hutz of Gogol Bordello. The evening starts with clarinet, percussion and vocal workshops from 7-8pm. At 8:15 we are offering a cutting-edge panel discussion: Romani History, "Gypsy" Music, and Activism: Challenges and Prospects". This panel will explore how music and activism can be combined and discuss issues of ownership, control, representation, appropriation, and stereotypes regarding Romani music, and examine the interaction between Roma and non-Romani musicians and producers. Participants include Petra Gelbart (ethnomusicologist and performer), Eugene Hutz (founder of Gogol Bordello), Dusan Ristic (founding member of KAL) and Sani Rifati (president of VOR). Carol Silverman (anthropologist and performer) will moderate. The panel is followed by dancing to Original Electronic Romani Mix with DJs Eugene Hutz and Leonardo until 11:30pm.

Headliners on Saturday are **Yuri Yunakov and Rumen Sali Shopov** with the Romani Wedding Band that

toured the country last Fall. Yunakov, New York- Bulgarian Rom sax player is well-known to festival audiences, as is Shopov, master tamboura player and percussionist; the band also includes Erhan Umer on keyboard and up and coming star clarinetist, Sal Mamudoski. Back by popular demand, Russian Rom performer, Vadim Kapalkov, on 7 string guitar, vocals, and dancing, performing with Petra Safarova-Gelbart, Oleg Ponomarev and Eugene Hutz. The Bay Area's hottest brass band, Brass Menagerie, will rock the house (park). FLAMENCO! LIVE! Dance Ensemble with La Fibi and Friends will also perform and Amy Luna of Shuvani will MC again this year.

Folks interested in participating in workshops (separate charge) can sign up online or just show up Friday evening at 7pm or Saturday in the park by noon (workshops are 12:30 – 2pm).

Traditional foods are sold throughout the day, along with Sonoma County wines and beer. Films about Kosovo Roma will be shown in the Vet's Hall.

The not-to-be-missed, California Herdeljezi Festival creates a sense of "mahala" (community-neighborhood) infusing it with the traditional music, songs, dances, stories, henna art, foods, handcrafts, and customs of the Roma. If you're interested in volunteering, contact voiceofroma@comcast.net or check out the website: www.voiceofroma.com.

Featured at the festival are the beautiful handcrafts created by Romani women in Kosovo, including crocheted cotton shawls in brilliant colors and elegant decorator pillows with the Romani wheel of life embroidered in the center. The handcrafts are part of a VOR project called: "The Threads that Connect Us". A small group of Sonoma County women are involved in helping to design the items that are crocheted and embroidered by the women in Kosovo.

VOR is hoping, as part of the festival community experience, before, during, and after, more local women with sewing skills will join the circle of women trying to make a difference: feeding their own souls as they help to literally feed the families of the refugee women who are creating the handcrafts.

New items this year include lovely banners and wall hangings embroidered with scenes of Romani life and beautiful baby blankets with small embroidered wheels in the center. All the proceeds generated by the handcrafts are sent back to the women in Kosovo who made them. These items are available to view and purchase for the first time, exclusively at the Festival. The names of the Kosovo Romani women who create the handcrafts are tied to each item, and VOR encourages those who purchase the handcrafts send a photo, postcard or email messages which will be passed on to them by VOR's staff in Kosovo.

"Discover Art Discover Artists"

Art at the Source: A Tuscany-like Adventure

By Tony Mininno

Sonoma County is often described as the Tuscany of the United States and most who have experienced both, favorably agree. The weather, wines and food are the obvious matches. However, as in Italy, Sonoma County also possesses a huge community of working artists comprised of painters, sculptors, potters, weavers, glass artists, and jewelers as well as art galleries, art centers and museums that offer unlimited opportunities to see and buy fine art.

Although Sonoma County does not have historical art and an ancient culture, it makes up for it by having other notable similarities and differences which in some ways has more to offer the visitor. For instance its miles of magnificent coastline dotted with quaint fishing villages like Bodega Bay and its many sandy beaches. The western portion of Italy's Tuscany in spite of its miles of coastline has relatively few places of interest or towns until one ventures north or south out of the region.

Here our coastline joins foot hills and plains that eventually meet our high mountain ridges dense with forests of our rare native giant redwood trees as well as fir, coastal oak and bay. These mountain forests are reminiscent of Tuscany's mountainous pine forests in the Parco Naturale delle Alpi Apuane located between the cities of Lucca and Carrara in the north.

"West County", the western portion of Sonoma County that borders on the Pacific Ocean, has miles of hiking trails that meander along our scenic rugged beaches, grass covered coastal bluffs and meadows dotted with cows and sheep that lead to our forests of giant trees. One such hike begins at Shell Beach on Highway 1 and ends up in a redwood forest perched high above the coastal town of Jenner. This spot has commanding views of the ocean where it meets the Russian River and has been preserved many times over in paintings by local artists.

Throughout the year Sonoma County hosts numerous events that parallel those of Tuscany and similarly focus around music, food, wine, sports and art. One such annual art event here is Art at The Source, a self guided art tour that this year will bring visitors to the homes and studios of over one hundred of the county's most accomplished artists. The tour is limited to the entire western portion of Sonoma County and it gives the visitor not only the chance to see studios not usually accessible to the public, but of equal interest, the chance to discover the ever changing landscape, charming towns and other places of interest one encounters while journeying between studios.

For example there is the town of Occidental which was settled in the mid eighteenth hundreds as a logging community. Among its first inhabitants were Italian immigrants who were the first to recognize the area's similarity to Tuscany. Sonoma County's mild

temperate climate and volcanic soil mirrored Tuscany's ideal conditions for growing olives and grapes. Today the hills around Occidental are a quilt of vineyards and olive groves. In addition to Occidental's several restaurants; two whose roots go back to the town's early days, there are shops to suit everyone's interests from local crafts, antiques, gifts, home accessories and lodging.

About six kilometers east of Tuscany's old walled city of Lucca, is Montecatini Termini. This beautiful town is famous all over Europe for being the number one place to go to benefit from its healing natural warm mineral laden spring waters. There are numerous grand old ornate marble buildings that offer not only mineral baths, but massage and natural steam caves that tunnel under ground. Here in Sonoma County we have in the small hamlet of Freestone, Osmosis, which is a spa where one can relax in the warm dry heat of a traditional Japanese bath of fermented herbs which is then followed by a full body massage. Although not concentrated in one place as in Montecatini Terme, Sonoma County has numerous other health and beauty facilities and practitioners located on every town that offer yoga, acupuncture, massage and Jacuzzi.

In addition to hiking, Sonoma County also offers canoeing and kayaking on the Russian River, as well as other towns to explore like Duncan's Mills, Guerneville, Forestville, Graton, Sebastopol, Bodega and the jewel of the coast, Bodega Bay with its many restaurants that feature fresh caught fish and seafood. Each of these places offers something for the explorer and more information about the county is available at "West County's" tourist information office on highway 1 in Bodega Bay.

Art At The Source which is sponsored by the Sebastopol Center For The Arts, celebrates this fourteenth successful year with 108 participating artists opening their studios to the public on two weekends beginning Saturday May 31, and Sunday June 1st, 7th and 8th; from 10: AM to 5: PM. Catalogs and additional information are available from the SCA at 707.829.3797 or on line at <http://www.artatthesource.org>

Especially exciting is "A Perfect Pairing: The Wineries Salute To The Arts". From May 1st through June 9th, more than fifty of the county's wineries and Art At The Source artists will collaborate to feature the work of the artists. This will be the first time members of the wine industry join together to formally celebrate West County's large art community. The two will work hand in hand not only as a wonderful preview of Art At The Source, but as an invitation to "Discover Art Discover Artists", taste fine wines, explore the landscape, dine on the culinary delights of the many restaurants and to decide for one's self that Sonoma County is the Tuscany of the United States.