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## Sonoma County Restaurants

By Carolyn Horan E-Mail: [horan@sonic.net](mailto:horan@sonic.net)

### Pazzo

My friend Martha Cant who runs her sheep ranch just outside Freestone loves the theater, as do I. So we attend Sunday matinees at A.C.T. in San Francisco and after each production we discuss the play over dinner. Often I select a restaurant that has been recommended as a potential for this article.

Last month we went to Pazzo at 132 Keller Street in Petaluma. My initial impression was the unique and carefully planned design of the restaurant. There is a roomy full service bar with chairs and a few small tables separated by a partition coming down from the ceiling that looks like a giant ocean wave. While still having a feeling of open space this allows for a division of the dining and bar area.

We commented on the fact that the TV above the bar was not visible from the dining area which to me was a plus as that can be distracting. The tables were arranged in a way that everyone had a degree of privacy while still being part of the ambiance of the dining room. The colors will intrigue you and the art work is very good.

There is an opening to the kitchen that allows you to view the chefs at work and even the bathroom was attractive. When I interviewed the owners I found that they had carefully planned this design themselves and the goal was to have a flexible, calming atmosphere that made the customers feel comfortable.

Bill and Beverly Woodbridge opened this restaurant about four years ago. As they put it, they spent twice as much time and money than planned before they completed their goal of having a family restaurant that is comfortable, has great food and friendly service. Bill and Beverly met about 25 years ago when they both worked for the California Café in Mill Valley.

They had a passion for good food and wine and decided learn more about different cultures first hand. So in a Volkswagen Van they spent a year touring Europe and then another year backpacking in Asia. They learned about French, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Moroccan cuisine as a result. Returning to Sonoma they had two children and worked in restaurants until they were ready for their own.

The philosophy of international cuisine is reflected in the menu. I had veal and was able to choose from Veal Piccata, Veal Scaloppine, or their own version, Veal that will jump into your Mouth. They have done the same with four versions of chicken dishes so customers can select whatever their taste buds feel like that day (smooth



and creamy, spicy, or traditional).

The menu is extensive and includes ten pasta or grain options and two or three versions of lamb, steak, pork, duck, fish and chicken dishes. Most entrees are in the \$15 to \$20 range with a few from \$22 to \$26. You get a vegetable and a starch selection so the meal is hearty.

For those of you who like a lighter dinner there are 16 Starters to choose from which include soups, salads and things like a 'Greek Platter' which includes Dolmas, spanikopita, petite lamb chops, hummus, roasted almonds, dried figs, Turkish apricots, Greek olives & Bulgarian feta (for \$12) or 'Prawns Diavolo' - prawns wrapped in pancetta, grilled & served on a bed of saffron risotto topped with a spicy red pepper sauce. (12). I had the Caesar Salad (\$7) which was crisp and fresh and a traditional Caesar that you could eat with your fingers.

In 2006 and again in 2009 they won the 'People's Choice' award at the Heirloom Tomato Festival at Kendal Jackson for the Lobster Bisque. Speaking of lobster, THURSDAYS are LOBSTER NIGHT and you get choice of soup or salad and 1-1/2 lb Maine Lobster with drawn butter, vegetable & a piece of Tiramisu - all for only \$26. Bill Woodbridge makes some of the desserts as his specialty. For example there is a Chocolate ganache torte in a pecan crust drizzled with caramel sauce. I was too full to try that but I will go back and check it out.

They currently offer 81 different wines, mostly Sonoma County, and you can get 15 varieties by the glass. They have draft and bottled beer and some very interesting cocktails such as the Obama Pama or the John Daly.

The restaurant and bar opens daily at 4:00 p.m. Dinner is served until 9:00 and the bar remains open after 9:00. **They have an "Early Menu" from 4:00 to 6:00 for \$15.** Friday night there is a DJ. and contemporary music (for the younger crowd) and Saturday night the music is more toward the classical and jazz scene. You can check them out at [www.webwpazzo.com](http://www.webwpazzo.com) or call 707 763 3333 for reservations. They are one block off Washington and two blocks off Petaluma Blvd and next to a parking garage.