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FARM FRESH AND FOUR STAR IN NEW YORK'S HUDSON RIVER VALLEY

Hudson Valley Restaurant Weeks Show Off Region as a Culinary Destination

NEWBURGH, New York (January 7, 2008) -- Travelers and epicureans alike can experience world-class gourmet dining this March as they explore one of America's most beautiful regions, New York's Hudson River Valley. Many of the restaurants in the valley highlight the bounty of the region on their menus, helping to make the Hudson Valley one of the nation's most talked about dining destinations. In March, **Hudson Valley Restaurant Weeks** will give restaurateurs a chance to put the best of the valley on display and diners a chance to savor the tantalizing flavors from many of the region's award-winning restaurants and hottest chefs—at bargain prices.

During the two-week event (Sunday through Friday only), participating restaurants will offer prix-fixe 3-course lunches at \$16.09, and three-course dinners at \$26.09. The Valley Table, The Magazine of Hudson Valley Farms, Food and Cuisine, produces Hudson Valley Restaurant Weeks and expects up to 100 restaurants to participate in this year's event, being held March 9-21, 2008.

www.HudsonValleyRestaurantWeek.com

"Hudson Valley chefs are proving that fine dining can flourish outside of New York City," says Anne Dailey, coordinator of Hudson Valley Restaurant Weeks. "Using the best locally-produced ingredients on their menus is a big part of that."

The region's farms offer venison, heritage pork, foie gras, artisanal cheeses, apples, cherries, berries, root vegetables, greens, legumes and just about anything else a true gourmand could hope for. As The Wine Spectator writes, "the farms, along with the steady supply of highly trained cooks, are what make a weekend jaunt to this region a gastronomic adventure."

At Sprout Creek Farm, a 200-acre working farm in LaGrange, artisanal cheeses are made in the age-old tradition of European farmstead cheese. Sprout Creek cheeses, which show up on the menus of many Hudson Valley restaurants, are made from the rich and creamy milk of grass-fed Jersey, Guernsey, Milking Shorthorn and Brown Swiss cows. The farm is also an educational center, offering numerous programs that reconnect children and adults to the land. (www.sproutcreekfarm.org)

Just up the river from Sprout Creek is one of the best-known wineries in New York State, Millbrook Vineyards and Winery, which earned the 2006 statewide "Winery Award." The winery produces

8,000-10,000 cases of wine per year, and specializes in Chardonnay, Tocai Friulano, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc. (www.millbrookwine.com) Millbrook is one of 38 wineries in the Hudson Valley region, many of which are open for tours and tastings throughout the year. (www.hvwga.com)

Hudson Valley travelers can dine in a wide variety of wonderful settings. Consider the Iron Forge Inn in Warwick, housed in an historic forge and house that dates back to the Revolutionary War era, where epicurians might find mouthwatering dishes such as mustard-crust ed Eden Brook trout served with vanilla-scented root vegetables on the menu. Or try the Big Easy Bistro, a mix of New Orleans and innovative American cuisine on the Newburgh riverfront. And if it's views and great food you crave, you'll want to visit Valley Restaurant at The Garrison in the Hudson Highlands, or Equus at Castle on the Hudson, in Tarrytown, where you are sure to dine on tantalizing dishes such as chipotle-braised short ribs with mascarpone polenta.

Travelers searching for a special place to stay during their visit to the Hudson Valley may wish to take advantage of the accommodations available on the premises of some of the participating restaurants. Among them are The Thayer Hotel at West Point, the famed Mohonk Mountain House in Ulster County, Alumnae House at Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, the Kittle House in Mount Kisco, and Castle on the Hudson in Tarrytown. Other unique lodgings in the region can be found online at www.vintagehudsonvalley.com

Hudson Valley Restaurant Weeks is presented by The Valley Table. Major sponsors are American Express, Hudson Valley Tourism, The Journal News, 100.7 WHUD, and The Gold Standard Marketing Communications, with additional support from Zwilling J.A. Henckels, The Thayer Hotel, Westchester Magazine, Hudson Valley Magazine, Millbrook Vineyards and Winery, Eagle Coffee International, Nina Hill of Wachovia Securities LLC, Chefs Warehouse and Westfair Business Publications (Westchester County Business Journal, Hudson Valley Business).

To consult the growing list of restaurants participating in Hudson Valley Restaurant Weeks, go online to www.HudsonValleyRestaurantWeek.com. For regional travel information, including overnight lodgings, call 1-800-232-4782 for a free Hudson Valley travel guide, or go to www.HudsonValleyVoyager.com.