

Tahoe chefs ready to dazzle Restaurant Week diners

By Kathryn Reed

Twenty-seven restaurants and only eight days. It's going to make the decision about where to eat difficult.

The second annual Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week, which includes Truckee, is Oct. 2-9.

To give locals an added incentive to eat out and visitors a reason to come to the basin, the event was moved from early September to early October. September is often a busy month, while October it slows down in the basin.

"Lake Tahoe Restaurant Week is a celebration of the scrumptious and culinary talent that has made the Lake Tahoe region the best mountain dining destination in the country. It's also designed to generate overnight visitors and increase the number of diners during a slower time of year," organizer Pettit Gilwee told *Lake Tahoe News*. "I started Restaurant Week because I'm a lover of all things food and wine and I wanted to showcase what Lake Tahoe has to offer. My goal is have the event pay for itself by year five."

It's a money saver for those eating and money generator for those fixing the food.



LAKE TAHOE
RESTAURANT WEEK

Three-course lunch and dinner options are offered at \$20, \$30 and \$40 – with each restaurant able to choose what amount to charge and what the menu is.

"It's tough to track where people are from, but after polling

restaurants that participated last year, they reported an average 23 percent increase in the number of guests and a 20 percent increase in revenue, compared to the same time period last year, Labor Day week of 2009," Gilwee said.

With most of the people in 2010 being new customers, this added to Edgewood restaurant's desire to be part of the event again.

Soule Domain in Kings Beach did more business in 2010 during Labor Day week than this year – which is when Restaurant Week was last year.

Organizers said it's near impossible for them to track where people are from, so it's up to the restaurants if they want to.

Beyond the economics of the whole event, the food is the focus.

"It's nice to give our chef an opportunity to create something different," said Bryan Davis of Edgewood restaurant in Stateline. (The difference this year is the restaurant is closed Mondays and Tuesdays in October, so Restaurant Week diners won't be able to go to Edgewood those days.)

Chef-owner Charlie Soule of Soule Domain in Kings Beach likes being able to do something different in the kitchen during this week.

"It's not just an increase in traffic, but it also exposes them to special menus," Soule said. "We get to offer stuff that is a little over and beyond what we normally do."

He plans to focus on what will be in season for fall, using more earthy flavors like shitake mushrooms and figs, while incorporating the last hints of summer produce such as tomatoes and basil.

For those dining out, there are no tickets to buy or coupons

to redeem. It's just a matter of making a reservation – or reservations. Most of the menus for the event have been posted online so you know what you'll be served. That's also the place to see which restaurants are participating.