



Paul Martin's American Bistro

BY MARY TOWN PHOTOS BY RYAN DONAHUE

Paul Martin's American Bistro is taking diners back to the farm, both literally and figuratively, with a philosophic approach to menu development that emphasizes seasonal ingredients from locally-sourced producers. According to restaurant co-founder Brian Bennett, Paul Martin's mantra, "Eat organic. Believe in sustainable. Buy local." is more than just a saying; it's the heart and soul of their business model. In fact, Bennett and his partner and Paul Fleming spent more than a year handpicking the sources for Paul Martin's menu. The thorough search produced 40 partnerships with thoughtful, local farmstead producers, 80 percent of whom are located in Northern California.





“We’re committed to using fresh, peak-of-the-season ingredients, sourced whenever possible from local, sustainable farmers,” Bennett states. Bennett and his team frequently visit the fields and kitchens of their suppliers, and occasionally bring clientele along to enjoy the farm experience first-hand. On a recent day, Bennett and his managers visited Free Spirit Farms to hand-pick and taste the heirloom tomatoes featured on the late-summer salad menu. “I really get a kick out of watching someone bite into a hand-picked tomato for the first time. Their eyes light up, juice runs down their chin - the taste is like nothing they’ve ever experienced before. I love being able to transport that experience to the restaurant.”

As evidence of their commitment to local producers, the restaurant has expanded their partnership with Free Spirit Farms. Now, in addition to providing the heirloom tomatoes for Paul Martin’s summer salads, Free Spirit will also source summer and winter squash, as well as basil. What does this mean for the small, local farm? Free Spirit is looking to triple the size of their farm to meet the needs of the restaurant.



“When we find conscientious, local purveyors committed to the same ideals we’ve built our restaurant upon, we’ll go to great lengths to foster and build the relationship. We’re looking for the industry’s best, doing what they know and love best - that is creating an exceptional product, using sustainable practices,” Bennett says.

“I think the primary difference between Paul Martin’s American Bistro and other restaurants waving the ‘local, sustainable’ flag, is that we’re committed to providing more than lip-service to this philosophy. We’ve made it the core of our business. We actually put on the

Paul Martin’s American Bistro is conveniently located off Eureka Road and Interstate 80, at 1455 Eureka Road, Suite 100. Restaurant hours: Sunday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. For reservations call (916) 783-3600 or visit paulmartinsamericanbistro.com

