



THE DIRT

AUGUST 2008

NEWS FROM THE OCCIDENTAL BOHEMIAN FARMERS MARKET

WWW.OCCIDENTALFARMERSMARKET.COM

farmer profile

SOL FOOD FARM

BY SARAH HADLER

SOL FOOD FARM
4388 HARRISON GRADE
707-874-2300
WWW.SOLFOODFARM.ORG

distance from market:
2 MILES

To kick off the Occidental Bohemian Farmers Market (OBFM) newsletter, we decided that an interview with Brandon Pugh and Brian Riva, Sol Food farmers, would be relevant and fitting as Sol Food Farm is just about as close to the market as it gets—talk about locally grown and harvested food! Sol Food Farm is located just 2 miles east of Occidental on Harrison Grade Road, and is home to many flowers and vegetables on a two+ acre plot of land. Sol Food farmers, Brandon and Brian, grow flowers, lettuces, carrots (both orange and the occasional purple), beets, garlic, basil, lots of basil, collards, tomatoes and other vegetables. They attend both the OBFM (Fridays—4pm 'til dusk) and the Sebastopol Farmers Market (Sundays—10am-1:30pm) and run a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program in which members pick up a seasonal box of produce and flowers once a week.

a week and often have an intern/WOOFer who stays with them, lives and eats on the farm, and puts in 25-30 hours a week. For them, farming is one way to make a difference...as Brandon puts it so eloquently, "It's crazy to farm, but it's crazy not to farm."

The soil at Sol Food Farm is very sandy and drains quickly, so it is amended with horse manure, compost, and tilled-in cover crops. Water comes from a shallow well and the plants are irrigated via a drip system. The folks at Sol Food Farm, for necessity's sake, practice hardcore water conservation, and are very lucky to have generous neighbors as their well often runs dry. Pests are taken care of with floating row covers, crop rotation, and periodically, organic sprays. The farmers also use a compost tea that makes the plants happy and healthy. Weeding is done by hand "when the weeds just get too big" and the farm is known to host Weed (*not that kind!*) N' Wine shindigs where members of the community can come help out, put their muscles to good use, be outside all day, and then enjoy a drink or two in the evening. Although Sol Food Farm has been organically certified in the past, they are now "choosing to maintain our own and our community's standards of ecological farming without a USDA certificate." Stepping outside the dictates of bureaucracy...

"IT'S CRAZY TO FARM, BUT IT'S CRAZY NOT TO FARM." —*brandon pugh*



brandon pugh, sol food

It is Brandon and Brian's first year running Sol Food Farms together. They are the third reincarnation of farmers at Sol Food which got started in 2005 and has been passed on to friends over the past 4 years (Andy, the guy who started the farm, now runs Sol Flower Farm in New York). Brandon comes from a family of soybean farmers in Arkansas, did an apprenticeship in Santa Cruz and landed at Sol Food last year. Brian did organic composting in Oregon before coming to Sol Food. It is definitely a full-time gig for the two of them. They work long hours, seven days

Come to the Farmers Market in Occidental and check out Sol Food Farm: colorful flowers, delectable veggies, and the farmer's fun-loving, hard-working selves—or give them a holler (go to their website—it rocks!), and become a part of their CSA Program. There's a rumor that unicorns run around at Sol Food Farm feeding on purple carrots—you might get lucky and see one...

MARKET
CALENDAR

August 29th

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Belly Dancing

SPECIAL EVENT
Makers Market

September 5th

MUSIC
Happenstance

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Marylu Downing

September 12th

MUSIC
Good Job, Joe!

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Children's Books

September 19th

MUSIC
Front Porch Blues

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Ken Kolsbun,
Author of *Peace: The
Biography of a Symbol*

September 26th

MUSIC
Bodega Ol' Timeys

CENTER FOR THE ARTS
Barbara Baer &
Floreant Press

*Thanks to our generous
sponsors, without
whom the Market
could not thrive.*

HARVEST LEVEL

Make:
makezine.com

BLOOM LEVEL



SEED LEVEL



as THE SOIL TURNS

news & notes from the market

PAELLA THROWDOWN!

Did you catch our local favorite, Gerard Nebesky, on the Food Network last month? He was challenged to a Throwdown with Bobby Flay and emerged victorious—no surprise to those of us who enjoy his delicious paella at the Market every week. Kudos also to his invaluable crew, Lorrie and Anna!

OCCIDENTAL RADIO: ROAMING KOWS

It's been a long road to live air, but Occidental's new local public radio station has been broadcasting all summer. KOWS has a full slate of programming and you can find West County Community Radio at FM 107.3. Listen for our long-time Master Gardener, Ann Chambers, on Friday evenings!

DOGS AT THE MARKET

It's one of our least favorite laws to lay down, but we have to enforce it nevertheless: the Sonoma County Department of Health says no dogs in the Market—or any live animal, except service dogs. (The county sees the Market as no different from a restaurant or grocery store, where animals aren't permitted near the food.) We do provide a "dog parking" area near the Market's information table, and there's a good chance the manager will keep an eye on your pooch for you...

In season

We're at the peak of the bounty right now: heirloom tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, potatoes, garlic, berries, beets, cucumbers, and so much more. And apples are just coming into season, too!

Got news to share? Email us at info@occidentalfarmersmarket.com.

YES, I'm pleased to sponsor the Occidental Bohemian Farmers Market. I know my contribution will help support our local economy and connect our community members to the food they consume.

- \$50 SEED LEVEL
- \$100 BLOOM LEVEL
- \$250 HARVEST LEVEL
- \$ _____

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please make checks payable to Occidental Bohemian Farmers Market, and mail to PO Box 782, Occidental CA 95465. The Occidental Bohemian Farmers Market is a non-profit mutual benefit corporation registered with the State of California.

MARKET
VENDORS

Farmers

- Armstrong Valley Farm
- Bella Ridge
- Blasi Ranch
- Bloomfield Bees
- Earthworker Farm
- Fifteen Gates Farm
- First Light Farm
- French Garden Farm
- Heron Fox Farm
- Kenyon Gardens
- Mudpie Farm
- Nelsen Ranch
- Rainbow's End
- Red Shed Apples
- Side by Side Farm
- Singing Frogs Farm
- Smiling Sun
- Sol Food Farm
- Star Mountain Gardens
- Taylor Maid
- Twin Peaks Orchard

Prepared Foods

- Gerard's Paella
- Kashaya's Pizza
- Lata's Indian Food
- Love Bird Chocolates
- Paul's Smoked Salmon
- Rocker Oysterfeller's
- Sister Pie
- Sonoma Chocolatiers

Crafters

Varies

Services

Relax Systems Massage

Community

- KOWS Radio
- Master Gardeners
- Occidental Center for the Arts

Please email to confirm attendance by vendors on any given week.