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## Luring Diners Out of Their Dens

By [ALICE GABRIEL](#)

As groundhogs stir, the fourth annual Hudson Valley Restaurant Week will be tempting diners from their own winter sleep. With more than 130 restaurants participating — twice the number that first signed on in 2007 — the 14-day event, this year from March 15-28, has blossomed into something of a prix-fixe-palooza.

“We had 150,000 diners come out last year,” said Janet Crawshaw, the editor of The Valley Table, a regional magazine devoted to the region’s epicurean riches and a sponsor of the event ([valleytable.com](#)). “It’s become a communal thing.”

Restaurants in Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam, Dutchess, Ulster and Columbia Counties will be offering three-course prix-fixe lunches for \$20 and/or dinners for \$28 (check the Web site — [hudsonvalleyrestaurantweek.com](#) — for details, restrictions and reservation policies). In a show of regional pride, many chefs will be using meat and produce from nearby farms, and sommeliers will focus on local wines, brews and distillations.

Emerging along with spring ramps and fiddlehead ferns is some new talent.

Sara Lukasiwicz, chef at the Red Devon, in Bangall, Dutchess County, is a recent graduate of the [Culinary Institute of America](#), in Hyde Park, and she held an externship at the red-hot [Momofuku Noodle Bar](#) in Manhattan.

“I came away from there with a love of all things pig and pork,” said Ms. Lukasiwicz, who makes her own salami and hangs her own hams. During Restaurant Week, diners can sample her smoked bacon in a mushroom carbonara, from an appealing menu whose ingredients are scrupulously sourced from local farmers and artisans (visit [reddevonrestaurant.com](#)).

And at the Bird and Bottle Inn in Garrison, Douglas Gardner, a graduate of the French Culinary Institute in Manhattan and a native son of the Hudson River Valley, has brought new luster to the menu ([thebirdandbottleinn.com](#)). For Restaurant Week, he’ll be simmering his favorite soup, a celery bisque made with celery, celery root, leeks and potato.

**ALICE GABRIEL**