



8 Chefs and Owners on San Diego Restaurant Week

BY DARLENE HORN | SEPTEMBER 26, 2016



San Diego Restaurant Week is celebrating its 12th year, and for this round there are more than 180 restaurants participating throughout the county ([see this year's must-get reservations](#)). Given the event's broad reach and years of repetition, you'd think that restaurateurs would be jumping at the chance to join in the eight-day affair. Not always. We surveyed restaurants around the town and found that while some can't get enough of the event, others have chosen to opt out. Read below to see which owners, chefs and general managers like Restaurant Week and which don't (and why).



Courtesy of Pardon My French Bar & Kitchen

Eric and Lindsey Fillion, owners of [Pardon My French Bar & Kitchen](#): Opting out this year

"As a small neighborhood restaurant, you really want to be mindful about partnering with the right events that promote the atmosphere and dining experience you have worked to create. With our new fall menu about to launch mid-October and all-day Happy Hour on Tuesdays, customers can enjoy the excitement of Restaurant Week, Pardon My French Style, without the rush and restrictions."



Courtesy of Barbusa

Joe Busalacchi, owner of [Barbusa](#): Participating this year

"We've been taking part in San Diego Restaurant Week for many years now, although this is our first at our newly opened restaurant, Barbusa. While we usually have to staff up for the event, it's always been beneficial for us. The week always brings new guests to our restaurant that often have never been in before, then it's up to us to really impress them to the point where they'll come back."



Courtesy of The Royal Stone Bistro

Jackie Stone, owner of [The Royal Stone Bistro](#): Opting out this year

"For us, the cost outweighs the benefit. We see how it could be a benefit for a large restaurant group who can afford it, but for a small business such as ours, we aren't able to extend ourselves in that manner. Additionally, we have heard that folks who frequent restaurants during this week tend not to be repeat guests as they prefer dining during 'special deal' weeks. I don't know that we would be completely closed to the idea in the future."



Courtesy of Mister A's and Mille Fleurs

Bertrand Hug, owner of [Mister A's](#) and [Mille Fleurs](#): Participating this year

"In the great old days when SDRW started, I wasn't the biggest fan, but I did it because of my position on the restaurant association board. In those days, there were only a few fine dining establishments in San Diego and Mille Fleurs was always full. All of us established restaurateurs thought of it as amateur hour. Nowadays, it is a different story, and we have come to really respect what SDRW does for local restaurants. We try to do as good a job as possible to introduce the restaurant to a lot of first-time diners whom we wish to really impress. The customer is, in the end, the winner."



Courtesy of Cueva Bar

Chef Osvaldo Blackaller, chef and owner of [Cueva Bar](#): Not participating this year

“At Cueva Bar we feel that working with San Diego’s Restaurant Week is like working with a mass media marketing campaign. Such marketing campaigns are just like throwing a bunch of darts in the dark and hoping one or a couple of them will hit the bull’s eye. With the tapas model we have at Cueva Bar — and during happy hour you can sample more food than a 3-4 course set menu — [you can] still spend as much or less than what you would spend at a Restaurant Week participating restaurant.”



Courtesy of Bellamy's Restaurant

Kristina Miller, general manager of [Bellamy’s Restaurant](#): Participating this year

“Bellamy's has participated in Restaurant Week since the opening, nearly four years. We love doing Restaurant Week. We are able to meet new faces and create fun and friendly dishes for the guests to enjoy. It's a great way for us to showcase what we offer on a daily basis, wonderful food, wine and service, at an incredible price for the guest. ... This will be the first year for Bellamy's to offer Restaurant Week after our remodel and we can't wait!”

Sean Renard, general manager of [The Cork & Craft](#): Not participating this year

“Cork & Craft has worked hard to establish a culture and identity. We want our guests to

experience the restaurant, and our cuisine, as it was intended when they visit us. We strive to stand out and offer something unique, and it becomes a challenge to do so when guests aren't experiencing the authentic us."



Courtesy of Farmer's Bottega

Alberto Morreale, owner and executive chef of [Farmer's Bottega](#): Participating this year

"We love Restaurant Week as it's a fantastic partnership between the consumer, the restaurant and local food/produce merchants and vendors. During the last five years of our participation, we have received a huge amount of interest at all our participating locations (Farmer's Bottega and Fig Tree Cafe) ... It's a win-win situation for both the consumer and restaurant, as the consumer gets to experience a carefully selected prix fixe menu at a promotional price, which normally is not available. Thanks to SDRW, restaurants get a little boost during slower than normal times, while being able to offer local goods to the consumer, thus helping local food/produce merchants and vendors."