



CONTEMPORARY CALIFORNIA RANCH CUISINE

## INTRODUCTION

### Welcome

Welcome to the Far Western Tavern—contemporary California ranch cuisine inspired by local traditions. Owned by three generations of the Minetti family, the Far Western Tavern is recognized as a landmark of Santa Maria Style Barbecue, a renowned regional fare rooted in native ingredients and methods that were first popularized by 19th century rancheros. The menu blends this local barbecue style with other dishes that reflect our heritage in the Santa Maria Valley's Swiss- Italian ranching community, all prepared with fresh flavors from nearby farms, ranches and vineyards.

### Location

300 Clark Avenue in Old Town Orcutt in the Santa Maria Valley

### Online

[www.FarWesternTavern.com](http://www.FarWesternTavern.com)

### Timeline

1930s—A young Clarence Minetti dines regularly at the Palace Hotel in Guadalupe, his appetite whetted by pitching hay in nearby fields.

1958—Clarence and Rosalie Minetti, along with cousins Richard and Jean Maretti, acquire the Palace Hotel building and restore the dormant restaurant, now called the Far Western Tavern.

1996—Richard Maretti retires; Clarence and Rosalie's children and grandchildren take an increasingly active role in managing the restaurant.

2012—The Far Western Tavern moves to a new location in Old Town Orcutt, preserving and advancing the Far Western Tavern tradition for years to come in the Santa Maria Valley.

### Region

The Santa Maria Valley is famed for its fine wines, fresh produce and world famous Santa Maria Style Barbecue—all of which are showcased at the Far Western Tavern. With local family ranching roots that reach back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Minettis are ambassadors of a culinary legacy that was born during California's rancho era and continues today as one of the nation's most distinctive regional cuisines. The Minettis close ties with local farms, ranches and wineries, ensuring that fresh local ingredients are integral to the Far Western Tavern dining experience.

## **WHAT'S NEW — AND WHAT'S NOT**

After 54 years in Guadalupe, the Far Western Tavern moved 10 miles down the road to a new building in Old Town Orcutt in October of 2012. But while the address may have changed, the distinctive spirit and ambiance of the original restaurant continues today.

### **Familiar Furnishings**

Like the original restaurant, the new location beckons guests with a signature Far Western Tavern marquee. The interior layout is very similar as well, with a welcoming bar, separate dining room and upstairs banquet room.

The Minetti family carefully catalogued the entire contents of the original restaurant prior to the move, and sought to incorporate as many existing elements as possible, including the signature antique mahogany bar that has long served as a community gathering place.

Other familiar furnishings in the new restaurant include Clarence Minetti's famous cowhide curtains. The etched "glue chip" glass panels from the original dining room's swinging doors are now mounted above the entry to the new dining room. The original bar window's stained-glass art depicting the Far Western steer head is now mounted above the entry to the new bar. Most of the signature animal mounts have been incorporated into the new restaurant, and the classic longhorns that once graced the dining room entry are now displayed above the kitchen entry. The antique gas ceiling lamps from the original bar and dining room have been refurbished and now grace the new bar and entry.

Customers will recognize the iconic mural that was hand-painted in the Guadalupe restaurant by legendary Western artist Ernie Morris, as well as the dining room oil painting of Clarence Minetti by Ruthanne Maretti Gamble, which now graces the reception area. Cowhide-covered bench seats and flocked red wallpaper in the bar also honor the original décor.

Several new touches are designed to enhance the restaurant's historical ambiance as well, including a bull-crowned copper weathervane that sits atop the pointed roof of the tower room.

"We all grew up together as a family at the restaurant, and so many friends and customers enjoyed their own meals and memories there as well," says third-generation co-owner Renee Righetti-Fowler. "We wanted to honor those memories by creating a familiar sense of place and community in the new location."

### **New Amenities**

While much of the ambiance and décor are familiar, several new touches are designed to enhance the quality of the cuisine and dining experience, including a state-of-the-art kitchen and a modern wine cellar. Other new facets include an outdoor patio with overhead heating, and a picturesque upstairs tower room for special events.

The kitchen was designed with a customized layout and equipment to fit the Far Western Tavern menu. Co-owner Toby Goodwin crafted the kitchen's custom stainless steel barbecue pit, which serves as the foundation for the restaurant's Santa Maria-style fare.

The wine cellar was built to serve the restaurant's emphasis on offering locally grown wines from the Santa Maria Valley and Central Coast. The wine cellar also includes rare sought-after vintages.

## **LOCAL INGREDIENTS & CULINARY PARTNERS**

As ranchers and farmers themselves for several generations in the Santa Maria Valley, the Minetti family has been blessed with strong personal ties to the local agricultural community.

Here, “farm to table” isn’t a new idea or marketing concept, but rather a longtime way of life. Naturally, when the Minettis and their friends gather for celebrations, the dinner table abounds with fresh ingredients that exhibit the distinctive flavors of the Santa Maria Valley. It is their way of entertaining—and an experience that they wish to extend to the patrons of the Far Western Tavern. Following are family and friends whose products contribute to the Far Western Tavern menu:

### **Alamo Farms – Piquito Beans**

Family friend John Porter learned the art of growing piquito beans from his father and grandfather, who was one of the first commercial piquito farmers.

### **Babe Farms – Spring Mix, Baby Spinach, Beets**

Family friends Judy and Jeff Lundberg are renowned for growing specialty vegetables, including 30 varieties of baby lettuce.

### **Betteravia Farms – Piquito Beans**

As a principal and product manager at Betteravia Farms, Tom Minetti ensures that fine piquitos are never in short supply at the restaurant.

### **Gold Coast Farms – Cilantro, Spinach, Broccoli**

Co-founded by Ron Burk along with Bob Espinola, Gold Coast Farms is acclaimed for its cilantro and many other crops.

### **Hermreck Farms – Avocados and Lemons**

Randy and Karen Hermreck are family friends and vintners who grow fine avocados and lemons at their small farm.

### **Maretti-Minetti Ranch Co. & Righetti Ranch – Broccoli, Artichokes and Strawberries**

The Ralph Maretti and Clarence Minetti families, along with Far Western Tavern co-owners Susan and Paul Righetti, grow several crops on their family ranches.

### **Ocean Front Farms - Artichokes**

Jamie Gamble, a Minetti family cousin, grows amazing artichokes in Guadalupe, not far from the original Far Western Tavern.

### **Riverbench Vineyard – Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Riesling, Rosé and Sparkling**

Far Western Tavern co-owners Marie Minetti-Will and her husband Steve also co-own this acclaimed producer of fine Santa Maria Valley wines.

### **Teixeira Farms – Lettuce and Broccoli**

The Teixeiras, longtime family friends of the Minettis, have been farming in the Santa Maria Valley since the 1930s.

### **Susie Q’s Brand – Santa Maria Valley Style Seasoning**

Far Western Tavern co-owner Susan Righetti founded Susie Q’s Brand in 1981 as the original artisan purveyor of Santa Maria Style Barbecue foods.

## **RESTAURANT OVERVIEW**

The Far Western Tavern occupies a new building in Old Town Orcutt that was designed from the ground up to honor the original location while taking the dining, service and guest experience to the next level.

### **Size:**

- 10,000 square feet, similar to original restaurant

### **Seating:**

- 135 maximum combined for dining room, patio and bar
- 180 maximum in upstairs banquet room

### **Dining Room:**

- Individual dining tables as well as six booths
- Semi-private dining area (Chief's Corner) fits one table of 16 or two tables of 8

### **Bar:**

- Full-service bar with a focus on local wines and beers
- Built-in, cowhide-covered seating along with bistro tables
- Antique mahogany Brunswick back bar from original restaurant

### **Patio:**

- Outdoor dining with small tables and overhead heating
- Clear tent siding can be raised and lowered depending on weather

### **Banquet Room:**

- Large open room that can be partitioned for smaller parties
- Intimate tower room fits up to 10 guests or wedding cake display
- Complete audio-visual technology for group and corporate presentations
- Upstairs patio available for dining and mingling
- Refurbished century-old bar from Righetti ranch, rumored to have come from the original Paso Robles Hotel

### **Wine Cellar:**

- Multi-level library storage with temperature and humidity control
- Fits up to 1,200 bottles, including large-format offerings
- Emphasis on Santa Maria Valley and Central Coast bottlings
- Includes rare sought-after vintages

### **Kitchen:**

- The kitchen features state-of-the-art equipment and a new barbecue pit that enable us to maximize cuisine quality. The kitchen was designed around the Far Western Tavern menu, ensuring an efficient flow of ingredients from storage to preparation to service.

## THE STORY OF THE FAR WESTERN TAVERN

For more than five decades spanning three generations of Minetti family ownership, the Far Western Tavern has been driven by a timeless appreciation for regional cuisine and an inherited commitment to hospitality.

The story begins in the 1930s, when a young local ranch hand by the name of Clarence Minetti made a habit of retiring to Guadalupe's Palace Hotel restaurant after a hard day's work. There, he would replenish himself with a 65-cent meal of ribeye steak and spaghetti.

One day, while courting his future wife Rosalie, Clarence rode over to her house on horseback and tied his horse to the fence. Alas, the family pig spooked the horse, and the horse fled with the fence in tow. Clarence spent days rebuilding the fence, again working up an appetite that was fed by Rosalie's mother, whose ranch cooking was renowned in the Santa Maria Valley.

These and other experiences helped shape Clarence and Rosalie's appreciation for the valley's distinctive cuisine, which complemented their own shared passion for public service and hospitality.

So it's probably no surprise that when the Palace Hotel went on the market in 1958, Clarence and Rosalie sprang into action. Partnering with Rosalie's cousin Richard Maretti, they acquired the historic building and created their own restaurant, the Far Western Tavern, which Clarence said was patterned on "how we as a family like to entertain."

The Far Western Tavern quickly became a hometown favorite, a place where the portions were nearly as big as Clarence's welcoming smile. The inspired décor—including cowhide curtains, an antique mahogany bar and a mural hand-painted by renowned Western artist Ernie Morris—provided the perfect aesthetic seasoning to the restaurant's distinctive dishes, which blended traditional Santa Maria Style Barbecue with Swiss-Italian influences rooted in the local ranching community.

Since those early days, the Far Western Tavern has outlasted countless culinary trends, a handful of recessions, and even a devastating fire in 1971. As Clarence once said, "To last in this business, you have to like people and you have to serve great food. It's that simple."

Over the decades, the Far Western Tavern has developed a loyal following as well as numerous accolades. In 2009, *Sunset Magazine* named it one of the West's best barbecue restaurants. When Bobby Flay came to the area for his Food Network show *BBQ with Bobby Flay*, he chose the Minetti family to show viewers how to prepare Santa Maria Style Barbecue. In October of 2012, the Far Western Tavern was showcased in a segment on the Cooking Channel's *Man Fire Food* hosted by Roger Mooking.

Today, the Far Western embarks on its next chapter after moving 10 miles down the road to a new location in Old Town Orcutt in 2012. Modeled after the original restaurant and incorporating many of its signature appointments—including the aforementioned antique bar and cowhide curtains—the "new" Far Western Tavern is ultimately designed to meet the high standards set by Clarence and Rosalie more than 50 years ago.

"We are following the same blueprint established by my grandparents," says third-generation co-owner Renee Righetti-Fowler. "When it comes to food and hospitality, they set a remarkable example that guides us to this day."

## **FOUNDERS & FAMILY TREE**

The Far Western Tavern opened in 1958, born of local flavors and family traditions, and inspired by classic California ranch-style hospitality. At the original restaurant in Guadalupe, Clarence and Rosalie Minetti dedicated themselves to welcoming their guests and serving the community for more than 50 years. Today, their legacy endures in Old Town Orcutt, where their heirs are committed to continuing what they started. The Far Western Tavern is ultimately a testament to the Santa Maria Valley's barbecue heritage, and to those who return to gather around the table for yet another special meal. Such is the timeless experience upon which Clarence and Rosalie's dream was built. As they were fond of saying, "*Mangia e Bevi.*"

### **FOUNDERS**

#### **Clarence and Rosalie Minetti**

Clarence and Rosalie Minetti established the Far Western Tavern in Guadalupe in 1958 along with Rosalie's cousin, Richard Maretti, and his wife Jean. Clarence Minetti passed away in 2011 at the age of 93. Like the rancher he was, Clarence took a hands-on approach to getting things done in the community, and his efforts were defined by his humility, hospitality, cowboy ethics and love of people. Clarence's outgoing hospitality and Rosalie's culinary talents ultimately set an example that guides the Far Western Tavern to this day.

### **SECOND GENERATION OWNERSHIP**

#### **Susan (née Minetti) and Paul Righetti**

- Longtime local ranchers and farmers
- Proprietors of Susie Q's Brand barbecue products

#### **Marie (née Minetti) and Steve Will**

- Expertise and training in northern Italian cuisine
- Co-owners of Riverbench Vineyard & Winery

### **THIRD GENERATION OWNERSHIP**

#### **Renee (daughter of Susan and Paul) and Mark Fowler**

- Partners in Susie Q's Brand and the family ranch operations; Mark serves as chairman of the board of the Far Western Tavern

#### **Tim Righetti (son of Susan and Paul)**

- Partner, rancher and farmer at the Righetti family ranch

#### **Toby (son of Marie) and Kim Goodwin**

- Partners in Riverbench Vineyard & Winery

#### **Jamie Goodwin (son of Marie)**

- Partner in Riverbench Vineyard & Winery

## **HOMEGROWN FLAVORS**

The Far Western Tavern menu is inspired by the local flavors of the Santa Maria Valley, where famous barbecue, fresh produce and world-class wines are woven into the fabric of the community.

### **Santa Maria Style Barbecue**

The Far Western Tavern is recognized as a landmark of Santa Maria Style Barbecue, a regional culinary tradition founded on local ingredients and methods that date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The signature cuts for Santa Maria Style Barbecue are top block sirloin and the triangular-shaped bottom sirloin known as “tri tip,” a cut that was popularized in the Santa Maria Valley. The meat is rolled in a mixture of salt, pepper and garlic salt just prior to cooking over red oak coals. The red oak—which is native to the region—contributes a distinctively hearty flavor. The traditional menu also includes French bread dipped in sweet melted butter, tossed green salad and slow-cooked pinto beans, a small pink bean that is grown exclusively in the Santa Maria Valley.

Over time, at the Far Western Tavern and elsewhere, this signature local barbecue has enjoyed a variety of variations and personal touches that give new expressions to an old tradition.

### **Santa Maria Valley Agriculture**

The Santa Maria Valley is one of California’s most productive and respected agricultural regions, yielding everything from strawberries to cilantro, broccoli to artichokes.

While Santa Maria Style Barbecue and local wines enjoy more of the popular spotlight, the valley’s produce is coveted far and wide. In fact, strawberries are the region’s top cash crop, followed by broccoli and wine grapes. The excellence of the local produce is rooted in the valley’s fertile soils and temperate climate, which combine to create optimal growing conditions for a wide variety of crops.

Many of the valley’s farming operations—from the smallest to some of the largest—remain family owned, combining cutting-edge cultivation and packing methods with homegrown knowhow. The Far Western Tavern is proud to feature a diverse selection of ingredients grown by family and friends in the surrounding fields of the Santa Maria Valley.

### **Santa Maria Valley Wine Country**

The Santa Maria Valley occupies the northern perimeter of Santa Barbara County, which is today recognized as one of the world’s finest regions for Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and other varieties.

Bottlings from the Santa Maria Valley regularly rank among the highest-rated wines of the year in the *Wine Spectator*, *Wine Enthusiast* and other publications. In fact, leading wine critic Steve Heimoff remarked that “the Santa Maria Valley may well have the highest overall quality of grapes and wines of any appellation in California.”

The Santa Maria Valley boasts a rare “transverse” geography, an east-west orientation that channels cool ocean air directly into the valley, creating an extended growing season that is particularly optimal for growing remarkable Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The Far Western Tavern is committed to showcasing Santa Maria Valley and Central Coast wines as perfect complements to the menu’s local flavors.