

For immediate release
July 19, 2004

Contact: Malei Weir
(805) 239-0020
mw@mooncatcher.com



SMOKIN' HOT EXPOSURE FOR SANTA MARIA BARBECUE ***BBQ with Bobby Flay, Sunset Magazine and Others Spotlight Legendary Local Cuisine***

SANTA MARIA, CA—Punctuating a season of sizzling publicity, the Santa Maria Valley's famed Santa Maria Style Barbecue earned a new fan last week as celebrity chef Bobby Flay enjoyed a barbecue luncheon hosted by the Righetti family, whose culinary roots reach deep into the region.

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau initially pitched the idea to the Food Network's *BBQ with Bobby Flay* and helped coordinate the proceedings. In hosting the event, Susan Righetti, owner of Righetti Specialties and the Susie Q's brand of barbecue seasonings, was joined by husband Paul and parents Clarence and Rosalie Minetti, owners of Guadalupe's Far Western Tavern, as well as several other family members.

"The Righetts were perfect ambassadors for Santa Maria Style Barbecue," said April Tunnell, manager of the Santa Maria Valley Visitor & Convention Bureau. "They prepared an outstanding lunch for twelve, and it was evident that Bobby Flay walked away impressed with both the meal and the tradition of our local barbecue."

The segment on the Righetts and Santa Maria Style Barbecue is scheduled to air this fall on *BBQ with Bobby Flay*. It will feature insights into the preparation and method of Santa Maria Style Barbecue, as well as glimpses of life at the Righetti ranch near Orcutt.

The filming followed a succession of positive press for local barbecue. In its July issue, *Sunset* magazine dedicated a sidebar and photo to Santa Maria Style Barbecue as part of its "West's Best BBQ" cover feature. On June 23, the East Bay's ANG newspaper group, which includes the *Oakland Tribune*, *San Mateo County Times* and others, published "California has a barbecue heritage all its own" by Laurel Millerm, which elaborated on the history and technique of Santa Maria Style Barbecue.

Visitor magazine *Wine Country This Week* also published a comprehensive Santa Maria Style Barbecue piece in June entitled "Baddest Barbecue in the West Set for Sizzling Summer," which featured barbecue pairings with Santa Maria Valley wines. Grilling was also a hot topic on July 4 when Tunnell joined host Gabe Saglie for a segment on Santa Barbara-based KEYT-TV's *Coastal Business Report*, which also included a lead-in feature segment on Santa Maria Style Barbecue. Even the French are apparently impressed with the valley's local flavor—in its March/April issue, France-based *Western Magazine* included a two-page spread on "Le Barbecue Santa Maria."

"All of this publicity reinforces our region's identity as a leading food-and-wine destination and encourages tourism to our area," Tunnell said.

For more information on Santa Maria Style Barbecue, including an instructional video and interactive DVD, log onto the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau web site at www.santamaria.com or call (800) 331-3779.

Serving the greater Santa Maria Valley in the heart of California's Central Coast, the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau is a nonprofit association that facilitates local tourism and provides information on the region's many attractions and visitor services. Famed for its fine wines, natural wonders, agricultural heritage and flavorful barbecue, the Santa Maria Valley offers a broad range of cultural, sporting and historical experiences. For information on lodging, dining, tours, attractions and events, please contact the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitor & Convention Bureau at (800) 331-3779, or visit www.santamaria.com.

###