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PILOTS ENJOY “RED CARPET” RUNWAY IN SANTA MARIA

Airport on California’s Central Coast Offers Unique Conveniences to Private Pilots—Including Free Parking, Walk-Up Dining and Lodging Discounts

Santa Maria, CA—The runway at Santa Maria Airport might as well be made of red carpet as private pilots enjoy one-of-a-kind amenities here in the heart of California’s Central Coast wine country—including free parking, walk-up dining and special lodging discounts.

“I’m not aware of anything else like it in California,” said Mark Sullivan, sales director for the airport’s 184-room Radisson Hotel, which includes the Vintner’s Grill and Atrium Bistro right next to the runway. “A lot of pilots come just for our Sunday brunch. They park for free within 100 feet of the restaurant, enjoy a great meal and then take off without delay.”

While Santa Maria Airport is large enough to feature a full ILS, 6,300-foot runway, control tower and commercial airlines, including United Express and Allegiant Air, it takes pride in offering small-town hospitality and hassle-free service. The airport does not charge tiedown (parking) fees for private planes, and rental cars are often delivered to pilots as they wait by their planes. The proximity of the hotel and restaurants—literally just steps away from the parked planes—is ideal for both quick bites and easy overnights. Santa Maria Airport is also California’s closest refueling station to Hawaii, making it a popular stop for flights to the islands.

Sullivan, who fondly recalls flying in and out of Santa Maria Airport with his pilot father 20 years ago, said that he and his colleagues have cultivated a special rapport with visiting pilots. “We enjoy catering to them,” he said. “We have such a unique setup here, and we want to make the most of it.”

Indeed, in addition to the convenience of walk-up dining and lodging, the Radisson Hotel offers “Pilot Special” room discounts and upgrades to pilots, depending on availability. “Just show us your pilot’s license and we’ll do everything we can to get you the best room for the best price,” Sullivan said.

Santa Maria Airport is located in the City of Santa Maria, which is tucked between the Pacific Ocean and rolling vineyards in northern Santa Barbara County along Highway 101. The surrounding Santa Maria Valley, featured in the hit movie *Sideways*, is famed for its fine wines, fresh strawberries, natural beauty, extensive golf courses and world-famous Santa Maria Style Barbecue.

For more information on the Radisson Hotel Santa Maria, please visit www.radisson.com/santamariaca or call (800) 235-1422. For more information on Santa Maria Airport, please visit www.santamariaairport.com or call (805) 922-1726.

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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.