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BY KRISTIN RANUIO

## A New Kind of Market

**People in the Napa Valley have a new place to shop,** eat, and connect at the Oxbow Public Marketplace which is scheduled to open this month.

After his successful venture with the San Francisco Ferry Building Marketplace founder and CEO Steve Carlin is bringing the experience closer to home. A resident of St. Helena for the past thirty years, Carlin modified the Ferry Plaza concept, including size and architectural design, to appeal to the people of Napa Valley.

“It’s a little self-serving, I guess,” said Carlin, “in that this is how I like to shop. I learned a long time ago I’m a much better cook when I use quality ingredients, and the market is all

about food source and knowing where the food product comes from.” This is one market where you can get a lot of information about your purchases from the vendors themselves. There are approximately 25 vendors in the marketplace, each owner-operated and from the Bay Area. All use sustainable practices.

Some of the market tenants are Taylor’s Refresher, a Napa Valley burger institution, The Fatted Calf, an artisan butcher and charcuterie, The Model Bakery, Whole Spice, The Olive Press, Tillerman Tea, Rotisario rotisserie meats, Anette’s Chocolate Factory, The Oxbow Cheese Merchant, Pica-Pica, featuring a variety of native Venezuelan foods and

Three Twins Ice Cream, one of only two known producers of certified organic ice cream in the United States.

There are farm stands where shoppers can purchase organic produce, grown within an approximately 150-square-mile radius. Some vendors will be familiar faces from our local farmer's markets, while others will be new.

You can also experience a micro-winery, right inside the marketplace. Folio Enoteca is bringing part of the winemaking experience to the people right on site, alongside their wine shop and artisan café.

After perusing all of the vendors' wares, you can stop for a bite to eat at one of the two casual restaurants at either end of the marketplace, or grab a burger at Taylor's Refresher.

Do you need the perfect hostess gift or something to set your table in style? You're covered: Just stop by Fete, described as "an oasis of provisions for the at-home entertainer," offering goods that are elegant and timeless, such as linen napkins and custom letter pressed invitations.

You can shop for a special event, or fill your refrigerator for the week. You can grab a quick bite, or sit down for a more leisurely meal. If it's a bit of sweet you crave, or a glass of wine, stop on by. The Oxbow Public Marketplace is 40,000 square feet filled with regional and sustainable foods, and unique foods and food-related products.

With its open, airy structure, the market is inviting and relaxed. It is much more than a grocery store. Carlin put it best, "You go into a supermarket, you have a supermarket experience; you come into the public market, you get a really different type of experience."

That experience may include picking up some local olive oil, an artisanal loaf of bread, and some fine cheeses for your appetizer; grabbing a free-range chicken and organic vegetables for the main meal; selecting a local wine (while chatting with the winemaker) and then choosing some local chocolates and pastries, along with a selection of teas, for dessert. After your dinner shopping is complete, you can head out to the patio overlooking the river with some organic ice cream to chat with neighbors. It's a whole new way to shop in the Napa Valley.

There will be about thirteen vendors open when the Oxbow Public Market welcomes the public this month, with more to follow in the new year. The market should be in full swing by the end of 2008. It's open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. except on Sunday, when it closes at 8 p.m. The market is located in the Oxbow District right next to Copia, at 610 and 644 First Street in Napa. More information can be found on the website [www.oxbowpublicmarket.com](http://www.oxbowpublicmarket.com).

Carlin says, "We want people to come down and hang out, shop, and get reconnected. That's what the market is about."

