

RIDERS *of the* ALISAL

PUBLISHED WHENEVER A LITTLE CORRAL DUST NEEDS KICKIN' AROUND

SPOTLIGHT:
The Alisal Piano Man



Photographic Memories
Guest share their favorites



Alisal Package Wrap-Up
Packages for every taste

» WHAT'S NEW *at the* RANCH? «



Alisal Unveils Exclusive Songwriters Workshop

The Alisal and singing cowboys have gone hand-in-hand for more than 60 years. Now for the first time, guests with a passion for music will have a rare chance to learn how to craft a song and perform it with Jim Messina, one of the most respected singer songwriters of our time. Unlike “fantasy” rock camps, this is the real deal for singer songwriters who wish to explore their creative selves and take their skills to the next level.

Imagine yourself, a small group of poets and music lovers, and Jim Messina, all working together in an intensive six-day workshop. You will start by focusing on songwriting, then work on performing your own songs, and finally for those interested, have the opportunity to share your song at a special Saturday evening concert performed in front of a live audience of Alisal guests.

The workshop curriculum goes beyond the lyric writing process and addresses how to structure a performance set, work with a sound system, and how to become more at ease with an audience. The workshop is designed to provide songwriters, performers and poets with a safe environment, with emphasis on communication skills that encourage feedback without judgment among participants.

The six-day workshop will take place February 5-12, 2012. And for those who prefer to appreciate music only as an audience member, you will have a chance to participate in the 2-night/3-day Weekend Performance Package on February 10-12, 2012. Come up for

the weekend, relax and enjoy all the Ranch activities and then on Saturday you'll be treated to an intimate evening performance and special wine dinner. Think of it as an early Valentine's Day present, or an unforgettable private concert opportunity. Please visit the Alisal website for details. www.Alisal.com

What's New on the Links

Every year, it is our goal to make our two Alisal golf courses better than the year before. This year, thanks to the hard work of our grounds crew and some equipment investments, we have made some positive changes at the Ranch Course.

If you haven't been out on the Ranch Course lately, here are some of things you have been missing: a new fleet of zippy electric carts and a beautiful new practice putting green, planted with turf that matches all of the other greens on the course. The Ranch also recently acquired new state-of-the art Baroness greens mowers that have allowed us to dramatically increase the speed of the putting surface. With these improvements and generally outstanding conditions throughout the course, we have received numerous compliments from both members and guests. The word has gotten out and the Southern California Golf Association recently selected the Alisal Ranch Course to host its annual Senior Amateur Championship Tournament.

We welcome all of you to come out and play the Ranch Course. We think you will be impressed.

ALISAL PACKAGE WRAP-UP



In our last newsletter we introduced a couple of special package offers - our Harvest Weekend Wine Package and our first ever BBQ Bootcamp. Due to the many guest inquiries, we thought we would report back to you on how these packages fared.

We are pleased to report both were great successes and complete sell-outs. Our inaugural BBQ Bootcamp debuted in late October and was presided over by the Alisal's Executive Chef Pascal Gode and the legendary Grill Master and Hitching Post Restaurant owner, Frank Ostini. Participants at the four-day /three-night event went home full of grilling secrets and of course had their fill of the best

grilled cuisine you can imagine. Perhaps it was that culinary experience that, pardon the pun, "created a thirst" for the Harvest Wine Event that followed soon after.

The Harvest Wine Package, which is offered in November, gave guests a chance to taste the latest varietals from well-known Lucas & Lewellen Winery, kick-up their heels with some line dancing and of course feast on a sumptuous winemaker's dinner. The wines were outstanding and everyone had a lot of fun.

Yes, we will be offering both packages again in 2012 so be sure to visit the website and sign-up early. www.alisal.com/packages.html



A PICTURE *is worth a* THOUSAND WORDS

We truly appreciate everyone who tweets about their stay at the Alisal and joins the conversation on our Facebook page. Our social media family continues to grow and it is a great way for all of us to stay in touch. Your kind words are wonderful and your photos and videos add a lot. When you post your photographic memories it lets everyone relive their own special moments at the Ranch. So feel free to share your Alisal adventures on our Flickr and Facebook pages.



To see guest photos go to Alisal Flickr photo stream at www.flickr.com/photos/alisalguestranch.

To share your Alisal photos with the community send them to webmarketing@alisal.com.

Family Memories at the Alisal 2011





Wrangler Matchmakers

Guests come to the Alisal looking for a great riding experience. That's why Tony Thompson, our Head Wrangler, and the rest of his team take great care in matching the rider to the appropriate horse. Matching the rider to the horse is a two-part process: interview and instinct. Whenever a new rider comes out to the barn, Tony considers their skill-level, height and approximate weight. Tony selects a horse that fits both temperament and size. "I would love to have a three dimensional horse" explains Tony – "meaning one horse that fits beginner, intermediate and advanced riders. The truth is that what makes a horse good for advanced riders would not be a good match for a child or novice adult. The funny thing is that some of today's most popular horses for beginners were once the prized mounts of advanced riders."

One example is Sundance, who loves the little ones today, but used to be a champion rodeo horse with a basket full of ribbons and belt buckles to her credit. Since horses have a long and happy career at the Alisal, they often serve all levels of riders at one time or another. They usually come in as younger horses with plenty of spirit, making them ideal for advanced riders. After a few years on the trails, they have mellowed enough to make them perfect for intermediate riders. By the time they are seasoned pros and nothing rattles them, they become the favorites of the younger age group.

Sometimes guests who visited the Ranch 10 or 15 years ago return and want to ride the same horse they loped along the trails on many years earlier. Now those horses have become better suited for their kids. It's another nice way parents are able to pass on their Alisal tradition to the next generation.

No "Bummer" Horses

Naming new horses at the Alisal is an honor bestowed on the wranglers who know them best. When a new horse is being considered, Head Wrangler, Tony Thompson, gives them a thorough going over. "I check the bone structure, the feet, and look for a "kind eye" (a horse that is calm around people), says Tony. After the initial once-over, a wrangler is assigned to take the prospective horse out on the trail to test its demeanor. If it makes the grade then it becomes one of a string of around 115 horses that range in age from three years to 33 years (the average age is around 12 years old). Many of the horses come to the Alisal with fine names, while others have names that don't do them justice. One gentle horse came to us named "Bummer" and was more aptly renamed Idaho. Most of the time a horse's name is based on some physical characteristic. Some examples of new horses that will be joining the stable are: "Crow" (a flashy black horse with white face), "Bandit" (a pretty Paint) and Nacho" (an Arab quarter-horse). We invite you to pack your boots and visit the barn on your next visit to see all your old favorites as well as the newest members of the Alisal family.

SPOTLIGHT *on the* ALISAL PIANO MAN



Ask a long-time guest what makes coming back to the Alisal feel like home and you get a variety of answers. Some say it's riding their favorite horse, for others it's the familiar comfort of their favorite cottage and for many the Alisal experience means evenings in the Oak Room enjoying the piano stylings of Bill Powell. For more than 43 years, Bill has been filling the Alisal lounge and dining room with a dazzling array of show tunes, big band standards, and contemporary favorites that he seems to effortlessly pull from memory. For generations, guests have made requests for their favorite tunes and more than occasionally when they return, Bill greets them with their usual requests.

While Bill has legions of fans, few know his history before the Alisal. He's a local: born in Oxnard and raised in Ventura County. He gained his love of music from his mother who played piano and he learned the basics from a fine teacher (a working musician), who schooled Bill in a broad range of classical and contemporary popular pieces.

As his interest in music grew, Bill began performing on the public stage. He formed a band in high school, and went on to pursue a degree in music at UCSB. While in college, he joined I. Newton Perry's successful society orchestra and played notable events around Southern California. It was at one of these events that he met the Jackson Family who had recently acquired the

Alisal. Once Bill got out of the service he played at the Ranch and performed for various parties and special occasions.

When Bill was not performing, he was an elementary school teacher and superintendent for the Blochman School District near Santa Maria. His occasional Alisal gigs became more regular when then Alisal General Manager, Harold Lavon, invited Bill to play the Oak Room on a regular basis. He started by playing bass alongside a guitar player, but after the guitarist left, Bill switched to piano, and the rest is history. For 35 years he played at the Alisal five nights a week and for a period of time, he spent his "off nights" also playing at the prestigious Beverly Wilshire Hotel.

Over the years, Bill has built close relationships with long-time family guests. He was also close friends with actor/wine maker Fess Parker, who often came by the Oak Room to hear Bill play. Bill fondly recalls one night when Fess came in with a special visitor, Rosemary Clooney, who spent the night vocalizing with Bill to the delight of the lucky guests in attendance.

While Bill no longer plays quite as full a schedule, guests can still find him tickling the ivories three nights a week, more during the summer months. We are privileged to have him here and on behalf of all the guests we want to say "thank you Bill" for providing the soundtrack for so many great Alisal memories.

