

BON APPETIT

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TOP TABLES

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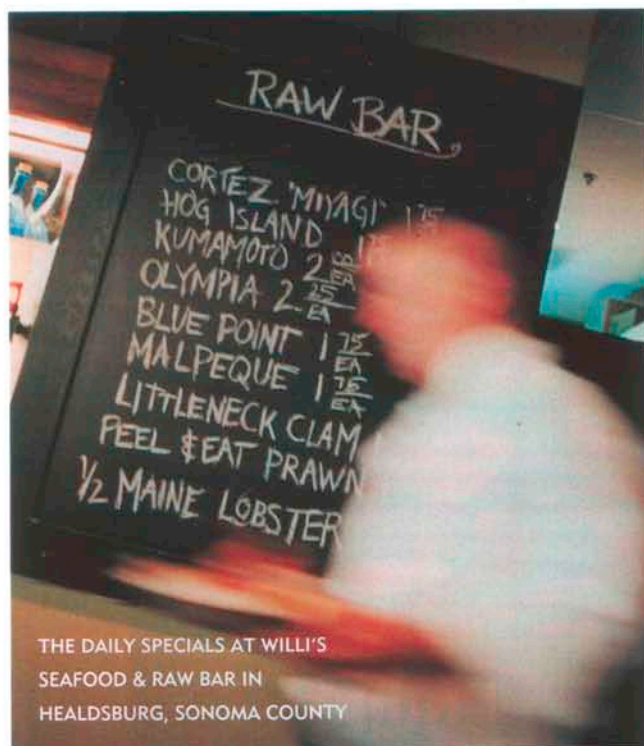
Around the country and around the world—where to go now

BY TANYA WENMAN STEEL

| NAPA AND SONOMA |

For some reason, Sonoma County's restaurant scene has long lagged behind its sophisticated wine industry. That is changing, particularly in Healdsburg, where the formerly quiet square is now neither quiet nor square. The Hotel Healdsburg, with Charlie Palmer's Dry Creek Kitchen, jump-started a burst of activity, and **WILLI'S SEAFOOD & RAW BAR** has added to the mix. Napa Valley resident Jamie Purviance, co-author of *Weber's Big Book of Grilling*, calls Willi's "the most exciting restaurant to open in the wine country in the past few years. The region is saturated with high-end Mediterranean palaces, so it's great to see a mostly Latin, mostly seafood, mostly dressed-down eatery flourish."

The split-level dining room has an almost Caribbean vibe, with bamboo chairs, slowly revolving wrought-iron fans, a pressed-tin ceiling, and deep marine blue and green walls lending a hint of the sea. The menu offers roughly 30 small-plate options. Purviance's favorites include chef Mark Stark's tuna tartare dressed in coconut milk with ginger, jalapeños, and cashews, the lobster roll with fennel and garlic butter, and the french fries served with Laura Chenel goat cheese ranch dressing. (403 Healdsburg Avenue, Healdsburg; 707-433-9191)



THE DAILY SPECIALS AT WILLI'S
SEAFOOD & RAW BAR IN
HEALDSBURG, SONOMA COUNTY