

Restaurant Week lets you taste something new

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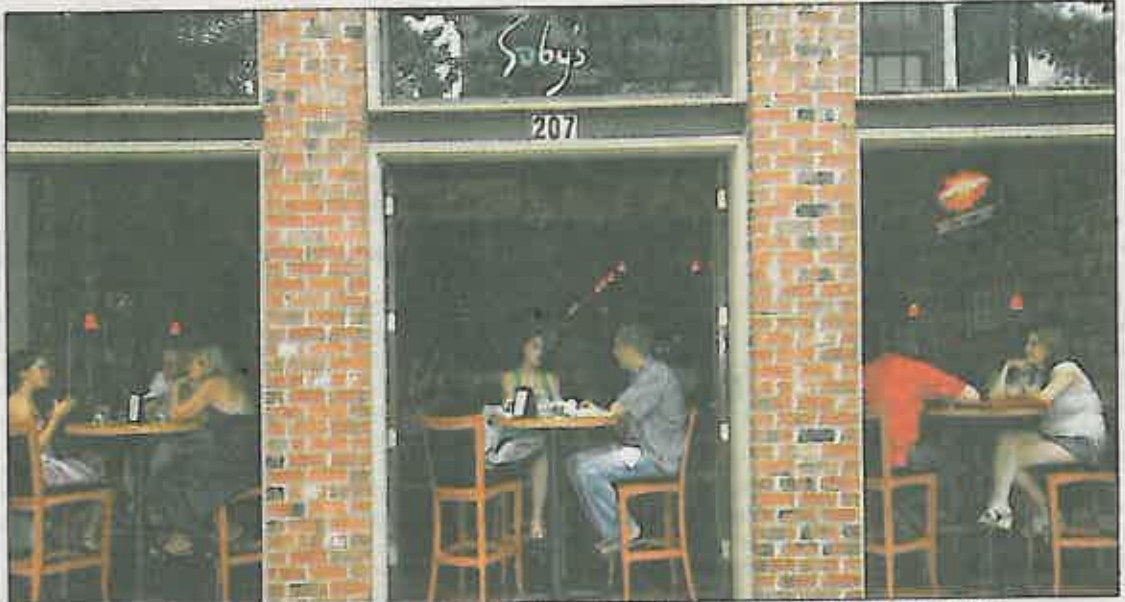
You know that restaurant you've been meaning to try? It's the one that has always seemed too far away or too expensive. Or maybe you've been waiting for the right occasion.

Well, now's your chance.

Tonight through Sunday, restaurants across the state are participating in the annual South Carolina Restaurant Week. This marks the third year for the event, which has grown to 230 restaurants, including 24 in the Upstate area.

"January is always the slowest month in the restaurant industry," says Tom Sponseller, president of the South Carolina Hospitality Association, which organizes Restaurant Week. "People are coming off of the holidays. This gives them an excuse to go out."

During the week, restaurants, many of them fine dining, offer set-price, multi-course menus at less-than-normal prices. Most prices hover around \$30, so Restaurant Week



Soby's is among 24 local restaurants participating in Restaurant Week, tonight through Sunday. STAFFFILE

is a great time to test the waters, says Sponseller.

If Devereaux's, for example, has always been on the back burner, this week you can try the butternut squash risotto with duck confit, a pistachio-crusted pork and a pumpkin and spice creme brulee. Or, maybe you've been wanting to try

Stella's Southern Bistro in Simpsonville. This week, \$30 will get you three carefully crafted courses and an amuse-bouche of traditional ham salad on a saltine.

Restaurant Week, though, is not all about fine dining. While most prices hover around \$30, spots like Wild Wings and Fud-

drucker's are offering three items for \$20 and \$18 per couple.

"We wanted it to be family friendly," Sponseller says.

South Carolina Restaurant Week runs through Sunday. For a list of all the participating restaurants, go to www.restaurantweeksouthcarolina.com.