

Robb Report

TRAVEL / HOTELS

Hotels Are Tapping Their Onsite Farms to Donate Fresh Fruit and Vegetables to Local Communities

For some luxury hotels, serving farm-to-table meals made with produce grown on-site is a point of pride. But what do they do with all that bounty when there are no guests to feed?

BY LAURA ITZKOWITZ ON APRIL 22, 2020



Courtesy Miraval Austin

With hotels around the world closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many are working to find ways to support their furloughed or laid off staff members and vulnerable members of their local communities. Providing access to [food](#) is one area in which hotels are uniquely positioned to help, and properties across the world have opened up their storerooms or kitchens to support food banks and other initiatives. Some hotels with their own farms and gardens, however, are going one step further and donating fresh fruit, vegetables and other homegrown items to those in need—thereby nourishing both people and the planet.



Beets from the Miraval Austin farm

Courtesy Miraval Austin

Focused on wellness, [Miraval Austin](#) is donating the organic produce from its 10-acre Cypress Creek Farm to its furloughed staff. Each week, the farm team harvests onions, collard greens, beets, carrots, chard, lettuce, and other vegetables, and gathers eggs from its hens and ducks, then invites staff members to pick everything up while practicing social distancing. In [Hawaii](#), where tourism makes up about 21 percent of the state's economy, [Timbers Kauai](#) is giving furloughed staff the chance to sign up for twice-weekly CSA boxes from the Farm at Hokuala at Timbers Kauai, and donating any other unclaimed produce to charities. Recipients get plenty of healthy, fresh options, from greens to pineapples and native Hawaiian canoe plants; so far, over 1,000 pounds of organic produce has been donated.



Harvesting the citrus grove at Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa

Courtesy [Rancho Valencia](#) Resort & Spa

Several members of [Relais & Châteaux](#), an association of independently run boutique luxury hotels that share a culinary focus, are looking beyond their boundaries to the community at large. Nestled in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, the [Old Edwards Inn & Spa](#) is doing everything it can to support its staff and the wider community. The resort has retained all 450 of its employees, and is delivering its fresh produce grown onsite to local organizations in need. The property's Director of Farms Matt Clayton and his team kicked off the initiative by donating 300 heads of lettuce to the Highlands Emergency Council, and will continue their efforts until the hotel is able to reopen.



Some of the bounty from the farm at Chewton Glen

Courtesy Chewton Glen

On the other side of the country, Relais & Châteaux member [Rancho Valencia Resort & Spa](#) partnered with local San Diego nonprofit ProduceGood to offer a gleaning pick of the lemons and oranges from its citrus grove to help the local community during the pandemic. Volunteers came to the property wearing masks and gloves to harvest the fruit while practicing social distancing, then delivered the bounty to the Community Resource Center and Kitchen for Good. Across the pond, [Chewton Glen](#), set on a English country estate that dates back to the 12th century, has partnered with local non-profit The Empty Bowls Project to ensure none of the produce grown on its organic farm goes to waste.