

## The Best of Fun Living



### Best Music Festival Series

#### ✓ Country Summer Music Festival

Sonoma County Fairgrounds, 1350 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa,  
707-543-0100, [countrysummer.com](http://countrysummer.com)

Country music is right at home in Sonoma County, according to Jim Murphy, Program Director at Froggy 92.9 and VP of Programming and Operations at Amarturo Sonoma Media. "Of the nine Bay Area counties, Sonoma County is one of the three or four that is very friendly to country music. It's the ag background and the overall lifestyle."

So when Amarturo teamed up with Impact Entertainment to produce the first Country Summer Festival at the Sonoma County fairgrounds in Santa Rosa in 2014, the partners knew the festival would be a resounding success from the get-go.

"Country music has mass appeal and it runs the gamut," he says, adding that the festival draws Sonoma residents of all ages and backgrounds. "Country music is about life and love and experiences — people's life stories. People can just relate to it."

Taking place on the carnival grounds over a three-day weekend each June, the festival has featured past performances by an array of big name country talent, including Lady Antebellum, Jake Owen, The Band Perry and Brantley Gilbert. This year's event drew nearly 30,000 country music fans who came to hear a number of different country artists, including Thomas Rhett, Maddie & Tae, Michael Ray, William Michael Morgan, Ned Ledoux, Darius Rucker, Montgomery Gentry, A Thousand Horses, Aaron Watson, Clare Dunn, Justin Moore, Randy Houser,

Cam and Canaan Smith.

"We got very positive feedback from Froggy listeners and others on the event, the lineup and the experience," Murphy says.

"This year, in particular, many of us got the feeling just through our normal interactions around the county that this has become a benchmark annual event that people are excited about and want to be part of."

Looking ahead to the 2018 Country Music Festival, Murphy expects even greater things.

"Our projected talent budget for 2018 is more than 30 percent higher than 2017, so we expect the overall lineup next year to be the best event." Tickets for 2018 are already on sale even though the list of artists has yet to be announced.

The Country Summer Festival takes place on a large outdoor stage with first-rate lighting and sound equipment, Murphy says. The event offers both reserved seating (3,000 seats) and general admission (7,000). Ticket prices start at \$79 for one-day general admission.

#### Montgomery Village Concert Series,

911 Village Court, Santa Rosa, 707-545-3844,  
[mvshops.com](http://mvshops.com)

#### Railroad Square Music Festival,

Fourth and Davis streets, Santa Rosa,  
[railroadsquaremusicfestival.com](http://railroadsquaremusicfestival.com)



Country home: Fans swoon as Darius Rucker takes the stage during the 2017 Country Summer at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa.

ALVIN BERNDA