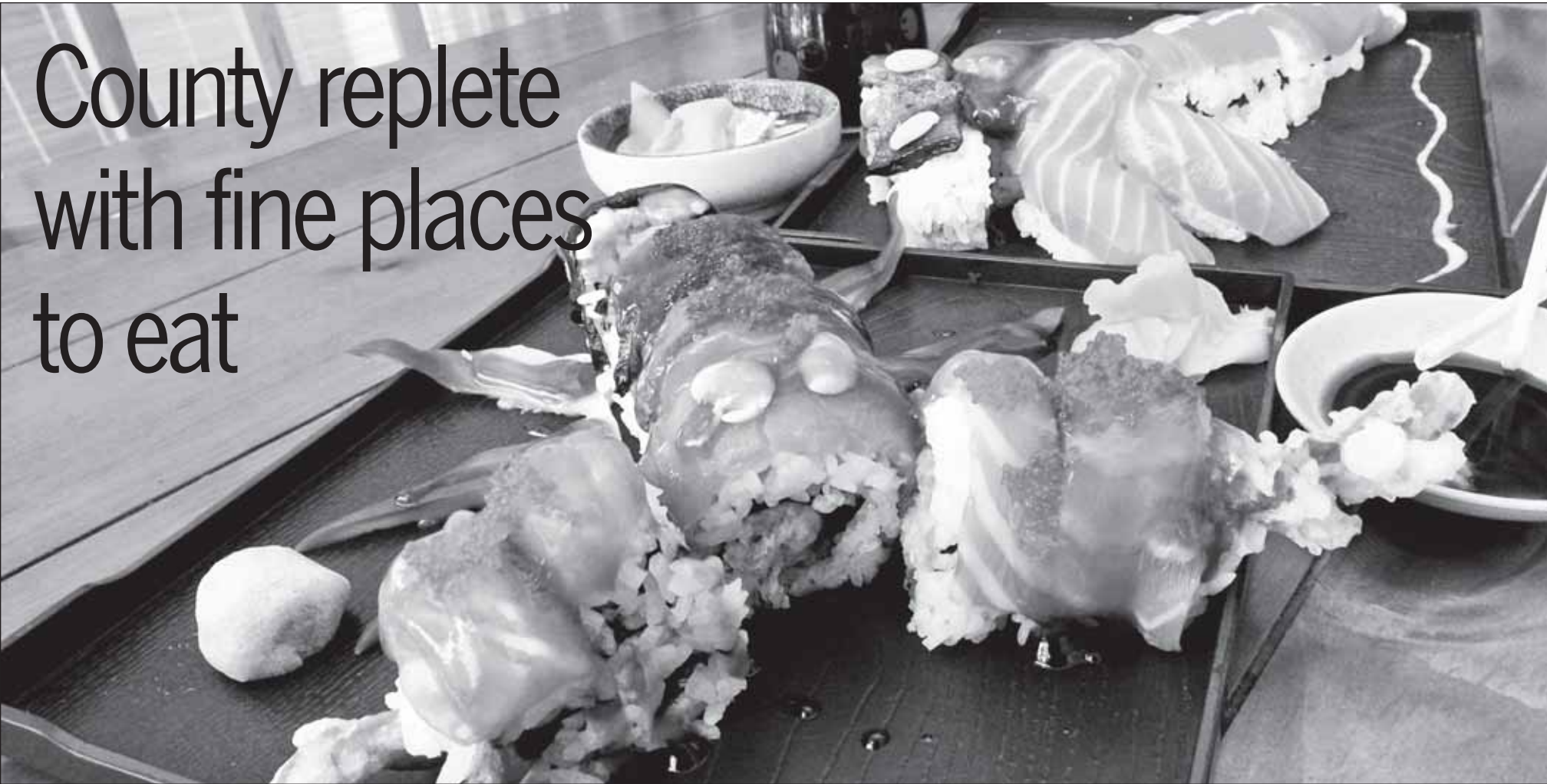


County replete with fine places to eat



Peninsula, Valley each provide local restaurant industry with world-class produce, wines, chefs

People seeking dining out possibilities in Monterey County soon realize that the table top is long and wide and well-spread with delectable dishes.

Part of that abundant variety is driven by a hearty agricultural industry, especially in the Salinas Valley. And Monterey County is a rising

star in the wine industry, too. Not to forget the blue Pacific and the fresh catches it yields, catches which appear on a diner's plate baked, blackened, breaded, battered, broiled, pan-fried, sautéed or otherwise.

In the Salinas Valley, restaurant numbers continue to multiply and their quality continues to climb. Yet it is

on the Monterey Peninsula and, to an extent, in Carmel Valley, where diners encounter what seems limitless choices.

In a good omen for the state of dining out here, many area chefs have garnered international reputations. The emphasis on eating well has led to several food and wine festivals.

— Dave Nordstrand