

NEWS RELEASE

Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau



Best of Rockford Region Restaurant Week Award Winners Announced

Community Selects Award Recipients for Best Bite, Best Atmosphere, Best Restaurant Week Package, Best Cocktail or Brew, and Best for All

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2023

Rockford, IL – Rockford Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (RACVB) is thrilled to announce the 2023 Rockford Region Restaurant Week “Best of” Winners.

Residents and visitors to the Rockford area flocked to over 50 participating restaurants, bars and food establishments throughout the week (Jan. 31 – Feb. 6) and voted for Restaurant Week’s “best of” awards. Votes were cast throughout the week on GoRockford.com. Categories ranged from the Best Bite to Best for All for creating a sense of belonging for those visiting local restaurants.

“Through radio, television, out-of-home and digital advertising, combined with social media promotion, our goal with Restaurant Week is to drive incremental business during a slow time to our local restaurants. Whether they are existing or new customers, we aim for the week to be a celebration of the culinary excellence in the region and a motivator to encourage repeat visitation throughout the year,” **said John Groh, RACVB president/CEO.** “Feedback has been great from our restaurateurs. They felt supported and appreciated and like the year is off to a good start.”

“We were blown away by the enthusiasm for our Restaurant Week feature menu,” **said Paul Sletten, executive chef and president of Abreo LLC.** “It was the single busiest week we’ve had in January or February since opening in 2005, 18 years! We want to thank everyone who came out to dine with us and all the other amazing Rockford Restaurants.”

Fifty-two local establishments participated, with 23 of them new to the event. Over 1,300 votes were cast during the seven-day run for the “Best of” awards.

The 2023 Restaurant Week Winners are as follows:

- **Best Atmosphere & Vibes:** A food establishment that showcases the best vibes through lighting, service, and overall experience. **Winner – Ernie’s Midtown Pub** for the second year in a row.
- **Best Restaurant Week Package:** The most creative deal, experience, or package. **Winner – Alchemy at Aldeen Supper Club** for their three-course dinner.

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- **Best Cocktail or Brew:** The most creative and tasty beverage. This category includes coffee, cocktails, smoothies, beer, and other freshly served beverages. **Winner – 8th Ward Pub** for the second year in a row.
- **Best Bite:** Vote for the meal packing the most flavorful bite. **Winner – The Norwegian.**
- **Best for All:** Your favorite food establishment showcases a welcoming environment for all. This is defined as a venue that welcomes residents and visitors by creating a sense of belonging. **Winner – Lino's.**

The winning restaurants will receive an award suitable for hanging in their restaurant, in addition to recognition on billboards and exposure on RACVB's "GoRockford" social media channels.

Additional Feedback from Restaurateurs:

- "For the third year in a row RRRW served as a great sales driver in this otherwise slower time of the year. This year, our sales were up 24 percent over the same week last year. It was great not only seeing our regular guests but also seeing so many new faces during the promotion," **said Joshua Binning, owner, Lucha Cantina.**
- "Restaurant Week was a blast for us at Octane! It was great way to kick off the year which is usually a slow time for the industry. Sold so much of our package deal and the best part was people asking us to please put the Fried Chicken Rice Bowl and the Jungle Bird Cocktail on menu! We are pumped for Restaurant Week 2024," **said Patrick Alberto, owner, Octane.**

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About RACVB: *RACVB is responsible for promoting the Rockford region as an attractive travel destination and enhancing its public image as a dynamic place to live and work. Through the impact of travel, RACVB strengthens the economic position of the region and provides opportunities for people in our communities.*
www.gorockford.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Jacqui Corsi, RACVB Vice President of Marketing: 815.489.1664 or jcorsi@gorockford.com