



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WORLD FOOD TRAVEL ASSOCIATION ANNOUNCES 2017 FOODTREKKING AWARD WINNERS

GRAND RAPIDS COMES IN 2ND FOR BEST FOOD/BEVERAGE DESTINATION EXPERIENCE WORLDWIDE

Grand Rapids, Mich. – The World Food Travel Association (WFTA), the world's leading authority on food and beverage tourism, has announced the winners of the 2017 FoodTrekkling Awards for excellence in food and beverage tourism. Grand Rapids came in second place in the Best Food & Beverage Destination Experience category.

Grand Rapids' submission included information about the booming craft beverage and food scene including aspects such as: Grand Rapids Food Trail, beer tourism, the Beer City Passport, Downtown Market Grand Rapids, Cocktail Week GR, local farmers' markets, an agriculturally rich area, and much more.

This recognition is especially important for Grand Rapids because not only is it an international award, but it reinstates that beer tourism has helped shape Grand Rapids and it is here to stay.

"Beer City USA pairs perfectly with the emerging culinary scene in Grand Rapids," said Kate Herron, Director of Marketing with Experience Grand Rapids. "We have a plethora of artisanal culinary businesses popping up, and high quality restaurants as well which all contribute to this award in their own way."

Additional Food Trekking Award information:

Best Food/Beverage Destination Experience

1st Place: Province of Ontario, Culinary Tourism Alliance OntarioCulinary.com

2nd Place: Experience Grand Rapids experiencegr.com/biteseeing

2017 JUDGES & SELECTION PROCESS

Seven experts in specific fields served as judges for the 2017 Awards:

1. Panna Balazsy (Hungary), Owner, [Globalist Kitchen](#)
2. Roberta Garibaldi (Italy), [food and wine tourism consultant](#) and coordinator of [East Lombardy - European Region of Gastronomy 2017](#)

3. Livio Colapinto (Italy), Owner, Zest of Italy
4. Katarzyna Janiszewska (Poland), Founder, SlowLife.pl
5. Udi Goldschmidt (Israel), culinary tourism consultant to Israel's tourism industry
6. Brian F Lorge (USA), CCTP, HAAC (USA), Chairman, Certified Ambassador World Food Travel Association; Exec. Dir., American Culinary Federation (MCCA); Fellow, American Academy of Chefs & Les Amis d'Escoffier; Industry Consultant
7. Lawrence Acosta (USA), Owner, Grub Crawl

THE CRITERIA & SELECTION PROCESS

Winners were selected from among all submitted applications. Judges were asked to evaluate the business strategy for the submitting company or organization; the marketing communications that support the product or business; the overall public reputation of the company or product; and as needed, the individual product itself. Each application was reviewed by a minimum of two different judges. For each category, there was one first place winner and up to one second place winner. Not all categories had second place winners. Applications for the 2018 Awards will open in October 2017.

PAST WINNERS

To see current and past winners, visit <http://foodtrekkingawards.org/winners>

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ABOUT THE WORLD FOOD TRAVEL ASSOCIATION (WFTA)

The World Food Travel Association (WFTA) creates economic opportunities where food and beverage meet travel and hospitality. We are a hub that supports the economic viability of food, beverage, travel and hospitality industry stakeholders.

Food is a common denominator shared by everyone around the world, no matter where we live or where we travel. Our research shows that for 93% of travelers, food and drink create memories, and are not just meals.

Without our distinctive food and beverage products, culinary cultures and local hospitality, the unique sense of place that inspires us to travel and even host visitors at home, will be forever lost.