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CONTACT: Andrea McHugh, 401-845-9151
Senior Communications Manager
Discover Newport
amchugh@discovernewport.org

LaForge Casino Restaurant Sweeps the 2018 Newport Burger Bender

The winning restaurant, a Newport institution for more than half a century, wowed diners with The Crowley Burger.

Newport (R.I.) February 26, 2018 – They took an all-beef patty, cooked it to perfection, topped it with Gruyère cheese, layered it with creminis and tempura cornichons, generously drizzled it with truffle aioli and wedged it all between a buttery brioche bun. And the result won over the hearts and taste buds of Newporters and beyond. LaForge Casino Restaurant’s Crowley Burger, which has now become a part of the regular menu, won the coveted popular vote in the second annual Newport Burger Bender.

“We are thrilled to hear that we have won the Burger Bender Competition!” said James “JR” Rodrigues, the restaurant’s general manager, when informed of the victory. “We are extremely proud of our staff for the effort and support. The Crowley Burger was delicious and proudly honored a great Newport family. Thanks to all who came out for it.”

But the Crowley Burger isn’t the only entry in the spotlight. Providence Journal Food Editor Gail Ciampa has crowned 22 Bowen’s Wine Bar & Grill’s Secret Burger her “Critic’s Choice.”

“Don’t assume the toppings of foie gras and butter-poached lobster are why this was my favorite of the 2018 Burger Bender. No doubt the richness of the ingredients makes this a

winning combination on any plate,” said Ciampa. “It was all about the burger, the dripping-with-juice Wagyu dry-aged beef. Made from one of the Japanese breeds of beef cattle known for superior marbling, the flavor was amazing, the meat tender. Starting with that beef gave Bowen's Executive Chef Walter Slater's burger an edge. Pickled red onion, truffle garlic aioli and house-made pickles are the perfect complementing condiments for the stellar burger on a house-made onion bun. Several restaurants amped up their burgers this year and I loved them all. But nobody did it better than 22 Bowen's Wine Bar & Grille.”

Jamie Coelho, Associate Editor at Rhode Island Monthly and author of *The Dish*, the magazine's monthly newsletter, declared The Wharf Pub's Antipasti Patty the “Creative Champion.”

“It's an Italian take on a bacon cheeseburger, subbing in prosciutto and mozzarella in place of bacon and cheddar. The balsamic roasted red peppers, onions and Rhode Island mushrooms gave it an epic presentation while rounding out the flavors with a bit of sweetness from the caramelized vegetables and cherry pepper aioli. The toasted ciabatta roll held up to all the toppings and gave the perfectly cooked burger a nice and sturdy foundation,” said Coelho. “And I'll never look at French fries the same way again after munching on those truffle tater tots!”

The Newport Burger Bender is now an annual simple burger contest which recognizes the bevy of culinary creativity throughout our destination. There is no participation fee for restaurants nor has there ever been. Participating restaurants must be in Newport or Bristol County, Rhode Island, and this year's contest was limited to the first 30 restaurants to register. Participants receive complimentary promotional materials including custom menu inserts and Burger Bender coasters. Each entry is photographed and featured on DiscoverNewport.org.

Images available.

ABOUT DISCOVER NEWPORT

Discover Newport is the official destination management organization (DMO) dedicated to promoting the City of Newport and the eight surrounding coastal townships in Newport and Bristol counties, Rhode Island. These include Barrington, Bristol, Jamestown, Little Compton, Middletown, Newport, Portsmouth, Tiverton and Warren. As a non-profit organization, Discover Newport partners with stakeholders throughout our tourism and hospitality industry to market the region as a premier destination for business and leisure travel.

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