

WORKING LUNCH: TAZZA DONALD MOFFETT'S SOUND ART QUILLS "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE" March 6, 2019

STYLLG

WEEKLY

*We explore
what Longoven,
our Restaurant
of the Year,
means for
Richmond's
thriving
dining scene.*

State
of the
Plate



State of the Plate

Last year, I was tasked with assigning and compiling the State of the Plate issue after only a month at the helm of *Style's* food and drink section. Historically, the issue has prominently featured the much-anticipated Restaurant of the Year, a critics' choice of sorts, along with a collection of stories from other corners of Richmond's dining scene.

I was lucky to have a writing team of talented voices and diverse palates with the institutional knowledge that I lacked at the time, which made last year's selection pretty straightforward: I emailed the writers asking for each of their top three restaurants that had opened within the previous year, every person had one in common, and boom. Easy enough.

This time around, we invited some more nuance into the process and also broadened the scope of the conversation beyond focusing on a single restaurant. One Thursday evening in late January, my food writers and I gathered at *Style's* conference table, equipped with snacks, cans of LaCroix, lists of contenders and a whole lot of opinions.

As commenters so generously remind us on the internet, food criticism is entirely subjective. Even considering the varied experience and expertise of this group of writers, a reviewer's opinion is still exactly that: an opinion. And much like sending four writers to the same restaurant would almost certainly result in four completely distinct reviews, asking a group to contemplate the most notable establishment of an entire year resulted in a host of different priorities and qualifiers.

Before even discussing the restaurants themselves, we had to address the central question: What does it mean to be *Style's* restaurant of the year? Is it as simple as a consensus on everyone's favorite? What role do public opinion and popularity play? What about prices and accessibility? We really took the name of this issue, State of the Plate, to heart. We asked ourselves and each other, what *is* the state of Richmond's dining scene, and which new restaurant encompasses that?

Here's where we landed: As food writers, we have the luxury of viewing dining as not just utilitarian and very much as an experience. Chefs and their teams do more than simply serve meals, and we concluded that the restaurant of the year is all about impact. Who's doing something different? Who's challenging the status quo and giving us more to talk about? Who's making moves that Richmond has never seen before? By those parameters, the answer was clear.

But the current state of our ever-changing, ever-beloved dining scene is a reflection of more than one new restaurant. We're proud of the reputation Richmond has built for itself, held up by the tireless, passionate labor that goes into filling our plates, our bellies and our souls. And while it's by no means an exhaustive list, this package is an homage to the complex, diverse, delicious web of food that we're so fortunate to call our own, and the people making it happen. —*Laura Ingles*



Roasted potatoes with koji cream, potato greens, seaweed and potato crumble.



It's edgy, unexpected and risky, and it's making a statement in our dining scene.

by Phaedra Hise

At *Style*, we gravitate toward risk with our Restaurant of the Year award. Past winners include chef David Shannon's idiosyncratic masterpiece, L'Opossum, chef Brittanny Anderson's visionary German-Italian mashup, Brenner Pass, and the restaurant that arguably led Richmond into culinary greatness, the Roosevelt.

This year, it's Longoven.

You don't have to like Longoven's minimalist décor and small-plate food, or, frankly, even eat there, to respect it. The judges agreed that Longoven isn't particularly approachable, a term that seems to mean that the food is easy to understand and inexpensive.

But that's precisely why this restaurant is *Style's* choice this year. Eating there may not be for everyone, but with outstanding flavors, creativity and vision, Longoven's chefs and owners Andrew Manning, Patrick Phelan and Megan Fitzroy Phelan challenge Richmond to embrace risk and diversity in high-end eating.

Not surprisingly, Richmond is holding back. Since opening last June, Longoven has been chasing the success of its sold-out pop-up series that earned national attention.

"We opened in July, had an amazing couple of months," says Patrick. "Then after Labor Day we felt the business tail off. We know it's going to take time to build a story and build a place that the diner trusts."

That dip is surprising for a city that lines up for new restaurant openings the way Hollywood lines up for film premieres. We have the most craft breweries per capita in the country, and have been named among the top food cities in the country by Zagat. It seems like every month Richmond is mentioned on some national food list or another. A spot like Longoven, which clearly models itself on Michelin-starred spots in bigger cities, would seem to be the next logical step in our dining evolution.

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Restaurant of the Year:

Longoven



Olive oil crumble with winter citrus topped with herbs, olive oil ice cream and citrus foam.



Chocolate cake, blood orange sorbet and cubeb pepper ganache.



Roast pigeon with caramelized salsify, shallots confit, maitake mushrooms and Nebbiolo sauce.



Longoven owners Andrew Manning, Megan Fitzroy Phelan and Patrick Phelan.



Miniature sweets known as mignardises, clockwise from top: chocolate-rosemary macarons, black sesame toffee gold bars, cauliflower bonbons, whiskey pâté de fruit with smoked sugar and ras el hanout marshmallows.

To understand what's going on here, let's go back to that word approachable. What does it mean, exactly? Does it, and should it, define Richmond's food scene? And is Longoven really not approachable?

On price, Longoven's small plates are in the same range as starters at Acacia, Brenner Pass, Lemaire, L'Opossum and Shagbark. Longoven doesn't serve big dinner plates of meat-and-three main courses, but the chef's tasting menu provides a full dinner. Longoven's tasting menu, at \$165 per person with paired wines, is far less than the \$200 option at Perch. That makes Longoven financially approachable for diners used to visiting Richmond's high-end eateries.

As for the concept, the food at Longoven is exciting. It's bold, with unexpected dishes like slices of perfectly cooked octopus layered with fingerling potato and sprinkled with pickled onion and tiny pearls of egg white. A corn custard topped with blue crab, shiitake mushroom and grated egg yolk is a sublime re-imagination of classic Virginia flavors. The mixed-grain risotto of "seeds," stinging nettles and cheese takes comfort food uptown.

Desserts from award-winning pastry chef Megan Fitzroy Phelan incorporate savory elements, like rich olive oil shortbread with blackberries and thyme, black sesame ice cream and coriander cake. She often sends diners a bite-sized pastry assortment following a meal, including her now-famous gold-dusted toffee bar.

The plating is streamlined and artistic, with clean colors and carefully placed garnishes. Eating here is like nothing else in Richmond, which may make it feel unapproachable for those afraid to gamble more than \$100 on an evening of unknowns.

But for adventurous eaters with means, Longoven is impressively high concept. If the Michelin judges came to Richmond, Longoven is one of the first places they'd check out.

"Hospitality strives to take you to a place for a brief period of time to enjoy possibly the most habitual experience we have on this planet," Phelan says. "When you come in here, a small part of you has to be willing to surrender yourself to the experience."

As our judges talked about Restaurant of the Year, it became clear that what's approachable for one person is not necessarily approachable for another. In other words, we were having a conversation about diversity. And, as Richmond is currently struggling to understand in both social and political venues, successful communities thrive on diversity.

Richmond may congratulate itself on finally being on par with the South's

restaurant towns like Charleston or Asheville in the Carolinas, but the truth is that our most beloved restaurants tend to look about the same: Chefs riff on variations of upscale but familiar farm-to-table Southern dishes. The food is delicious, and their success is well-deserved. But we need more dining diversity.

There are some notable exceptions. Richmonders didn't know we wanted German food until Brittany Anderson showed us. David Shannon outright flaunts gay subculture at L'Opossum, to the delight of diners and James Beard judges. ZZQ's outstanding success was born of Chris Fultz's single-minded, decades-long obsession with brisket. Pho Tay Do and the surrounding small Vietnamese eateries on Horsepen Road are beloved institutions.

But those are points of food diversity in a town that overwhelmingly likes dinner — especially an expensive dinner — to be safe, predictable and approachable.

Our chefs pay the price for this limitation. Several chefs at Richmond's desti-

nation eateries have complained to me that they have to reel in their creativity in order to attract diners.

These are diners whom I've heard say:

"When I spend \$100 on a meal, I want it to be something I know I'll like," and "Eating at Longoven was confusing. There was no big plate so I felt like we didn't actually have a real dinner."

The success of artsy concept food influences a town's entire dining scene. In seeing that risk rewarded, other chefs are encouraged to share their own self-expression, then diversity expands and a city becomes a world-class dining destination.

By choosing Longoven this year, *Style* invites Richmond to grow beyond the familiar food experiences. Let's each try something new on a menu this year. Trust what the chef is telling you and order the special. Seek out a cuisine you don't know. Support a minority-owned restaurant.

Richmond can explode its food-scene trajectory, if we just embrace a little more risk.



But for adventurous eaters with means, Longoven is impressively high concept. If the Michelin judges came to Richmond, Longoven is one of the first places they'd check out.



Megan Fitzroy Phelan plates a dessert in the kitchen at Longoven.

SCOTT ELMQUIST



Grilled Steak Sandwich (\$16.50)

Can Can Brasserie

Sometimes a favorite is an oldie, but a reliable goodie. We all know the best things about Can Can include the ambience: the white paper on the tables, the coffee service in the mornings, accompanied by towers of croissants on display, the wall of windows that open in the spring, and of course, the delightful service. The second best thing about Can Can is the grilled steak sandwich. It's been on the lunch menu for years, and remains my mouthwatering go-to for the occasional midday splurge.

The ciabatta is soft and fresh, with thinly sliced steak topped with caramelized onions, fontina cheese, arugula leaves and garlic butter. Can Can's frites remain exceptional, if not only for the fragrant smell swirling around the bistro at lunchtime. Pairs well with a carafe of mimosas.

— *Nathalie Oates*

SCOTT ELMQUIST

Favorite Dishes of 2019

The Swank Bank (\$36)

L'Opossum

L'Opossum is my corner restaurant, and I've learned that the secret to getting into this award-winning spot is to slide in after the first set of tables turn and wait for a seat at the bar. One Friday night, decompressing after a hard week, I zeroed in on the lobster mac and cheese. I needed carbs, buttery fat and a hug.

David Shannon's swanky take on this classic comfort dish wrapped me in the warmth of reassuring familiarity with just enough delightful newness. The tender little pasta shells are bathed in a white truffle Mornay cream, dotted with big chunks of butter-poached Maine lobster. Chard and al dente asparagus add color and a healthy-ish few bites.

When black truffles are in season, Shannon grates them over the dish, wearing a sparkly silver glove. This is \$36 of pure delight.

Tucked in at the cozy dark bar that night, savoring every rich bite, I felt cared for. I didn't get the hug, but my hard week still slid away, erased by a warm bowl of carbs and dazzle.

— *Phaedra Hise*



ASH DANIEL



Mustard Gnocchi (\$24)

Amuse Restaurant

Amuse is a quiet spot that seems overlooked either because it's hidden on the third floor of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts or because of the limited hours of operation. But the 2011 Restaurant of the Year is still killing it. Between champagne cocktails and curry fried oysters, there are some mainstays from the beginning, but this dish stood out on the winter menu.

It does what Amuse does best: It surprises guests with unexpected flavors and creative candor. Gnocchi is already a favorite of mine, and when it is not presented in a puddle of mediocre marinara, you can better enjoy the bronze sear on the pasta and the nutty mustard depth of the flavor. I also love a pesto, and the arugula variety was pleasantly more subdued than your usual, brighter basil. Tender slices of roasted mushrooms and Brussels sprouts are tossed in, making the serving hearty and distinctive. The entree also gives vegetarians the opportunity to order something decidedly not boring. — *Nathalie Oates*



Eggnog Cheesecake (\$3.75 a slice; \$30 whole)

WPA Bakery

The holidays are long gone, but I'm still thinking about this one slice of WPA's eggnog cheesecake I enjoyed on a snowy December day at the bakery's South Side location. The bakers who dreamt this creation into reality knew the world needed a dessert that would make sugar plum fairies dance their magical hearts out. I'm writing this, thankfully, just in time to start considering what Lenten promises I might make and eventually break this year.

The eggnog cheesecake is a decadent, if seasonal, indulgence. The crust is a tasty melding of gingersnap and graham cracker with accents of molasses. Eggnog, gently spiced with nutmeg, replaces the heavy whipping cream to create the smooth consistency of the cheesecake. The slices are topped with an airy layer of nutmeg-infused whipped cream and a wedge of a sugar-crusted gingerbread cookie. It's better than any of the seasonal beverages at that green mermaid's coffee joint. And it pairs exceedingly well with WPA's hot chocolate and homemade marshmallows on a cold and snowy day. It almost makes you want more bleak, wintry days. Almost. — *Paul Brockwell*



Swordfish Tartare (\$10)

Alewife

For our first Alewife experience, my dining companion and I opted for a smattering of starters and small plates in lieu of entrees. To say we weren't disappointed would be a vast understatement, and we still rave about nearly everything on the list, including our mocktails in observance of Dry January, which had such depth of flavor we forgot they were missing the booze.

While there's nothing on this menu I wouldn't recommend — hello, soft-serve affogato — it's the swordfish tartare that stole my heart. Seaweed aioli binds the bite-sized pieces of sushi-grade raw swordfish into a mound on the plate, and when I had it, it was topped with pickled ramps, black garlic and a few microgreens. It's fresh, complex and ever-so-slightly sweet, and while I'd happily eat it off a spoon, the accompanying slices of baguette, grilled to perfection, round it out beautifully.

The constantly rotating selection at Alewife depends heavily on what's seasonally available, so I'm deeply sorry to report that this particular swordfish tartare may not always be on the menu. The good news is, chef and owner Lee Gregory says you can usually count on finding some kind of tartare in a similar vein. Whew. — *Laura Ingles*

SCOTT ELMQUIST

ASH DANIEL

ASH DANIEL

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Favorite Dishes of 2019



SCOTT ELMQUIST

Bianca Pizza (\$11.95)

Galley Go-To

I like white pizza and I cannot lie. Give me a Bianca on a crust with the chew of a fine baguette from Galley Go-To and all's right with the world.

But just to be clear, all the pies at Galley Go-To have what it takes to rock my world. That's because pizza-maker Giustino Riccio spent six months experimenting with dough to figure out what would taste best coming out of the restaurant's gas-powered pizza ovens. The result is a gift to me and Richmond's crust-loving masses because his is a pizza defined by its dough. I'm talking a Neapolitan-like thin crust, with a puffy outer lip to the pie that's crunchy on the outside but soft and chewy on the inside.

No pizza shines brighter than the Bianca, sublimely simple with nothing but house-made mozzarella, Gorgonzola, Parmesan, garlic, black pepper and olive oil. Just the right amount of Gorgonzola ensures that its pungency doesn't overwhelm the more delicate cheeses. What's not to love about the equivalent of a good baguette with warm cheeses? — *Karen Newton*



SCOTT ELMQUIST

Reuben (\$13)

Salt & Forge

When I was a kid, my Opa used to cure corned beef. He'd mix a mysterious blend of spices and saltpeter with brine in an old spackle bucket, then let the beef brisket swim around in there for a few days until it was pink and tangy.

A Reuben remains one of my all-time favorite sandwiches, and Salt & Forge has a great one. Like

my Opa, owner David Hahn cures the beef in-house. He layers that with homemade Russian dressing and soft Gruyere cheese between two thick slices of rye bread.

The sweet and tangy house-made coriander slaw almost tempts me to choose that instead of sauerkraut on my Reuben, but I'm a traditionalist. I compromise by getting kraut on the sandwich and slaw on the side.

Magically, this Reuben has all the drippy oozing goodness one could want, but it doesn't fall apart into a soggy mess. You will gladly lick your fingers, and start planning

when you can return for more. — *Phaedra Hise*

Most Requested Omelet (\$7.95)

Joe's Inn

This remarkably versatile dish is a regular in my dining rotation, equal parts nostalgia and convenience. The menu at Joe's is vast, but I rarely need to take a gander. Regardless of the time of day, usually this omelet is the perfect antidote to cure my acute, esurient chops. I developed the habit during my earliest days in Richmond when grabbing takeout from Shields across the street. To demystify the name, it's really just a classic Greek omelet:

your spinach, feta and tomato served with a side of home fries that are usually hot and perfectly sizzled with onions and the charred remnants of other spuds. The dish comes with a choice — biscuit or toast. And honestly, neither is wrong.

Before I knew better, I asked a former owner what made this omelet worthy of such a title. In my overactive imagination, I dreamed up an elaborate tracking system where each year the quants would determine by sales what would be Joe's Next Top Omelet. Menus would be reprinted, celebrations planned. Alas, the origin story is far simpler. Sorry, Western omelet, don't get your hopes up. The name emerged organically after many customers were building their own omelets at Joe's with the classic Greek ingredients. A real people's choice, if you will. This dish is comfort food. Breakfast any time of day with an old friend. — *Paul Brockwell*



SCOTT ELMQUIST



SCOTT ELMQUIST

Mushroom Pâté (\$10)

Aloi

If I'm honest, I'll admit to being promiscuous about pâté. My first passion was a seafood variety, soon followed by coarse country pork, chicken liver and pistachio-studded pork shoulder and duck liver. I fell hard for venison and rustic rabbit versions as well as colorful, veggie-based pâtés featuring beets and spinach.

Even so, when I saw mushroom pâté on Aloi's menu, I hadn't a clue how fabulous it could be. The creamy slab of local mushrooms sported a crown of crushed hazelnuts for textural contrast, squiggles of smoked cherry gelee to balance sweet with savory and a sprinkle of cocoa because it worked. With fat slices of crusty brown bread to spread it over, the earthy paste dared my palate to miss the meat versions.

I'm talking an umami bomb of the highest order, deeply flavorful, wildly satisfying and distinctively different than any version that had previously crossed my lips. Pâté virgins, this is where you should start. Pâté pros, miss out at your own risk.

— *Karen Newton*

Unsung Heroes

Parts and labor make up critical components of a restaurant's identity, and too often the eater has no idea who's making it happen.

by Karen Newton

Laine Myers

Pasta-maker and chef, Nota Bene

I've been making pasta since my Graffiato days in 2014 and everywhere I've been since. Even at Metzger Bar and Butchery, we ran an occasional pasta course. But every night is a pasta night at Nota Bene. It's easily my strong suit.

The secret to making good pasta is when you think you're done kneading, knead five minutes more and when you think you're done resting it, let it rest another 20 minutes. It's crucial because almost every table wants pasta. It's a guilty pleasure and a comfort food.

Every week, we go through 50 pounds of flour — buckwheat, bread flour, rye flour, durum wheat, semolina and spelt — and two cases of eggs. It would be shocking how many eggs we go through. A ball of dough that weighs three pounds probably has 30 egg yolks in it.

It's a collaborative effort, putting 20 to 30 hours into pasta production every week. You can make pasta really sexy. I like that it's a labor of love, doing honest, hard work for a prissy plate-up.



SCOTT ELMQUIST

T.J. Hollington

Lead oyster shucker, Rappahannock

I started working at Rappahannock two years ago as a part-time dishwasher then learned prep until I was a line cook at brunch. One of the shuckers taught me to shuck and I started to get really good at it. So I went to work at Merroir, where the shucking's way more intense 'cause orders come in by the four or five dozen. I had to learn to get even quicker. Now I'm lead shucker at Rappahannock, but it was a gradual process that snowballed.

When you're shucking, it's all about safety to prevent the knife from going through your hand. You want to make the oyster as presentable as possible to the eye, no shells. Takes me about 50 seconds to shuck a dozen. But you need to be careful not to scramble the oyster so it looks like chopped meat. What makes me good at it? I can shuck oysters all night and still smile and talk to customers.

On a busy night, I'll shuck 800 to 1000 oysters — 853 last Saturday. I like Old Saltes best for what I call their oceanic taste. I don't get tired of our oysters. I could eat them all day.



SCOTT ELMQUIST

Velma Johnson

Cake baker and owner, Mama J's

I've been baking since I was 11 years old, so 60 years. We started with 20 different cakes and now we're doing 65. I can take my basic recipe and make almost any kind of cake with it.

I go through 60 to 70 pounds of flour and the same in sugar to make 30 to 40 cakes every week. We've got three mixers and each makes four cakes at a time. It takes 45 minutes to mix the batter together and 45 minutes in the oven. So in an hour and a half, I can have a dozen cakes made and cooling on the racks. But you have to have a love of doing this and not rush it. If you rush through making the cake, it won't rise right.

Our cakes are a big part of Mama J's, probably a nine on a scale of one to 10. Maybe it's the way we present them on the shelf so people can see them. I know my favorite part of baking is looking at the finished cake with icing. It's just satisfying.



SCOTT ELMQUIST

Mario Albanes

Pupusa-maker and owner, El Pope

I learned to make pupusas in El Salvador as a teenager from my grandmother. It was a family thing.

It's a big process to make the filling, but the dough is the quick part. I go through 200 pounds of corn flour a week making them. Keeping everything inside is the hard part, but I have a trick for doing that. I have to, I make 100 to 200 a day and the pupusas need to be perfect every time.

After I worked 19 years running kitchens, I wanted my own restaurant. I wanted another step up. My family said if you never try, you never know. When I opened my own restaurant a year and a half ago, I only had a few pupusas on the menu but they were what everyone was ordering. Now there are seven pupusas, meat and vegetable, all with cheese.

Some people come back because of our pupusas and some come in and never heard of them. We tell them they're a traditional El Salvador dish made from scratch here at El Pope. I'm very happy when something I cook makes people happy eating it. Then I'm feeling happy, too.



SCOTT ELMQUIST

Tacos

Bill Simmons

@billsimmonsrv



Underrated! A complete meal in a shell.

Galen Parker

@GalenParker5



Why is Underrated even an option?

A Restaurant Critic's Opinion

David Streever

@StreeverWrites



Under! Yelp is worthless; I don't care what Mike, who wanted pizza but reluctantly went for sushi with his friends, thinks about his meal. I want to know what a person with a broad palate and lots of food experience thinks is standout -- and what's lacking -- about a place.

Mariane Matera

@MarianeMatera



Overrated. People who write about food don't eat out like normal people.

Cynical_Immigrant

@ValidGarry



Underrated. Crowdsourced online ratings are devoid of quality and too open to abuse. Reviews written by someone who enjoys food and writing about it can be anything from informative to delightful to read. I prefer considered criticism and context over stars on a website.

Shamus O'Connor

@McShamusOConnor



Under -- As long as it is fair & impartial. Too often you see publications give great reviews to restaurants when six pages over is a two page full ad for said restaurant ... And yelp is trash. Who cares that 'Becky and Chad' hated some Brunch spot b/c they didn't like the music.

Moxie - Your Brain On Facts

@BrainOnFactspod



Largely overrated, the least reason being that they are only one person. They have also developed a standard that likely to be different from your average person.



PHOTO BY SCOTT HELMQUIST

On the Map

Richmond's dining scene made national headlines before last year, but the opening of Nate's Bagels made it a true foodie town. **by Karen Newton**

In a food city like Richmond, variety is a defining feature. Having a readily accessible smorgasbord, with everything from a \$5 Frito pie at Don't Look Back to Perch's \$200 multicourse tasting menu, is crucial. Self-proclaimed restaurant scene historians generally trace the starting gun that launched Richmond on its path to becoming a food city to July 2011, when the Roosevelt opened its Church Hill doors. Once a new level of dining and drinking had been inaugurated, what seemed like a stampeding herd of restaurants, bakeries, breweries and distilleries piled on, until even the national press had to acknowledge us as a food destination. But for many, especially come-here from the Northeast, one burning question remained: How could Richmond possibly be considered a food town with no local bagel shop?

All that changed last spring when Nate's Bagels opened. It had been two years since Nate Mathews began trolling New York bagel shops, experimenting to create the kind of bagels Richmonders wanted, and he held a series of pop-ups to acquaint locals with his products. Before the shop even opened, website the Nosh published a list of each state's supreme bagels, and Nate's got

the Virginia nod.

During the 35-day government shutdown, an idle federal employee named Jim Warner used his forced unemployment to write a program to create a map of bagel store density along the East Coast. To absolutely no bagel lover's surprise, his map showed that there are 30 to 40 bagel stores within a 1-mile radius in much of New Jersey and southern New York, along with a few in major cities like Boston, Miami and Washington.

Georgia, Virginia and West Virginia, he concluded, have a serious bagel-shop deficit.

Jacqueline O'Connor, a Richmond come-here from Massapequa, Long Island, grew up with bagel shops on every corner, which she frequented on her way to school in the mornings. Her family even included bagels in its Christmas morning breakfast.

"Those bagel shops have at least 20 different kinds of cream cheese, including chocolate, and some have as many as 50," she says, recalling her favorite combination as a salt bagel with vanilla walnut raisin cream cheese. At Nate's, her standard order is a schmear of honey vanilla cream cheese on a salt bagel.

Style Weekly food critic Paul Brockwell recalls being impressed with Mathews for seeing a void in Richmond's food scene and stepping in to own it. He also believes that the Restaurant of the Year should be a place everyone has the ability to enjoy.

"And for that, Nate's hits the mark," he insists. "While you may have to wait in a line — the dread — it's not outside the realm of financial possibility to grab one of Nate's bagel sandwiches."

Cream cheese options aside, O'Connor joins Brockwell in seeing Nate's Bagels as a game changer.

"Now we are a food town," she says emphatically. "So when is Nate's II going to open on South Side?"