

# WELCOME TO THE 4393 AWARDS Readers' Choice 2023

# Hip, hip, hooray!

We're back. Here are the results of our sixth annual 4393 Awards. We were all set to go in 2020 — we'd already put out the call for nominees — when, well, we all know what happened.

In the 4393s, readers of the Stowe Reporter and News & Citizen vote for their favorite restaurants, shops, home services, nonprofit organizations and so much more.

In early spring, hundreds of readers nominated all the people, places and things that made it to the final voting ballot. We were a bit off our contest record of 3,270 votes in 2019, but we'll get back there! As long as the world doesn't shut down again.

We've listed the top three in each category, along with the top nominees. As for those nominees, we didn't include one-hit wonders, and in most categories cut off the list of nominees if people didn't at least hit a respectable number. Nominees are listed in alphabetical order, not by vote totals.

We would have shared some of the real comments left by survey-takers, from the silly and good-humored to the snarky and scandalous, but we forgot to ask for them! If you have suggestions for additional categories, send them, with "4393" in the subject line, to news@stowereporter.com or news@newsandcitizen.com.

In case you're wondering, 4393 corresponds to the elevation of Mt. Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak and home to Stowe Mountain Resort.

The 4393 Awards will live online at stowetoday.com/4393awards until next year's contest, and printed copies will be distributed throughout Stowe and Lamoille County. Congratulations to all the winners and nominees, and remember to support local, and that includes your local newspapers.





**GORDON MILLER** 

# **Mansfield Dairy**

Depicting a cow on skis, The Mansfield Dairy logo embodies the quintessential Vermont essence.

It's an iconic and instantly recognizable symbol. At least in the Stowe and greater Mt. Mansfield area.

In 1970, Winford and Allene Small bought the dairy from Carroll Pike and his farming family and since then it has become a pioneering force in farm-to-table produce. The dairy's offerings, particularly its renowned chocolate milk, permeate almost every café, convenience store and restaurant in central Vermont.

Additionally, its various milk containers, ranging from pints to gallons, have

become a staple for locals and tourists alike. With a history that spans over half a century, Mansfield Dairy has become a cherished part of Vermont's cultural fabric. Its commitment to providing fresh and locally sourced products has earned the loyalty of countless customers.

All Mansfield Dairy products and merchandise can be purchased from the dairy itself, located directly off U.S. Route 100, on the right just south of Stowe village.

As the brand continues to serve only the best, its logo ensures the dairy will remain an emblem of the region's agricultural heritage and adventurous spirit.

— Lilly Keller

# 4393 Awards READERS' CHOICE 2023

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**2** 4393 Awards

#### **BEST PIZZA**

- 1. Piecasso
- **American Flatbread**
- Pizza on Main

Nominees: House of Pizza, Jimmz Pizza, The Bench.

If it's pizza you want, it's Piecasso. These Stowe pie tossers have won this coveted award six years running. Airy crust, inspired toppings, a fun vibe, great bar and beer taps, and that great lunch special - two big slices and a fountain drink for just a couple of bucks. See page 4.

# **BEST BURGER**

- **Doc Ponds**
- 2. **Burger Barn**
- 3. The Bench

Nominees: Idletyme Brewing Company, Lost Nation Brewing, Piecasso, The Backyard, The Whip.

Another repeat winner. Last time round, we noted that AndreaTheGreat of Queensbury, N.Y., said the smash burger, an egg-washed brioche-style bun never too much bread — Vermont beef, yummy cheddar and secret sauce was the "burger that changed my life." Her review went the way of much of the interwebs and we couldn't find it, but Curtis K. of Old Greenwich, Conn., chimed in on Yelp with "Suffice to say it was the best burger I've ever had. And I didn't just fall off the turnip truck. I've been eating burgers for years. Go home, other burgers!" OK, he didn't use any capital letters, but that's high praise indeed.

# **BEST FRENCH FRIES**

- **Doc Ponds**
- The Bench
- The Matterhorn

Nominees: 10 Railroad Street, Idletyme Brewing Company, Ranch Camp.

What goes perfectly with that smash burger? French fries, natch, at Doc Ponds. The Bench and The Matterhorn were neck-in-neck for second and third. Rally your fans next year, peeps.

# **BEST WINGS**

- **Black Diamond Barbecue** 1.
- The Matterhorn
- **Doc Ponds**

Nominees: Moog's Place, Piecasso, Sushi Yoshi, Village Tavern.

As the great disco diva Andrea True asked, "How do you like it? How do you like it?" Well at Black Diamond you can like it just about any way you want: dry rub, barbecue, Asian barbecue, buffalo, maple habanero, jalapeno agave - yum - dragon fire and blue cheese and ranch. Your chicken wings, that is, the best around according to our readers. Andrea was singing about something else entirely.

#### **BEST VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN FOOD**

- Nepali Kitchen and Ranch Camp
- 2. Aladdin
- Thai in the Mountain

We love ties! See our writeups, pages 19 and 23.

#### **BEST NEW RESTAURANT**

- **American Flatbread**
- 2. Marsala Salsa
- 3. **Aladdin**

Nominees: Grant's Pub, Raja Restaurant.

Jan Chotalal, who recently brought her popular eatery Marsala Salsa back into action in Johnson — she had a longtime presence on Stowe Street in Waterbury chomped at the heels of American Flatbread, the ultimate winner among our readers.

# **BEST CHEF**

- Michael Kloeti -1. Michael's on the Hill
- 2. Jamie Nelson -Harrison's Restaurant
- 3. Aaron Martin, -**Plate**

Nominees: Bill Hoag - Two Sons Bakehouse, Jerome Picca, - Edson Hill, John Nelson - Piecasso, Susanna Keefer - Susanna's Catering.

Michael, Michael. Kloeti is a perennial winner in this category in 4393 history - sometimes a runnerup. Born, raised and trained in Switzerland, Kloeti continues to delight diners and their tastebuds with his inspired creations, creatively mixing two cultures, as he says, "Vermont's culinary bounty" with European comfort food. His pedigree is impeccable: New York City's Lespinasse, Koele Lodge in Lanai, Hawaii, St. Regis Hotel in Manhattan and for the past two decades, Micheal's. When locals want to treat themselves, they never need look further than the Hill right before Waterbury Center.

## **BEST RESTAURANT — STOWE**

- 1. Harrison's Restaurant
- 2. **Edson Hill**
- **Doc Ponds**

Nominees: The Bistro at Ten Acres, Cork, Michael's on the Hill, Piecasso, Plate, Ranch Camp, The Bench, The Matterhorn, The Whip, von Trapp Brewery & Bierhall.

Call Harrison's on, say, Wednesday. "I'd like a table for two on Friday at 7 p.m." "We could do 9:30, but our next 7 p.m. Friday opening is in 2030." OK, we exaggerate, but please don't let their immense popularity discourage you from trying. See our writeup, page 16.

Continued on Page 5



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# **Piecasso**

Craving a slice? Look no further than Piecasso.

Piecasso has been mastering the art of artisanal pizza for over half a century, setting a standard that few can rival. It comes as no surprise that its culinary prowess has earned the Stowe pizzeria its sixth consecutive win in a row in the 4393 best-of contest in the greater Mansfield region.

Whether you've been conquering the trail, pounding nails or navigating a day at the desk, nothing quite compares to savoring a fresh slice complemented by a refreshing draft. All these years later, Piecasso still knows how to elevate the pizza experience to new heights.

Piecasso, while locally owned, is part of three generations

of the same family, 30 pizza restaurants and the same Sicilian family recipes. It is a casual night out, a heartwarming family reunion or a memorable first or last date, all rolled into one. Its leisurely atmosphere is tailor-made for an unforgettable meal, without burning a hole in your pocket.

Even with its diverse menu — strombolis, calzones, salads, special entries and so much more — pizza remains king. There's pepperoni, meatballs, sausage — both sweet and spicy — onions, sun-dried tomatoes, ham, anchovies and a couple of dozen other topping choices, but Piecasso is also famous for the racks of its own concoctions that hundreds of workers, tourists and trust funders pick from

in the pizzeria's takeout zone every day at lunch.

There's a margherita pizza, natch, but also the popular Tree Hugger — fresh garlic, red onions, mozzarella and red sauce. Or the Positive Pie — a nod to the family's Montpelier location — with fresh spinach, artichoke, roasted red peppers and Vermont Butter & Cheese chevre.

Our faves, though, are the Vienna — pesto, spinach, kalamata olives, fresh mozzarella, sun-dried toms and a balsamic reduction — and when we're feeling heart-healthy, the Carcass, which doubles the mozzarella and adds all the meats: pepperoni, ham, sausage, bacon and meatballs.

"Tutti a tavola a mangiare!" — Lilly Keller

**4 4393** Awards

## BEST RESTAURANT — LAMOILLE COUNTY

- 1. Harrison's Restaurant
- 2. 10 Railroad Street
- 3. Maxi's

**Nominees**: Martell's at the Red Fox, Piecasso, Plate, Cork, Edson Hill.

A two-fer! See our writeup, page 16

# BEST RESTAURANT TO TAKE THE KIDS

- 1. Piecasso
- 2. Hoagie's Pizza & Pasta
- 3. Maxi's

**Nominees**: Doc Ponds, Martell's at the Red Fox, Ranch Camp.

Natch. It's fun. It's easy. Great staff and setting. Lots of choices for the kiddoes. Sorry, but we couldn't resist reprinting our 4393 blurb from 2019, our last best-of foray before the COVID-19: "Always the handsdown favorite in this category, Piecasso is a place for all kinds of families - kids with parents, leaf peepers, snowboard bums, YRPPIES (young rural professionals), both Woodchucks and Woodcharles (thanks, Peter Miller), tourists, couples and singles, gay and straight. Guess what we're saying is it's just downright friendly. For everybody, save one: survey taker No. 2,456, a self-described 'childless bastard.'" See our writeup, page 4.

## **BEST BREAKFAST/BRUNCH SPOT**

- I. Butler's Pantry
- 2. Woodland Baking and Coffee
- 3. Maxi's

Nominees:158 Main Black Cap Coffee & Bakery of Vermont, Skinny Pancake, Stowe Bee Bakery, The Charlmont, Two Sons Bakehouse.

Zoe is the real deal. A yum-tastic breakfast. See our writeup, page 11.

# BEST PLACE TO GRAB A QUICK BITE/TAKEOUT

- 1. Edelweiss Mountain Deli
- 2. Stowe Sandwich Company
  - Café on Main

3.

**Nominees**: Deb's Place, Martell's at the Red Fox, Piecasso, The Butchery.

Edelweiss celebrated 50 years slinging sandwiches in 2018 just in time to take on a new set of owners, its fifth in five decades. Edelweiss was built in 1968 by Swiss-born Adi Yoerg and run with his wife, Inge. It sold a few years later to Lew and Phyllis "Sporty" Bell, longtime Stowe residents. After that, John Nichols assumed control, and Alex Stein took the reins in the early 2000s before selling it to husband-and-wife team, Jeff Clarke and Kris Ryan-Clarke. That's an amazing run — continued success under five different visions. Jeff and Kris embraced

what their predecessors created and just continue to make it better. And they kept the meatloaf sandwich! Bravo. (We miss you Sporty)

# **BEST OUTDOOR DINING**

- 1. Idletyme Brewing Company
- 2. von Trapp Brewery & Bierhall
- 3. Piecasso

**Nominees**: Edson Hill, Sushi Yoshi, The Bistro at Ten Acres.

There's little idle time at Idletyme — that place is always hopping. The outdoor bar and dining room expanded during the pandemic — people even ate in their ski parkas for goodness sakes! — and the crew has kept up the pace. Great bartenders (remember to vote for them next year), comfort food, inspired cocktails and a very, very nice housemade beer selection.

## **BEST BREWERY**

- 1. The Alchemist Brewery
- 2. Lost Nation Brewing
- 3. Ten Bends Beer

**Nominees**: Rock Art Brewery, von Trapp Brewery.

Heady Topper. Focal Banger. Community commitment. Alchemist Foundation. Humor and humility. Jen and John Kimmich for the win. Again!

# BEST LOCAL SPIRITS OR CIDER MAKER

- 1. Stowe Cider
- 2. Green Mountain Distillers and Cold Hollow Cider Mill
- 3. Smugglers' Notch Distillery

"Goodnight you princes of Maine, you kings of New England." Stowe Cider rules this House.

## **BEST COCKTAILS**

- Doc Ponds
- 2. Zenbarn
- 3. Lower Bar

Nominees: Apres, Cork, Piecasso, Plate.

OK, we always get a beer at Doc Ponds, but next time... just you wait. Maybe the Mezcal Pineapple Margarita — Peleton mezcal, Sauza silver, pineapple, lime and sugar. (Don't they make bikes?) No, definitely the Storonto, Knob Creek bourbon, Fernet Branca, sugar, angostura bitters and orange bitters. Shit, no, let's go with the Painkillah/Partykillah — gold rum, pineapple, OJ, coconut, lime and nutmeg. I can't decide. Call me an Uber, please. And take me to Hotel Vermont. We miss you Kate!

Continued on Page 7

# YOUR VOTE MEANS THE WORLD TO US.

THANK YOU!





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# Music in the Meadow

The Music in the Meadow summer concert series at Trapp Family Lodge is the ultimate in BYO — bring your own beverage, dinner, camp chair, dance partner and light sweater for when the sun goes down or the clouds move in.

Music concerts, especially those set in as picturesque a locale, have a way of attracting tourists, and there are plenty of out-of-towners attending the grassy proceedings. But, for some reason, Music in the Meadow always turns into a who's who of neighbors, and it's nearly as fun to scan the crowd for familiar faces as it is to watch whoever is on stage.

The person ripping your ticket in half is the same one who walked the streets of Moscow during the July 4th parade blasting Sousa marches from a boom box. The person directing cars in the parking lot is the same one who asks all the questions on Town Meeting Day.

A big part of the people watching really boils down to two types of intrigue — what are they wearing for hats? And what did they bring to eat?

Some people go rustic fancy, with picturesque spreads of cheeses and fruits, crackers and expensive wines spread out on blankets or on small foldable tables.

But there's also something delightfully anachronistic about seeing a group of Stoweites pour out splashes of boxed rose into some red Solo cups while tearing strips of flesh from a rotisserie chicken and breaking off hunks from a crusty grocery store baguette all the while nodding along appreciatively to a Dvorak symphony.

Because, yes, there's also music at these Music in the Meadow proceedings. There are jazz bands and singersongwriter groups and the annual appearance by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra.

The northwest-facing view of the stage from the lawn slopes gently downhill, providing clear lines of sight. There really isn't a bad seat in the house, because you can just pick up your chair or your blanket and move to whatever open spot of grass is available, or just lay back on the grass and watch the sun drop below the western slopes of Mt. Mansfield and listen to the notes hang in the air along with the first stars of dusk.

—Tommy Gardner



GORDON MILLER

6

#### **BEST BARTENDER**

- 1. Brian Krux Plate
- 2. Jessy Allen Piecasso
- 3. Ian Budd Cork and Jeremy Moselle Ideltyme

Nominees: Annie Aitken – Lower Bar, Jen Loren – Harrison's, Johnathan Weiss – Grant's, Matt Miller – Zenbarn, Sam Sheldon – Doc Ponds.

See our writeup, page 8.

## **BEST SERVER**

- 1. Seth Burbank Plate
- Susanne Kempe von Trapp Brewery & Bierhall
- 3. Rachel Clarkin Cork

In Europe, wait service is a profession and waiters and waitresses are, if not revered, respected in a way that many Americans fail to grasp. Waiting. On. Tables. Is. Hard. Work. Chefs can often be hostile to front-of-the-house crews, owners aren't always the easiest, and customers — well, don't get us started. "Hey, customer, you ain't always right!" But it is great to see folks around these parts actually know the names of the people taking such good care of them. Burbank won this in 2017, too, but then he was working at Harrison's.

## **BEST LOCAL CATERER**

- 1. Susanna's Catering
- 2. Stowe Sandwich Company
- 3. Sweet & Savory

Nominee: Black Diamond Barbecue

We've all been there. A catered party at a much-too-fabulous house in The Hollow. John Fusco's Stowe movie premiere for "The Wind and the Reckoning." Perusing thought-provoking contemporary art at The Current. Every event is made better with private chef Susanna Keefer's delectable nibbles. "Captivated by each market stand, spice pile and street food cart she encounters," as she herself says, Susanna's globally inspired cuisine never fails. Never.

# **BEST WINE SHOP/SELECTION**

- 1. Cork
- 2. Dedalus
- 3. Fine Wine Cellars

# **BEST PLACE FOR COFFEE**

- 1. Black Cap Coffee & Bakery of Vermont
- 2. Woodland Baking and Coffee
- 3. Vermont Artisan Coffee & Tea Co.

**Nominees**: Deb's Place, Stowe Bee Bakery, The Bagel, The Roastery.

Newcomer Woodland gave Black Cap a run for its cups this year, but Main Street fixture Black Cap beaned its way back to the brim. Main Street is accurate, too, as the coffee giant has poured itself into locations on Main Streets in both Waterbury (just off Main), Morrisville and Burlington. (Church Street is sort of a Main Street, right?) Funky Monkey latte, anyone?

# **BEST DATE/NIGHT OUT**

- 1. Edson Hill
- 2. Harrison's Restaurant
- 3. The Bistro at Ten Acres

**Nominees**: Alfie's Wild Ride, Cork, Hen of the Wood, Martell's at the Red Fox.

True story. A little birdie wrote me just last week to say, "I had an amazing, delicious dinner at Edson Hill, where I noted that they have crappy magazines (&^\$%f& and \*&^#ng&@) in their classic sitting room, but no Stowe magazine." I've been meaning to go - first up, finding a date! - and I've already picked out the menu: smoked octopus with pea puree, citrus creme fraiche (wish I'd thought of that), shaved fennel, pickled radish and a micro salad. Next, a wedge salad - classic with a few twists: house bacon, buttermilk dressing, blistered tomato, Bayley Hazen blue cheese and fried shallot. Entrees presented a challenge, but finally settled on the seared day boat scallops with sweet corn succotash, black garlic and citrus, followed by vanilla panna cotta with lime marmalade. I like to say, "mar-ma-lad." Something tells us they won't rush us either, especially on date night. Now, for that date! And we'll deliver you some magazines, pronto.

# BEST MUSIC VENUE (INDOOR OR OUTDOOR)

- 1. The Meadow at Trapp Family Lodge
- 2. Moog's Joint
- 3. Zenbarn

**Nominees**: Martell's at the Red Fox, Stowe Cider, The Alchemist Brewery.

See our writeup, page 6.

# **BEST WEDDING VENUE**

- 1. Edson Hill
- 2. Trapp Family Lodge
- 3. The Barn at Boyden Farm

**Nominees**: Barn at Smugglers' Notch, The Lodge at Spruce Peak, Zenbarn.

See above. If they do dinner like that, imagine your wedding!

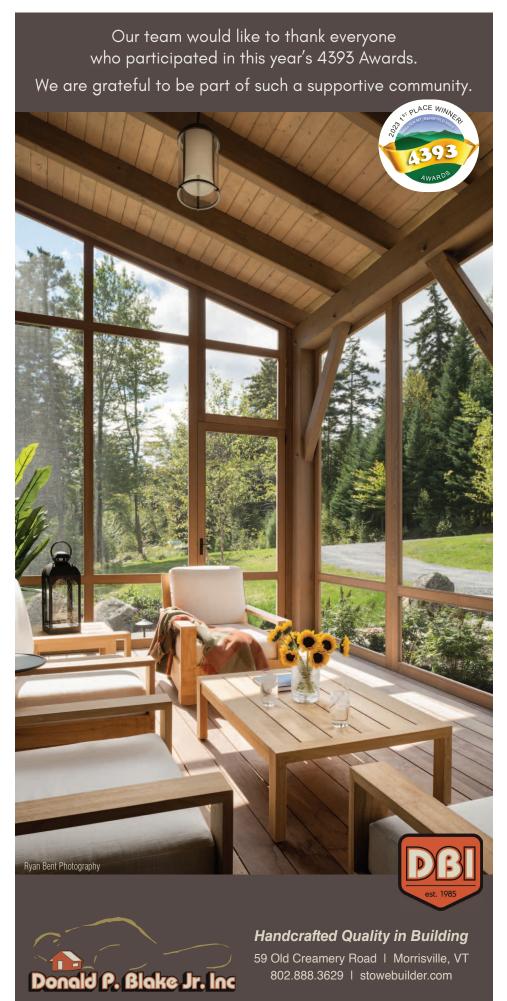
## **BEST SPA**

- 1. Topnotch
- 2. The Spa at Spruce Peak
- 3. Stowe Village Massage (Green Mountain Inn)

**Nominees**: Salon Salon, Stoweflake Mountain Resort.

As I've never set foot in a spa, I've invited in a guest to blurb. April W., a kind

Continued on Page 9



**4393** Awards



# **Brian Krux**

Brian Krux has been slinging drinks behind the bar at several local establishments in the area for nearly a decade, but to him, life behind the pine is much more like an art form than just a way to pay the bills

He has spent the last two years with the crew at Plate on Main Street in Stowe and has elevated its status from a wine bar to a full-fledged cocktail bar—a craft that takes skill, passion and a deep knowledge of mixology.

More than just creating a quality cocktail, his character and goofy shticks are enough to make a bar stool feel like a front-row seat to your own personal entertainment for the night.

"He takes his job really seriously," owner Aaron Martin said. "He really enjoys his craft and puts a lot of time and research into what he does, plus he's got quite a large group of friends in the area."

In addition to clever monikers, this summer's cocktail menu has featured My Name is Jen Martin, a shoutout to owner Jen Martin that combines Barr Hill Tom Cat, Jamaican rum, honey and shaved nutmeg. Not your tumbler? How about a Main Street Margarita, a mix of



**COURTESY PHOTOS** 

Casamigos Reposado, Cointreau, lime, maple and bitters — "otra, por favor" — or the Runner Please, a mix of mezcal, tequila, honey, lemon, grapefruit peel and a "regal shake."

Regal shake, indeed.

— Liberty Darr





and positive internet reviewer — don't you hate those negative Nancys (sorry, Nancy, but imagine how Karen feels) who write hostile, unpleasant reviews. As mom used to say, "If you don't have anything nice to say ..." and "Don't trust online reviews." Except for April, who says, simply, "Beautiful experience. It was both mine and my wife's first time and it was the most relaxing time we'd ever spent at a resort." Might be time to hit my first spa.

# **BEST MASSAGE THERAPIST**

- 1. Kate Graves
- 2. Laura Mara
- 3. Donna Petit

**Nominees**: Cheryl Small, Jenna Kelly, Judith Foti, Katie Vezina, Mia Lanpher.

Kate Graves is a Stowe-area institution. Over the last 30 years, Kate's hands and healing touch — through countless modalities — have helped countless folks sleep better, manage pain, relieve stress, improve general health and well-being, move around better. That list just goes on and on. Just relax, you're in good hands. (Sorry, Kate, but as is clearly not tradition, we're repeating the writeup from the last 4393s in 2019, which were repeated from the year prior.) We just couldn't improve on it? Congrats, again.

## **BEST SALON**

- 1. Salon Salon
- 2. Salon 4 Men
- 3. Artistic Roots Salon

**Nominees**: Essence Salon & Day Spa, Hair Republic, The Spa at Spruce Peak, Styles.

Stowe's longest-lived salon, Salon Salon was started in the 1980s by Glenn Sautter, and his daughter, grand-daughter and daughter-in-law carry forward his legacy. Beautifully, we might add.

# **BEST CANNABIS RETAILER**

- 1. Zenbarn Farms
- 2. Higher Elevation
- 3. Cambridge Cannabis Company

**Nominee**: Lamoille County Cannabis Dispensary.

See our writeup, page 22.

# **BEST JEWELRY STORE**

- 1. Von Bargen's Jewelry
- 2. Ferro Estate & Custom Jewelers
  - Moss Boutique

**Nominee**: Remarkable Things at Stowe Craft

It's always a choker in this category as these three top-drawer jewelry stores bat-

tle for the top carat. They're all diamonds in our book, but Von Bargen's once again wears the tiara.

## **BEST CLOTHING STORE**

- 1. AJ's Ski & Sports
- 2. BunyaBunya
- 3. In Company Clothing

**Nominees**: Archery Close, Green Envy, Johnson Farm & Garden, Miller's Country Outfitters, The Boutique.

In a town with a proliferation of very fine women's clothing stores, AJ's draws a first. Hey, it's a sporty town!

# BEST GIFT STORE/SPECIALTY SHOP

- 1. Stowe Mercantile
- 2. Moss Boutique
- 3. Country Stowe on Main

**Nominees**: Remarkable Things at Stowe Craft, Rogue Herbalist, Stowe Living.

Moss put up a good fight — Artist Jen Hubbard's superbly curated gift store just moved into a much larger space in Morrisville village — but Stowe Mercantile, where shoppers can pick up Stowethemed gear, Vermont-made housewares, penny (nickel?) candies, birdhouses, tchotchkes, T-shirts, jams, jellies and maple syrup ... you name it, Stowe Mer-

cantile probably has it. Clearly that's why it's our readers' favorite stop for gifts. It's just so much darn fun to poke around.

#### **BEST FLORIST**

- 1. Uncle George's Flowers
- 2. Peck's Flower Shop
- 3. Bramble + Bloom

# BEST REAL ESTATE AGENT OR COMPANY

- 1. McKee Macdonald
- 2. Pete Kelly
- 3. Pall Spera

**Nominees**: Bobby Roberts, Beckwith Real Estate, Hickey & Foster Real Estate, Maggie Macdonald, Pall Spera (person), Pete Kelly, Red Barn Realty, Shauna Larson.

So, it seems we've confused everyone, including ourselves. First off, the Stowe area has a proliferation of great agents to help you buy and sell. Phew! But we should have split this into two categories — as we've done before — but we didn't want to overwhelm folks coming back with our first 4393 after the Big C. Hey, enough with your excuses, but last time when we asked if we'd forgotten a category one smartass wrote, "Yes, I'm sure you did. But given that this survey is over 100 questions

Continued on next page





Thank you both to our Stowe community & our team.

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long, that does seem a bit ridiculous, does it not?" To which we would say, "Have you seen the Daysies? Good god, man!" Anyway, if we go by agency here's your top three: Pall Spera Co., Coldwell Banker Carlson Real Estate, and Hickey and Foster.

# BEST LOCAL FARM PRODUCT/PRODUCER

- 1. Mansfield Dairy
- 2. Foote Brook Farm and Sandiwood Farm
- 3. Long Winter Farm

**Nominees**: Knee Deep Farm, Naked Acre Farm, Sage Farm Goat Dairy.

A real Stowe institution. See our writeup, page 2.

## **BEST BUILDER**

- 1. Donald P. Blake Jr. Inc.
- 2. Gyllenborg Construction
- 3. Gristmill Builders

**Nominees:** Gordon Dixon Construction, Inc., Patterson & Smith Construction, Sisler Builders, Steel Construction, Tim Meehan Builders.

The nail guns of Donnie Blake Travis Cutler and crew are all over Stowe and environs, from building super high-end homes to renovations, restorations and energy enhancements to existing residences, and from commercial buildings like Manufacturing Solutions Inc., to the rebuild of the historic Stone Hut on Mount Mansfield and a beach house at Elmore State Park. They're also heavily involved in good works in the communities around these parts.

## BEST ARCHITECT/ ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER

- 1. Andrew Volansky
- 2. Cushman Design Group
- 3. Sam Scofield

**Nominees**: Brian Hamor, Ernie Ruskey, Harry Hunt, Sam Scofield.

This was a close one, with just a few votes separating our top two contenders. One of Volansky's clients seemed to sum it up best: "Andrew's attention to detail and open-minded approach to design, guided the project, along with his ability to problem solve and communicate effectively." What more could you ask for when realizing your dream home?

## **BEST INTERIOR DESIGNER**

- I. Brenna B Interiors
- 2. Cushman Design Group
- 3. Stowe Living

**Nominees**: Brenna Connor – Volansky Studios, Susan Bayer-Fishman.



**0 4393** Awards

Sophisticated. Fanciful. Thoughtful. Respect. Custom. Personal. Collaboration. Home. Brenna B's designs are all that. And Brenna B — short for Brochhausen — is also a force of nature.

# **BEST BIKE SHOP**

- 1. Chuck's Bikes
- 2. Ranch Camp
- 3. Pinnacle Ski and Sports

**Nominees**: AJ's Ski & Sports, Bootlegger Bikes, Hitchhiker Bike Shop, Power Play Sports.

Turn off your cars and ride a bike. After Pinnacle flipped perennial winner Chuck's Bikes over the handlebars in 2019, Hank Glowiak (the brain and brawns behind the Morrisville shop) pedals away with yet another win.

#### **BEST SKI/SNOWBOARD SHOP**

- 1. Pinnacle Ski and Sports
- 2. AJ's Ski & Sports
- 3. MountainOps

**Nominees**: Darkside Snowboards, Power Play Sports.

Once again, fierce competition, but Pinnacle rode the lift right back to the top.

Continued on Page 14

# **Butler's Pantry**

If you're looking for fuel before hitting the slopes or just hankering for some stellar pancakes, Butler's Pantry has you covered.

Located at the intersection of Main and School streets, this spot has been serving leaf peepers, ski bums and locals since 2016. In that short time, the breakfast joint has garnered more than a dozen awards, including making it on the list of top 100 places to eat in the U.S. in 2019.

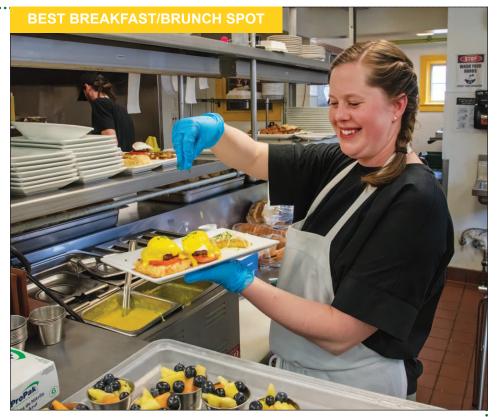
Chef and owner Zoe Biron likes to take the classic breakfast up a notch. Biscuits and gravy are a fan favorite, and if you're more of a morning sweets person, the fresh acai bowl is sure to send your tastebuds straight to the tropics. And, oh la la, those biscuit French toast sticks.

Biron tops her eggs benedict with a perfect hollandaise, and it's served on a freshly baked, grilled biscuit, a slice of tomato, and a choice of housemade sausage, bacon, ham, or spinach. (*Hint: The sausage is perfection.*)

Biron, who grew up in Stowe and graduated from Stowe High School in 2009, studied culinary and French cooking techniques at New England Culinary Institute.

<sup>2</sup>"We try to keep things simple, yet special," Biron told Stowe magazine this summer.

The cheddar jalapeno pancakes are one of the more popular items on the menu,



**GORDON MILLE** 

and restaurant's breakfast salad adds two poached eggs and a sauce of hot bacon and onion over a bed of baby spinach. So, whether you're from Stowe or just passing through, Butler's Pantry always feels like coming home. — *Liberty Darr* 



# **BEST OF STOWE, 1980s-STYLE**

Stowe had a best of competition in the 1980s and into the early 1990s, so here's a fun look back. Clockwise from top right: Three grand dames of yore: Blanche Blauvelt, Liliane McAree and Ruth Nimick. Lee Labier and Diane Mc-Carthy "gossip' at McCarthy's Restaurant. Doug Adams tunes a ski at Today's Edge. Glenn Sautter of Salon Salon gives a gal a perm. Best vanity plate. Roger Elkins of Ladies Invited fame. Bill Reichelt. A trio of Stowe High teachers: Louisa Drury, Rico Martone and Norm Williams. With all due respect to Everett Lahue, he was the town's only barber! Fran and Sue Parda of Mountain Cheese and Wine fame. Lynn and Sol Baumrind at the now-gone Gables Inn. They tied with McCarthy's for best breakfast. Best burger — wait for it — McDonald's, which operated on the Mountain Road for many years; from left, Sheila Coolum, Nicole Belval, Mike Legendre and Shauna Tatro. And, finally, Britt Jopson and Leslie Gauff ham it up at Hapleton's, now home to Harrison's Restaurant.



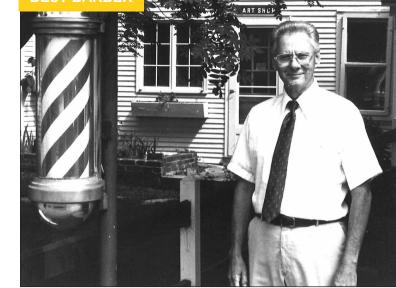




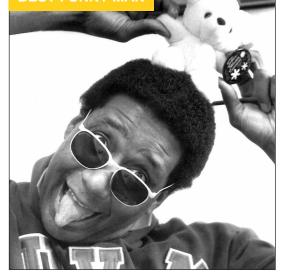








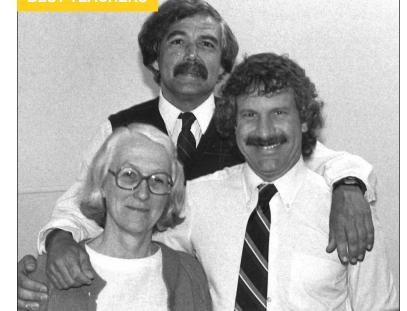


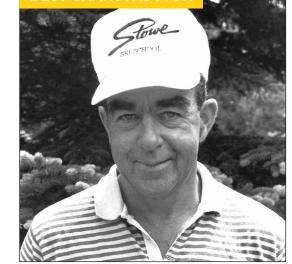


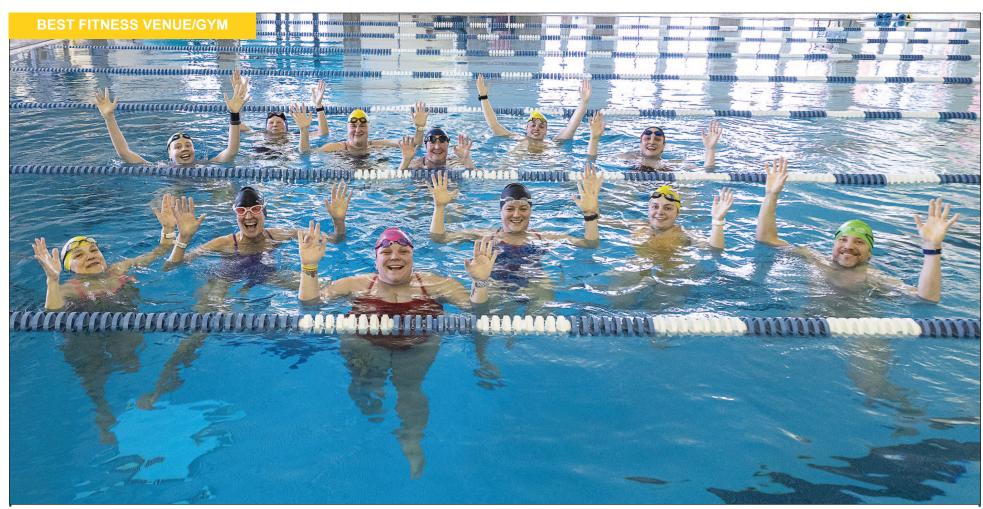












TESSA K FERRARIO

# **Swimming Hole**

Even in a town with such a bountiful selection of year-round outdoor recreation activities, people still find it plenty useful to take their workouts inside, whether for the solitary rigidity of reps in the weight room or the camaraderie of a spin class.

Stowe has several popular gyms to choose from, but one of them this year left the rest in its wake.

The Swimming Hole, located on Weeks Hill Road adjacent to the Stowe Recreation Path, received nearly twice as many votes as second place in this year's 4393 Awards.

Part of that is the fact that it has all those other gym staples — free weights, exercise machines, classes — but also houses a competition-sized pool and a fleet of swimming instructors headed up by a world-class marathon swimmer, Charlotte Brynn.

Access to such aquatic acumen has proven such a draw that people will drive from far and wide to take some laps. Noel Ford and his friend Betty LeRoy wrote in a 2009 letter to the editor in the Stowe Reporter that they drove three times a week from the Northeast Kingdom town of West Glover to the Swimming Hole — 50 miles one way "on some interesting and challenging back roads."

For those who want to give competition a try, the kids

.....

who participate with Stowe Swimmers and the adults in the Stowe masters swimmers programs call the Swimming Hole home. Their training regularly pays off with top finishes in all distances and stroke disciplines at swim meets in Vermont and beyond.

The gym, funded and founded in 2001 by Burton Snowboards founders Jake and Donna Carpenter, operates as a nonprofit and offers financial aid for income-eligible people — qualified gym-goers can get up to half their membership taken care of.

— Tommy Gardner

# BEST MOUNTAIN AMBASSADOR (INSTRUCTOR, HOST, ETC.)

- Karen Wagner
- 2. Benny Wax
- 3. Andre Blais

Maybe more than anyone else, Karen Wagner keeps us safe on the Mountain. She's Stowe Mountain Resort's risk manager and Stowe ski patrol director, where she leads an eclectic and colorful group of patrollers. Wagner is humble too. She told us in 2017: "My predecessors were pioneers in the ski industry. I have huge boots to fill."

#### **BEST LOCAL MUSICIAN OR BAND**

- 1. Seth Yacovone
- 2. George Petit
- 3. Deadbeats of Stowe

**Nominees**: Beg, Steal or Borrow, Eames Brothers Band, Jon Gailmor.

# BEST LOCAL PERFORMANCE ARTS GROUP/THEATER

- 1. Lamoille County Players
- 2. Lamoille Valley Dance Academy
- 3. Vermont Vaudeville

# Nominee: Stowe Dance Academy

"Hey, let's put on a show! Those immortal words," according to its website, "were what started Lamoille County Players 70 years ago!"

Steve Hall, who lived to a ripe old age of 105, helped form the Lamoille County Players in 1952 after assembling local thespians to put on a Gilbert and Sullivan musical, "The Mikado," to raise money for a new organ for the Congregational Church.

The following year, she borrowed \$200

to fix up the then-abandoned Hyde Park Opera House. Soon afterward, she persuaded the town to lease the Opera House to the Players for \$1 a year, a deal that still stands today.

This year, the Players are putting on "The Foreigner" and "Haunting of Hill House" and, as they say, after three pandemic years, "We're so excited to utter those words again." (See above!)

Continued on Page 17

# 4393 Readers' Choice Awards 2023





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FILE PHOTO

# Harrison's Restaurant

After nearly 20 years, no restaurant or eatery has a more established presence in Stowe — or in Lamoille County — than Harrison's Restaurant and Bar.

The popular stop on Main Street has this year earned two 4393 awards — best restaurant both in Stowe and countywide.

First opened in December 2003 by Kathy Kneale and her son, Andrew, the restaurant has thrived by serving an eclectic menu of pasta, seafood, steaks and creative salads, drawing visitors and tourists, as well as dedicated locals.

Added to the menu are expertly crafted cocktails, a diverse wine list and the coziest of atmospheres downstairs in Main Street's Carlson Building, where it feels like you're discovering a secret. Throughout, the bar remains a popular spot for locals, and in 2016 Andrew earned his own Best Bartender 4393 Award.

Kathy has more than 40 years of experience running restaurants, owning and operating two other restaurants in town with her late husband before opening

Harrison's.

Named after David Harrison Kneale, Kathy's husband and Andrew's father, Harrison's is a place where, in their own words, "you could meet old friend and new, have a romantic date night out or just unwind with a nice glass of wine."

The other two Kneale establishments were the Partridge Inn, a seafood restaurant "because David cooked a lot of seafood growing up on the Cape," and Depot Street Malt Shop, a 1950s-themed diner and ice cream parlor," wrote Alan Handwerger in a 2014 Stowe Reporter profile.

"The Kneales love people. Love meeting them, love getting to know them, love feeding them," Handwerger said. "Small wonder that when you ask Andrew what his favorite food is, his immediate response is 'comfort food.' After all, his family has been feeding Stowe and making guests feel comfortable for over 40 years."

— Corey McDonald

Thank you to our community for your continued support throughout the years.

— Jen, Chelsea and Ally



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16 4393 Awards

## **BEST LOCAL ARTIST**

- 1. Craig Mooney
- 2. Jennifer Hubbard
- 3. Rett Sturman

Nominee: Natasha Bogar.

Craig Mooney likes "dramatic moments, heightened emotionality." His work is representational, yet abstract, and widely collected. He's in good company here — Hubbard, Sturman, Bogar — all accomplished painters in their own right.

# **BEST LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER**

- Jesse Schloff
- 2. Savannah Brown
- 3. Caitlin Kelly

**Nominees**: Gordon Miller, Heather Glenn, Jack Morris, Paul Rogers.

They say a picture's worth a thousand words, so we'll keep it short. Photographer Jesse Schloff, a Vermont native who lives in Stowe with his family, has taken thousands upon thousands of pictures, starting nearly 20 years ago at this very company. This year, readers once again chose him as their favorite local shutterbug. Oh, and here are those thousand words: jesseschloffphotography.com.

# MS. STOWE (PERSON WHO EMBODIES COMMUNITY)

- 1. Heidi Scheuermann
- 2. Kathy Kneale
- 3. Kristin Mooney

**Nominees**: Abby Earle, Brenna Brochhausen, Caitlin Kelly, Janet Martinez, Jo Sabel Courtney, Kate Carpenter, Lex Turner, Rachel Moore.

We miss you, Heidi. Well, only in the pages of this newspaper cuz she's still around everywhere else like she's always been. Many folks miss Heidi in the Legislature, too, where she often injected a dose of old-fashioned Vermont conservatism — never MAGA-world — into a political arena where so many pols pile their plates too high like they're at a Chinese restaurant buffet. Enjoy that free time!

# MR. STOWE (PERSON WHO EMBODIES COMMUNITY)

1. Ryan Percy

3.

- 2. Andre Blais and Tony DeVito
  - Graham Mink

**Nominees**: Billy Adams, Charles Safford, Drew Clymer, John Nelson.

See our writeup, page 20.

# MS. LAMOILLE (PERSON WHO EMBODIES COMMUNITY)

- 1. Cat Gallagher
- 2. Jennifer Hubbard
- 3. Amy Olsen

**Nominees**: Deb Papineau, Kim Kauffman, Kyle Nuse, Lucy Rogers, Tricia Follert.

See our writeup, page 21.

# MR. LAMOILLE (PERSON WHO EMBODIES COMMUNITY)

- 1. Rusty DeWees
- 2. Dan Noyes
- 3. Tom Moog

**Nominees**: Bob Beeman, Caleb Magoon, Todd Thomas.

Back on top, Mr. Dewees, after an aberrational year in 2019. Who doesn't know — and love — The Logger. Rusty (or Russ for those of us in the know) continues to entertain the masses with his unique brand of comedy, part social commentary and part Woodchuck schtick. Sometimes it is even a little bit dirty. (Sorry Marilyn, sorry Bill.) He's also a kickass musician, awesome collaborator, friend to many and asset to any community he graces. And damn, he's held up well, don't you think?

# **ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR**

- 1. Joshua Wolfgang
- 2. Graham Mink and Sarah Henshaw

We've been trying to profile the Wolfgangs (Josh, Katrine and David) and their Stowe empire — Pinnacle Ski and Sports, Ski Essentials, and myriad other endeavors — for several years now in Stowe magazine. Maybe this is just the impetus to finally hear that yes. Congratulations Josh!

# VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR (LOCAL WHO GIVES BACK)

- 1. Emily Rosenbaum
- 2. Leigh Pelletier
- 3. Leslie Anderson

**Nominees**: Huntly Armbruster, Rebecca Chase, Sarah Henshaw.

Emily does it all. For us, her monthly Stowe Reporter/News and Citizen column, which hooks up people in need with services and valuable resources, also encourages us all to look beyond ourselves and our own little existences to make the larger world better. That's just what Emily does. And, so very well.

Continued on Page 18



**4393** Awards **17** 



GORDON MILLER

# **Stowe Jazz Festival**

Music (and life) is all about style, according to the legendary jazz musician and composer Miles Davis. Or, as he put in blunter terms: Anybody can play. Playing the note is only 20 percent of the equation "the attitude of the motherf---er who plays it is 80 percent.'

If there's any event that brings the style to Stowe, it's the Stowe Jazz Fest.

That style and originality this year earned it a 4393 Award honoring the best in the area.

Originally founded and organized in 2017, The Stowe Jazz Fest — the brainchild

of musician George Petit — has brought both local and international cats to the scene in August each year — spreading out through venues throughout the town.

Petit, who in 2016 returned to his adopted hometown after several decades in New York, conceptualized the festival as a way to bring great music to the Greens.

According to Petit, "Jazz has to do with tradition, and tradition with innovation, innovation with courage and empathy, empathy with inclusion and without prejudice. Joy, sharing, discipline, free-

.....

dom, mentorship, cooperation and love."

And Petit brings it to town for free, thanks to a lot of support from friends, businesses and sponsors. (More at stowejazzfestival.org)

Now in its seventh year, the nonprofit festival has attracted artists and musicians from all over the world, including Israel, Argentina, Spain, Quebec and New York.

This year's festival is scheduled for Aug. 25-27, and will feature groups like the The Ed Cherry Quartet, Manuel Valera & New Cuban Express, The Bruce Sklar Sextet, The Oz Noy Trio, among others.

- Corey McDonald

#### **BEST ANNUAL EVENT — STOWE**

- Stowe Jazz Festival
- 2. Fourth of July Fireworks/Parade
- **British Invasion**

Nominees: Roots, Stowe Foliage Arts Festival, Stowe Winter Carnival, Vermont Renaissance Faire.

See our write up, this page.

## **BEST ANNUAL EVENT — COUNTY**

- 1. Fourth of July Fireworks/ Parade Morrisville
- 2. Oxbow Music Festival
- **LACINg Up for Cancer**

## **BEST NONPROFIT/COMMUNITY** ORGANIZATION — STOWE

- 1. Stowe Mountain Rescue and **Stowe Land Trust**
- 2. Stowe Trails Partnership
- 3. The Current

Nominees: Stowe Community Fund, Stowe Rotary.

Two deserving winners. Stowe Mountain Rescue, well, those folks just go above and beyond. They save our butts when we put them in very precarious places. Always with the utmost skill, grace, kindness, professionalism and humor. Stowe Land Trust should be replicated in every community in Vermont. The other contenders - trails and bikes, art, community and service ... well, we're pretty darn lucky, aren't we?

## **BEST NONPROFIT/COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION** — LAMOILLE

- **North Country Animal League** 1. 2.
  - Jenna's Promise
- Clarina Howard Nichols Center

Nominees: Lamoille Area Cancer Network, Lamoille County Food Shelf, Lamoille Restorative Center.

See above. Keep community but switch up to read animals, rebuilding shattered lives — times two — F cancer, feeding people and giving a leg up. Wow.

Continued on page 20





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# **BEST VEGETARIAN FOOD**



GORDON MILLER

# Nepali Cuisine

There's a great American tradition of gas station cuisine that focuses on food that's comforting, affordable and easy to grab on the go, and there may not be anyone doing it better in Lamoille County than Raymond and Laxmi Dewan at Nepali Cuisine in the Riverbend Market, aka the Shell station at the corner of Bridge and Railroad streets in Morrisville.

Whether you're looking for a quick but filling lunch or just trying to get through the dinner hour without breaking the bank, there's something for everyone here. For nearly a decade now, The Dewans have been sharing their Himalayan cuisine with a simple menu featuring curry, vegetable fried noodles, momos and samosas. From the hippy who only shops at the co-op to the road worker looking for a hearty meal, Nepali Cuisine satisfies all appetites.

The Dewans never skimp on the portions, with a hearty heaping of noodles in every to-go box and no less than eight dumplings to an order of momos. While the dumplings are filled with beef, it's easy to go vegetarian and vegan with the curry and noodles. Amid a sea of pizza and burgers, they're also serving up something different, and variety is worth its weight in rural food scenes.

— Aaron Calvin





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FILE PHOTO

# **Ryan Percy**

When Courtney Percy first met her future husband Ryan, she undertook some due diligence and researched him before meeting him in person. The first thing she found was a Stowe Reporter article from October 2007 that detailed his journey traveling around the world before returning home to help his father, Paul Percy, carry on the family's legacy of dairy farming in Stowe.

"A guy that traveled the world and then came back home to do what he loved to do!" Courtney said. "That pretty much sealed the deal for a first date."

On that first date, Ryan gave Courtney a tour of the town. They drove up to Mt. Mansfield, and he showed her the rolling acres that make up the Percy farm. They

lunched at The Bench and took a stroll on the recreation path.

"He knows every street, every field, every river, every property and is an encyclopedia of Stowe history and funny anecdotes that have happened in his hometown over the years. He enjoys connecting with old friends who grew up here and now raise their families here as well as the new residents who have more recently called Stowe home," Courtney said. "He is always interested in new businesses and new ideas and initiatives happening in town and how those things will contribute to our community. I have never once doubted his love for Stowe and its beautiful landscape.'

In another Reporter story about the fu-.....

ture of farming in Stowe, Ryan pledged his commitment to grazing his cows despite a national dairy market that disincentivizes anything but keeping cows shut up inside the barn, constantly producing. The cows grazing in the pasture, after all, is part of what makes Stowe, Stowe.

The town showed its love for Ryan's cows when a historic barn fire in early 2022 killed over a hundred of them. Ryan braved the blaze to rescue seven calves that night, and Stowe residents grieved alongside him.

"You will never meet anyone kinder, more open and accepting and caring of the world — people, animals, environment — than him," Courtney said.

— Aaron Calvin

# **BEST BIKE TRAIL(S)**

- **Cady Hill Forest**
- Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
- **Stowe Recreation Path**

Nominees: Cady's Falls, Perry Hill.

Natch. Though the new 93-mile rail trail gave Cady Hill a pedal for the medal.

## **BEST CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING**

- **Trapp Family Lodge**
- **Craftsbury Outdoor Center**
- **Edson Hill**

Nominee: Wiessner Woods.

Um, is this a surprise?

## **BEST PLACE TO HIKE OR RUN**

- 1. **Stowe Pinnacle**
- Lamoille Valley Rail Trail
- **Sterling Pond Trail**

Nominees: Cotton Brook, Wiessner Woods.

In a state where stunning views abound all around, our winner reaches a special pinnacle.

## **BEST PLACE TO PADDLE**

- **Green River Reservoir** 1.
- **Waterbury Reservoir**
- Lake Willoughby

Nominee: Lake Elmore.

The solitude of the Green River Reservoir glided past Waterbury Reservoir again. Hope they don't ever drain it.

# **BEST PLACE TO PLAY GOLF**

- **Stowe Country Club**
- **Country Club of Vermont**
- **Mountain View Country Club**

Nominees: Copley Country Club, Ryder Brook Golf Club.

Once again Stowe Country Club drove in 30 percent of the vote, but the next four teed off quite nicely, pretty evenly splicing together the other 70.

# **BEST DISC GOLF COURSE**

- Smugglers' Notch
- **Trapp Family Lodge** 2.
- **Center Chains** 3.

Center Chains got tossed out of the top slot from the last 4393s, pushing Smugglers' and Trapp Family Lodge up to par.

## **BEST LOCAL RACE OR SPORTING EVENT**

- **Stowe Derby**
- Ski Bum Races
- Race to the Top of Vermont

Nominees: Craft Brew Races, Stowe 8-Miler & 5K,

Continued on page 23

# **Catherine Gallagher**

In a place as rural and a population as loosely grouped as Lamoille County, school districts take on a significant role in public life. Whether someone lives in a village, on a dirt road or in a mobile home or a centuries-old farmhouse, almost everyone sends their kid to the local school, or they graduated from it, or pays taxes for its support.

School business is everyone's business. The Lamoille North Supervisory Union, which oversees the Lamoille Union Middle and High schools and the elementary schools in the county's most rural and sparsely populated towns, serves an important social function, providing the meals, sports, activities and community conversations that bring these towns together.

One other thing is constant, too — district superintendent Catherine "Cat" Gallagher. There are few school events where she's not present, a shawl thrown over her shoulders as she warmly greets — everyone!

When Gallagher took on the district's top job in 2017 from her position as director of student support services, it was unlikely that she could have foreseen the challenges ahead. But under her guidance, the district endured the social distancing and remote learning challenges of the early COVID-19 pandemic, the



GORDON MILLER

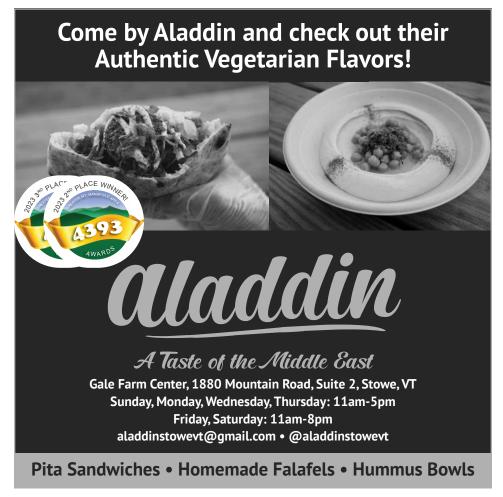
departure of a longtime high school principal, and the return of a battered student population to full-time, maskless learning after the widespread adoption of vaccines.

Through it all, Gallagher worked in the trenches alongside students, teachers and

families to ensure no one was left behind in the tumult, and she recently reminded everyone that it takes a village to get it right.

"We live in times that serve as poignant reminders of how adversity can strike at a moment's notice, but how you handle such unexpected events and what you do to impact your communities in a positive way is the gift, challenge and responsibility," Gallagher told the 2023 Lamoille Union High School graduating class.

— Aaron Calvin





**4393** Awards **21** 



GORDON MILLER

# **Zenbarn Farms**

With its commitment to spiritual wellness established prior to retail cannabis arriving in Vermont, it's no wonder that Zenbarn Farms rose to the top of everyone's list as the preferred place to buy pot.

Noah and Marlena Fishman, owners of Zenbarn, had already established a well-re-

spected cannabidiol, or CBD, business prior to getting a cannabis retail license from the state, opening them up to selling hemp and cannabis products on two different fronts.

As one reviewer wrote on the cannabis community website Leafly, summing up a broad feeling that has made Zenbarn the cream of the cannabis crop in north central Vermont, "The people (smart and educated team), the mission (they donate profits to local social equity advocates), the prices (very affordable), and the quality of everything they carry is absolutely top-notch."

Cannabis is dispensed at Zenbarn in a deli

style, meaning a variety of strains are dished out from canisters along with pre-rolled joints and a variety of THC added-value products. Friendly budtenders make sure every customer makes the right match, whether they be a curious newcomer or veteran smoker.

— Aaron Calvin







COURTESY PHOTO

# Ranch Camp

Every family in Stowe who must account for conflicting tastes and appetites knows where to go to lunch. Though obviously catering to the mountain biking crowd in its retail shop, Ranch Camp is also a one-stop shop for nourishment for herbivores and carnivores alike, but with many meatless options that keep vegetarians and vegans from feeling left out.

Your 5-year-old can get chicken tenders so wonderfully crispy that he won't want to share, while your newly vegetarian teen can grab the focaccia sandwich. Mom's craving a burger and fries, but Dad feels like pairing his local craft beer with something light, like a grain bowl brimming over with a medley of vegetables.

For those looking to dine out on a budget, there's plenty to share, from nachos to the family taco box, essentially a take-out only build-your-own taco set that has likely saved dinner for countless families.

And along with Nepali Kitchen, the vegetarians and vegans out there voted Ranch Camp the best.

— Aaron Calvin



If the Derby is really more popular than the bums, why does participation seem to be dipping every year. Come on people. Step it up in 2024. Make Erling Strom and Sepp Ruschp proud.

# BEST TRAINER/FITNESS INSTRUCTOR

- 1. Hector Ortiz
- 2. Tom Williams
- 3. Kyle Smith

**Nominees**: Chad Couto, Ernie Roick, Jeff Rutledge, Melissa Senesac.

Hector has his own private training barn in Stowe. I just looked down and couldn't see my feet. Hopefully Hector's got one more opening. He's surely got a lot of fans.

# **BEST FITNESS VENUE/GYM**

- 1. The Swimming Hole
- 2. PHIT Performance
- 3. The Forge

**Nominees**: Deep Roots Fitness, RIDE, Snap Fitness.

See writeup, Page 14.

## BEST DOCTOR/SPECIALIST/ PHYSICAL THERAPIST

- 1. Kim Bruno
- 2. Summit Physical Therapy
- 3. Kathleen Doehla

**Nominees**: Angela Winchell, David Bisbee, Kat Dwyer, Katy Marvin, Kelly Lively.

Best. Doc. Ever. With a sense of humor.

# BEST ALTERNATIVE WELLNESS PROVIDER

- 1. Charkalis Chiropractic Center
- 2. Li Ming Tseng Stowe Acupuncture
- 3. Rogue Herbalist

**Nominees**: Earth Sea Acupuncture, Four Corners Acupuncture, Jenna Kelly, Little River Chiropractic.

Calling Dr. Charkalis. Emergency. Right away.

# **BEST RAINY DAY ACTIVITY**

- 1. Stowe Bowl
- 2. Stowe Cinema
- 3. The Swimming Hole

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Thank you to all the readers that voted for me

**4393 Readers' Choice** 2023

**4393** Awards **23** 

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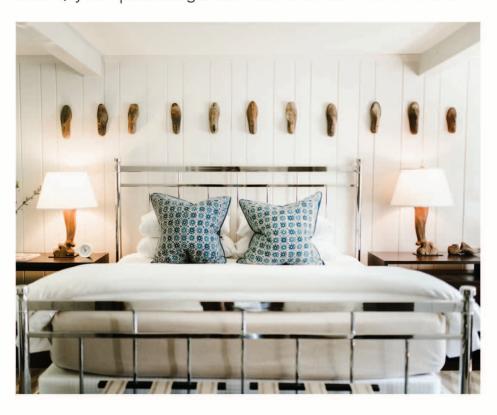


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