

# NEAPOLITAN

+ FOOD & CLASSIFIED



Sweet Annie's banana split base: pistachio, birthday cake and strawberry top fresh-peeled fruit. DIANA BIEDERMAN/NAPLES DAILY NEWS/USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

# THE SCOOP ON THE BEST

*For National Ice Cream Day, Yelp released its list of the top ice cream spots in Florida*

Annabelle Tometich | Fort Myers News-Press | USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

**I**n time for National Ice Cream Day on July 17, Yelp released its roundup last week of the Top 25 Ice Cream Spots in Florida for 2022. Perhaps not surprising to the area's many ice cream lovers, four Lee and Collier joints made the review site's list. ● Taking the top spot locally: Joey's Custard on Sanibel, which scooped up third behind No. 2 Sweet Aloha Ice Cream and No. 1 The Magic Cow, both in Davie. Joey's secured its top ranking with 258 glowing reviews and an overall rating of a perfect five stars. ● One Yelp user called Joey's, "the best dessert on the island, full stop!!!" Another noted the shop's scratch-made offerings, large selection of flavors and friendly staff.

See ICE CREAM, Page 6D



Joey Almeida owns Joey's Custard on Sanibel Island with his mother, Debbie Almeida. SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS



A summery batch of blueberry cobbler ice cream from Cape Creamery in Cape Coral. COURTESY CAPE CREAMERY

## RESTAURANT NEWS

# Venues with a view: award-winning outdoor dining, new ramen, gelato

Diana Biederman  
Naples Daily News  
USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

This week's theme: high style at every budget.

We visit Southwest Florida's best al fresco restaurants according to America's most popular reservations app. Both are gorgeous, yet the vibes and design couldn't be more different. The pricing, comparable.

This week's #FOMO is Spain, where six of my friends, none of whom know each other, are sharing fantastic food

porn from Barcelona, Madrid and San Sebastian on Instagram. With no intention of dealing with international travel's current hassles, I'd rather try dining deals at three local Spanish restaurants, where the decor is to die for with food to match.

Did you know gelato boasts 30% less fat than traditional ice cream?

I did not until hitting Waterside Shops for post-brunch shopping on National Ice Cream Day, where Kendra Scott's lovely boutique offered customers a sweet gift with purchase: artisan gelato from a Naples pop-up. Read on for the

cart's next steps.

Artistic ramen and rice bowls that only look expensive? Folks in Fort Myers are psyched about a new noodle spot where offerings are less than \$15.

We also hear that the world's ultimate VIP is visiting North Fort Myers. Anyone willing to pony up \$9 has the opportunity to dine with this gifting guru.

Style need not be pricey: the most delectable thing eaten this week was an elegant \$4 plum and bacon empanada at Mila's Bistro in North Naples. The most

See NEWS, Page 5D



Shopping and a scoop: Jennifer Fox with daughters Addie and Brooke enjoying Birdie's Gelato at Kendra Scott's Waterside Shop in Naples.

DIANA BIEDERMAN/NAPLES DAILY NEWS/USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA



The Continental in Naples was one of two winners on OpenTable's 2022 best outdoor dining list. LORI HAMILTON



Mediterrano is one of two restaurants in Naples making the best 100 outdoor dining restaurants. DIANA BIEDERMAN/NAPLES DAILY NEWS/USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

# News

Continued from Page 1D

refreshing? Chipotle's hydrating \$3 organic watermelon limeade that serves double duty as a cocktail mixer.

As legendary Florida fashion designer Lilly Pulitzer, whose frock business evolved from her lemonade stand once said, "Being happy never goes out of style."

Her advice doesn't cost a dime.

## Best al fresco

OpenTable has released its list of America's "100 Best Restaurants for Outdoor Dining."

For 2022, two Third Street South restaurants in Olde Naples earned a coveted slot: D'Amico's Continental and

Mediterrano. Both are gorgeous and transporting, albeit in different ways.

"The Continental is in a magical setting with magical design in a magical seaside village. It's one of those situations where all of the pieces came together — from the food program to our loyal customers, to the service, to our talented staff — from top to bottom," owner Richard D'Amico said in an email.

Mediterrano's owner Milos Ljubenovic is also thankful to his employees and shared that his win was a three-peat accomplishment. The restaurant earned this accolade in 2017 and 2019, the last time OpenTable issued its list. Mediterranean is also TripAdvisor's No. 1 restaurant for six years running among the 689 listed locally.

Noticing how the bulk of restaurants scoring a coveted spot were waterfront locations, Ljubenovic said, "It's an honor to be recognized and stand out on this

list."

A nature lover, he designed the intimate plant and flower-filled patio that was inspired by his parents' gorgeous garden in south Serbia where he grew up.

To compile the list, OpenTable looked at the number of restaurants listing outdoor dining availability from Jan. 1 to June 30, 2022, compared to the same date range in 2019 when its last list was published. They also looked at total seated reservations for May and June 2022. The final list was generated from more than 13.6 million verified OpenTable diner reviews collected between May 1, 2021 and April 30, 2022.

The full list plus additional details determining how top choices were selected can be viewed on the app's website.

Restaurants using other reservation platforms including Resy, Tock and Yelp were not considered.

(Continental: 1205 Third St. S., Naples;

239-659-0007; damicoscontinental.com; Mediterranean: 336 13th Ave. S., Naples; 239-261-7498; mediterrano-naples.com)

## New ramen in Fort Myers

Token Ramen, an eight-restaurant Florida chain founded by Randy Lau in 2019, opened its first Fort Myers location July 6. Main-course ramens and rice bowls are priced less than \$15; upgrades are an additional charge. The weekday lunch special is \$9.

(8001 Dani Drive, Fort Myers; 239-362-0119; tokenramentea.com)

## Spanish cuisine deals

Bodega Ole in Naples, and Bonita Springs sister restaurant El Basque run

See NEWS, Page 6D

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# News

Continued from Page 5D

happy hour Tuesday to Saturday until 6 p.m. with \$5 tapas, wine, sangria and ca-va, \$19 paellas, plus a \$29 three-course prix fixe. (965 Fourth Ave. N., Naples; 239-304-8108; [bodegaolenaples.com](http://bodegaolenaples.com); 25245 Chamber of Commerce Drive, Bonita Springs; 239-301-4973; [elbasque.com](http://elbasque.com))

**Lamoraga's** famous paella and everything else is 25% off before 5:30 p.m. (3936 North Tamiami Trail, Naples; 239-331-3669; [lamoragarestaurant.com](http://lamoragarestaurant.com))

## Ice cream challenge week four

If you've recently flown the (ahem) "friendly" skies, perhaps Biscoff was the free snack du jour. On July 17, National Ice Cream Day, Kendra Scott's busy jewelry store at Waterside Shops featured Birdie's Gelato cart scooping four flavors of deliciousness, including a spicy Biscoff riff, as a free gift with purchase. My pal purchased enough jewelry to warrant two cups. She selected cookies and cream; I went whole hog on the irresistibly pretty birthday cake, a staple flavor at each weekly stop. Birdie's was oh-so-smooth, rich and non-cakey with chunks of chocolate added for good measure.

Birdie's offers one dairy-free variety on any given day. We sampled refreshing mango sorbet. Non-dairy gelato for vanilla, dark chocolate, sea-salt caramel and toasted coconut flavors use oat milk as the base.



**Order dinner at Lamoraga by 5:30 p.m. and score 25% off your check.** COURTESY OF LAMORAGA

From gourmet pizzerias and public parks to soigneur private events including ZOOobile and CMON's Spring Fling in Naples, you'll find this cute cart's schedule posted weekly via @birdiesgelato on Instagram. Cups are \$6, pints \$12.

## Breakfast with a celebrity

Southern Grill at The Shell Factory in North Fort Myers is celebrating Christmas in July, hosting a pancake breakfast with Santa as the guest of honor July 24 from 9-11 a.m. Prices start at \$9 for adults, \$5.50 for kids 12 and younger. Reservations required. Get that wish list ready.

(16554 N. Cleveland Ave., North Fort Myers; 239-995-2141, ext. 110; [shellfactory.com](http://shellfactory.com))

*Diana Biederman is the food and restaurant reporter at Naples Daily News who contributes to Fort Myers News-Press. Send deals and scoops two weeks ahead for consideration to [diana.biederman@naplesnews.com](mailto:diana.biederman@naplesnews.com).*

# Ice cream

Continued from Page 1D

The next local spot to make the list was Cape Creamery in Cape Coral at No. 14. In the shop's 118 reviews, it also averaged a perfect five stars with reviewers noting "quick, kind and generous" service, as well as "outstanding ice cream."

On Marco Island, Sweet Annie's Ice Cream Parlour took the No. 19 spot with 188 reviews and a 4.5 star overall rating. Following close behind was another Sanibel spot, The Shack of Sanibel, which has 50 reviews and an average rating of five stars.

To compile the list, "Yelp identified

businesses in the ice cream category, then ranked those spots using a number of factors including the total volume and ratings of reviews between January 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. When available, all businesses on this list have a passing health score as of June 30, 2022."

To view the full list and read more about the ice cream shops that made the cut, visit this link.

*Annabelle Tometich writes about food and restaurants for The News-Press and Naples Daily News. Connect with this reporter: [atometich@news-press.com](mailto:atometich@news-press.com); @abellewrites (Instagram); @atometich (Twitter)*



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