



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

For further information, contact:

Amy Riemer, Media Relations

978-475-4441 (office) or 978-502-4895 (cell)

amy@riemercommunications.com

THOUSANDS OF INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS ATTEND THE RECENT PIZZA TOMORROW SUMMIT AND FLORIDA RESTAURANT & LODGING SHOW IN ORLANDO

ORLANDO, FL, November 15, 2023 – Last week The 2nd Annual [Pizza Tomorrow Summit](#) and the [Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show](#) sponsored by the [Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association](#) brought together thousands of movers and shakers in the restaurant, pizza, foodservice, and lodging industries to source new products from hundreds of exhibiting companies, gain knowledge from subject matter experts in dozens of education sessions and enjoy several culinary competitions. The trade shows were held for the first time together at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL.

“We were thrilled with the great energy and excitement that was created on the expanded exhibit floors. By bringing these two incredible industry events together we were able to nearly triple the size of the event and provide the exhibitors with a high quality and quantity of buyer attendees,” said Glenn Celentano, Partner, Restaurant Events LLC, new owners of the event. “We thank the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association, the US Pizza Team as well as all our exhibitors, sponsors, speakers, attendees, media partners, and supporting organizations who helped to make the events a huge success.” For access to photos, [click here](#).



The combined expanded [exhibit halls](#) featured hundreds of leading vendors occupying 450 booths providing demonstrations and sampling of products and services. Exhibitors were extremely pleased with the event.

- Rey Santos, Marketing Director, Premium Blend commented, “My sales director said that out of his 30+ years of experience at trade shows he never saw a booth as busy as Premium Blend’s booth. We have gotten some solid leads, new customers, and old customers to purchase new products. Overall, it was an amazing show for Premium Blend.”
- Chef Luca Donofrio, culinary director of RCN Imports Inc. said, “Great to be in the sunshine state for a killer roundup of pizza pros. There are so few shows of this size to focus on pizza making so when it’s on you do not want to miss it.”

- Carlos Santiago with Skytab/Shift4 said, "Another successful event #SkyTab stays present and dominate. Thank you FRLS for this amazing event. Great show, amazing exhibitors, and a lot of pizza."
- Mike Turmel with Meazureup said, "Great time at the FRLS! Looking forward to working with all the new companies we met this week."
- Billy with Manzo Pizza said, "Pizza summit is about building relationships. It's just like building a pizza, each time you put a different topping on a pizza it's like building a team which makes for a great Pizza Summit. The show was a huge success."

The **Culinary Innovation Theater**, sponsored by Ser.vi, the American Culinary Federation (ACF) Central Florida Chapter and UberEats, featured demonstrations by local chefs from the ACF Central Florida Chapter including Hari Pulapaka, PhD, Jason Lynn, Keith Keogh, Nora Galdiano and Christopher Tanner. Congratulations to Chef Ken James from Orlando-based My Plates on Deck who won \$1,000 and the title **Rapid-Fire Challenge Champion** for his Cajun Crab Cake. The competition was judged by Master Chef Shaun O'Neale who was joined by Kate Reed and Philip Marro from the Visit Lauderdale Food & Wine Festival.

On Thursday, November 9, Rachel Duncan from Pineapples Restaurant in Melbourne, FL won the **Hip Sip: Battle of the Modern Bartender Competition**. The competition was sponsored by Savage & Cooke Distillery and judged by Art Sutley, Hospitality & Nightlife Expert, Savage & Cooke Distillery; and Bar Rescue's Mia Mastroianni, and Phil Wills, The Spirits in Motion. Rachel won a trip to the Savage & Cooke Distillery, which includes airfare, 2-night accommodation in Napa, a tour of the distillery and a meet & greet with the master distiller.

The '23 Galbani Professionale Pizza Cup & Acrobatic Trials (GPPC) crowned a new champion from 26 talented pizzaioli who competed. Congratulations to Niles Peacock of Niles Peacock Kitchen & Bar in Edmond, Wash. Peacock took home the grand prize title as well as a trip to Parma, Italy to compete in the Campionato Mondiale della Pizza in April 2025. Daniel Saccone of Saccone's Pizza & Subs in Austin Tex. took home 2nd place overall in the GPPC, using a cheese pizza off his menu, followed by Dustin Finnegan of The NONA slice house in Safety Harbor, Fla.

On Thursday, November 9 the '23 Galbani Professionale Pizza Cup and Acrobatic Trials showcased 10 of the country's best pizza athletes in categories ranging from Largest Dough Stretch to Fastest Pie maker, Fastest Box Folder and the visually stunning Freestyle Acrobatics. The winners were:

- **Freestyle Acrobatics:** 1st prize went to McKenna Carney, The NONA slice house, Safety Harbor, Fla.; 2nd place to Wilhelm Rodriguez, Papa's Pizza, Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico; and 3rd place to Matt Hickey, Caliente Pizza & Draffhouse Pittsburgh, Penn.
- **Largest Dough Stretch:** 1st place to Matt Hickey, 34.125"; 2nd place to Wilhelm Rodriguez, 32"; and 3rd place to Kevin Knott, The Nona Slice House, 28.75"
- **Fastest Pie Maker:** 1st place went to David Whisker, B.C. Pizza of Boyne, Boyne City, Mich., 33.28 sec.; 2nd place to Joey Streeter, The Nona Slice House, 40.88 sec.; and 3rd place to Wilhelm Rodriguez, 43.31 sec.
- **Fastest Box Folder:** 1st place went to David Whisker, 20.72 sec.; 2nd place to Justin Adams, Sicily Pizza & Restaurant, Nazareth, Penn., 24.44 sec.; and 3rd place to Matt Hickey, 31.85 sec.

The following sponsors made the Pizza Tomorrow Summit competitions possible: Galbani Professionale US, The Pizza Tomorrow Summit, Fiero, Gi.Metal, MFG Tray (Molded Fiber Glass Tray), @ Grain Craft, Margherita Meats, Palazzolo's Cheese Hog and Lillsun Peels. The team is also sponsored by REAL CALIFORNIA MILK, La Nova Wings, Burkett Restaurant Equipment & Supplies, Univex Corporation, Perfect Crust Pizza Liners, and PMQ Pizza.

Thirty education sessions, many standing-room only, provided actionable solutions and ideas, from industry subject matter experts focused on *People, Process and New Technology; How to Lease Restaurant Space; Growing Your Restaurant Through your Chamber of Commerce, Building a Team, How to Recognize Talent and Develop Leaders* and much more. In addition, dozens of restaurant professionals participated in the Restaurant Management 201 Workshop. This brand-new workshop guided the entire management team through the process of becoming a cohesive team with strong leadership. Darren Denington and Alison Anne provided the knowledge, skills, and systems needed for a team to properly run a business' daily operations, while still having the time and focus to manage the business details that will drive you to success.

[The Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show](#) and [Pizza Tomorrow Summit](#) will be back at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, FL on Wednesday, November 6 and Thursday, November 7, 2024. During the event it was announcing that there will be a Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion at the 2024 [Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo](#) to be held August 25-27 at the Los Angeles Convention Center. The events are owned by Restaurant Events, LLC which also produces [the International Restaurant & Foodservice Show of New York](#), scheduled for March 3-5, 2024 at the Javits Center in New York City. For exhibitor information for the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Show contact Joe Carlino at (484) 823-9611 or joe@therestaurantevents.com. For Pizza Tomorrow Summit exhibitor information about the contact Dave Kellogg at 203-788-3794 or david@pizzatomorrow.com.

###