

Idaho Statesman

Made reservations yet, Boise? These four Idaho restaurants just won Wine Spectator Awards

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June 26, 2024

Diners who crave the grape anticipate the annual Wine Spectator Restaurant Awards, a celebration of dining destinations with the best selections. This year's list includes four Idaho recipients. When a restaurant receives any type of Wine Spectator award, it's an indication that significant attention and resources are being devoted to wine.

In Boise, perennial winners Chandlers Steakhouse, 981 W. Grove St., and Fork, 199 N. 8th St., were recognized again. Chandlers won a Best of Award of Excellence, the mid-tier honor, while Fork picked up a base-level Award of Excellence. The Narrows Steakhouse at Shore Lodge, 501 W. Lake St. in McCall, also picked up a Best of Award of Excellence. Idaho's quartet also includes Beverly's at Coeur d'Alene Resort, 115 S. Second St. It, too, received a notable Best of Award of Excellence.

The self-described "world's leading authority on wine," Wine Spectator recognized 3,777 dining destinations from more than 75 countries, according to a media release. In total, the three levels of distinction broke down like this: Award of Excellence (2,150 winners), Best of Award of Excellence (1,531) and the top-tier Grand Award (96). One might assume that no Idaho restaurant has ever won a Grand Award. Think again. Beverly's claims on its website that after opening in 1986, its formidable wine cellar made it "immediately recognized as a world-class wine destination. Since then, the list has been awarded multiple consecutive Wine Spectator Magazine Grand Awards, (a) DiRoNa Fine Dining Award, Four Diamond: AAA Award and more."

This is the first time in years that Beverly's has received any level of Wine Spectator Restaurant Award. In Idaho, the number of Wine Spectator-approved restaurants has dropped substantially. As recently as 2020, 11 restaurants popped the cork. That number steadily declined afterward — down to a dismal three in 2023 before this year's slight trend reversal. The Gem State's plummet doesn't necessarily mean that local restaurants' wine selection has gone south. As I've written before, I suspect that fewer Idaho restaurants are entering this "contest" ever since the COVID-19 pandemic altered business priorities. In 2022, I contacted two Boise restaurants that had earned Wine Spectator Awards in past years but were notably absent. Both had decided not to enter. Wine Spectator Restaurant Awards are pay-to-play. Restaurants submit a significant entry fee to be considered. Not all restaurants end up making the cut, but — you get the idea.