

Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants survey respondents awarded

With restaurants picking up business over the past year after the pandemic, diners have voted and commented voraciously on the restaurants they have visited in 2022, the Definitive(ly) Good Guide Co., publishers of The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo and restaurantsmalta.com, said.

The survey conducted in September was answered by 3,557 people, with respondents dining out on average once to twice a week, in other words, over 277,446 dining experiences in a year.

The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo annual restaurant survey, which is supported by the Malta Tourism Authority, Global Payments and Nestlé, asks regular diners out to rate the restaurants they had visited in the last year for food, service and ambience, and to give their comments.

The results of the survey are analysed by an impartial, independent market research company, based in the US, which specialises in data analysis, and the top rated 150 restaurants out of an incredible 3,000 catering



Sheena Mifsud receiving her Hilton Malta prize.

establishments in both Malta and Gozo will then feature, at no cost to them, in the upcoming edition of The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Malta & Gozo 2023 which will be launched



Stephanie Vassallo being presented with her Phoenicia voucher.

during the Restaurants Awards Gala Dinner ceremony being held tomorrow.

The DGG restaurant survey (now going into its 23rd year) continues to

remain the only objective restaurant guide on the islands.

The survey winners are Sheena Mifsud (who won a luxury two-night stay at the Hilton Malta on bed and breakfast basis); Stephanie Vassallo (one night for two in a superior room, including breakfast, at The Phoenicia, Malta); Maria Grech Gerada (one night for two in a deluxe room, including breakfast, at AX The Palace); Robin Marshall (€250 voucher from Dical House); Doryn Abela, Jessica Coppini, Armin Eckermann and Josette Schembri Vella (vouchers of €100 from the Food Emporium Vini e Capricci by Abrahams, Gozo); and Marizia Cassar (€100 voucher to exchange for Riedel glassware from Grech Catering Supplies Ltd).

The following were shortlisted and received a complimentary copy of the The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo 2023 edition: Stella Cornelissen, Emelia Sammut, Jacqueline Schembri, Juliet Camilleri, Marcia Schembri, Linsi Caldecourt, Mick Laus, Gabi Mizzi, Josephine Chetcuti and Matthew Bugeja.

Survey winners announced from The Definitive(ly) Good Guide Restaurant survey 2022

With restaurants picking up on business tremendously over the last year, the Definitive(ly) Good Guide Co., publishers of *The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo* and restaurantsmalta.com are delighted that this has translated into enthusiastic diners-out voting and commenting voraciously on their favourite restaurants for this year. The survey conducted in September had a fantastic response of 3,557 survey respondents with people dining out on average 1-2 times a week, in other words over 277,446 dining experiences in a year!

The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo annual restaurant survey supported by the MTA, Global Payments and Nestle asks regular diners out to rate their favourite restaurants that they had visited in the last year for Food, Service and Ambience and to give their comments.

The results of the survey are analysed by an impartial, independent market research company, based in the US, which specialises in data analysis and the top-rated 150 restaurants out of an incredible 3,000 catering establishments in both Malta and Gozo will then feature, at no cost to them, in the upcoming

edition of *The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Malta & Gozo 2023* which will be launched during the lavish Restaurants Awards Gala Dinner ceremony held on Monday, 5 December.

The DGG restaurant survey (now going into its 23rd year) continues to remain the only objective Restaurant Guide on the

islands guiding lovers of good food to the consistent restaurants on the islands.

Below are the winners and all those shortlisted in The Definitive(ly) Good Guide survey. Heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in the survey and sponsored prizes and congratulations to all!

Prize	Winner
A luxury two-night stay at the Hilton Malta on bed & breakfast basis	Sheena Mifsud
One night for two in a Superior Room including breakfast at The Phoenicia, Malta	Stephane Vassallo
One night for two in a Deluxe room including breakfast at AX The Palace.	Maria Grech Gerada
A €250 voucher from the exclusive Dical House, purveyors of the finest foods and beverages	Robyn Marshall
four vouchers of €100 from the Food Emporium Vini e Capricci by Abrahams, Gozo	Dorin Abela, Jessica Coppin, Armin Eckermann, Josette Schembri Vella
A €100 voucher to exchange for Riedel glassware from Grech Catering Supplies Ltd	Marizja Cassar
Complimentary copy of <i>The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo 2023</i> edition	Stella Cornelissen, Emelita Sammut, Jacqueline Schembri, Juliet Camilleri, Marconia Schembri, Lusi Caldecourt, Mick Laus, Gabi Mizzi, Josephine Chetcuti, Matthew Bugeja



Phoenicia presentation survey winner



Hilton Malta Prize Winner

Noni rated top restaurant in Malta in annual survey

Definitive(Ly) Good Guide to Restaurants holds 21st edition of awards ceremony

Noni restaurant in Valletta was rated top overall restaurant at the Definitive(Ly) Good Guide to Restaurants Awards Ceremony, which was held at the Grand Ballroom of the Radisson Blu Resort & Spa, Golden Sands, last Monday, December 6.

After the unprecedented break in 2020 the awards once again celebrated the outstanding achievement of Malta and Gozo's top survey-rated restaurants as voted by diners who participated in the online Malta & Gozo Restaurant Survey at www.restaurantsmalta.com.

The survey results were revealed by Lisa Grech, managing director of the Definitive(Ly) Good Guide Co., on Monday and were presented by Johann Buttigieg, CEO of the Malta Tourism Authority, Adrian Cachia from Global Payments, Derek Vassallo and Giuliana Isolani from Nestlé (Malta) and Mark Ciantar of Continental Purchasing, on behalf of Schonwald, Germany, who supplied the commemorative award plates for the occasion.

This year's Malta & Gozo Restaurant Survey conducted in September returned a high number of responses, with 2,023 participants who dined out on average one to two times a week, equivalent to a total of 157,794 dining experiences in a year.

The latest edition of The Definitive(Ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo, which was launched during the event, sees 31 new restaurants listed in the guide. One can also find them on the portal www.restaurantsmalta.com.

The top 40 award-winning restaurants were taken from the highest-rated restaurants, taking into account their overall rating, the number of people rating, comments and other data from the survey.

The restaurants that won award plates (in order from the most highly rated) were: Noni; Tarragon Restaurant; Don Royale; The Golden Fork; The Chef's Table; Beppe's Restaurant; Root 81; Ta' Tona; Galea's Kitchen; Ristorante La Vela; Susurrus; Ta' Marija; The Lord Nelson Restaurant; Under Grain; Caviar & Bull; Barbajeon; Port 21; Rubino; Palazzo Preca Restaurant; Al Sale; The de Mondion Restaurant; Il Kartell Restaurant; Hammett's Mestizo; Meraki Wine & Dine; Zeri's; Suruchi Indian Restaurant; La Vida; Il Hneija; Rendez-vous; AcquaBlu; The Chophouse Restaurant; Terrone; Rebekah's Restaurant; Hammett's Gastro Bar; Brijia; Giuseppe's Bar & Bistro; Ta' Frenc Restaurant; ION The Harbour; Nan Yuan Cantonese Restaurant and Grotto Tavern.

Additional awards were handed out in different categories:

- Best food (sponsored by American Express): Noni.
- Best service (sponsored by Ozo Group): Noni.

- Best ambience (sponsored by Design Hub): Ristorante La Vela.

- Restaurant most dedicated to supporting local and best local wine list (sponsored



Malta Tourism Authority CEO Johann Buttigieg presenting the 'top overall survey rated' award to Ritiene Brincat, restaurant manager at Noni.

by the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights): Country Terrace and Root 81 respectively;

- Best restaurant in Gozo (sponsored by The Ministry for Gozo): Beppe's;

- Best chef award (sponsored by Pentole Agnelli represented exclusively by The Catering Centre): Edward Diacono of Rubino;

- Best business entertainment (sponsored by Spiteri Catering): Caviar & Bull;
- Best newcomer (sponsored by Horeca Magazine): Don Royale;

- Most children-friendly restaurant (sponsored by the Malta Baby & Kids Directory): Luzzu Restaurant;

- Best Maltese restaurant (sponsored by Malta Tourism Authority): Gululu;

- Most romantic restaurant: Barbajeon.

The Definitive(Ly) Good Guide to Restaurants also handed out wine awards in association with Vini e Capricci by Abraham's:

- The People's Choice Wine List (taken from the results of the returned surveys): Barbajeon;

- Best overall wine list: Country Terrace;

- Best presented wine list: Barbajeon;

- Best wine by the glass selection: Hammett's Mestizo;

- Best fine wine list: Tarragon;

- Best short wine list: Barbajeon;

- Best port wine list: Country Terrace.



The official commemorative plate presented to the top survey-rated 40 restaurants and the 2022 guide.

The results of the restaurant survey can be found in the 2022 hard copy edition of The Definitive(Ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta and Gozo, which is now available to purchase online at www.restaurantsmalta.com. It is also available at

leading stationers and bookshops in Malta and Gozo.

The awards ceremony was sponsored by the Malta Tourism Authority, Global Payments and Nestlé (Malta) representing Buondi.

You can now vote – survey on Maltese and Gozitan restaurants open

The annual *Definitive(y)* Good Guide to Restaurants restaurant survey, held online at www.restaurantsmalta.com during this month, is now open for voting. This will be the 22nd survey which will result in the 2023 guide and awards ceremony in December. As usual the survey results will determine the top-rated 150 restaurants which will have a free listing in the guide and the top 40 and other special awards which will be presented in December with the launch of the guide. The support of Global Payments Ltd and Nestlé Malta Limited, the Malta Tourism Authority and other award sponsors make it possible for the guide to remain objective by including top-rated restaurants at no charge.

Diners can rate restaurants on a scale of 1-10 on Food, Ambience and Service. Their ratings will determine which

restaurants will be included free in the 2023 edition. Answer additional questions to say who you feel should be the winners of the special awards including Best Maltese Food Restaurant; Best Restaurant for Business Entertainment; Best Value for Money; Most Romantic Restaurant; Most Child-friendly Restaurant; Best Restaurant Restroom; Most Pet-friendly Restaurant; Best Restaurant in Gozo; Restaurant Supporting Local Produce; Best Chef and Best Newcomer as well as which restaurants have your favourite wine lists. This year you can also vote for your favourite café. Send in your interesting, funny and informative comments and you could win one of these fantastic prizes:

- A luxury two-night stay at the Hilton Malta on bed & breakfast basis;



- One night for two in a Superior Room, including breakfast at The Phoenicia Malta;
- One night for two in a Deluxe Room including breakfast at AX The Palace;
- A €250 voucher from the exclusive Dical House – Purveyor of finest foods and beverages;
- Four vouchers of €100 each to be redeemed at the Food Emporium Vini e Capricci by Abraham's, Gozo;

- A €100 voucher to exchange for Riedel Glassware from Grech Catering Supplies Ltd;
 - An EcoPro Compact with six filters value €99 from Tapp Water (Malta) Ltd;
 - 10 copies of *The Definitive(y) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo 2023* edition including the results of the survey to runners-up.
- To help shape the face of Malta's Culinary Scene in 2023. Vote now!



The top winners from Root 81 celebrating their win. Right: Jean Pierre Dingli of Barbajeau receiving the best chef award.

Rabat's Root 81 rated best overall restaurant in Malta

Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants Awards Ceremony celebrated the top survey-rated eateries by diners out

Root 81, situated in Rabat, was rated top overall restaurant for 2022 at The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants Awards Ceremony held at The Kara Lodge last Monday.

The awards celebrated Malta and Gozo's top survey-rated restaurants as voted by diners out who participated in the Malta & Gozo Restaurant Survey online at www.restaurantsmalta.com in September.

Based on diner voting, only 150 restaurants made it to be included free in the The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo and on its official portal www.restaurantsmalta.com.

The results were revealed by Lisa Grech, managing director of the Definitive(ly) Good Guide Co., and were presented by Carlo Micallef, CEO of Malta Tourism Authority, Adrian Cachia from Global Payments, Giuliana Isolani and Cost Spiteri from Nestlé (Malta) and Mark Ciantar of Continental Purchasing on behalf of Schonwald, Germany, who supplied the commemorative award plates for the occasion.

This year's Malta & Gozo Restaurant Survey conducted in September 2022 returned a high number of responses, with 3,557 participants who dined out on average one to two times a week, equivalent to a total of 277,446 dining experiences in a year.

The latest edition of the guide sees 27 new restaurants in the The Defini-

tive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo which was launched on the evening. The information in the guide is also included in its newly revamped portal www.restaurantsmalta.com, which was also launched on the evening.

The top 40 award-winning restaurants were taken from the highest rated restaurants, taking into account their overall rating, the number of people rating, comments and other data from the survey.

The top 40 restaurants winning award plates in order from most highly rated were: Root 81; The Golden Fork; The Phoenix; Risetto; The Aft Galley; Grotto Tavern; Al Sale; Ta' Tona; Maggie's; Rebekah's; Susurru; Da Luigi; Noni; L'Orangerie Bistro; Step 15; Beppe's; Onda Blu; Venus; Barbajeau; Ristorante La Vela; Galea's Kitchen; Surf N Turf; Il-Hnejja; Tal-kamilja; Under Grain; La Vida; Meraki Wine & Dine; de Mondion; MUZA; Palazzo Preca; LOA; Fernando Gastrotheque; Ta' Frenč; Tarragon; The Sixah Leaf; Il-Bitha; Ion at the Harbour; Bahja; Hammett's Mestizo; and Dinner in the Sky.

Additional awards were given in various categories:

- Best food (sponsored by American Express): Venus;
- Best ambience: LOA;
- Restaurant most dedicated to supporting local and best local wine list

(sponsored by The Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries, Food and Animal Rights); de Mondion and Country Terrace respectively;

- Best restaurant in Gozo (sponsored by The Ministry for Gozo): Al Sale;
- The best chef award (sponsored by Pentole Agnelli represented exclusively by The Catering Centre): Jean Pierre Dingli of Barbajeau;
- Best business entertainment (sponsored by Spiteri Catering): Caviar & Bull;
- Best newcomer (sponsored by The Food Factory): The Aft Galley;
- Most children friendly restaurant (sponsored by the Malta Baby & Kids Directory): Don Royale;
- Best Maltese restaurant (sponsored by Malta Tourism Authority): Diar il-Bniet;
- Most romantic restaurant: Barbajeau;
- Best value for money restaurant (sponsored by Horeca Magazine) - Il-Kartell;
- Best vegetarian restaurant (sponsored by FNG Supplies Co. Ltd): Emma's Kitchen;
- Favourite café (sponsored by Buondi): Busy Bee.

The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in association with Vini e Capricci by Abraham's Wine Awards were as follows:



- The people's choice wine list (taken from the results of the surveys): Barbajeau;
- Best overall wine list: Fernandos Gastrotheque;
- Best presented wine list: Barbajeau;
- Best wine by the glass selection: Hammett's Mestizo;
- Best fine wine list: Tarragon;
- Best short wine list: Barbajeau;
- Best Port wine list: Country Terrace.

The results of the Restaurant Survey can be found in the 2023 edition of The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta and Gozo which is now available to purchase online at www.restaurantsmalta.com. It is also available at leading stationers and bookshops in Malta & Gozo.

The awards ceremony was sponsored by the Malta Tourism Authority, Global Payments and Nestlé (Malta) representing Buondi.

Restaurant Guide Rendezvous at Xara Lodge

The Restaurant Awards Ceremony Gala Dinner, sponsored by the Malta Tourism Authority, Global Payments, Nestlé (Malta) representing Buondi, is always a glittering and exciting affair especially for chefs and restaurant owners.

This year the event was held at Xara Lodge now with a proper road leading to it. Dress code is always Black Tie though a handful do break the rule but there were no sloppy jeans and trainers. The ladies too, rose to the occasion. Let's face it, the average woman needs little encouragement to dress up on these islands. We love it, sometimes even tending to overdress but we always make an effort.

I turned up late, through no fault of my own and during the speeches. I finally pulled up a chair at a table where MTA officials and two young men who said they were from James Caterers were already seated. The young men from Lovin' Malta and Lea Hogg, the popular creator of *Maghkom* on Net TV turned up slightly later, due to deadlines and so on, so I didn't feel so guilty.

Well, I was born before vinegar went balsamic and yoga became fashionable and when eating out was a veritable treat. Since then restaurants have proliferated. As the array becomes more bewildering and eating out has been the new past time for a while now, we need guidance as to those restaurants in which we can let go of our hard earned cash and not come out disappointed or be downright fleeced.

It is hard for me to believe that the Restaurants Guide is now in its 23rd year. I well remember those first dinners with Colin Best presiding. It was him and Lisa Grech who had the vision and courage to start it all.

After welcome drinks and opening speeches dinner started being served. Three cold canapés were followed by Cold Red Snapper and delicious bits and pieces. Very delicate but the Asparagus & Parmesan soufflé with a slight taste of fennel seeds and thyme which followed was excellent. The Aged Fillet marinated in Gin with delicate accompaniments, the main dish, looked delicious and those on my table were obviously enjoying it. However, I am



Adrian Cachia and Denise Briffa



Luke Laurenti and Tim Diacono of Lovin' Malta

no lover of rare meat or fish and I was soon served a vegetarian dish without much ado. The absolutely delumptious dessert was Alpaco Chocolate. It had a filling of fermented dates, pears and raspberries. It really was very special. I felt like rushing into the kitchen, kissing the pâtissier and asking him for the recipe but resisted. I can't rush anymore.

The four wines served were from South Africa which pleased me no end as I have drunk South African wines in my time both in Mauritius and in South Africa. The husband of one of my two South African friends in Mauritius imported SA wines and we drank them during our weekly lunches in one of our homes. I am so happy they are being imported to Malta. By the time dessert was enjoyed many were too full to help themselves to coffee and petits fours. Some were waiting for their taxi to go home and hit their bed.

There was much excitement as winners were about to be revealed. The Awards celebrated the outstanding achievement of Malta and Gozo's top survey rated restaurants as voted by diners out who participated in the Malta & Gozo Restaurant Sur-



Lisa and Friends: Steven Borg, Lizzie Lowell, Louise Cutajar, Lisa Grech, John Mizzi, Victoria von Schönburg-Hartenstein



Luke Laurenti, your Diarist and an unnamed young man who shared our table



The two Polish musicians, Emilia and partner



Official Commemorative plate presented to Malta & Gozo's top survey rated 40 restaurants

vey online in September. It is all very democratic. Based on diner voting only 150 restaurants made it to be included free in The Definitive(y) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo and on its official portal www.restaurantsmalta.com

Congratulations go to the team at Root 81 who were rated Top Overall restaurant for 2022. That's the restaurant on the old stairs leading to Rabat with views of the Rabat countryside. I will have to pop in and try it after the festivities and a strict diet.

The results were revealed by Lisa Grech Managing Director of the Guide and presented by Carlo Micallef, CEO of Malta Tourism Authority, Adrian Cachia from Global Payments, Giulia Isolani and Cost Spiteri from Nestlé (Malta) and Mark Ciantar of Continental Purchasing on behalf of Schönwalk, Germany who supplied the commemorative awards plates for the occasion.

The latest edition of the Guide sees 27 new restaurants in the Definitive(y) Good Guide to Restaurants in Malta & Gozo which was launched on the evening. The information in the guide is also included in its newly revamped portal www.restaurantsmalta.com also launched that evening.

The Top 40 Award winning restaurants were taken from the highest rated restaurants taking

into account their overall rating, the number of people rating, comments and other data from the survey.

The Restaurants Guide has proved to be indispensable both to those to whom eating out (and I don't mean pizza and pasta) is a treat, like myself, and even more so to those to whom eating out regularly is part of their lifestyle. What we are all after is good food in a pleasant ambience and an acceptable, discrete and informed service. I don't want to be flummoxed by menu descriptions of "dry-farmed" fruits, "grass-fed" beef and "farmstead" blue cheese. Complicated menus don't impress me. Good food does.

A few days ago a daughter's father-in-law was here to visit. Some years ago he had taken his family to Spain to experience the then famous *El Bulli*. Ferran Adrià was head chef of this restaurant on the Costa Brava. Adrià's stated goal was to "provide unexpected contrasts of flavour, temperature and texture. Nothing is what it seems. The idea is to provoke, surprise and delight the diner." *El Bulli* had three Michelin stars and was one of the best restaurants in the world. You had to book a table soon after you were born, almost. It closed in 2011 and reopened as

a creativity centre to foster innovation like the chef's own and entirely new ideas in 2014.

My daughter, husband and father-in-law had enjoyed the experience and continue to reminisce about this shared memory. However, I must admit that I am a traditionalist when it comes to food and on the whole prefer the tried and tested with very little experimentation. "You are so boring, Ma!"

I want to end my story by giving tribute to the two skilled Polish musicians who played beautiful background music throughout the evening. I congratulated them during the interval and took them a hurried photo. Her name is Emilia. She never replied to my email as I wanted to know more about them. They played Piaf in the first half of the evening, which made my heart flutter and I asked them to play another Piaf in the second half and they gave us *La Vie en Rose*, the world's favourite. This is the kind of music we should be having at most events and not noisy bands and singers which do not allow us to have a conversation and ruin our evenings. Is anyone listening? This is a cri de coeur and I speak for many.

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