

Tasty treats and delectable dishes dined upon during Taste of Downtown Alton

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ALTON – Bon appétit!

The French phrase, used to wish someone enjoyment of the meal they are about to eat, was on everyone's mind as they sampled some of the best dishes from around the Riverbend at the annual **Taste of Downtown** event.

The dine-in fair, hosted by **Alton Main Street**, took place **Thursday** evening at the **Argosy Casino Music Hall** downtown.

For the reasonable price of **\$15** a ticket, guests to the event could dine on an all-you-could-eat sampling of food from area restaurants such as **Journey, Chez Marilyn, Mac's Time Out, Bossanova, Morrison's Irish Pub, Lewis and Clark Community College Catering, Great Rivers Bar and Grill** and much more.

“We have 17 restaurants that are here tonight that are going to be sharing a variety of appetizers, entrees and desserts for the crowd,” **Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street**, said. “This year, we have seven new restaurants that have never attended before, so that’s always exciting to bring new folks aboard,” McGibany said.

Those new participants had a chance to showcase their best and most delectable dishes for the hungry ticket holders and to spread the word about their products.

“It’s a good opportunity for newer restaurants to get the word out and let people know what they have to offer.”



Some chefs use the event as an opportunity to spice up their menu and step up a friendly competition with the other restaurants, McGibany said.

"They test out new menu items and float things by the public that they may or may not add to their menus."

Steven Johnson, owner of **Bunkhouse Joe Coffee**, was incredibly excited to bring his fresh brewed fairs to the Taste of Downtown. Johnson's delicious coffee will be for sale at The Underground on Broadway.

"This is getting down to the downtown market which has been so supportive of our farmer's market and I've gotten to know a lot of great people here," Johnson said. "I'm surrounded by a lot of good stuff here and I'm so excited to be joining forces with a wonderful bunch of people from The Underground on Broadway."

As far as being welcomed into Alton's dining community, Johnson is simply honored to be a part of the hidden charm that lies within the historic city.

"This is the cream of the crop," Johnson said. "You just have to get out, do some footwork on the sidewalk and see what's available. There's a lot of specialty jewels hidden away in these old buildings around Alton."

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