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BY BOBBY HART
PHOTOS BY MARSHALL FRANKLIN LONG



AND THE eMGY GOES TO ...



**YOUR VOTES DECREE THE AWARDS
FOR THE BEST SERVICES AND PLACES
IN MAPLE GROVE.**

Bet you never thought you'd be a member of an academy. But in this year's Best of Maple Grove online readers' survey, your vote made you a member of a valued panel of local experts. You selected the nominees (the top three vote-getters in each category) and told us the award-winner for the 25 best places to eat, shop, exercise and play—and you didn't even have to sit through a three-hour show with a cheesy host, ranting acceptance speeches and too many commercials. Glitz and glamour is overrated. We'd rather cut to the chase. So without further ado, allow us to introduce you to the eMGy Awards. (Get it? Short for Maple Grove, M.G., phonetically.) Here are your 2011 nominees!



The wooden eMGy Award was crafted by Maple Grove's Ed Reichow, the owner and master craftsman behind Titlecraft—a local business that makes high-end sports trophies and awards (theultimatetrophy.com). The trophy was engraved by Trophies by Linda (10550 Cty. Rd. 81 Suite 209, 763.425.5335, trophiesbylinda.com).

EMGY

BEST OF MAPLE GROVE

BEST HOME FURNISHINGS

The nominees: A Place Called Home, Pottery Barn, Ethan Allen
And the eMGy goes to: Pottery Barn

Pottery Barn reaches far beyond its namesake—there are more than pots, and the space is far too elegant for farm animals. But the staff there works hard, not unlike farmers, to round up customers and provide them with the best service possible. Pottery Barn's expert designers provide both in-store and in-house complimentary design services. *Pottery Barn, 12225 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.425.4002*

BEST BRUNCH

The nominees: Granite City Food & Brewery, Champps, 3 Squares
And the eMGy goes to: Granite City Food & Brewery

It's officially a three-peat for **Granite City Food & Brewery's** brunch, which offers double the indulgence with a mouth-watering buffet served on both Saturday (9 a.m.-noon, \$9.99; kids \$4.99) and Sunday (10 a.m.-2 p.m., \$14.99 or \$5.99 for kids). Sunday's buffet features a prime rib carving station and build-your-own eggs Benedict, while Saturday's handcrafted omelets will get your weekend started on the right foot. *Granite City Food & Brewery, 11909 Main St., 763.416.0010*

BEST SALON

The nominees: Kalla Lilly, MarcDaniel, Willow
And the eMGy goes to: MarcDaniel Salon

Style is defined by reputation. And conquering this category for the third consecutive year, **MarcDaniel Salon** has proven its primping touch over and over. Its employees are masters of style with a reputation for making you beautiful from head to toe—whether it's through manicures, pedicures, airbrush makeup applications or creating the latest custom hair style. *MarcDaniel Salon, 7884 Main St., 763.416.0027*

BEST PET GROOMING

The nominees: PETCO, PetSmart, Shaggy Dog Grooming
And the eMGy goes to: PETCO

PETCO has everything it takes to groom all breeds of dogs and cats. Their ever-popular Full-service Groom includes a 15-minute brush-out, bath, haircut (breed-specific or custom requested), blow dry, ear cleaning, nail trimming, glands check, ribbons and cologne. Who says pets don't deserve to be pampered? *PETCO, 8010 Wedgewood Ln. N., 763.420.5230*

BEST LANDSCAPER

The nominees: Mark's Lawn Service, Lynde Greenhouse &

Nursery, Fair's Nursery
And the eMGy goes to: Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery

For the third consecutive year, **Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery** put its stamp on the best landscapes our beautiful town has to offer. The fifth-generation family business has been providing landscape contracting services for the past decade. Their work is on display at The Shoppes at Arbor Lakes and The Lookout Bar & Grill's newly renovated patio. *Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery, 9293 Pineview Ln., 763.420.4400*

BEST PLACE TO WORK OUT

The nominees: Life Time Fitness, Snap Fitness, Anytime Fitness
And the eMGy goes to: Life Time Fitness

Everything a body needs is at **Life Time Fitness**. Exercise in a variety of ways, from weights and cardio equipment to yoga and Pilates classes in LifeStudio. Then refuel with a protein shake at LifeCafe before relaxing in the saunas, steam rooms or whirlpool. Kids even have a play maze to keep them entertained. *Life Time Fitness, 12601 82nd Ave. N., 763.420.8282*

BEST BEACH/PLACE TO SWIM

The nominees: Weaver Lake, Elm Creek Park Reserve,

Maple Grove Community Center
And the eMGy goes to: Elm Creek Park Reserve

The Elm Creek Swimming Pond is the prime summer hotspot to take a dip. Whether you just want to relax and catch some rays or take the kids somewhere to dispose of some dog-days energy, this manmade, outdoor pond offers everything you'll need: filtered and chlorinated water, a sand beach, changing shelters, concessions and bathrooms. Just remember to bring your suit and sunscreen! *Elm Creek Park Reserve, 12420 James Deane Pkwy., 763.694.7894*

BEST PARK

The nominees: Elm Creek Park Reserve, Fish Lake Park, Weaver Lake Park
And the eMGy goes to: Elm Creek Park Reserve

Five thousand acres goes a long ways—both literally and when it comes to ranking the best parks in Maple Grove. **Elm Creek Park Reserve** is the largest park in not only the city, but in the entire Three Rivers Park District. You can explore 20 miles of paved trails, swim, play disc golf, and next summer you'll be able to take advantage of a newly-built Eastman Nature Center that's twice the size as the old building. *Elm Creek Park Reserve, 12400 James Deane Pkwy., 763.694.7894*

BEST OUTDOOR DINING

The nominees: 3 Squares, Maple Tavern, The Lookout
And the eMGy goes to: The Lookout

Just when you thought **The Lookout Bar & Grill's** 1.5-acre outdoor patio area couldn't get any better, the summer dining mecca added more beautiful features last May. Already equipped with the city's largest patio—boasting a volleyball court, kids playground and fire pit—The Lookout added a trellis canopy area and a tranquil new landscape, including a water stream feature. *The Lookout Bar & Grill, 8672 Pineview Ln. N., 763.424.4365*

BEST NIGHT OUT

The nominees: The Lookout, J. Cousineau's, Wild Bills
And the eMGy goes to: The Lookout Bar & Grill

If you had one night to live it up in Maple Grove, and you were a majority vote in this category for the past two years, you'd land at **The Lookout Bar & Grill**. You'd most likely start by enjoying happy hour (Monday-Friday) on the scenic outdoor patio from 3-6 p.m., when drinks and 12 oz. domestic taps are only \$2 and 22 oz. taps are only \$3. After a game of volleyball, you'd refuel by indulging in The Lookout's famous broasted chicken. Then what better way to burn off those calories than by dancing the night away to live music (Thursday-Saturday)? *The Lookout Bar & Grill, 8672 Pineview Ln. N., 763.424.4365*

BEST BURGER

The nominees: Five Guys Burgers and Fries, Champps, The Lookout

And the eMGy goes to: Five Guys Burgers and Fries

A little more than a year old, it didn't take **Five Guys Burgers and Fries** long to make a name for itself on Main Street. The ever-popular bacon cheeseburger is in a class of its own, but with 16 free toppings, each customer can exercise creativity to build their own ideal burger. The secret to the great taste has everything to do with timing, according to general manager Brandon Dewald. "The burger comes straight from the grill to the bun to the customer," he says. "I think freshness and quality is the key." *Five Guys Burgers and Fries, 7814 Main St. N., 763.425.5489*



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BEST PIZZA

The nominees: Angeno's, Frankie's, Broadway
And the eMGy goes to: Broadway

Broadway Pizza may have moved to a larger, more luxurious venue a couple years ago, but the best things about the longtime local favorite never change. For example, Broadway's most popular topping—sausage—has been made the same way since 1953. The sausage is trimmed extra lean, ground fresh and seasoned in-house before being cooked.
Broadway Pizza, 7951 Elm Creek Blvd. 763.416.4446

BEST ETHNIC FOOD

The nominees: Benihana, Mt. Fuji, Sawatdee
And the eMGy goes to: Sawatdee

Sawatdee takes Thai food so seriously, you can taste it. Their award-winning pad Thai is tough to beat, but what makes Maple Grove's location truly unique is the presence of Zushiya—a sushi-lover's paradise—within the same culturally-rich confines. Come with a hungry group willing to experiment and order the ever-popular sushi boat, which serves four to six people for \$100 and two to three people for \$60.
Sawatdee, 7885 Main St. N. 763.494.5708

BEST BUILDER/REMODELER

The nominees: Andreen Construction Inc., J Brothers Home Improvement, London Point Remodeling
And the eMGy goes to: Andreen Construction Inc.

A new home isn't "home" until it feels like it. Dave Andreen, owner of **Andreen**

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Bartender Jericha Vredenburg knows how to concoct a mean cocktail (these Half Yards are the Blue Bikini, Monkey Up the Tree and Sex in the Hammock), a factor not likely overlooked by voters when awarding J. Cousineau's Dram & Alehouse the 2011 eMGy for Best Happy Hour.

BEST HAPPY HOUR

The nominees: J. Cousineau's Dram & Alehouse, Maple Tavern, 3 Squares
And the eMGy goes to: J. Cousineau's Dram & Alehouse

There are enough happy hours at **J. Cousineau's Dram & Alehouse** to make a person lead an ecstatic—and affordable—existence. Seven days a week from 3–7 p.m., 2-for-1 rail drinks and \$3 wines are available, plus domestic bottles of beer and taps are \$1 off and all appetizers are \$1.50 off. (Then, from 11 p.m.–2 a.m., 2-for-1s are back.) Popular appetizers such as the Reuben balls and wings (Italian, Thai, Teriyaki or Buffalo) are known for turning a frown upside down. *J. Cousineau's, 13540 Grove Dr., 763.420.8355*

Construction & Remodeling Inc., has 25 years of experience creating that feeling. Committed to hands-on building and expert craftsmanship, Andreen and his talented design team of Maple Grove residents Steve and Mary Kohlhepp know how to create award-winning living spaces that reflect the lifestyle of their customers. *Andreen Construction & Remodeling Inc., 10472 Abbott Dr., 612.741.0961*

BEST NEW RESTAURANT

The nominees: Wild Bill's, Malone's Bar & Grill, Maple Tavern
And the eMGy goes to: Malone's

Three rookie nominees made a strong case in this category, but **Malone's Bar & Grill** scored the game-winner with its fresh American cuisine and lively half-sports-bar, half-dining-room atmosphere. Happy hour (3–6 p.m. Monday–Friday,

plus another late-night) is a local hit, with \$3.50 domestic jumbo mugs, \$2.50 rails and an extremely affordable appetizer menu. *Malone's Bar & Grill, 12635 Elm Creek Blvd. N., 763.447.6500*

BEST PLACE TO TAKE KIDS

The nominees: Chuck E. Cheese's, Elm Creek Park Reserve, Maple Grove Community Center
And the eMGy goes to: Maple Grove Community Center

With an aquatic center, basketball court, ice arena and outdoor skate park, the **Maple Grove Community Center** is kid heaven. But the four-level Maple Maze Indoor Playground is the main attraction, with new additions such as the Moonwalk (soft-padded stairs) and a rock-climbing wall. *Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Rd., 763.494.6500*

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BEST FASHION BOUTIQUE

The nominees: White House/Black Market, Hot Mama, Francesca's Collections
And the eMGy goes to: Francesca's Collections

A boutique that specializes in cross-culture fashion, **Francesca's** has a little bit of everything. Ladies love the clothes, jewelry and handbags, but the latest in home décor is also available. What makes Francesca's truly the best is its fashion uniqueness and exclusiveness. When the shop gets clothes delivered, they only get two smalls, two mediums and one large. *Francesca's Collections, 12121 Elm Creek Blvd. N., 763.425.3252*

BEST CONSIGNMENT STORE

The nominees: Clothes Mentor, Plato's Closet, Once Upon a Child
And the eMGy goes to: Clothes Mentor

Clothes Mentor can keep both your wardrobe and wallet stocked. This gently used resale shop, which has clothes and accessories for women of all shapes (sizes 0-26 and maternity), is full of hidden gems from all the top brand names. You can also get cash on the spot in the shop, which recently added 1,000 square feet, for those threads you're ready to part with. *Clothes Mentor, 13641 Grove Dr., 763.494.4584*

BEST SPORTING GOODS

The nominees: Dick's Sporting Goods, Dave's Sport Shop, Sports Authority
And the eMGy goes to: Dick's Sporting Goods

No matter the sport, **Dick's Sporting Goods** has the top brand supplies it takes to keep clients prepared, from offseason to postseason. Plus, they have the experts on staff to coach you through what's

what in today's sports landscape. *Dick's Sporting Goods, 11361 Fountains Dr., 763.315.5377*

BEST BABY SHOP

The nominees: Edelweiss Baby, Pottery Barn Kids, Babies "R" Us
And the eMGy goes to: Babies "R" Us

With endless aisles of bedding, diapers, car seats, clothes, and strollers, **Babies "R" Us** has everything the newest member of the family will need. To make things even better, Toys "R" Us was added this spring to provide double the fun. *Babies 'R' Us, 12750 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.494.5747*

BEST DAYCARE

The nominees: Primrose School of Maple Grove, Step By Step Montessori School of Maple Grove, KinderCare
And the eMGy goes to: Primrose School of Maple Grove

The Primrose School of Maple Grove goes beyond just daycare, emphasizing a "balanced learning" philosophy that

takes into account a child's interests, while also utilizing a teacher's guidance and support. With an age range of 6 weeks to 11 years, Primrose is accredited by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement. *Primrose School of Maple Grove, 6975 Wedgewood Rd., 763.494.4330*

BEST NEW SHOP

The nominees: Calico Barn, Oilerie, Chez Arnaud French Bakery
And the eMGy goes to: Oilerie

Since opening last fall, Maple Grove's **Oilerie** has earned a reputation as lustrous as the stainless steel tanks it pours its 18 varieties of extra virgin olive oils from. Balsamic vinegars, a variety of private-label gourmet foods (21 flavors of stuffed olives, pastas, beans, etc.), spices and even health and wellness items containing oils are available at Oilerie, which gets its oils from a third-generation family rather than a distributor. *Oilerie, 13551 Grove Dr., 763.657.0857*

BEST AUTO REPAIR SHOP

The nominees: Tires Plus, Maple Grove Tire & Service (Goodyear), Maple Grove Auto Service
And the eMGy goes to: Maple Grove Auto Service

When you have trust issues with your automobile, you want to have faith in the hands repairing it. **Maple Grove Auto Service**, the defending champion in this category, employs a lot of those hands, which happen to belong to technicians who are ASE-certified by the National Institute of Automotive Service Excellence. Plus, the shop itself is a AAA Top Shop with a 98 percent customer satisfaction rating. *Maple Grove Auto Service, 9225 Wellington Ln., 763.425.8575*

BEST GROCERY STORE

The nominees: Cub Foods, Byerly's, Trader Joe's
And the eMGy goes to: Byerly's

With affordable prices and endless aisles of quality goods, **Byerly's** can take care of all your grocery needs in one trip. And Maple Grove shoppers, who have given Byerly's its second consecutive majority vote in this category, are faithful to its array of services, which includes US Bank, PrairieStone Pharmacy, Wine & Spirits, Caribou Coffee and Bachman's Floral. *Byerly's, 12880 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.416.1611 //*



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