



For Immediate Release

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Frederick Celebrates Voltaggio's Success on Bravo's Top Chef

Frederick, MD – Fans, friends, and area supporters celebrated local chef Bryan Voltaggio's participation in "Top Chef: Las Vegas" at a private "Top Chef" finale viewing party at his restaurant, Volt, in Frederick, MD. Voltaggio is both co-owner and executive chef at Volt, which opened in 2008. He competed against his brother, Michael Voltaggio, and fellow contestant Kevin Gillespie in the season finale that aired December 9 on Bravo. In a close competition, Michael Voltaggio, also from Frederick, was awarded the title Top Chef. The event was hosted by the Tourism Council of Frederick County, Downtown Frederick Partnership, the Frederick City Department of Economic Development and the Frederick County Office of Economic Development. The event also has numerous sponsors.

"Regardless of the final outcome, we wanted to celebrate Bryan's success and participation on 'Top Chef,'" says Tourism's Executive Director John Fieseler. "Everyone is very proud and excited that Bryan has done so well. He has tremendous local support." Original discussion for the celebration began midway through the "Top Chef" viewing season, and solidified as it became clear that Bryan was a frontrunner in the competition.

Voltaggio's restaurant sits in the heart of Frederick's vibrant downtown and occupies the first floor of the historic Houck Mansion. "Bryan's talent and focus throughout the season put him on top, and we were happy to recognize his accomplishments at the gathering. But looking at the bigger picture, we are also celebrating Frederick's emergence as a dining destination. His appearance on 'Top Chef' has really ignited the public's awareness that Frederick is also a culinary destination," says Fieseler.

Frederick's strong agricultural and culinary attractions have been growing in popularity, and Voltaggio's appearance on "Top Chef" is shining a national spotlight on us, says Fieseler. From award-winning local wines and beer to some of the region's best farms, restaurants have practically everything in their backyard to create a feast. Many restaurants, like Volt, are turning to farm-to-table menu items that feature the unique tastes of Frederick County. "Frederick area restaurants are producing some exceptional, unique, dishes using local produce and meats," says Fieseler.

In addition to the ability to offer local produce, the restaurants in Downtown Frederick have an added benefit – the large number of food establishments within walking distance to each other. "We know that some businesses – like restaurants – generally do better when grouped together," explains Kara Norman, Executive Director of the Downtown Frederick Partnership. Visitors can head downtown and know that there are over 60 restaurants, specialty food shops, cafes, bakeries, and coffee & tea houses within just a few short blocks of each other. "In this environment, they all thrive as it establishes the area as a culinary and dining destination," says Norman.



In fact, plans to further establish Frederick as a dining destination are already underway. In a collaborative effort, the Downtown Frederick Partnership and the Tourism Council of Frederick County, along with local restaurants, are planning Frederick's first Restaurant Week in the spring. "Volt has been a great advocate of a restaurant week promotion. We've been working with them and others to plan Restaurant Week," says Fieseler. While we are still working on the specifics, there is a lot of enthusiasm from the restaurants about this project, says Tiffany Ahalt, Tourism Marketing Manager. "It's a great way to promote our great dining scene," she added.

To learn more about Frederick County, visit the Tourism Council of Frederick County website at www.fredericktourism.org or call 1-800-999-3613. Frederick County is part of the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area (www.heartofthecivilwar.com), and the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area (<http://hallowedground.org>).

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