

DUBAI'S FOOD LOVERS HAVE CAST THEIR VOTES AND THE RESULTS ARE IN.

WINNING WAS ON THE MENU AT THE WHAT'S ON AWARDS



Winners of the Chef's Favourite Japanese Restaurant Dubai – Tokyo @ The Towers, Jumeirah Emirates Towers Hotel.



Winners of the Favourite Independent Restaurant/Café Dubai – Trader Vic's, Souk Madinat Jumeirah.



Winners of the Favourite Bar Dubai – Barasti at Le Meridien Mina Seyahi.



Parisa and Rola.



Divya and Anisa.



Arun and Armen.



Donna Stratton and Colin.



Winners of the Best Newcomer Dubai – Frankie's Italian Bar and Grill.



Winners of the Favourite Seafood Restaurant Dubai – Fish Market Radisson SAS Hotel Dubai Deira Creek.

PHOTOS BY ATIQ-UR-REHMAN/GULF NEWS

WHAT'S ON TOP

By Marie-Louise Olson  
Staff Reporter

It was nothing less than a feast fit for a king at the *What's On Awards* held at Dubai Media City Amphitheatre on Monday night. The event is a major annual celebration in recognition of the hospitality and entertainment industry in the UAE and since its conception seven years ago, more than a million people have cast their votes for their favourite bars and restaurants. The venue was brimming with Dubai's biggest food connoisseurs who meandered through the countless buffet tables tasting delicacies from all

corners of the world. There were live cooking stations churning out everything from Asian stir-fry dishes, Tex Mex fajitas and Punjabi samosas to falafel wraps, freshly rolled sushi and barbecued meat galore. Perhaps the most popular buffet stand was the seafood cooking station where chefs mixed the best of the sea in a delicious tomato-based sauce while salivating onlookers watched impressed. But a meal is not complete without a cherry on top, and that's where the desserts come in. It was like *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* times 10. Tables overflowing with luscious cakes, sweets and puddings tempted people to be naughty and forget about

any diets they were possibly contemplating. However, the most frequented dessert table was the cheese buffet with all varieties, ranging from emmental and brie to ones that were so pungent that they made your mouth and eyes water. **ENTERTAINMENT** While guests dug into their overloaded plates of food, the background music provided a great atmosphere. DJ Tim Cheddar, who's well-known for his popular Cheese nights at Chi @ The Lodge, played some tracks in the early part of the evening. He didn't vote for any of the restaurants but said he could see how

nervous everyone was. "Everyone has been waiting for this. After it's over they will let their hair down," he said. Omani singer Salha and her band played two energetic sets before and after the awards ceremony. She has been performing at the *What's On Awards* for three years running and says she loves it. "I'm a big fan of this. I've worked with a lot of these people. It's all the beautiful people in Dubai who come to this event," she said. The audience was starting to get slightly restless as they waited for the ceremony to start. It was close to 10pm when finally the opening act came on in the shape of a glamorous-

looking Therése Neaimé who glided on stage wearing a flowing gold dress. The Lebanese/Swedish singer wowed the audience with two of her songs from her first and latest album, starting with the popular single *How Could I* and followed by *Here To Stay*. The singer said she was overwhelmed to be singing at such an event. "It was amazing and an honour to be performing in front of the whole industry," she said. Her new album was included in the gift bags and she was excited that people would hear her music. "This was my Cinderella moment," Neaimé said. The awards ceremony had some surprising moments, but many of the

wins were also expected. The Favourite International Speciality award went to Marketplace at the JW Marriott Hotel. Falek Al Saadani, Food and Beverage Manager, and Andrea Conte, Chef de Cuisine, were overjoyed with their award. "We didn't expect to win. It was a total surprise. We are happy and very proud of our team," said Al Saadani. **HONOUR** Michael Galasso and Sean Shanor, who accepted the Favourite Sporting Event award on behalf of the Dubai Desert Classic, said it was an honour to win. Other nominees included the Dubai Rugby Sevens. "The Desert Classic has never won and we were up

against some big events. We've been around for 20 years and having someone like Tiger Woods come to Dubai and win is all you could ask for at an event. All eyes are on Dubai and people are standing up and taking notice of us now," he said. The award for Favourite Nightclub went to Chi @ The Lodge. The club's Marketing and Events Co-ordinator Mohammad Anwar was over the moon. "We have worked so hard. I think we are more creative, we've got the best service, lots of choices of music and indoors and outdoors. We're the biggest club. There is no competition," he said proudly, as he cradled his trophy.

Therése Neaimé (above) wowed the audience with two of her songs from her first and latest album, starting with the popular single *How Could I* and followed by *Here To Stay*.

THE WINNERS

FAVOURITE ARABIAN / LEBANESE / IRANIAN RESTAURANT  
★ SHABESTAN, RADISSON SAS HOTEL, DUBAI DEIRA CREEK

FAVOURITE ITALIAN RESTAURANT  
★ LA MODA, RADISSON SAS HOTEL, DUBAI DEIRA CREEK

FAVOURITE PUB GRUB  
★ BOSTON BAR, JUMEIRAH ROTANA HOTEL

FAVOURITE FAR EASTERN RESTAURANT  
★ BLUE ELEPHANT, AL BUSTAN ROTANA HOTEL

FAVOURITE INDIAN/PAKISTANI RESTAURANT  
★ ANTIQUE BAZAAR, FOUR POINTS SHERATON, BUR DUBAI

FAVOURITE EUROPEAN SPECIALITY RESTAURANT  
★ BRAUHAUS, JUMEIRAH ROTANA HOTEL

FAVOURITE AMERICAN SPECIALITY RESTAURANT  
★ RIB ROOM, JUMEIRAH EMIRATES TOWERS

FAVOURITE INTERNATIONAL SPECIALITY RESTAURANT  
★ MARKET PLACE, JW MARRIOTT HOTEL

FAVOURITE JAPANESE RESTAURANT  
★ TOKYO @ THE TOWERS, JUMEIRAH EMIRATES TOWERS

FAVOURITE SEAFOOD RESTAURANT  
★ THE FISH MARKET, RADISSON SAS HOTEL, DUBAI DEIRA CREEK

FAVOURITE CAFÉ OR INDEPENDENT RESTAURANT  
★ TRADER VIC'S, SOUK MADINAT JUMEIRAH

FAVOURITE BAR  
★ BARASTI, LE MERIDIEN MINA SEYAH

FAVOURITE NIGHTCLUB  
★ CHI @ THE LODGE

FAVOURITE WEEKEND GETAWAY HOTEL IN THE UAE  
★ AL MAHA DESERT RESORT & SPA

FAVOURITE SPORTING EVENT  
★ DUBAI DESERT CLASSIC

FAVOURITE FESTIVAL  
★ DUBAI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

BEST CONCERT  
★ CARLOS SANTANA

SPECIAL PANELLIST'S AWARD  
★ BICE, HILTON JUMEIRAH

BEST NEWCOMER  
★ FRANKIE'S ITALIAN BAR & GRILL

CHEF'S CHOICE AWARD  
★ JW STEAKHOUSE, JW MARRIOTT HOTEL