

OUR COMMUNITY/OUR MAGAZINE

maplegrove

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MAPLE GROVE

YOUR VOTES DETERMINE THE BEST SPOTS TO EAT, DRINK, SHOP AND PLAY



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Reviving Weaver Lake

The WLCA creates cleaner waters

Educating Rwanda

A local church helps build African schools

Restaurants

Dining Alfresco



BEST



MAPLE GROVE



BY BOBBY HART



“BEST” IS A LABEL THAT GETS THROWN AROUND A LOT.

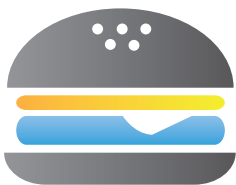
“Mom, this vegetable medley is the best!” “Grandma, you got me another wool sweater for my birthday? You’re the best!” “In the mood for a romantic comedy tonight, honey?”

Hugh Grant is the best in the business!”

But to truly be “the best” at something, you have to earn it. That’s why we asked our readers to vote for what they thought was the best Maple Grove had to offer in 25 different categories. You were asked to be a judge as local restaurants, parks, daycare centers, hair salons and grocery stores went head to head. In the end, only one per category could claim a blue ribbon—and the right to be called “the best.”



Sawatdee offers tasty, affordable Thai food in an environment infused with live music.



Best Burger

Granite City Food & Brewery doesn't skimp when it comes to producing a meaty burger. A half-pound of ground Angus beef is the status quo, and the two most popular burgers—the Bedda Chedda Burger (\$9.29) and the Bleu Peppercorn Burger (\$9.59)—also feature two thick slabs of smokehouse bacon. Kitchen manager David Valera sums it up best: "They're huge." So now we know what it takes to reign supreme with the best burger in town: Bring on a beefy burger that looks like it can bite back! Granite City, 11909 Main Street, 763.416.0010 **Red:** Champps **White:** Pittsburgh Blue



Best Ethnic Food

Sawatdee introduced Maple Grove to Thai food nearly a decade ago, and customers return the favor by coming back for more. This restaurant keeps its ethnic touch with its menu, yet localizes its atmosphere with live music (starting at 7 p.m. Tuesday–Thursday and 8 p.m. Saturday) ranging from oldies to acoustic to jazz. You won't find a better Pad Thai anywhere, and Supenn's fresh spring rolls—with shrimp, chicken, silver-thread noodles and veggies—are a local hit. Happy hour includes \$3 appetizers and \$2 drinks 3–7 p.m. Sunday through Thursday. There is also a sushi 2-for-1 happy hour 5–7 p.m. Monday through Thursday. *Sawatdee, 7885 Main St. N. 763.494.5708* **Red:** El Rodeo Mexican Restaurant **White:** P.F. Chang's China Bistro



Best Place to Hike/Bike

The largest park reserve in the Three River Parks District with about 5,000 acres and 20 miles of paved trails connected to the North Hennepin Trail Corridor, Elm Creek Park Reserve is second to none in the area for hiking and biking for the second straight year. The Eastman Nature Center is a must-see landmark that will open your eyes to your beautiful surroundings. *Elm Creek Park Reserve, 12400 James Deane Parkway, 763.694.7894* **Red:** Rice Lake **White:** Weaver Lake



Best Happy Hour

There are plenty of happy hours to fill your day at Champps Americana, which captured the popular vote for the best food and drink specials in town. Every day from 3–6 p.m. and 9 p.m.–close, you can find select mixed drinks, domestic and premium taps and domestic bottle beers for only \$2, a recent and popular change from what used to be 2-for-1 drinks. All other drinks are \$1 off, and bar bites—half-orders of appetizers such as buffalo wings, southwest nachos, cheese sticks and mini burgers—range from \$2.99–\$3.99. *Champps, 13521 80th Circle N., 763.494.4515* **Red:** 3 Squares Restaurant **White:** Houlihan's

SAWATDEE PHOTO BY EMILY J. DAVIS; MAPLE GROVE DAYS PHOTO COURTESY OF FLUXFOTOLOGY.



Best Brunch

What's the only thing that could make Granite City Food & Brewery's reigning best brunch even better? Serving it twice a week. Not only is an all-you-can-eat brunch buffet served 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Sunday (\$14.99; \$5.99 for kids), but GC also added one Saturday brunch (\$10.99) 9 a.m.–noon. Sunday's brunch is still the main attraction, including French toast made with Grand Marnier and a fresh strawberry glaze, a prime rib carving station and custom-made eggs Benedict. But you'll find an endless array of scones, fresh fruit, GC's special Reggiano hash browns, scrambled eggs and many other items both weekend mornings/days. *Granite City, 11909 Main Street, 763.416.0010* **Red:** Champps **White:** 3 Squares Restaurant



Best Hair Salon

Again this year MarcDaniel Salon has won the battle of beauty. Whether it's carefully crafting the latest hair styles, applying the perfect makeup for the bride-to-be on her wedding day or pampering customers with the best manicures and pedicures in town, MarcDaniel's specialists will make you glow. *MarcDaniel Salon, 7884 Main St., 763.416.0027* **Red:** Willow Salon **White:** Simonson's Salon & Day Spa



The Kids Fun Run is one of the many popular events that make Maple Grove Days an annual summer hit.

Best Community Festival

Maple Grove Days has blossomed into one of the largest community celebrations around, with an annual attendance of about 30,000. Highlighted by the Pierre Bottineau Parade—now 20 years in the making—the Rice Lake Classic Run, an inspiring art fair, and a midway full of food and fireworks, it's easy to see why Maple Grove Days won this award for the second year in a row. *Maple Grove Days, maplegrovedays.com* **Red:** Arbor Lakes Autumn Art Fair **White:** Farmers Market



Best Landscaper

Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery has installed, cultivated and preserved Maple Grove properties for more than a century now. Yet the fifth-generation family business continues to up the ante as the years go on, with its second consecutive first-place finish in this category as proof. Not only does Lynde keep The Shoppes and Fountains at Arbor Lakes looking beautiful each spring and summer, but its staff uses the same precision and innovative outdoor décor on residential homes. *Lynde Greenhouse & Nursery, 9293 Pineview Ln., 763.420.4400* **Red:** Fair's Nursery **White:** Mark's Lawn Service



Best Floral

It's officially a three-peat for Donato's Floral, which has conquered this category for the third consecutive year by offering the best variety of plants and bouquets in the business. Moving from its old location of Main Street to Kirkwood Lane hasn't cost this family-owned business any popularity, as owner Maria Donato and her staff continue their consistent commitment to providing topnotch floral arrangements and gifts for all seasons and occasions. *Donato's Floral, 7351 Kirkwood Ln. N., Ste. 118, 763.416.0488* **Red:** Maple Grove Floral **White:** Byerly's



Best Night Out

It's hard to beat free live music every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, and that's exactly what keeps the night scene rockin' at The Lookout Bar & Grill, a family-owned restaurant for more than 50 years. You can dance the night away, play bar bingo or bar trivia, throw darts, play volleyball or horseshoes outside, or a banquet room for a private party. "Every night there's something going on," says owner Michael Kinnan. To top it off, tap beer and call drinks are only \$2 during happy hour from 3 to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 p.m.–close Sunday through Thursday, making The Lookout the best party in town. *The Lookout Bar & Grill, 8672 Pineview Ln. N., 763.424.4365.* **Red:** Dave & Buster's **White:** Pittsburgh Blue



Best Home Furnishings

After winning Best Interior Designer in 2009, A Place Called Home kept its reputation with a similar title this year. Owned by David and Margo Bakken, this store on Main Street won the blue ribbon, thanks to a unique selection of decorations, including dinnerware, centerpieces and other home accessories. Staff use a hands-on approach to helping customers find the best accents to complement their home. As a bonus, David—a successful interior designer—is full of tips on the latest home décor trends for every season. *A Place Called Home, 7889 Main St., 763.773.4663* **Red:** Pottery Barn **White:** Ethan Allen

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Cars are in good hands with Gary Douglas on the job. Douglas has been a mechanic at Maple Grove Auto Service for more than 15 years.



Best Auto Repair Shop

Maple Grove Auto Service has been a staple in town for 30 years.

Owners Conrad Grev, Mark Boelter and Doug Schoberg know their customers and are an integral part of the city, serving in Rotary and the North Hennepin Area Chamber, while also volunteering in youth-related programs. Grev says the business's large size, long hours and quality of personnel is what separates the shop from competitors. Maple Grove Auto Service uses only ASE-certified technicians and is a AAA approved repair shop with a Top Shop rating since 2000. They offer everything from oil changes to engine repairs, and they'll even throw in a loaner car while they work on yours. *Maple Grove Auto Service, 9225 Wellington Ln., 763.425.8575*

Red: Maple Grove Tire & Service (Goodyear) **White:** Precision Tune Auto Care

PHOTO BY MARSHALL FRANKLIN LONG



Best New Shop

What's better than having designer collections and top clothing apparel nearby? Getting it all for 50-60 percent off. Nordstrom Rack, which opened in Maple Grove last September, can dress the whole family. *Nordstrom Rack, 12745 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.898.5300* **Red:** Bluebird Boutique **White:** Flourish Wellness Spa



Best Grocery Store

With endless aisles of assorted products, Byerly's is a grocery shopper's dream. But at this one-stop shop, you can also grab coffee at Caribou, get money at US Bank, buy flowers at Bachman's, pick up a prescription at PrairieStone Pharmacy or grab a bottle of wine at the Wines & Spirits Shop. *Byerly's, 12880 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.416.1611* **Red:** Cub Foods **White:** Trader Joe's



Best Outdoor Dining

The largest outdoor patio in town is a hot draw during the summer months, giving The Lookout Bar & Grill the clear edge in this category. Live music, volleyball, horseshoes, a children's play area and a fire pit help provide a lively outdoor atmosphere unique to Maple Grove. "It's an acre-and-a-half of something to do," says owner Michael Kinnan. *The Lookout Bar & Grill, 8672 Pineview Ln. N., 763.424.4365* **Red:** Granite City **White:** 3 Squares Restaurant



Best Pizza

A move to a bigger location on Elm Creek Boulevard last January may have given Broadway Pizza a more recognizable venue, but the pizza is a tasty tradition that has been around the block and back. Broadway has been a pizza powerhouse in Maple Grove for more than 13 years. *Broadway Pizza, 7951 Elm Creek Blvd. 763.416.4446* **Red:** Frankie's **White:** Angeno's



Best Coffee

Even with two locations in town, Caribou Coffee's baristas stay plenty busy year-round. Coolers are a local favorite in the summer, and Caramel High Rises are Caribou's most popular espresso drink. *Caribou Coffee, 8073 Wedgewood Ln. N., 763.494.4422; 12880 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.494.3450* **Red:** Starbucks **White:** Dunn Bros



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Life Time Fitness offers a wide range of exercise classes, including cycling.

Best Place to Work Out

With a long list of exercise classes, an endless stock of equipment, a LifeSpa and even a Child Center to entertain the kids, Life Time Fitness has proved it can fit the needs of nearly everyone with its second straight title in this category. Its location near the Maple Grove Community Center and the neighboring malls make it a convenient stop for many Maple Groveans. Life Time Fitness, 12601 82nd Ave. N., 763.420.8282. **Red:** Anytime Fitness **White:** Snap Fitness

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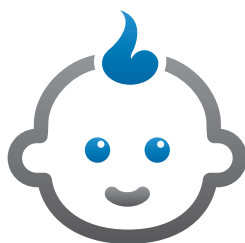
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Best Daycare

Step By Step Montessori School of Maple Grove offers a carefully planned environment for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Using the Montessori Method, children learn to develop social relationships and self-help skills from programs based on self-directed, non-competitive activities designed to help develop strong self-esteem. Individual and group instruction is mixed to fit each student's learning style. *Step By Step Montessori School of Maple Grove, 16601 73rd Ave. N., 763.557.6777* **Red:** Primrose School of Maple Grove **White:** New Horizon Academy



Best Place to Take Kids

Without a doubt, the Maple Maze Indoor Playground is the No. 1 attraction for kids at the Maple Grove Community Center. But there's also a basketball court, swimming pool, ice skating rink and outdoor playground for little ones to enjoy. The community center is a popular birthday party destination with rooms to reserve and party packages offered. *Maple Grove Community Center, 12951 Weaver Lake Road, 763.494.6000* **Red:** Chuck E. Cheese's **White:** Dave & Buster's



Best Consignment Store

A year after winning the title of Best New Shop, Clothes Mentor proved there's no better place in town to buy and sell your gently used clothes. This resale shop specializes in buying and selling quality used clothing for women, including everything from modern maternity wear to designer purses from Coach or Louis Vuitton. Clothes Mentor will also pay you cash on the spot for your brand-name fashions and accessories. *Clothes Mentor, 13641 Grove Dr., 763.494.4584* **Red:** Plato's Closet **White:** Once Upon a Child

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIFE TIME FITNESS



Best Pet Grooming

Petco's slogan is "Where the pets go." But it's the clean-cut condition they leave in that has garnered this local pet haven its second consecutive win in this category. Of course, once your pet has been pampered, it doesn't hurt that there are endless aisles to stroll through for a shopping escapade. *Petco*, 8010 Wedgewood Ln. N., 763.420.5230 **Red:** PetSmart **White:** Shaggy Dog Grooming



Best New Restaurant

The best-kept secret in town no longer, Dickey's Barbecue Pit has hit the spot since opening its first Minnesota location in Maple Grove last August. Its fast, casual style allows you to get your food within about two minutes after you order, yet it doesn't taste like fast food. The meat is slow-cooked and slathered with time-tested sauces, the way barbecue should be. You choose between eight tender meats and 11 side dishes, the most popular being the pulled pork sandwich platter (\$8.75; with two sides and a drink). *Dickey's Barbecue Pit*, 11631 Fountains Dr., 763.416.2271



Best Playground

The Maple Grove Community Center's Maple Maze Indoor Playground is a child's paradise. Kids 12 and younger can crawl through four climbing levels in the ceiling-high playhouse and jet down the variety of different slides. There is also a play area with a ball pit, slide and climbing structure for toddlers 3 and under. The maze is open 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. *Maple Grove Community Center*, 12951 Weaver Lake Road, 763.494.6000 **Red:** Weaver Lake Park **White:** Elm Creek Park Reserve



Best Baby Shop

Babies 'R' Us takes the cake for all your baby needs. Babies 'R' Us also accommodates parents and the newest member of the family with an in-store and online gift registry and monthly events that include workshops on breast feeding and car-seat safety. *Babies 'R' Us*, 12750 Elm Creek Blvd., 763.494.5747 **Red:** Edelweiss Baby **White:** Pottery Barn Kids //

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