



Best of Moscow 2011

The 2011 Best of Moscow winners were determined by the answers generated from the polls put on The Argonaut Facebook page using the Questions feature.



Mexican food and margaritas:

La Casa Lopez is a win



Margaritas sit on a table at La Casa Lopez Tuesday. In this year's Best of Moscow, Casa won best margarita and best Mexican food.

Kristen Whitney
Argonaut

Coming in first as Best Mexican Restaurant and winning by a land slide for Best Margarita, La Casa Lopez is a favorite for Vandals.

Bret Barker, a native of Moscow and senior in recreation at the University of Idaho, said what makes La Casa Lopez the best Mexican restaurant in town is its great staff.

"I love the atmosphere, I love the people that work there, they're really friendly and nice, they're good in customer service," Barker said. "It's definitely my favorite Mexican restaurant in town because of the people that work there. It's a family run business and they do a really good job."

Barker said he is a big fan of the two-for-one margarita special on Wednesday nights and attends often.

Manager Mitchell Lopez remembers back in 2002 when La Casa Lopez first opened its doors. Having been a Mexican restaurant since 1993, Lopez said what sets La Casa Lopez apart is its unique atmosphere compared to the other Mexican restaurants.

"We treat our customers the way we would like to be taken care of and we pride ourselves in our food and our drink," Lopez said.

Lopez said his family and staff try to provide a fun atmosphere for all their customers. Part of that fun is their award winning margaritas. Lopez said his favorite and best selling margarita is the "My Margarita."

Lopez said some of the most popular dishes are Pollo a la Crema, Carne Asada and a specialty meal named "Gringas," which is carne asada tacos with cheese.



La Casa Lopez has a large capacity to accommodate many groups and is organized to allow groups to get in and out in a timely manner. Lopez said this makes La Casa Lopez a good choice for special occasions and birthdays. Reservations must be made 24 hours in advance for groups and almost any number can be accommodated, except for on special weekends like graduation, Moms Weekend, Homecoming etc.

Waitress Lauren Hale, a UI marketing and Spanish major, said she enjoys the diversity among her coworkers.

"I love the people I work with — they are probably the best part, everyone I work with has a wonderful attitude," Hale said.

Hale said La Casa Lopez is a great place to work because everything about the restaurant is family oriented.



Photos by Steven Devine | Argonaut
Megan Prusynski enjoys the veggie combo at La Casa Lopez along with one of their popular margaritas Tuesday afternoon. The restaurant won best Mexican food and best margarita in this year's Best of Moscow.

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Steven Devine | Argonaut

Members of Pert Near Sandstone perform at Johns Alley Tavern in Moscow Wednesday night. Johns Alley won best live music for Moscow's Best Awards and hosts a variety of bands.

John's Alley named spot for the best sounds

Kelli Hadley
Argonaut

When Vertical Dave heard John's Alley and Tavern won the Best of Moscow contest for live music, his response was, "Of course."

"We won because we have a kickass stage and we have actual bands that come and play," he said. "Scott Pemberton from Portland, Left Hand Smoke from Seattle — it's hard to say who's the most regular of bands, but usually if they come once they'll come again."

Vertical Dave is a partial owner of the multicolored, low-lit, incense-scented bar best known as The Alley. A stage rises about two feet above the main dance area, a cleared out cement-floor space filled with dancing bodies multiple nights each week. The types of music at The Alley vary from bluegrass to soul to "electro-funk rock," but the crowds of students and community members always come for the same thing — to drink for cheap prices and dance to live music.

Ryan Squires, a senior at the University of Idaho, said he also enjoys The Alley's atmosphere, which is a "chill, hippie-type of vibe."

"Just people out to have a good time, I've never seen any fights go on down there ... you go generally to The Alley and there's a lot of chill people who want to listen to good music and have a good conversation, and drink some good beer," Squires said. "... I do think they charge cover a little too much sometimes but hey, you gotta do what you gotta do."

Squires said The Alley is one of the bars he frequents most in Moscow, as it is where he can get his fix for more alternative styles of music.

"I really enjoy a lot of their funk and bluegrass mix groups ... kind of like a hip-hop-folk kind of style that you don't really hear on the radio ... so it's kind of cool going down to The Alley to hear new sounds coming out that you've never heard before," he said.

The best concert Squires has seen at The Alley was a one-man band known as "That 1 Guy." The international artist is a technically trained bassist and made his own mu-

sical instrument — the Magic Pipe. The instrument is a 7-foot tall swirl of pipes, buttons, strings and gears.

"I really suggest you check out YouTube and see what it's all about He started his tour in Moscow a few years back and it's hands-down the best show I've seen there," Squires said. "If you check out his videos they're really original, really different looking, it's just a funk — the funkiest music I've ever heard."

Vertical Dave said bands usually contact the venue to inquire about playing at The Alley — some of the more recognizable names that have performed are David Allan Coe, Derek Trucks, Lyrics Born, Afroman and Sweatshop Union. Some bands lined up to play in the near future include UI alumnae Finn Riggins, Too Slim and the Tail-draggers, Lo-Fi and The Acorn Project. As for why bands enjoy playing at The Alley, Vertical Dave said it is simply because of what the Moscow staple has to offer.

"I think it's the reputation we've built over the last 10, 12 years," he said, "being a venue to play, bands get treated well, students usually make it a good night."

The club and its tubs

Ashley Centers
Argonaut

When Marc Trivelpiece bought The Corner Club in August 2007 he wasn't just buying a bar. He was buying the bar he met his wife Stacey at in 1996 while working as a bartender and studying resource recreation and tourism at the University of Idaho. They were married three years later.

"I was working here and taking classes at the university and a lot of memories were made here," Trivelpiece said. "We wanted to raise our family in Moscow and so we jumped at the chance to buy the bar."

The Club opened July 23, 1948. Trivelpiece said it might be the oldest standing bar in Moscow.

Trivelpiece said fair prices and good customer service are what keep patrons satisfied and coming back. He said he makes it a point to learn customers' names and what they like to drink.

"It doesn't matter who you are, where you're from or what you do for a living. You're welcome here," Trivelpiece said. "We'll have professors mingling with lawyers, mingling with day laborers, mingling with students."

The Club has free shuffleboard and popcorn available for its patrons, and has a variety of drink specials and exclusive nights in hopes of appealing to a wide range of people. Every Thursday is "Ladies Night" and women get half-priced drinks. Wednesdays are "Peanut Night" and patrons get free

peanuts and can throw the shells on the floor, Trivelpiece said.

"It's a great place to come and see my friends and just a cool spot to hang out," said Carmen Miller, 47, of Moscow. "I come maybe three or four times a week just to see what's happening. It's best to come early before everybody else comes and it gets too busy."

Miller said she's been a loyal customer of The Club for at least 15 years.

Matt Aramburu, has been an employee of The Club for five years and said he loves his job. The recent UI graduate said he wasn't surprised to hear The Club was voted Best Overall Bar in Moscow because he and the other employees enjoy doing their jobs and employ good customer service, which in turn makes the customers happy.

"A lot of college kids like this bar and we make friends with everybody," Aramburu said. "We have really loyal and consistent customers. This is really their bar."

Trivelpiece said he spends between 50 and 60 hours per week working at The Club and is always trying to make sure his employees are happy because if his employees aren't happy ultimately his customers won't be happy.

"I don't consider what I do a job," Trivelpiece said. "I get to spend my days hanging with old friends and meeting new ones. It's a very humbling feeling to know that Moscow loves us just as much as we do them."



Steven Devine | Argonaut

The Corner Club has been steeped in tradition for years and features photos, sports memorabilia, and clippings from old newspapers dating back to the opening of the bar. The "Club" won Best Overall Bar for this year's Moscow's Best.



Amrah Canul | Argonaut

Allison Cerrillo and Ashley Borup serve up customers at Moscow Bagel and Deli during lunchtime Wednesday. The shop is open every day but Sunday until 3 a.m.

Bagels best late night bite

Kayla Herrmann
Argonaut

Moscow has only a few food venues that are open late to satisfy college students' late night munchies, and this year Moscow Bagel and Deli claimed the title of best late night munchies.

Moscow Bagel and Deli, otherwise known as the "Bagel Shop," won by 58 percent in this year's Moscow survey.

Bagel Shop employee Marie Pengilly said she is happy they won this year because

of how busy they are every night.

"We really try and make a fun late night place for people to eat," Pengilly said. "I think that most people enjoy getting their bagels late at night, especially after being out on the town."

The Bagel Shop seems to be extremely busy on weekend nights and Sunday mornings, but it varies depending on what's going on in Moscow, Pengilly said.

Joey Lusardi, a senior at the University of Idaho, said the Bagel Shop is where the rest of his money goes after he leaves the bars.

"The Bagel Shop is semi-cheap and is on my way home from the bars," Lusardi said. "I always get the Clayboy because it tastes really good when I've been drinking."

One of the Bagel Shop's most popular bagels is the Sweaty Teddy because it's a big sandwich with a funny and catchy name that people remember, Pengilly said.

Although some students are content with the delicious bagels and inexpensive prices, Jenna Lane, a senior at the UI, said she enjoys the blaring music and atmo-

sphere at the Bagel Shop.

"It really is a fun environment to hang out in because once the bars close there isn't a lot of places everyone can still hang out at," Lane said. "The customer service is wonderful and everyone is super friendly, which I think would be hard to do sometimes when the employees have to deal with intoxicated college students."

Moscow Bagel and Deli is open six days a week from 7 a.m. to 3 a.m. and Sunday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Bucer's takes coffee crown



Katherine Brown | Argonaut

Bucer's barista Jon Williams, left, takes a customer's order while Rebecca Van Dyken mixes a coffee drink Wednesday morning. In the 2011 Best of Moscow survey, Bucer's won the category entitled "Best Coffee."

Beer, wine, coffee, food: It can all be found six days a week

Anthony Saia
Argonaut

When it comes to coffee, participants in the "Best of Moscow" survey have spoken.

Bucer's Coffeehouse Pub has been in Moscow for almost 11 years, solidifying its downtown spot on Main Street.

From the environment to the coffee and beer and wine selection, Bucer's has a degree of class.

Owner and operator Pat Greenfield may have been aiming for that when she and a couple of business partners chose the décor.

"I think we wanted it to look the most like a European pub or something like home," Greenfield said. "We wanted something that was going to be warm and inviting, so the leather and the wood are nice features that make it peaceful."

Barista and New Saint Andrews College student James Frazier agreed with Greenfield.

"Mostly, it's a really nice place to study," Frazier said. "My freshman year I studied here every day and made friends with all the baristas. Everyone is always really nice."

The environment is not all that makes Bucer's special though.

"We're the only coffee house, I think on the Palouse that roasts our own coffee in house," Greenfield said. "Our coffee comes to us from all around the world, but since we roast it here it makes it fresher."

Gwen McConn, an employee at Team Idaho Real Estate and resident of Moscow, endorsed Bucer's coffee with a raving review.

"Bucer's has the best coffee ever," she said. "I've been to other coffee places in town and theirs is just better than others."

This coffee shop and pub is not all about the drinks.

"We get a lot of business people that come here and get lunch too," Frazier said. "It's also a nice place to get a beer so it's a good variety."

Boasting a full commercial kitchen, the employees of Bucer's are able to provide a food menu that includes items ranging from a quick snack or dessert to a fresh Italian Panini, and can usually be something to savor.

Students who are looking for a nice place to study, relax, have lunch or just enjoy a cup of Joe, Bucer's can service all of those needs six days a week.



Katherine Brown | Argonaut

Students work on homework in the UI Library computer lab Wednesday afternoon. In the 2011 Best of Moscow survey, the UI Library won the category entitled "Best Study Spot on Campus."

'No excuses' not to study in the best place

R.J. Taylor
Argonaut

With a student walking through its doors every 75 seconds, it should come as no surprise that the University of Idaho library was chosen by Argonaut readers as the best place to study on campus.

After all, an average of 1,170 students a day couldn't be wrong, and that's just how many students visit the library every day, said Lynn N. Baird, dean of Library Services.

And that high volume of Van-

dal traffic is just what Baird said she wants to see.

"Hopefully we've provided people with places to think about stuff," she said. "Student leadership has supported the idea of the library being the 'Knowledge Commons.'"

The "Knowledge Commons" provides a place for all students to study as the first and second floors are designed for group use, while the third and fourth floors are designated quiet study areas for individual study.

University of Idaho plant science major Brad Huffman said he

studies three days a week on the library's quiet floors.

"It's the quietest place on campus with the most areas to study," Huffman said.

Computer labs on the first and fourth floors, individual desks, tables and study rooms provide students with a number of places to study.

For students needing assistance, librarians stand by ready to help them get started on their research projects.

"We have a wide range of knowledge," Rochelle Smith, a reference librarian said. "We love

to share our knowledge. You can throw us any subject and we can find materials for it — even Zombie attacks."

In an attempt to become more student-friendly, the library removed its "no food or drink" policy a few years ago.

"We want to be your partners in academic success," Baird said.

University of Idaho freshmen Jared Toba and Randy Miller recently used the library to complete a group assignment together.

"It's the easiest place to study," Miller, an interior design major, said.

Miller said he studies four days a week on the library's first two floors as part of his fraternity's required study table hours.

"The atmosphere motivates you more to study," Toba agreed. "It's less distracting than the Commons."

From Sunday to Monday, the library is open until midnight. For students who wish to remain later than that at Moscow's best place to study, the library lounge, affectionately called "the Fish Bowl," never closes.

"This is the 'no excuses' library," Baird said.



Zach Edwards | Argonaut

Pizza Perfection was voted as the winner of the best pizza in Moscow during last week's Best of Moscow poll.

Two pizzas are better than one

Amanda D'Anna
Argonaut

"Two Pizzas, Too Perfect," is the slogan of Pizza Perfection, who was voted best pizza in the 2011 Best of Moscow poll.

Pizza Perfection beat Dominos, Pizza Hut, Gambino's, Smokey Mountain Pizzeria and

Papa Murphy's by 24 percent of students all around campus.

Dennis Wilson, the owner of Pizza Perfection, bought the business from his mother in 1992, and although they have expanded throughout the years, the building in Moscow has never moved. There are currently four Pizza Perfections, one in Moscow,

Lewiston, Pullman and Meridian.

"I was ordering Pizza Perfection so much that I had to give it up for lent, because if I didn't I wouldn't be able to pay for school next year," said Sam Flaherty, a sophomore at the University of Idaho.

A popular deal for the business is the "buy one, get one" on

carry out orders. UI freshman Michael Cullen said he would not lie about his original vote for Dominos, but after consideration, changed his mind.

"After seriously contemplating my vote, I decided that if it was late on a Friday night and I really wanted pizza, I would definitely call Pizza Perfection," Cullen

said. "Therefore, I take back my Dominos vote and gladly give it to Pizza Perfection."

Wilson said he credited the win in the poll to his employees.

"We thrive on customers and we are heavily involved on campus and in the community. We give everything we can, and haven't changed a thing," he said.



Zach Edwards | Argonaut

Football was voted as the most popular spectator sport in this year's Best of Moscow poll.

Game days are tradition

R.J. Taylor
Argonaut

There are games. Then there are game days.

For students like Rob Todeschi, it's that distinction that separates football from Idaho's other sports and places it at the top as the best University of Idaho sport to watch.

Like most college campuses, Idaho football games are an all day event.

There's tailgating, multiple marching bands, beer, burgers and hotdogs. There are old friends, new friends, the Vandal Walk, beautiful Moscow fall afternoons, RV's, family and alumni.

Somewhere in all of that, there's a football game. Students will likely forget the score, but not the game day experience.

Those who don't understand, will call it "nasty and inebriated."

Todeschi calls it "tradition."

As a fourth-generation Vandal, Todeschi has been watching Idaho football games for as long as he can remember.

"The teams change, the coaches change, but the game day experience is always the same," Todeschi said.

It's that experience Idaho football coach Robb Akey hopes current Vandals treasure as part of their college career.

"My goal is to make game day part of the tradition of going to college," he said. "Something students treasure down the road."

Todeschi, a first year College of Law student, earned his undergraduate degree from Idaho in 2010. He has attended every home football game since he became an Idaho student and arrives as soon as he can get out of bed and on campus.

"The best part is the whole community is there and it exists outside of Moscow — alumni, family, friends and the faculty and staff," Todeschi said.

Akey said the support in the stands carries over onto the field.

"It helps us play to an even stronger level," Akey said. "The challenge is to play at a level that they can't help but want to be there."

Akey said he would love to see every student be part of the game day experience, and acknowledged it's his team's responsibility to make students want to be part of it.

After going 3-21 in his first two years at Idaho, Akey said he has noticed more students in the stands the past two seasons as the team improved to 14-12, and won the 2009 Rody's Humanitarian Bowl.

"The first year, I think I could see everyone who came in the Dome," he said. "I was told 'If they build it, they will come.' We built the program, now we want to see them all come."

For students like Todeschi, there's no other place to be on game day.

It's tradition.



Steven Devine | Argonaut

This year Red Bento won best Asian food with their authentic hand-rolled sushi and other foods such as Japanese Lasagna.

Affordable sushi

Red Bento wins best Asian food

Anja Sundali
Argonaut

Since opening its doors in December 2009, Red Bento restaurant on West Third Street hasn't had a chance to take a breather.

"We're at capacity almost all the time," said Jesse Smith, manager of the sushi, teriyaki and Asian fusion restaurant.

Red Bento just broke its all-time sale record April 9 during Washington State University's Moms Weekend.

But owners Linda and Chris Joo have set their sights even higher, with plans to open a new location in Pullman or Lewiston in the near future.

Red Bento originally opened in just the small front room of the restaurant, but quickly expanded into the space next door in May 2010. Smith attributes the restaurant's success to a variety of factors.

"We have a very diverse menu which caters to a lot of different people, and our prices are ridiculously cheap," Smith said.

The restaurant won 76 percent of the vote for this year's "Best of Moscow," and it's not hard to see why it's popular among students.

Meaghan Jones, a junior chemistry and anthropology double major, eats at Red Bento almost once a week.

"Red Bento has some of the best sushi in Moscow and they're affordable on a student budget," Jones said. "They have great lunch specials and a friendly staff that makes an effort to get to know you personally."

Jones is also a vegetarian, which she said can sometimes make going out to eat difficult.

"They have great veggie rolls and other vegetarian options," Jones said. "My favorite is the agedashi tofu."

Despite cheap prices, the food at Red Bento is considered to be excellent in quality.

"All of our sauces, ingredients, etc. are all made in-house so there's no MSG," Smith said.

Red Bento offers a variety of dishes, from sushi to teriyaki to Korean to the popular Bento combination plates. They are open seven days a week from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, 12 p.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 12 p.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday.

"We see all ages and all walks of life here at Red Bento," Smith said. "We've got something for everyone."



Steven Devine | Argonaut

Part owner of Red Bento Lynda Joo prepares an authentic hand rolled sushi dish in her restaurant located on Third Street in Moscow.



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