



Roundup & Best Bites Restaurant

# HANDBOOK

Rodeo  Uncorked!®

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™

## **2026 RULES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK REVISIONS**

Date	Section	Description

# HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™ 2026 ROUNDUP & BEST BITES COMPETITION

Presented by Nan and Company Properties

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# 2026 ROUNDUP & BEST BITES COMPETITION

Thank you for your interest in the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo 2026 Rodeo Uncorked! Roundup & Best Bites Competition, presented by Nan and Company Properties. This handbook is designed to provide culinary entities (including restaurants, caterers, and more), hereafter also referred to as "Participants," important information about the Competition and answer any questions. The current version of the competition handbook is available on the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo website at <http://www.rodeohouston.com/wine> and may be subject to revisions or changes.

## HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo,™ hereafter also referred to as the "Show," promotes agriculture by hosting an annual, family-friendly experience that educates and entertains the public, supports Texas youth, showcases Western heritage and provides year-round educational support within the community. Since its beginning in 1932, the Show has committed more than \$630 million to the youth of Texas. In its 23<sup>rd</sup> year as a premier attraction at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the Rodeo Uncorked! program starts with the prestigious International Wine Competition – one of the largest wine competitions in America, judged by a panel of recognized wine experts. The other Rodeo Uncorked! events, the Roundup & Best Bites Competition, Champion Wine Auction & Dinner, and Champion Wine Garden, and sales of the Collector's Cases serve to promote the winners of the Competition.

## RODEO UNCORKED! OBJECTIVES

The Rodeo Uncorked! Wine Program, and associated events, were founded in 2004 for the following purposes:

- To promote healthy competition among international and U.S. wine producers and drive continuing improvement in the quality of all wines, and in particular, Texas wines and vineyards;
- To raise awareness of Texas and the annual featured region's wines in the United States and internationally;
- To introduce Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo patrons to the outstanding quality and phenomenal values available in today's wines from around the world;
- To introduce regional wine aficionados and professionals to the educational and charitable aspects of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

## **ROUNDUP & BEST BITES COMPETITION OBJECTIVES**

The Rodeo Uncorked! Roundup & Best Bites Competition is a food and wine tasting event featuring the Top Award champion saddle winners, the Class Champions, Texas and Region Class Champions, Reserve Class Champions and Texas and Region Reserve Class Champions and Double Gold medal awards from the International Wine Competition. As a Participant and contributor, the Roundup & Best Bites Competition allows you to showcase your cuisine to our wine and food loving guests. Guests will enjoy your bites while sipping award-winning wines. With its growing success, we typically host more than 6,000 food and wine aficionados for this fun evening at NRG Center. Belt buckle awards will be given to our top competitors across multiple food categories.

## **FORCE MAJEURE**

Neither Party shall be liable for any delay or failure to perform its operations, activities, shows, events and/or obligations owed pursuant to this Agreement to the extent such delay or failure results from a Force Majeure Event. As used in this Handbook, a "Force Majeure Event" is defined as any occurrence which makes performance by a Party, in its sole discretion, illegal, impossible or commercially impracticable and includes, but is not limited to, any (i) material breakage or accident to equipment, machinery or facilities; (ii) any strike, lock-out or other labor difficulties (but not including a lock-out of employees by such Party); (iii) statute, ordinance, regulation, order, directive or rule issued by a governmental authority, including, but not limited to, those concerning public health and safety, animal disease prevention, detection and response and/or protection of the environment; (iv) final, non-appealable judicial decree or order; (v) pandemic, epidemic or quarantine as determined by the World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or state or local government authority or health agencies (including, but not limited to, the health threats of COVID-19, H1N1 and/or other infectious diseases); (vi) animal disease and/or quarantine; (vii) war, riot or insurrection; (viii) civil disobedience, public demonstration or sabotage; (ix) act of God, fire, flood, earthquake, hurricane, national disaster or explosion; (x) material inability to obtain necessary labor, materials, supplies, utilities or transportation; (xi) nationwide depression materially impacting the Party's ability to perform; (xii) embargo or energy shortage that disproportionately affects the invoking Party; or (xiii) any other cause beyond the Party's reasonable control.

## **RELEASE OF LIABILITY**

In the event of an unexcepted closure, or inability to host the Roundup & Best Bites Competition for any reason, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo shall not be held responsible for any direct or indirect costs, however so incurred by the Participant, related to or in preparation for the event, whether or not such costs were foreseeable.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

It is each Participant's responsibility to ensure that it complies with all applicable rules and policies stated in this Handbook. Although registration begins in 2025, the Show year assigned is 2026, to coincide with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The Roundup & Best Bites Competition will be held on February 22, 2026.

## **INTEGRITY OF THE COMPETITION AND RESULTS**

The integrity, validity and reliability of this competition are paramount for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. All aspects of this food judging have been, and will be, conducted to ensure that the results have the highest degree of integrity and are fully worthy of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

## **THE WINE COMMITTEES**

The Wine Committees (Wine Competition Committee, Winery Relations Committee, Wine Sales Committee, Wine Events Committee and Wine Garden Committee) support the activities of the Rodeo Uncorked! program. Many of these volunteers come from the ranks of respected local restaurateurs, wine consultants, retailers, wholesalers, and suppliers. In addition, the trained, dedicated, and respected management and staff are committed to professional excellence and unimpeachable results in the wine judging arena.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The following Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo staff members support the Rodeo Uncorked! program and are available to assist with any questions regarding the Wine Show.

Jennifer Lindsay  
Director, Wine Show  
[wine@rodeoHouston.com](mailto:wine@rodeoHouston.com)  
Phone: (832) 667-1184

Rachael Fernandez  
Coordinator, Wine Show  
[wine@rodeoHouston.com](mailto:wine@rodeoHouston.com)  
Phone: (832) 667-1184

**HLSR Mailing Address:**  
HLSR  
Wine Show  
3 NRG Park  
Houston, TX 77054

**Vice Chairman of the Roundup & Best Bites Competition:**  
Renee Smith  
[wine@rodeoHouston.com](mailto:wine@rodeoHouston.com)

**Roundup & Best Bites Location Address:**

NRG Center, Halls D & E  
3 NRG Park  
Houston, TX 77054

The 2026 Wine Show Committees (“Committee”) management team for the Roundup & Best Bites Competition is made up of the following dedicated Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo volunteers:

Amy Miller.....Officer-in-Charge, Wine Events and Wine Sales  
Leif Graham .....Chairman, Winery Relations  
Chris Johnson.....Chairman, Wine Sales  
Lindsay Wied.....Chairman, Wine Garden  
Blake Beyer.....Chairman, Wine Competition  
Kelton Tonn .....Chairman, Wine Events

*Amanda Lenertz, Division Chairman*

*Renee Smith, Vice Chairman, Roundup & Best Bites Competition*

*Shae Keefe Jacobs, Captain, Restaurant Relations*

*Jacque Tomchesson, Captain, Supplies & Logistics*

*Brian Perry, Captain, Pourers*

*Amy Evans, Captain, Restaurant Liaisons*

*Claudia Harris, Captain, Event Services*

*Diane Jones, Captain, Judging*

*Johnny Cortinas, Captain, Event Operations*

*Kathy Self, Captain, Plates & Glasses*

*Mary Ryder, Captain, Grand Cru*

*Francis Nathan, Captain, Inside Guest Relations*

*Jared Altimore, Captain, Outside Guest Relations*

## **RODEO UNCORKED! ROUNDUP & BEST BITES CALENDAR**

<b>Date</b>	<b>What is Due</b>
<b>Tuesday, September 2, 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Best Bites Competition entries open online.</li></ul>
<b>Tuesday, December 2, 2025</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Early entry deadline – any entity that has signed up and submitted their signed indemnity form by this date will get additional benefits, outlined below.</li></ul>
<b>Friday, January 9, 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deadline to sign up with guaranteed placement in the printed program (<i>unless restaurant capacity has already been reached</i>)</li></ul>
<b>Sunday, February 22, 2026</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rodeo Uncorked! Roundup &amp; Best Bites Competition at NRG Center.</li></ul>

### **INTERPRETATION OF RULES AND RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES**

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, in its sole discretion, shall have the exclusive authority to interpret all rules and resolve any disputes arising under them, including those concerning unforeseen circumstances not explicitly covered by these rules, and its decisions shall be final and binding on all parties involved. **1. Failure of any Participant to abide by all rules, regulations, specifications, guidelines, and requirements as set forth in the 2026 Roundup & Best Bites Handbook may, at the sole discretion of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, result in forfeiture of all monies, rights, and privileges.**

**2. Any incident of non-compliance with any part of this Handbook is considered a breach of agreement and may be cause for immediate expulsion from the Contest and event.**

3. Show policy promotes equal opportunities and participation for everyone with no distinctions based on race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability, national origin, or other considerations. Notwithstanding other provisions included in this Handbook, violation of this policy could result in immediate removal from the event and forfeiture of future invitations to participate.

4. The various logos of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and RODEOHOUSTON are registered trademarks and may NOT be used under any circumstances **without prior written permission** from the marketing division of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. All requests should be directed to [wine@hlsr.com](mailto:wine@hlsr.com).

5. Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo management reserves the right to establish and enforce whatever rules are necessary for the regulation of the Competition.
8. Participant representatives must comply with all rules, regulations, and requirements of the Fire Marshal, the City of Houston Health Department and any governmental entity having jurisdiction over these premises.

## **RESOURCES**

**HLSR Website:** The Rodeo Uncorked!® page of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ website is [www.rodeoHouston.com/wine](http://www.rodeoHouston.com/wine). Scroll down to “Roundup & Best Bites Competition” and then click “Participant Information” to view the Participant page. Under “Culinary Participant Registration,” click the “2026 Signup Information” link for a packet with a quick overview of the event. Click the “ENTER NOW” button to view & submit the entry form. Click the “Release of Indemnity Form” to review the indemnity form.

**Notification of the Competition:** Although great effort is made to reach as many culinary entities as possible, the Show is not responsible for failure to notify or contact any one entity regarding confirmation of entry into the Competition. Each culinary entity is responsible for confirming their entry into the Competition with the Show.

# BEFORE THE COMPETITION

## GENERAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Any culinary entity that is a legally permitted Texas Food Establishment (“Participant”) located in the Greater Houston Metro/Gulf Coast Region is eligible to enter the Rodeo Uncorked! Roundup & Best Bites Competition.

## PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

### **Official Entry Requirements**

An official entry shall consist of the following. It is the responsibility of the Participant to ensure all requirements have been met.

1. A fully completed entry form, including all applicable information, submitted through the online entry system,
2. A signed mandatory indemnity form (linked to the entry form),
3. A mandatory City of Houston Temporary Health Permit, acquired by the Participant,
4. A fully completed supply request form, including electrical needs received by the deadline,
5. A fully completed HLSR In-Kind Donation form indicating the value of goods and services provided. This completed In-Kind Donation form will serve as your donation receipt.
6. Ability to provide a minimum of 1,500 2-3 oz. bites for attendees at the event at no cost to the Show
  - a. Six portions of these bites will be entered for mandatory judging in the competition
  - b. An optional “media” ready bite for media photography, details explained on page 21.
7. Ability to provide 1-5 staff members to serve your bites at your assigned table. **No one under the age of 21 will be permitted to work at your assigned table, regardless of their work status.** You may have persons under the age of 21 assist with set-up only, but they must immediately depart the event once set-up is complete, or by 5 p.m., whichever comes first. Anyone found to have persons under the age of 21 present during the event will be subject to immediate removal and may forfeit future invitations to participate in the event.
8. All participants MUST submit an entry for judging in the Best Bites Competition.

## Entry Limitations

- The maximum number of Participants accepted for the 2026 competition will be capped at 125. Acceptance is based on a first-come, first-serve basis, which will be determined by date and time stamps via the online entry system. Registrants that sign up after capacity is reached will be placed on a waitlist.
- Participants **must** serve the same dish to the public that is presented for judging. Participants may serve more than one dish at their station if so desired, but only one of the dishes may be presented for judging.

## Participation Benefits

In addition to showcasing your food to a wide audience, participants will receive the following benefits for participation:

1. Photos of your table presentation (available for download via SmugMug) if station is set up by 5 p.m.
2. Two silver badges that will provide entry for two people into NRG Park during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Silver badges can be used to enter the Show grounds (March 2 – 22, 2026) and the World’s Championship Bar-B-Que Contest (Feb. 26 – 28, 2026). Silver badges are not valid for entry into Rodeo Uncorked! events or RODEOHOUSTON® performances.
3. The opportunity to win custom belt buckle awards in the Best Bites Competition across various categories.
4. Window cling sticker indicating your participation plus digital banners and stickers.
5. A wall plaque recognizing your participation to hang in your establishment.
6. Pre- and post-media exposure via culinary listing on the Show website, the Rodeo Uncorked! Facebook group, and winner recognition in media publications such as Houston Press, Paper City Magazine and Culture Map.
7. Early Bird Offers:
  - a. If registered by December 2, 2025: one additional silver badge (for three total) and priority of booth location preference.
  - b. If registered by January 9, 2026: guaranteed inclusion in the printed program.

## Entry Form

- Online entry forms must be submitted for each culinary entity that plans to participate. **Please note: multiple entities under the same restaurant group must have their own individual entry form if they intend to participate separately (i.e., have a booth for each restaurant).**
- **The entry form must be complete in every detail.**
- The form must include a valid telephone number, physical mailing address and e-mail address for the person designated to serve as the entity contact. Entries without up-to-date contact information may be disqualified at the sole discretion of the Roundup & Best Bites Competition management. Any changes in contact information after entry is

complete should be sent to [wine@rodeohouston.com](mailto:wine@rodeohouston.com). This is the contact information that will be utilized to contact you with questions, follow up on indemnity forms, supply requests, post-competition awards, and other information.

- Incomplete entries may be disqualified at the sole discretion of the Roundup & Best Bites Competition management.

### **Supply Request Form**

- In early January, the contact listed on your entry form will be sent an online supply form via email. This form must be filled out in its entirety by the stated deadline. This form is where you will indicate your required electrical, and utensils & serving ware for guests (i.e., napkins, spoons, forks, plates, and bowls).

## **THE COMPETITION**

### **COMPETITION RULES**

- The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is not responsible for correcting errors on entry forms or incorrect information supplied and/or created by the Participant staff or their designated representatives.
- An entry will be deemed ineligible if it does not meet all requirements set forth in this handbook.
- The Show is not responsible if a dish is later disqualified for being tasted in the wrong category, showing faults or for any other reason.
- No contestant shall be entitled to an award which has been disallowed as a result of their own error.

### **Fundamental Ethics**

Any entry found to have submitted deliberately misleading information, either in the online registration or onsite entry form, may result in the Participant being disqualified from all awards and, at the sole discretion of the Show's Roundup & Best Bites Competition management team, also may prohibit the entity from entering the judging in succeeding years.

### **COMPETITION PROCEDURES**

- Determine the dish you want to submit for judging. You do not have to inform Competition management what dish you are preparing in advance of the event date.
- Select the competition category of dish you are entering. The three main categories are Trailblazing Appetizer, Lone Star Entrée, and Two-Steppin' Dessert. The full list of awards can be found under "Awards Presentation" on Page 24 of this handbook.

- On the day of the event, fill out and submit the Competition Entry Form (see **Appendix D**) with your prepared bites to the Judging area (see **Appendix C** for location on event map). See “Contest Procedures” section on page 18 for more details.
- Review all information in this handbook, carefully noting all entry deadlines, delivery dates, directions, and rules. **Participants will be disqualified for failure to meet deadlines or abide by the rules, no exceptions.**

## DAY-OF TIMELINE

12 – 5 p.m.	Arrival, check-in and set up
4:30 – 5:30 p.m.	Winery representative arrival time
5 p.m.	All vehicles must be removed from the building and parked in the designated parking area (Tan Lot) behind NRG Center.  NO EXCEPTIONS.
5 p.m.	Wristband check – all non-working staff and all persons under the age of 21 MUST depart NRG Center.
5 p.m.	Competition turn in time for Trailblazing Appetizer. See map in Appendix C for turn in location.
5 p.m.	All restaurants should be ready for photography of their food presentation. These photos will be available on SmugMug after the event.
5:15 p.m.	Competition turn in time for Lone Star Entrée. See map in Appendix C for turn in location.
5:15 p.m.	Private reception opens for Grand Cru table guests in their seating area
5:30 p.m.	Competition turn in time for Two Steppin’ Dessert. See map in Appendix C for turn in location.
5:30 p.m.	Judging for Outstanding Showmanship Award begins
6 p.m.	Doors open for table guests
6:30 p.m.	Doors open for general admission guests
8:15 p.m.	Voting carafes and plastic zip bags with tokens collected
9:00 p.m.	Awards presentation begins
9:30 p.m.	Event concludes

## ARRIVAL AND CHECK-IN

### **Parking**

Please enter NRG through Gate 12 on North Stadium Drive. Parking is free and inform the gate attendant you are participating in Roundup & Best Bites Competition.

Following signage for “Restaurant Load In,” continue straight into the parking lot/loading dock area behind NRG Center and drive into the building through the large roll doors for Hall D. A volunteer will direct you to your station. Do not deviate from the posted drive lanes and traffic directions. Once unloaded, exit through the Hall E dock and park in the Tan Lot behind NRG.

Note: all vehicles must be unloaded and removed from the hall by 5 p.m. for the event. Additionally, all vehicles MUST be moved from the parking lot at the conclusion of the event for HLSR Commercial Exhibitor and restocking trailer move in early the next morning. Any vehicles left overnight are subject to be towed, as well as the possibility of revoking future invitations to participate in Roundup & Best Bites.

If your team arrives separately, they may enter through Gate 12 and park in the Tan Lot, overflowing to Red Lot if necessary. Please see **Appendix B** for a property map.

### **Check-In**

You will check in with our volunteers as you enter Hall D. Your station number will be communicated at the time of check-in and volunteers will direct your vehicle to your station to unload. A Restaurant Liaison volunteer will meet you at your station to deliver your supplies and review all details with you.

**\*We are not able to provide any carts for loading or unloading, so be sure to bring your own, especially for move out when vehicle access is not available in the building.\***

### **Event Layout**

Our layout maximizes guest interaction and culinary exposure. The event is divided into several sections by letter. All Participants will be in Sections A-L. The signup form allows you to indicate your preferred section for your station. While not guaranteed, priority will be given to Participants who register and return the signed indemnity form by the December early-bird deadline. The layout can be found in **Appendix A** at the end of this handbook.

## **YOUR STATION**

### **Setup**

Move In begins at 12 noon to set up your station. You must be completely set up and ready to serve food by 6 p.m. when the doors open. Keep in mind, many participants and vendors for the event arrive around 4 – 4:30 p.m., which will cause congestion at the dock. Arrive earlier to avoid waiting.

Participants will be provided with two 8' tables with black tablecloths, one to serve the public and one as a back-preparation table. Every participant is strongly encouraged to decorate and individualize their serving station, including linens to be judged in our Showmanship Competition. Culinary name signs are provided for all participants. Each participant is permitted to bring up to five people to work in your booth; wristbands are provided for your team members. These wristbands are working credentials and do not allow for participation in the Best Bites wine and food tasting. Wristband check will be at 5 p.m., and any extra team members will be asked to leave at that time.

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is a non-profit organization and is precluded from engaging in political activity. Additionally, the Rodeo does not tolerate discriminatory practices. Therefore, any signage, décor and public engagement activities must adhere to the Show's non-political and non-discriminatory practices. Any materials, décor and/or anything visible to the general public must be appropriate for a public audience of all ages, races and ethnicities and may not consist of material that may detract from the general character of the Rodeo. This includes, but is not limited to, items having a political, discriminatory, racial or lewd nature, such as the Confederate flag and items for/against political parties or candidates. The Roundup & Best Bites Competition Management Team reserves the right to remove any such signage, décor and displays, and end any such activity deemed to detract from the general character of the Rodeo.

### **Supplies**

Each entity must supply their own equipment for food preparation; there is no on-site kitchen available for use. The items you indicate on the Supply Request Form are individual guest consumption supplies. Once you have arrived at your booth to set up, a volunteer will deliver a box of supplies containing the items you specified from the Supply Request link and supplies needed for the duration of Best Bites. Note, the full quantity of serving supplies for 1500 bites will not be in the initial box. If you need replenishments, your Restaurant Liaison volunteer can assist during the event. The full contents of the supply box can be found listed in **Appendix E**.

A Restaurant Liaison volunteer will be assigned to your table (and surrounding tables) for the duration of the event. This volunteer will restock your station with supplies throughout the night. If you have any other needs during the event, please work with your Restaurant Liaison and they will endeavor to assist you.

### **Water & Ice**

Dump sinks are located on the outer east and west sides of the event space. See map in **Appendix C**. Please bring pitchers or a container to transfer water from the provided sinks, as needed. **We do not provide ice or coolers or receptacles for ice storage.** Also, you will not be permitted to transport ice to your table during the event. Please plan accordingly.

### **Power**

Participants must specify electrical needs for all equipment used at the event. There are no permanent electrical outlets in Halls D or E, and all connections must be installed by our outside contractor via written request. All electrical requests must be indicated on the Supply Request Form by the stated deadline.

### **Handwashing Stations**

Handwashing stations will be provided between every two restaurant and winery tables. Please follow City of Houston Health Department regulations for handwashing.

## **RESTRICTIONS & REQUIREMENTS**

Per the City of Houston Fire Marshal, fire safety codes do not allow propane or any open flames to be used at this venue. Sterno (designated for indoor use) is permitted as well as electric appliances. Participants must indicate on the Supply Request form whether they are using grease. Type 10 AB:C fire extinguishers will be provided throughout the venue for emergency use. Type K extinguishers will be issued to culinary entities cooking with grease and must be returned at the conclusion of the event. It is very important to specify this on the supply order in January so we have the correct amount of type K extinguishers available.

All culinary participants are required to hold a valid **City of Houston Temporary Health Permit** for this event. Instructions and forms to be filed with the city will be provided to all registered participants as soon as it is available. HLSR will reimburse the health permit fee for entities that complete their participation in Roundup & Best Bites and follow all rules established in the Restaurant Handbook. Restaurants that cancel or no show will not be eligible for reimbursement. Participants must submit their receipt to receive reimbursement. Additionally, HLSR will not reimburse the special investigative fee for payments made less than 7 full calendar days before the event start date. Participants who successfully submit their receipt and information for reimbursement will receive payment within 30 days of the event.

**NO OUTSIDE ALCOHOL IS PERMITTED ON THE PREMISES.**

**NO ONE UNDER THE AGE OF 21 WILL BE PERMITTED INSIDE NRG CENTER DURING THE EVENT.**

Restaurants may not collect customer information at the event, including for marketing lists, drawings, or otherwise.

## **GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

The following guidelines are mandated by the City of Houston Health Department. All participants are required to adhere to these guidelines. This may not be a complete and current list. It is the entrant's responsibility to ensure they are in full compliance with the City of Houston Health Department.

1. Ice used for consumption must be from an approved source. Ice shall be held in bags until used and dispensed properly. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is unable to provide ice for you, so please make arrangements to bring it with your supplies if needed.
2. Food contact surfaces of equipment shall be protected from contamination by consumers and other contaminating agents by using separating counters, tables, sneeze guards, etc. All equipment, including hot/cold food storage facilities, shall be adequate in number and capacity to provide food temperatures of time/temperature controlled for safety (TCS)

food of 41°F (05°C) or below or 135°F (57°C) or above at all times, except as otherwise allowed and must be of acceptable design and fabrication.

3. Provide only single-service articles for customers' use. Your plates/bowls/forks/spoons will be provided by the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Please indicate which items are necessary for your particular food item in the survey provided in January.
4. Potable water from an approved source shall be made available in a temporary food establishment for food preparation, cleaning and sanitizing utensils and equipment, and for hand-washing. Water need not be under pressure but shall come from approved sources, which include commercially bottled drinking water, closed portable water containers, enclosed vehicular water tanks, on-premises water storage tanks, or piping, tubing or approved hoses connected to an approved source. The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo has installed hand-wash sinks between each station and dump sinks for restaurant use in the back of house areas of each quadrant. Please reference the restaurant services map provided in Appendix C.
  - a. To prevent cross-contamination, kitchenware and food-contact surfaces of equipment shall be washed, rinsed, and sanitized at least every 4 hours or more frequently if necessary. Provide potable water for cleaning and sanitizing utensils. Provide a heating facility capable of producing hot water. When chemicals are used for sanitization, a test kit or other device that accurately measures the concentration of the solution in parts per million or milligrams per liter shall be provided and used. Use three (3) containers for WASHING, RINSING & SANITIZING e.g., plastic buckets, plastic food containers. Three (3) buckets, detergent tablets and quaternary sanitation tablets will be provided by HLSR for sanitation in your supply packet for soap, rinse and sanitize. You are welcome to bring your preferred soap.
  - b. Hand-washing facilities shall include an insulated container with a spigot that can be turned on to allow potable, clean, warm water to flow. A wastewater container, soap, disposable towels, and a waste receptacle are required. Hand-washing facilities are not required if the only food items offered are commercially pre-packaged foods that are dispensed in their original containers. Hand-washing facilities are in addition to any available hand sanitizer. HLSR will provide a handwashing station between each two winery and restaurant tables.
5. The storage of food in contact with water or ice is prohibited except that food in waterproof packaging may be stored in contact with continuously drained ice.
6. Dispose of all liquid waste (wastewater) as sewage in dump sinks provided by HLSR. Dispose of solid waste (garbage) in accordance with all applicable laws. Trash cans can be found throughout the event as well as larger hoppers in the back at the end of the event. Individual trash bags will be provided to Participants to transfer trash to a larger receptacle.
7. Provide cleanable floors in food preparation and service areas e.g., concrete, wood, or asphalt.

8. Provide a ceiling in food preparation and service areas e.g., wood, canvas, or other material that protects the interior of the establishment from the weather and other contaminating agents.
9. At all times, including while being stored, prepared, displayed, served, or transported, food shall be protected from potential contamination by all agents, including dust, insects, rodents, unclean equipment and utensils, unnecessary handling, coughs and sneezes, flooding, draining, and overhead leakage or overhead drippage from condensation. Foods for self-service shall be protected from consumer contamination using packaging, sneeze guards, or other devices. TCS food (often referred to as potentially hazardous or perishable food) must be kept at proper temperatures to reduce the growth of microorganisms that can cause food borne illness. If you are not sure if a food is a TCS food, treat it as though it is.
10. Protect food from contamination at all times:
  - a. Keep hot foods at 135° F or above and keep cold foods at 41° F or below.
  - b. Wear an effective hair restraint e.g., ball cap or hair net. Hair spray or visors are not acceptable. HLSR will provide hairnets in your supply box.
  - c. Wear gloves when handling non-packaged food. HLSR will provide (5) pairs of gloves in your supply box. If more are needed, please bring with your supplies.
  - d. Provide sneeze guards for open foods at display areas.
  - e. All food, equipment, and paper products must be stored at least 6 inches above the floor. HLSR will provide (2) 8' tables, one for preparation of food and one for food service to event guests.
  - f. Eating, drinking, or smoking is prohibited in the booth/stand.
  - g. Provide a barrier such as tables or counters between the employee work area and the customers.
  - h. Pets and other animals are prohibited in the booth/stand.
11. SERVE ONLY FOODS THAT ARE PREPARED OR OBTAINED FROM APPROVED COMMERCIAL SOURCES. FOOD PREPARED OR STORED AT YOUR RESIDENCE OR OTHER UNLICENSED LOCATION IS PROHIBITED.
12. PREPARATION OF FOODS THAT REQUIRE A HACCP PLAN, A VARIANCE, A CONSUMER ADVISORY OR EXTENSIVE PREPARATION/HANDLING ARE PROHIBITED.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

The objective of the Emergency Plan is to provide information, procedures, and a plan of action to protect life and property in the event of an emergency during Show operations. Emergencies include fire, bomb threat, explosion, severe weather, and other accidents and/or disasters.

### **Reporting an Emergency**

In the event of an emergency, the first individual at the scene should immediately contact the Show's Safety Office at (832) 667-1300. Be prepared to provide:

- your name and contact number;
- the type of emergency;
- the location of the emergency; and
- whether or not emergency medical help is necessary.

In the unlikely event that the Safety Office line is busy or not answered, contact the Show's Security Office at (832) 667-3636. If necessary, call 911.

In the event cellular service is not available, Participants should immediately seek Safety and Emergency Personnel and provide them with specific information about the emergency situation. Safety and Emergency Personnel include licensed law enforcement officers, primarily uniformed Houston Police Department and Harris County Sheriff's Department officers; Houston Fire Department officials and; HLSR Safety Committee members (Safety Committee volunteers can be identified by their tan vests).

### **Notification Methods**

There are several methods of notification that will be used in the event of an emergency.

1. Verbal instructions may be provided by Safety and Emergency Personnel.
2. Notification by HLSR and NRG Park staff members, identified by NRG Park credential.
3. Announcements over the facility emergency broadcast system.

**Participants are required to follow evacuation and any other instructions issued via the methods listed above, no exceptions.** In the event of any other emergency, such as a bomb threat, explosion, or other disaster, instructions will be issued via one of the notification methods listed. Violators are subject to removal from the current and future Shows and/or arrest by law enforcement.

### **Fire Safety**

Participants should report a fire emergency to the Show's Safety Office at (832) 667-1300. Be prepared to provide:

- your name and contact number;
- the type of emergency;
- the location of the emergency (note the closest column number in the exhibit hall); and
- whether or not emergency medical help is necessary.

In the event cellular service is not available, Participants should immediately seek Safety and Emergency Personnel and provide them with specific information about the emergency situation.

1. All fires, no matter the size, must be reported to the Safety Office.
2. If the fire is small and contained, attempt to put it out with a fire extinguisher. **Do not jeopardize personal safety to do so.** Never allow the fire to come between you and the exit.
3. If the fire cannot be contained:
  - a. Evacuate the area and report to the designated Muster Area. For Roundup & Best Bites, the Muster Area is the Champion Wine Garden/ Carruth Plaza. If this area is unavailable, the backup Muster Area is Red Lot 4 on the West side of the event space. Please see **Appendix B** for a reference map.
  - b. Do not attempt to save possessions or equipment at the risk of personal injury.

## CONTEST PROCEDURES

### **Preparation**

A clamshell box will be provided in each Participant's supply box for competition judging. Participants will use this to provide six portions of your Best Bite. The submission must include (6) bites of the same food item that you are serving to guests. Do not include multiple items or variations of an item. Participants will deliver the box and completed Competition Entry Form (**Appendix D**) to the back for judging on the East side of the stage (see **Appendix C** for site map) at the designated time based on their selected category. The printed entry form must be completed and submitted with your sample portions.

At each Participant's request, we will store the clamshell of six bites at warm, cold, or at room temperature. The bites will not be re-plated, handled, or touched by anyone before the judging panel receives them so they should be placed how you would like them to be presented.

- All Participants are required to participate in the Best Bites Competition.
- Participants MUST enter the same bite which is being served to the public for judging. A different food item may not be submitted into the Competition.
- Competition entries should only include edible items. We will not be able to provide guidance to the judges as to what may or may not be eaten.
- No items will be returned from the submission. Please do not include any non-disposable serve ware.
- The Show does not have the capability to keep items frozen. If a bite needs to remain frozen, the Participant will need to provide dry ice to go with the bites into a Show provided cooler.

Competition entries should not include any items that would identify the food submission with your culinary entity. This includes logoed napkins, stickers, containers, etc. This is a blind competition.

### **Media Ready Photo**

A second clamshell box along with an ID card will be in the supply box. These are used for a “media ready” version of your Best Bite. Participants may enclose a single bite, plated as they would like it to appear when served. This bite will not be eaten, so it can contain non-edible ingredients to keep the appearance as you want it throughout the event (i.e., use Crisco instead of ice cream). These bites will not be temperature controlled.

On the ID card, please include the culinary entity’s proper name and the name of your item as you would like them to appear in print. The media will have access to photograph/film your bite and will use this card to identify food items in their coverage.

These will be showcased on a table adjacent to the judging area where media can take photos of bites to include in their coverage. Competition judges will not have access until their judging is complete.

## **JUDGING PROCEDURES**

Your food submission will be given a blind ID number at the check in table to maintain anonymity through the judging process. When it is time for your sample to be judged, volunteers will remove your clamshell from its designated temperature storage and deliver it to one of the panels of five judges. Bites are assigned to panels randomly. Each judge will remove a bite from the box and sample it. Judges will rate each bite on the following criteria on a scale from 1-10:

- Appearance, 25% of total score
- Aroma, 15% of total score
- Taste, 45% of total score
- Texture, 15% of total score

Each bite is judged on its own merit, not as it compares to other bites. After the judges complete their scoring, the ballots are taken to the scoring team for tabulation.

Three judges are asked to stay after initial scoring in the event of a tie. These judges will taste samples and determine place winners.

A single restaurant may only win (1) award except for the People’s Choice Award. If a restaurant qualifies as the winner for more than (1) award, the following hierarchy will determine which award will be granted. The forfeited award will be granted to the next eligible contestant.

1. People's Choice Award – may be granted in conjunction with one of the below
2. Trailblazing Starter/Appetizer; Lone Star Entrée; Two-Steppin' Dessert
3. Top Rookie; Tasty Tradition
4. Outstanding Showmanship

In your supply box, you will receive a plastic canister for guests to place their voting tokens in for the People's Choice Awards.

- a. You will also receive gallon sized Ziplock bags, which restaurants may place any overflow tokens into.
- b. **Participating restaurants may only solicit tokens from guests who are served at their station. No hawking to passing guests is permitted. Further, samples may not be withheld for tokens.**
- c. At 8:15 p.m., Wine Events Committee volunteers will collect these tokens, the carafe and overflow bags to be weighed for the award. Please ensure the sticker with your restaurant name remains on the container and that your restaurant name and booth location are marked on the Ziplock at the time of turn in.

Winners will be announced on the main stage and the winning restaurant will be called up for the presentation. Please make sure a representative(s) from your culinary entity is present to accept your award. The stage is located at the rear of the room where the food judging actually takes place.

# **DURING THE EVENT**

## **PUBLIC EVENT HOURS**

The doors to the event open at 6:00 p.m. for table guests and general admission guests at 6:30 p.m. The Grand Cru reception will take place from 5:15-6:00 p.m. before doors open but will be contained in the Grand Cru area. All Participants are expected to be ready to serve patrons when doors open at 6:00 p.m.

## **WASTE MANAGEMENT**

### **Trash**

You will be provided with (1) contractor-size trash bag in your supply box to collect trash throughout the duration of the event. If you fill up your bag and need to have trash removed and a new bag brought to you, please ask your Restaurant Liaison representative and they will assist you.

**At the conclusion of the event, each restaurant is responsible for clearing all trash from their space. Trash may be placed in public trash cans or the larger hopper containers in the back of the Halls. No food items or supplies should be left in your space. Failure to properly clean up your immediate area could result in revocation of future participation in the Competition.**

### **Grease Disposal**

There are two grease traps located in the event space: one on the far West side behind the guest seating area and one on the far East side behind the guest seating area. If you are frying and need to dispose of grease, please use the provided containers and pour carefully to avoid spills. See the map on **Appendix C** for location.

1. Participants must ensure they have adequate disposal containers and procedures to address the quantity of grease generated by the Participant's operations.
2. Participants are responsible for ensuring that their representatives are fully trained in safe handling of grease and disposal.
3. All grease should be disposed of in the designated grease trap.
4. Do not dispose of grease in trash receptacles.
5. Do not put other trash or materials in the grease disposal bins.
6. **DO NOT dispose of used cooking oil in any manner on the Show grounds except into the appropriate grease barrels. Violation could result in immediate expulsion from the Competition, revocation of future participation in the Competition, and/or written citation(s) issued by the Health Department.**

## **PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD**

Guests are supplied with (5) tokens which they will award to their favorite Participants. This award is determined by the token total weight on a gram scale. Tokens should be collected from guests in the labeled carafe provided in the supply box and plastic bags used for overflow.

Tokens will be collected at 8:15 p.m. and votes will be tabulated and announced during the awards ceremony at approximately 9:00 p.m. Participants are not permitted to solicit tokens/votes beyond their station or ask a guest to exchange tokens for a bite. Such practices can result in disqualification from the competition.

## **AWARDS PRESENTATION**

Awards will be presented at the post-competition ceremony at approximately 9:00 p.m. Restaurant Liaison volunteers will endeavor to notify Participants to be near the stage if they can expect to receive an award to reduce the time moving from their station to the stage. Please do not leave your table, even if you run out of food so that we can find your representatives. Awards will be presented one by one. Each winning participant will be invited onto the stage to receive their belt buckle award and have their photo taken with Show officials. After the on-stage photo, the team will be escorted to a photo op backdrop for an additional promotional photo. The awards presentation will conclude around 9:30 p.m.

### **Awards to Be Presented**

Each award winner will be given a commemorative belt buckle with the name of the award and year mounted on a display plaque. All Participants will be given a commemorative participation plaque and window cling sticker regardless of awards. These items can be found in the supply box received at check in. Digital awards will also be available on the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo website. The list of awards with their descriptions are as follows:

### **Food Category Descriptions:**

- **People's Choice Award:** Guests will place voting tokens into pre-marked canisters at each restaurant station or food truck. Tokens will be weighed in ounces (up to 5 decimal points), and the top two winners will be awarded 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place buckles.
- **Trailblazing Starter/Appetizer Award:** Panels of judges rate the dishes to determine 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners. Judging criteria includes: appearance, aroma, taste and texture.
- **Lone Star Entrée Award:** Panels of judges rate the dishes to determine 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> place winner. Judging criteria includes: appearance, aroma, taste and texture.
- **Two-Steppin' Dessert Award:** Panels of judges rate the dishes to determine 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners. Judging criteria include appearance, aroma, taste and texture.
- **Tasty Tradition Award:** 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place winners are awarded. To qualify for this award, a restaurant must have at least 10 years of business under the same name and food concept

in the greater Houston area and be commonly considered to be a local tradition because of its familiarity and history. This award will be granted to the qualifying culinary institution receiving the highest judge's score for their appetizer, entrée or dessert submission.

- **Rookie Award:** This award is presented to first-time Roundup & Best Bites participants only. Each rookie restaurant is judged on taste and presentation of its food. The winner does not have to be a new restaurant, only new to the competition. An award is presented for 1<sup>st</sup> place. This award will be granted to the qualifying culinary institution receiving the highest judge's score for their appetizer, entrée or dessert submission.
- **Outstanding Showmanship Award:** This award is presented to a restaurant whose booth best incorporates an original and outstanding presentation of themes of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and Roundup & Best Bites. The wine producing region being highlighted at this year's event is Oregon if you wish to incorporate this into your theme. Only the serving table will be judged. There will be no room for posters and/or banners. An award will be presented for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

# AFTER THE EVENT

## LOAD OUT PROCEDURES

Load out may begin at the conclusion of the event at 9:30 p.m. All stations must be manned, and decorations remain until the event officially closes. Participants may not break down their stations early, no exceptions, even if you run out of bites to serve.

Fire code restricts vehicles inside NRG Center after the event. It is the Participant's responsibility to make certain their staff is aware of this. Please bring carts or dollies to assist with getting supplies back to your vehicles parked outdoors. HLSR is unable to supply carts.

## PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

### Advertising

Each Participant consents to abide by the following rules that govern the use of results of the Show's Roundup & Best Bites Competition and other Show activities in advertising by the entity:

- The entity agrees to refrain from any misleading advertising or labeling regarding any award which may be granted.
- The entity agrees that it will not represent any food item as being identical to the award-winning dish unless it is.
- In the event of misleading advertising by an award-winning entrant relative to a particular award or awards, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, at its discretion, reserves the right to disqualify both the offending dish and the responsible Participant from this and future competitions.

### Promotional Materials

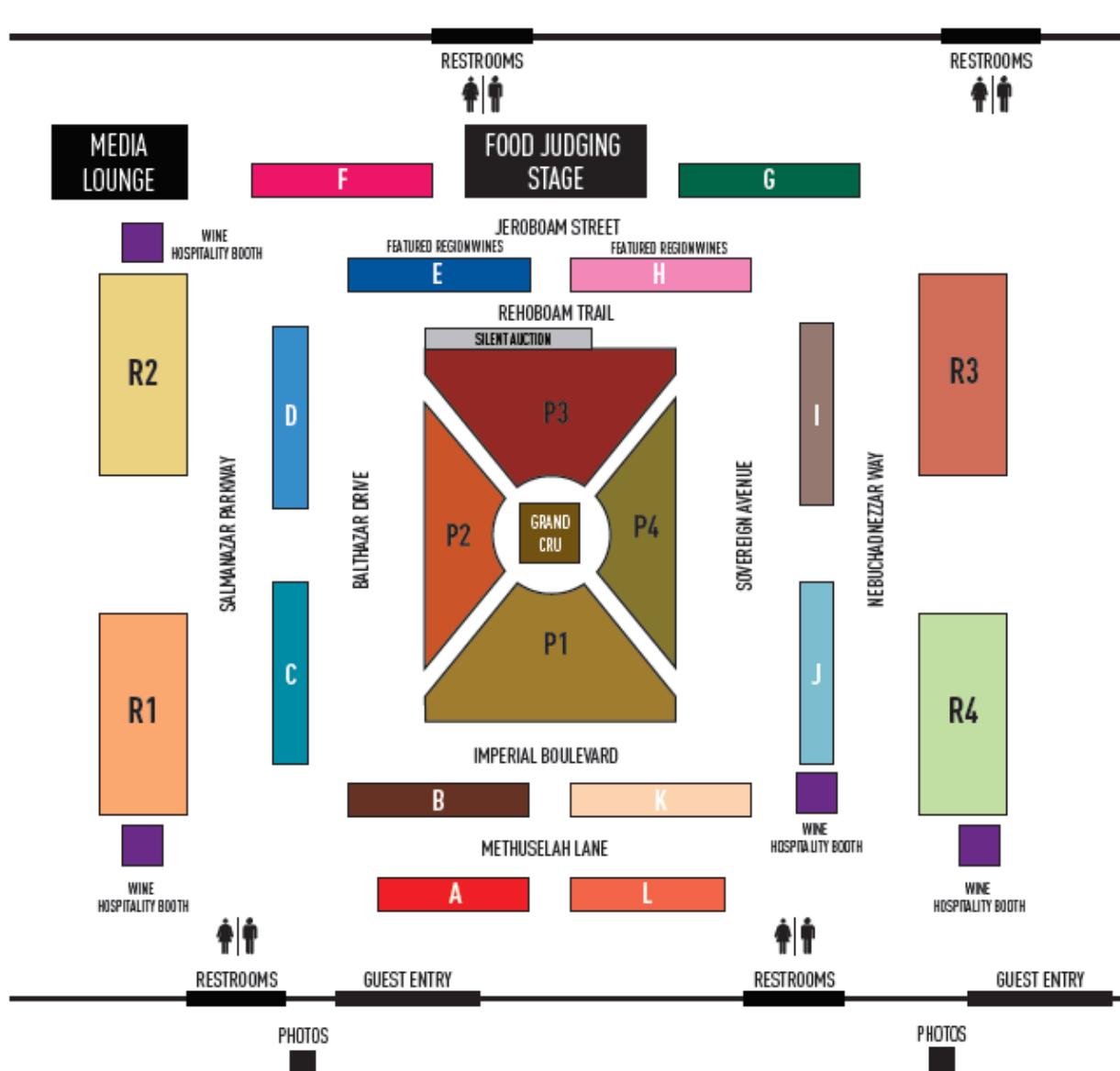
The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo will provide digital banners, stickers, emblems and other graphics that may be used in electronic or print advertising, such as your websites or social media. Digital medal artwork may not be altered in any way. Please note, this art is the only approved format in which to use the Show's logo in conjunction with your winning bite.

### Logos and Marks

Competition participants may not use any official Show logo in association with their brands. The various logos of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, RODEOHOUSTON and Rodeo Uncorked! are registered trademarks and may NOT be used under any circumstances without prior written permission from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. The awards, participation plaque and sticker, digital medals and materials provided on the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo website are the only approved format in which to use the Show's logo in conjunction with your participation.

## APPENDIX A:

### PUBLIC EVENT MAP



#### WINNING WINES\* & RESTAURANTS

<span style="color: red;">■</span> SECTION A	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> SECTION E*	<span style="color: brown;">■</span> SECTION I
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> SECTION B	<span style="color: magenta;">■</span> SECTION F	<span style="color: lightblue;">■</span> SECTION J
<span style="color: teal;">■</span> SECTION C	<span style="color: green;">■</span> SECTION G	<span style="color: lightorange;">■</span> SECTION K
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> SECTION D	<span style="color: pink;">■</span> SECTION H*	<span style="color: orange;">■</span> SECTION L

\*WINES FROM OUR FEATURED REGION OF MENDOZA, ARGENTINA  
CAN BE FOUND IN SECTIONS E AND H.

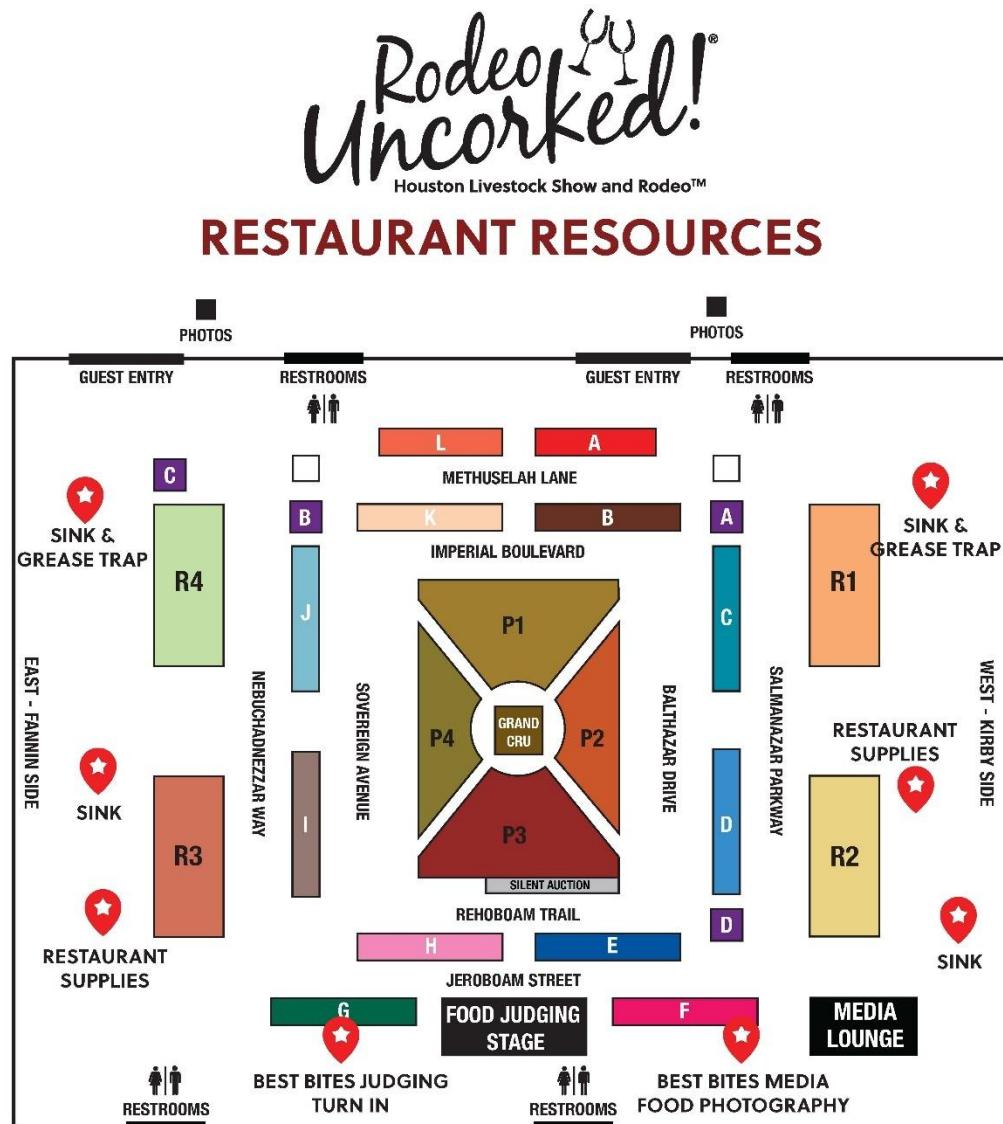
#### TABLE BUYER SEATING

<span style="color: brown;">■</span> GRAND CRU	<span style="color: lightorange;">■</span> RESERVE - R1
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> PREMIUM - P1	<span style="color: lightyellow;">■</span> RESERVE - R2
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> PREMIUM - P2	<span style="color: lightbrown;">■</span> RESERVE - R3
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> PREMIUM - P3	<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span> RESERVE - R4
<span style="color: brown;">■</span> PREMIUM - P4	

## APPENDIX B: PARKING & MUSTER LOCATIONS



## APPENDIX C: RESTAURANT RESOURCES AT THE EVENT



## APPENDIX D: COMPETITION ENTRY FORM TURNED IN WITH THE ENTRY ON EVENT DAY

Rodeo Uncorked!® Roundup & Best Bites Competition

### COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

**Please bring this completed form with you on the day of the event, Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026.**

**You will submit this form with your competition entry samples at the judging area.**

Culinary entity / Name as you would like it listed for publicity: \_\_\_\_\_

Booth location: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name at event: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone at event: \_\_\_\_\_

Category for judging:

\_\_\_\_\_ Trailblazing Appetizer      \_\_\_\_\_ Lone Star Entree      \_\_\_\_\_ Two Steppin' Dessert

Menu item (for publicity): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Eligibility for awards:

Tasty Tradition (at least 10 years in business): \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes)      \_\_\_\_\_ (No)

Rookie Award (first time at event): \_\_\_\_\_ (Yes)      \_\_\_\_\_ (No)

## **APPENDIX E:**

### **SUPPLY BOX CONTENTS**

#### **Presentation Items**

- (1) Commemorative plaque recognizing your participation in the event.
- (5) appreciation gift items for your restaurant staff at Best Bites
- Silver Badges – (2) per culinary institution. One (1) additional badge is included for restaurants who signed up & signed the Indemnity before the early bird deadline.
- (5) commemorative wine glasses for your staff to use at the event and take home.
- Static cling that may be attached to your front door or window of your establishment.

#### **Donation Form**

- In Kind Contribution Form you must complete and return to your Restaurant Liaison volunteer. Please keep the pink copy as your tax receipt.

#### **Credentials**

- (5) wristbands for restaurant staff access to the event. Anyone without a wristband will be asked to leave at 5 p.m.

#### **Best Bites Competition** – see enclosed information for details

- (1) clamshell container for competition entry
- (1) entry form to be filled out completely and turned in with your samples. Be sure to list everything with its proper name as you would like to see it in print.
- (1) clamshell for bite for media photo opportunity
- (1) media card to identify your bite for media photography. Be sure to list everything with its proper name as you would like to see it in print.
- Carafe to collect tokens from guests voting in the People's Choice Award
- One-(1) 1-gallon Ziplock bags to collect overflow tokens as needed. Be sure to label with your restaurant name!
- Competition Guidelines and Turn In Map

#### **Health Department Requirements**

- (5) hairnets
- (1) sanitizing tablet for sterilization and (1) detergent tablet for washing
- (3) water buckets for washing, rinsing and sterilization

#### **Supplies to serve your Bites**

- Plates, bowls, forks, and/or spoons as requested on your supply order form
- Cocktail napkins
- (2) rolls of paper towels to help with clean-up (continued next page)

- (5) sets of gloves for serving

#### **Clean Up**

- Garbage bag to keep your station clear and clean up when the event closes



# Rodeo Uncorked!<sup>®</sup>

Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™