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For rules go to: [www.niagaracountypeachfestival.org](http://www.niagaracountypeachfestival.org)

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NIAGARA GAZETTE

# Gather to offer sneak peek of new menu at Lewiston Jazz Festival

Hibbard teaming with Patti Thomas on new wine collection

BY JOSHUA MALONI  
GM/Managing Editor

Though there will be many food options available during the Northwest Lewiston Jazz Festival this weekend, those stopping by Gather by Gallo will find a special treat.

Owner Michael Hibbard has hired a new chef – whose name he can't yet reveal – and this culinary maestro is working on a brand-new menu.

"Jazz Festival weekend, he's actually going to do some teasers on the street in front of Gather. We're going to have a couple of the menu items that we feel like will work on the menu out on the street. He's going to be out there cooking," Hibbard said.

At the restaurateur's south Center Street eatery, "Renovations are, for the most part, complete," Hibbard said. "We added the frontal windows that are fully operational. Interior, we redid all the flooring, so all-new flooring in there; new bar tops, and then completely painted the interior a fresh, new vibrant look. And then we also took out the wall separation that separated the dining room and bar area. Put all-new light fixtures in.

"It's just a more modern look, but not ultra-modern."

He explained, "We kind of ran into some obstacles in the kitchen there this year. We wanted a fully operational kitchen but, with lack of staff, we kind of had to back off a little bit.

"We started brunch about a month ago, and that's been very successful on Sundays. Actually, myself and my general manager are cooking in the kitchen on Sundays for brunch. That's been fun. Actually, I really enjoy doing it, and working with Jeremy (Maxfield), my general manager, is great. We always have fun together."

While a new chef finalizes the future food choices at Gather, patrons can order food from Hibbard's north Center Street restaurant, Gallo Coal Fire Kitchen.

"We can produce it over at Gallo and bring it over," to Gather, he said. "The bar is fully open. Right now, we're working on getting that kitchen open and fully operational. We're hoping in the next



The new Gallo Coal Fire Kitchen bar has been a hit. (Gallo photo)

month or so."

And speaking of Gallo, Hibbard said, "We have the exterior bar that we're using mostly for events right now. We had the 'Gallo and the Ghost' event just recently, the event that Patti Thomas and I do together. Having that outside bar provides an easier way for patrons to access the bar – and it's just got kind of a really cool vibe out there, too, especially at night when music's playing."

That new bar was crafted by metal artist Dan Buttery.

"It's all steel frame that Dan produced in sections, and then brought it to Gallo and fabricated it on site," Hibbard said. The base is raw steel, with the upper part clear-coated and with brushed aluminum on top. "Dan did some really cool cutouts of the Gallo logo on the front and backside of the bar, which are all illuminated, as well. So at night, you see that illumination through the logo itself."

**'Choose Love Wine'**

In addition to his two restaurants, Hibbard said, "Myself, Patti Thomas, and Bob Castellani from Tops, we started a wine business together recently. That's been a whirlwind over the past month. We did a launch and it's kind of blown up. It's been a great, great experience."

He explained, "Patti Thomas and I are really good friends. And we've been doing this event at Gallo for the past couple years. I pitched her an idea about doing something together. Just kind of talking back and forth about different business ideas, the conversation of wine came up. And she did some artwork that was commissioned by Highmark Stadium



under the 'Choose Love' theme. And I said, 'Well, why don't we do a wine called 'Choose Love Wine,' with the approval, obviously, of some people."

Hibbard said, "It's a red blend. We have a red blend, and a chardonnay. We actually just got the email this morning: We're doing a private reserve, and that'll be out for the holidays. It'll be a more elevated red."

He noted, "We've been working on it for about eight months. We launched last month. And Try-It Distributing took the reins, and they helped us with marketing and distribution. Bob Castellani, he's a wine distributor/broker, he actually distributes wine around the world. He came on board, too. We've got a great team behind this. "And it's all getting produced at Reif Winery on Niagara-on-the-Lake. Try-It holds all the product and, within a month, we're in 32 liquor stores throughout Western New York.

"We are doing bottle signings with Patti and (her husband,) Thurman (Thomas), and we've done about five of them. The reception has been overwhelming."

The wine is available at Gallo, as well as Hibbard's Old Portage Shop Wine & Liquors, and Supermarket Liquors. Additional locations are listed online at [www.chooselovewine.com](http://www.chooselovewine.com).

## Lewiston Presbyterian Church jazz service

The First "Jazzyterian" Church of Lewiston is offering a jazz worship service at 11:15 a.m. Sunday as part of Jazz Festival weekend.

Renowned Western New York organist and pianist Bob Hull is music director for the church and will be coordinating the musical offerings. Various local musicians and vocalists will be participating.

"This special service is our way to pay tribute to the Village of Lewiston's highly successful annual Northwest Jazz Festival and is a perfect way to extend the festival into Sunday," said the Rev. Cath-

erine Rieley-Goddard. She noted the service is open to all, and refreshments will be served.

A press release stated, "The First Presbyterian Church of Lewiston is the oldest and most historic in the village, and played a major role in the Underground Railroad that helped secure freedom across the Niagara River to Canada for many slaves during the Civil War."

The church is located at 505 Cayuga St., Lewiston. It is handicapped-accessible, and parking is available on the street or in the back parking lot.