Slow Food Vermont
Snail of Approval Nomination and Awards Guidelines

Online nomination and application forms can be found at
http://slowfoodvermont.org/snail-of-approval
Slow Food Vermont's Snail of Approval is awarded to those restaurants, bars, food and beverage artisans, stores, and markets that contribute to the quality, authenticity, and sustainability of Vermont’s food supply and have been deemed outstanding among peers.

**Snail of Approval Standards**

Slow Food Vermont envisions these standards as guiding principles to embodying core Slow Food values. We understand that practicing Slow Food values is a process based on commitment, passion, and practicality, not on a rubric of metrics. Therefore, applicants need only meet 90% (32.4 of possible 36 points) of the criteria listed below to be considered for the Snail of Approval—with the goal to slowly reach 100%! Each of the 12 criteria is ranked from 0-3 points with fractional (quarter) points encouraged. The average of the three-person team (SFVT Board member + industry content expert + SFVT member at large) is calculated to determine approval/rejection status. A typical site visit lasts 90 minutes. It is expected that a small sample of food from the standard menu will be tasted with a background discussion to showcase how the food relates to the elements of the application. A current standard menu will also be requested for review and reference prior to the site visit.

**GOOD**

*Seasonality:* Menu emphasizes use of seasonal, fresh, local produce.

*Taste:* Menu offers fresh and wholesome ingredients; food is prepared with care and craft.

*Artisan:* Presents fine food created by their own or the hands of other artisans; traditional foods are true to their cultural heritage.
**Authenticity:** Heirloom varietals and heritage breeds are true to their evolutionary history and incorporated in menus and products.

**CLEAN**

**Sustainability:** Establishment uses natural products free of additives and strives to incorporate local, seasonal foods on the menu as much as possible with regard to provenance and production methods. Uses meats, dairy, fish, and shellfish that have been produced responsibly, sustainably, and humanely from reputable providers. Produce is grown and harvested with methods that have a positive impact on our local ecosystems and promotes biodiversity.

**Low Impact:** Produces food using products and processes that minimize waste and impact of food production/distribution (e.g., avoids single-use, non-recyclable packaging/products; participates in recycling/composting and low-carbon delivery programs).

**Connection:** Aims to communicate regularly with distributors and producers about the quality of, and production and processing of, produce and product. Regular dialogue ensures traceability and a commitment to food safety.

**FAIR**

**Local/Regional Sourcing:** Where applicable, makes an effort to procure food sources from “Maple Syrup Nation” (as defined by RAFT - Renewing America’s Food Traditions): starting with State of Vermont and extending out to the Northeast region.

**Awareness:** Establishment includes outreach and education for customers on the source of the products used.

**Fair Business and Labor Practices:** Contributes to the quality of life in Vermont through fair employment practices; purchases ingredients produced by people who are treated with dignity and justly compensated for their labor.

**Humane:** Humans and animals are treated with dignity and respect, from farm to table. Use of growth hormones and antibiotics is limited. Animals are free to move and not confined. Managers and caretakers are thoroughly trained, skilled and competent in animal husbandry and welfare.
Community: Contributes to the uniqueness and richness of the Vermont food community. Involved in advancing the awareness of Slow Food principles in the community through sharing time, talent, knowledge, and/or resources. Membership of other local food networks such as the Vermont Fresh Network.

Nomination and Application Process

1. Slow Food members educate potential Snail of Approval nominees and encourage them to join Slow Food, then to complete and submit the Slow Food Vermont Snail of Approval Nomination Form that can be found at this link.
   a. Slow Food Vermont members are encouraged to identify and educate restaurants or artisans of products in the State of Vermont that follow the principles of good, clean, and fair food.
   b. Restaurants/businesses that are owned or managed by Slow Food members may nominate themselves.
   c. Snail of Approval Applicants are required to be Slow Food members.

2. Nomination forms are submitted to the Slow Food Vermont Snail of Approval Committee.

3. Nominees are contacted, at which point they may decide to proceed with the application.

4. Applicants submit their application and the $50 fee* to the committee

5. A 3-person committee evaluates applications and performs an on-site visit to the restaurant/ business takes to fact check the application.
   a. All committee members are expected to be SFVT members; with one member being a member of the SFVT Board of Directors. It is ideal to have one member of the committee be a ‘content expert’ for the type of business under evaluation; i.e. chef, front of house, back of house, baker, sommelier.
   b. A recommendation to the Slow Food Vermont’s Board of Directors is made for final approval / rejection.

6. The Board of Directors votes on awarding the Snail of Approval. Decisions are made on an as presented basis.

7. Applicants receive notice detailing if they met the criteria and the next steps for receiving the Snail of Approval are communicated. Applicants that are not approved are sent a notice detailing why their application was rejected.

8. Awardees will be contacted by the Slow Food Vermont Marketing Director and will receive the Snail of Approval Public Relations package including decals to display at the physical...
business as well as access to the Snail of Approval logo for business websites and promotional materials as desired.

9. Awardees are listed, along with a description of products and services, on Slow Food Vermont’s Snail of Approval webpage and promoted according to our Public Relations Package.

* Submit your fee to **Slow Food Vermont, Attn: Snail of Approval** at the mailing address that you find in [this page](#).
Site Visit Process

1. Snail of Approval is a process based on commitment, passion, practicality, and achieving an acceptable score against a set criteria.
2. Purpose of the site visit is to clarify and verify the accuracy of the application.
3. Typical commitment is four hours on the day of the visit. This includes a one-hour pre-visit huddle, 1½-hour site visit, and a 1½-hour post-visit wrap-up to complete the assessment and paperwork. This timeframe does not include travel.
4. Snail applicants come from all regions of Vermont.
5. A three-person team comprised of a SFVT Board member + industry content expert + SFVT member at large will perform the site visit.
6. Site visit team is expected to review the links and reference material provided from the Snail Outreach Coordinator prior to the visit. This package typically includes:
   a. Nominee application and supporting materials
   b. Nominees website
   c. Public postings of the business’s reviews
   d. Snail reference materials including the standard evaluation criteria with scoring guidelines
   e. Please also be prepared to answer the following question:
      - Do you have any direct or indirect financial interest in the restaurant or business being nominated? If so, please explain:
        (For self-nominating restaurants and businesses this is not necessary to complete)
7. It is expected that a small sample of food from the standard menu will be tasted with a background discussion to showcase how the food relates to the elements of the application.
8. Each of the 12 criteria are ranked from 0-3 points with fractional (quarter) points encouraged.
9. Applicants must meet 90% (32.4 of possible 36 points) of the criteria to be considered for the Snail of Approval.
10. Each member of the site team is expected to assign a numeric score and provide an explanation / justification for each of the 12 categories on the provided scorecard.
11. The average of all three scorecards is calculated to determine the overall rating.
12. The following timeframe is expected for completion of a Snail of Approval evaluations:
   a. Delivery of completed assessment scorecard and supporting materials to the SOA Director within three weeks from date of on-site visit
   b. Entry of visit results into the SOA database within three weeks of receipt of information
c. Review of completed assessment results by SOA subcommittee within three weeks of completed posting to database

d. Recommendation and voting of SOA status by SFVT Board of Directors at the next scheduled meeting. Electronic voting is acceptable when appropriate.

e. Implementation of the SOA awards process is expected to be in progress within three months from the date of the site visit.

Monitoring & Renewal

Slow Food Vermont monitors the integrity of Snail of Approval restaurants and artisans through ongoing feedback from Slow Food Vermont members.

- Snail of Approval certification is valid for two years; renewal follows the initial process
- Applicants re-applying after 2 years do not have to pay the $50 fee.

*Please contact us with any questions about these standards by emailing us at VermontVT@slowfoodusa.org or visiting our website at SlowFoodVermont.org*