



The Bartolotta Restaurants
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MKE Airport Media Contact: media@mitchellairport.com

Bartolotta Media Contact: pr@bartolottas.com

MKE AIRPORT CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING OF BARTOLOTTA'S BAR & RISTORO

New contemporary Italian restaurant extends MKE's longstanding partnership with SSP America and The Bartolotta Restaurants

MILWAUKEE (October 29, 2026) – [Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport \(MKE\)](#) is celebrating the official grand opening of Bartolotta's Bar & Ristoro on Concourse D. The new concept merges the deep-rooted connection with Italian cuisine of Milwaukee native and two-time James Beard Award-winning Chef Paul Bartolotta with the signature hospitality of The Bartolotta Restaurants.

Developed specifically for MKE in partnership with The Bartolotta Restaurants and airport food and beverage operator SSP America, Bartolotta's Bar & Ristoro offers travelers an inviting taste of Italy at Milwaukee's hometown airport. The restaurant provides flexible dining options, from quick bites and salads to full-sized entrées. An open kitchen, prominent bar, and bright décor create a welcoming, energetic setting inspired by contemporary Italy.

"We're excited to introduce another exceptional dining experience at MKE," said Airport Director Brian Dranzik. "This new addition reflects our ongoing commitment to enhancing the travel experience while bringing the best of Milwaukee's local dining scene right to our travelers. Milwaukee has an incredible culinary scene, and we're excited to have that reflected in our airport concessions."

The menu offers a contemporary take on Italian cuisine, combining the culinary technique and regionality influences that define The Bartolotta Restaurants with an approachable dining experience designed for today's traveler. Guests can start their day with a prosciutto and Parmesan frittata or tiramisu toast, then choose from a selection of antipasti such as bresaola and shrimp scampi, pastas, pizza alla Romana, focaccia panini, and secondi including chicken Marsala and salmon olivada. The bar program features red, white, and sparkling wines; Wisconsin craft beers; signature cocktails, including the Italian 75, Hugo Spritz, Sicilian Margarita, and Lakeshore Sunset; as well as creative zero-proof offerings.

"Italian food has always been about great ingredients, simplicity and taking care of people," said Chef Bartolotta, owner and co-founder of The Bartolotta Restaurants. "Bartolotta's Bar & Ristoro brings that philosophy to travelers while staying true to the Italian cooking that has shaped my career. Milwaukee is our home, and whether you are arriving in our city, returning home or heading out on your next journey, we want the food you experience here to be something memorable."

Bartolotta's Bar & Ristoro replaces Nonna Bartolotta's, which opened at MKE in 2009, building on the longstanding partnership among MKE, SSP America, and The Bartolotta Restaurants. The following year, Airports Council International - North America awarded Nonna Bartolotta's first place for Best New Food and Beverage Concept, recognizing the value of bringing authentic local dining experiences to travelers.

“Great airport dining should do more than serve travelers; it should tell them something true about the place they have arrived in or are leaving behind,” said Kyle Phillips, Senior Vice President, Business Development, SSP America. “For more than 15 years, our partnership with The Bartolotta Restaurants has helped make dining at MKE one of the best parts of the journey. Bartolotta’s Bar & Ristoro carries that story forward, pairing Chef Paul Bartolotta’s deep connection to Italian cooking with the warmth, character and culinary confidence of Milwaukee.”

Bartolotta’s Bar & Ristoro is open daily starting at 4:00 a.m. serving breakfast, lunch, dinner, drinks, and snacks. A second location on Concourse C is expected to open in the coming months.

About Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport

[Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport](#) is celebrating 100 years of flight in 2026. Since 1926, MKE Airport has been serving Milwaukee with nonstop flights, nonstop innovation, nonstop employment, and nonstop adventures. The complete list of nonstop cities can be found at [flymke.com](#). MKE is owned by Milwaukee County and operated by the Department of Transportation, Airport Division, under the policy direction of the Milwaukee County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. The Airport is entirely funded by user fees; no property tax dollars are used for the Airport’s capital improvements or for its day-to-day operation.

About The Bartolotta Restaurants

The Bartolotta Restaurants is a nationally recognized restaurant and catering organization co-founded by Chef Paul Bartolotta and his late brother, Joe Bartolotta. Chef Paul Bartolotta is a two-time James Beard Award-winning chef in two separate regions, Midwest and Southwest, winning in both 1994 and 2009. In addition, Chef Paul Bartolotta has six James Beard Award nominations including Best Chef Midwest in 1993, Best New Restaurant in Las Vegas in 2005, Outstanding Restaurateur USA alongside his brother in 2017, 2018, 2019, and a finalist for Outstanding Restaurateur USA in 2020. Since the opening of its flagship restaurant, Ristorante Bartolotta dal 1993, The Bartolotta Restaurants group has grown to become the premier culinary brand in the Greater Milwaukee region, offering first class service and cuisine across a portfolio of 19 one-of-a-kind restaurants and catering facilities, including fine dining, upscale casual, food halls, executive dining, quick-casual, and airport concepts. More information can be found at [bartolottas.com](#).

About SSP America

[SSP America](#) is a division of SSP Group plc (LSE:SSPG), a global leading operator of food and beverage outlets in travel locations employing 49,000 colleagues in around 3,000 units across 38 countries. We specialize in designing, creating, and operating a diverse range of food and drink outlets in airports, train stations, and other travel hubs across six formats: sit-down and quick service restaurants, bars, cafés, lounges, and food-led convenience stores. Our extensive portfolio of brands features a mix of international, national, and local brands, tailored to meet the diverse needs of our clients and customers.

Our purpose is to be the best part of the journey, and our focus is on making every journey taste better – bringing great food and welcoming hospitality to travelers across the globe. Sustainability is crucial for our long-term success, and we aim to deliver a positive impact for our business while uniting stakeholders to promote a sustainable food travel sector.

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