

Friskie Fries: Motif Overall Favorite Truck Award

Where do the best thoughts come from? A boardroom? The shower?

For Randy D’Antuono, the best ideas came in the wee morning hours sitting on a street curb in Amsterdam, from some scribbled notes on a bar napkin. That’s where we can trace the origins of his greatest salty, starchy gift to Rhode Island: Friskie Fries.

From these humble beginnings, the entrepreneur ascended to claim the Motif top truck award this year, **Overall Favorite Truck**.

“Food and memories go hand in hand. We are lucky to be a part of it,” said Darryl Hutto, the Food Truck Manager, who accepted the award.

Our first question for D’Antuono stumped him: which fries are best?

“There are so many choices for so many different taste palates,” he said. “The number one seller is Miss Potato Head [Friskie Fries topped with smoked bacon, sharp cheddar, sour cream and scallions] followed by Cluckin’ Hot Mess [Friskie Fries topped with crispy chicken, buffalo sauce and blue cheese]. When the Tiger King [Friskie Fries topped with General Tso’s Chicken, Mandarin Oranges and scallions] was introduced as a special, it was overwhelmingly popular—so popular that customers demanded it to be a permanent item.”

D’Antuono did confide that his personal favorite menu item is The Dirty Daug, which is a collaboration with another RI culinary legend, New York System. The fries are topped with New York System weiner bits, meat sauce, diced onion, mustard, and of course celery salt. Now there’s an option for those revelrous souls who saunter out of their favorite downtown discotheque and don’t want to make the hike to Olneyville! Naturally Friskie Fries wouldn’t be Friskie Fries without Topsy, the business’s feline logo and mascot. D’Antuono told *Motif* that Topsy works overtime as both the mascot for Friskie Fries and its sister business the Alleycat Bar in downtown Providence. “For the past 20 years, that famous cat named Topsy has reminded people of good times, a safe atmosphere and memorable experiences,” he said. “[Since he] was so well known, we wanted to brand Friskie with the same public identification and recognition as the bar: in this case, just sitting on a pile of fries instead of sitting by a martini.”

D’Antuono says that the loyalty of his guests—known as “friskettes”—is incredibly humbling. “Without this following, Friskie would be just another place to get fries,” says D’Antuono. “It is not. It’s an experience.”

Looking to the future, Friskie Fries is headed for the moon: Friskie Fries just built another new truck, plans to expand their presence into Boston and is working to bring the Friskie brand into the franchising world by spring of 2022. “We honestly believe that Friskie can be a nationwide fry-nomenon,” D’Antuono told *Motif*. After grimacing at the pun, we agreed.

Friskie Fries has catered hundreds of concerts and corporate events. “Two that always stand out for us are The Salem Food Truck Festival and certainly “The Big E” Fair in West Springfield,” D’Antuono said.

“We have a beautiful location in The RI Building on the grounds where we witness two million visitors at the park in a three-week timeframe.” While a few of our questions were tough for D’Antuono, it was easy for him to say what he was proudest of. “This is the easiest question of them all. My staff. Without them, I would have nothing,” D’Antuono told *Motif*. “I could never pull this off myself. With the constant support of the community, friends and family, Friskie will continue to grow and deliver the highest quality product with a smile and a meow!”