

Nation's Restaurant News Recognizes White Castle as First-Ever Brand Icon

New annual award recognizes major chains that are protecting their legacy while pushing the envelope with innovation.

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— Nation's Restaurant News, the premier independent publication serving the entire foodservice industry, announced that White Castle has been named its first-ever [Brand Icon](#).

The logo for Nation's Restaurant News, featuring the words "Nation's Restaurant News" in a stylized, cursive font.

Nation's Restaurant News

Brand Icon, an annual recognition, will honor major restaurant companies that are pushing the envelope with innovation even as they protect their historic legacies.

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*Sam Oches, editor-in-chief of
Nation's Restaurant News*

“We launched Brand Icon this year as a way to acknowledge those restaurant companies that have been around for generations, yet haven't lost a step,” said Sam Oches, editor-in-chief of Nation's Restaurant News. “This recognition will highlight one restaurant company per year that excels at staying young at heart and resonating with consumers while also recognizing its rich history and place in the restaurant pantheon.”

White Castle is the oldest hamburger chain in the world, with founder E.W. “Billy” Ingram opening the first location in Wichita, Kan., in 1921. The company is still owned by the Ingram family; Billy Ingram's great-granddaughter, Lisa Ingram, is CEO.

Along with the brand's continued success — it enjoyed over \$600 million in sales from about 360 restaurants in 2021, and nearly \$850 million when including its retail business — White Castle continues to thrive as an industry innovator. It was the first national chain to partner with Impossible Foods when it launched the Impossible Slider in 2018, and it also teamed with Miso Robotics to test that company's Flippy 2 robot in a number of locations.

“Some legacy companies get so bogged down in not wanting to disrupt what’s worked in the past that they don’t innovate with an eye on the future. White Castle is the opposite,” Oches said. “This company somehow finds a way to stay fresh in its operations and relevant in its marketing even after 101 years. That’s why we gave it the inaugural Brand Icon award.”

To recognize White Castle as this year’s Brand Icon, Nation’s Restaurant News’ editors visited its Columbus, Ohio, headquarters to create an exclusive multimedia package. To read the story and watch three behind-the-scenes videos about what makes White Castle an iconic restaurant brand, visit nrn.com/white-castle.

ABOUT NATION’S RESTAURANT NEWS

Nation's Restaurant News (NRN) is the No. 1 source of business information for the foodservice industry. For more than 50 years, NRN has served the information and engagement needs of foodservice professionals, offering award-winning content across all mediums with the goal of driving businesses forward. NRN was named Best Media Brand by the Jesse H. Neal Awards in 2019. NRN is part of the Restaurant & Food Group by Informa Connect, the leading B2B integrated media group connecting products, solutions and thought leadership with the largest, most engaged and highly qualified audience in foodservice and food retail. The group connects the entire food and foodservice ecosystem of operators, chefs, retailers, manufacturers, vendors and solutions providers through traditional, digital, social and custom media as well as digital and live events. To learn more about NRN, visit www.nrn.com.

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