

James Beard Finalist Chef Rob Connoley Returns to Missouri for Historic Ozark Dining Experience at COMO Restaurant Week

COMO Restaurant Week brings lauded chef Rob Connoley back to Missouri for Historic Ozark Dining experience celebrating Missouri cuisine.

COLUMBIA, MO, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Food lovers from across

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Rob Connoley

Missouri will gather in Columbia this weekend for a one-of-a-kind culinary experience as Historic Ozark Dining, part of COMO Restaurant Week, welcomes acclaimed chef Rob Connoley back to his home state for an immersive seven-course dinner celebrating the rich food traditions of the Ozarks.

The exclusive dining experience showcases a contemporary interpretation of historic Ozark cuisine, highlighting the region's agricultural heritage and seasonal ingredients. Due to overwhelming demand, the original Sunday dinner sold out quickly, prompting organizers to

add additional dinners on Friday and Saturday to accommodate guests eager to experience Connoley's acclaimed cuisine.

A James Beard Award finalist, guest chef for the Smithsonian Institution and National Geographic, and renowned author, Connoley has built a national reputation for preserving and reimagining America's regional food traditions. His return to Missouri offers guests a rare opportunity to experience his thoughtful exploration of historical Ozark cooking.

“Not only was it a question of what German immigrants in the nineteenth century would have prepared, but what was the role of indigenous people of the area?” Connoley said. “What was the role of the enslaved people of the area? And how did those three cultures interact in a way that led to the food that we eat today?”

Guests will enjoy a seven-course menu inspired by the foods that have sustained Ozark communities for generations, featuring ingredients such as acorns, pork, Missouri corn, and fresh produce sourced from local farms and the Columbia Farmers Market. The menu also

showcases local products including beef from Herzog Farms and chocolate from Askinosie Chocolate, celebrating the bounty of Missouri producers.

According to Connoley, his purpose in curating the event is "to harken to the past in a way that is authentic and appropriate and attributes to the right person or group of people but ultimately gives you an amazing meal, an amazing experience."

Beyond the culinary experience, the event is expected to generate a meaningful economic impact for Columbia. Guests are traveling from across Missouri, including St. Louis and other communities, specifically to attend the dinner, contributing to local hotels, restaurants, and attractions during COMO Restaurant Week.

The event is made possible through the support of Columbia Regional Airport and City Club of Columbia.

A first-time inclusion, Historic Ozark Dining is one of the signature experiences of COMO Restaurant Week, an annual celebration of Columbia's vibrant dining scene that encourages residents and visitors alike to discover local restaurants, chefs, and culinary experiences.

In addition to celebrating Columbia's culinary community, COMO Restaurant Week serves a greater purpose by supporting The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri. A portion of proceeds from participating events and Restaurant Week initiatives helps provide meals to neighbors facing food insecurity throughout the region, allowing guests to enjoy exceptional dining experiences while giving back to the local community.

Event Details:

- Historic Ozark Dining with Chef Rob Connoley
- Friday, Saturday & Sunday
- Seven-course historic Ozark dining experience, with a few surprises
- In the historic ballroom of the Tiger Hotel
- Optional wine pairings available

For more information about COMO Restaurant Week, visit [COMO Restaurant Week](#).

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