

# FOOD BIZ Dynamic duo

by Ernie Grzeca

“Restaurant Radio Chicago” is a fun, informative program that has something for everyone. Airing on WIND (AM 560) every Saturday at 5 p.m., Tom Reboletti and Dane Neal bring you the latest news about great places to eat plus interviews with celebrity chefs, television’s biggest food personalities, restaurant owners, and national leaders in the restaurant world. For the diner looking for that perfect place to eat, “Restaurant Radio Chicago” “sets the table” for the weekend, with restaurant selections and special deals for every taste and budget. And since “sometimes the best restaurant in town is your own kitchen or your own backyard,” they have recipes and tips for everyone.

Neal is a nationally syndicated radio talk show personality known for his work on programs like Gasoline Alley (“The Fastest Show on Radio”) and as the longtime co-host of the “Joe Gentile Morning Show.” Reboletti is a former restaurateur, food industry veteran, national restaurant consultant and an expert in the area of restaurant real estate.

“Restaurant Radio Chicago” is also popular with the food service industry, which tunes in to hear features on hygiene, marketing, legislation, current trends, nutrition and even advice for new restaurant owners or those considering getting into the business.

Reboletti and Neal first got together in 2006, when Neal was co-hosting the “Joe Gentile Morning Show” on WJGG (AM 1530). Reboletti sat in with Neal and Gentile and they all started talking about restaurants and food. The chemistry was immediate, the conversation was lively, and the listener feedback was great. They all

agreed a radio show about food and the Chicago restaurant scene was a good idea. Within a week, “Restaurant Radio Chicago” was born.

“Tom is the insider, the guy who knows restaurants, consults with them, knows what they go through and what challenges they face and what makes the great ones great,” says Neal. “I have the perspective of the ‘everyman’ food fan. I am interested in and I love food, but see things the way that the average person does as the diner.”

“Chicago is one of the country’s great food cities. Tom has lots of connections and relationships with top food people here in town. I set up interviews with the networks, media, and food personalities from around the country,” he adds. “He is restaurants and I am radio ... together we

are Restaurant Radio.”

As the show progressed and grew in popularity, “Restaurant Radio Chicago” needed to find new ways to appeal to a broader range of listeners and sponsors. In May 2008, the switch was made to AM 560, a top talk station in the Chicago market that can also be heard in a few other states. As part of the Salem Broadcasting Network, WIND also provides many options to expand and grow the program.

Currently enjoying a listenership of more than 200,000, Reboletti and Neal have goals of bringing the best of Chicago’s culinary scene to an even broader audience. There are many new projects in the works for 2009, including more live appearances at restaurant grand openings, and summer festivals, expanding the radio show to two hours. “We are also looking forward to expanding the show on a national level, as well as researching TV possibilities,” says Reboletti.

And a national program is already on the horizon. Launching in the first half of 2009 is “Restaurant Radio America,” a syndicated show that will broadcast from Chicago and be heard in at least 30 markets. “It will be a natural extension of ‘Restaurant Radio Chicago’ about the people and places of the food world. We will have interviews for food travel destinations, top cooking television personalities, leaders in the restaurant field, and the latest and greatest for the kitchen or the backyard grill,” says Neal.

To find out why hundreds of thousands of listeners listen in every Saturday, tune in to AM 560 at 5 p.m. As always, they’ll “save you a table!” For details and to listen to past shows, visit [www.restaurantradio.tv](http://www.restaurantradio.tv).



Tom Reboletti and Dane Neal are tearing up the airwaves as hosts of “Restaurant Radio Chicago.”