

The tradition continues – the Cru Dinner at ACPT is back!

What: Reserve **NOW** for the **ACPT 2023 Friday Night Cru Dinner**

When: Friday, March 31 from 6 pm to 8 pm

Where: Sam's American Bistro, the hotel restaurant conveniently located on the lobby level of the Stamford Marriott, to the left of the main bar.

Who: Anyone who wants to attend. "Cru" is a state of mind, not an organization per se.

About the Cru Dinner: It began in 1999 when a small group of denizens of the New York Times Crossword Forum (the precursor to the Wordplay blog and its many commenters) decided to gather in person to eat and chat in real life before the start of the tournament.

The tradition has continued, with changes of venue (Stamford => Brooklyn => back to Stamford), and organizers, and it continues to be a fun way to kick off the weekend. The attendees are a mix of veteran solvers, tournament luminaries, rookies – and some special guests (hi Will!), who'll stop by to say hello and possibly bring some swag.

Cru Dinner Menu 2023

Served Buffet Style continuously from 6 PM to 8 PM

Bruschetta

Roma Tomato, Basil, and Mozzarella Cheese
Tuscan White Beans, Rosemary and Garlic
Black Olive Tapenade
served with Toasted Herb Focaccia and Crostini

Candied Sliced Roast Turkey Breast

served with Mini Whole Grain Rolls
Homemade Spicy Dijon Mustard on the side

Penne Pasta with Roasted Baby Vegetables (Vegan)

Sauteed in Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Poached Eggplant Garlic
Salt, Pepper, and Hot Pepper Flakes served on the side
Cheese Toppings will be available and served on the side

Salad Bar

Romaine Greens, Cucumbers, Peppers, Onions, Carrots, Tabbouleh, Couscous, Sprouts and Seeds
A selection of 3 Dressings and Croutons on the side

An Assortment of Mini Cannoli and Sliced Fresh Fruit

Regular Soda, Diet Soda, Regular Coffee, Decaf Coffee, and Tea

**** Adult Beverages may be purchased at the adjacent bar. ****

\$50.00 per person *including tax and tip*

If you're staying at the Marriott, please plan to charge your dinner to your room. If not, please bring the *exact amount* in cash.

Admittance to the Cru Dinner will be **by reservation only** as the room can accommodate a little over 80 people comfortably. Reservations will be closed at that point. As most regulars know, we do fill up so if you're planning to be there on March 31st, please reserve your spot soon as possible!

We will have a wait staff person (or two) attending to our buffet so that no matter when you arrive between 6 and 8, everything on the menu will be available. *Before you leave for the evening's activities, we recommend that everyone in attendance throw a dollar or two into a hat to thank our servers for what I expect will once again be excellent service.*

OK. You got me. How do I sign up?

Reservations can be made simply by emailing chris1aldrich@gmail.com

the (1) number, (2) names, and (3) email addresses

of those who will be attending

with **Cru Dinner** in the subject line. (This is important!)

If you're an ACPT rookie and/or a Cru Dinner rookie, let me know that also.

All attendees will receive an email confirmation.

As stated above, we are limited to a maximum of about 80 people so please **do not wait** until the last minute. We anticipate 2023 will once again be a sell-out.

FAQs

What is the Cru?

Essentially, anyone who ever contributed in any way to the old NY Times Crossword Puzzle Forum or the many successor venues. It's a big tent and if you'll be attending this year's edition of the ACPT, you're in the Cru.

Do I have to register for the tournament to attend the Cru Dinner?

No, but your dinner must be charged to a room if you're staying in the Marriott or paid in ****EXACT**** cash if you're not.

If I get held up in traffic and don't arrive until after 7, will I still eat?

Yes. Everything on the menu will be replenished regularly and available for the entire 2 hours.

This is my first tournament and I'm afraid I'll feel out of place at a dinner where everyone knows everyone else.

Traditionally, about a third of 2023 Cru Dinner attendees will be ACPT rookies, who are made to feel welcome by the veteran attendees. Feelings of unease will disappear in 5 minutes. Maybe quicker. Remember, every veteran was once a rookie.

Will I have time to get to the Friday evening program and wine and cheese reception?

Those venues are just across the lobby. There will be plenty of time. And Will Shortz will stop by following his Judges' Dinner so when he leaves for the evening's activities, that will be your cue.

More info?

Check out this interview of Mike Alpern, erstwhile Cru Dinner organizer, with Deb Amlen in the NYT Wordplay blog in 2013 <http://wordplay.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/07/a-c-p-t-2013-how-to-have-fun/>

What if I have any other questions? Email me: chris1aldrich@gmail.com with **Cru Dinner** in the subject line.

I look forward to seeing you on March 31. And good luck if you're competing!

Chris Aldrich (chris1aldrich@gmail.com)

Special thanks to Mike Alpern and Dan Chall, who won't be attending ACPT this year, for their assistance in making Cru Dinner 2023 a reality!