

# Four Winds Casino Resort's **COPPER ROCK** STEAKHOUSE

by AJ Naff

Four Winds Casino Resort in New Buffalo, Michigan offers its guests many entertainment options. The casino floor encompasses 130,000 sq. ft. and boasts over 3,000 slot machines, 100 table games, and the Midwest's only World Poker Tour Poker Room. The property provides big-name entertainment, a variety of venues that cater to nightlife, and a luxury hotel with an array of amenities. For those guests craving an upscale dining experience, or just looking to relax with a cocktail or cigar in an elegant setting, Four Winds offers the award-winning Copper Rock Steakhouse.



"I think the overall feeling of the room is one that's unexpected," said Frank Freedman, Assistant General Manager of Four Winds. "It stands up to the best, most classic steakhouses in the country." Billed as the resort's fine dining restaurant, Copper Rock serves a flavorful menu, including dry-aged steaks and over 550 wines. The restaurant delivers a remarkably attentive level of service and has garnered a superb reputation not only among resort patrons, but also throughout the surrounding community. "We're very proud to be at, if not beyond, the level of classic Chicago steakhouses in atmosphere and food quality."

Copper Rock Steakhouse is just off the casino floor. The windows on either side of the entrance open onto the elegant bar area as well as onto the wine room, with its stunning display of reds. Guests can look through the venue's 12-ft. double doors to the open kitchen at the back of the restaurant and watch the chefs at work. "From the front, a patron enjoying the casino gets a beautiful view of the steakhouse," said Daniel Richardson, Vice President of Food and Beverage. "It makes you want to walk inside."

Just inside the entrance sits one of the restaurant's most stunning features – an 8,600-pound copper rock from which the venue takes its name. A conversation piece, the rock is one of the largest single pieces of unearthed, natural copper in the United States. "Legend has it that if you touch the rock, it will bring you good fortune," said Frank Freedman. "It's a novel piece for the restaurant and draws a lot of attention."

The design of the restaurant is that of a classic steakhouse. The main room is decked in soft, muted earth tones and the candlelit tables feature fine linen tablecloths and flower arrangements. Rock is prominent throughout the restaurant, with stonework at the main entrance, granite flooring in the main dining room, and marble in the kitchen area. "When you're in the room you don't feel like it's in a larger facility," said

Freedman. "There are a lot of nuances that lend to the warmth of the room. Guests are in a comfort zone."

The venue's bar area offers handsome surroundings with hardwood and marble flooring and a granite-topped bar. "It's a very well-stocked bar," said Freedman. "There is an inordinate number of vodkas, all types of aged scotches, cognacs, an assortment of boutique tequilas, and even fine cigars." The bar is cigar-friendly, so guests can enjoy a cognac and cigar after their meal. The area also includes three dining tables for guests who would like to enjoy a full meal in the bar.



Copper Rock also offers its guests two private dining areas for special occasions or functions. The Wine Room can accommodate up to 20 guests, features the same décor as the main dining room, and is closed off with French doors. The room gets its name from its decorative display of the restaurant's wine selection, which lines one of the walls. The Chef's Table is a more contemporary and intimate setting, accommodating up to ten guests. Located next to the kitchen, the room features hardwood floors, tiled walls, and a bar-height, marble-topped table.

The restaurant's level of service is set to a very high standard, which it perpetually meets through rigorous and ongoing training for the staff. "We try very hard to anticipate what the guest needs before they ask for it," said Daniel Richardson. The venue's employees undergo days of instruction on service techniques, proper communication, and table etiquette, in addition to knowledge of the menu and wine selections. "We believe that our service is what separates us from the pack – how we take care of our guests and build relationships with them to keep them coming back."

Before servers can go out on the floor they are tested on menu knowledge, which includes ingredients and preparation. "They also have to know about any alterations that can be done to any particular item to make it more suitable to a guest's taste," said Richardson. "That way the guest gets an immediate response without the server having to talk to the chef first. It makes us look more prepared." The staff is also educated on wine service, including presentation and specific knowledge of each selection. "We run the full gamut of everything that should be expected from a fine dining room."

Copper Rock has approximately 550 labels on its wine list, including selections from Australia, Europe, California, South America, Oregon, local wines from Michigan, and a number of selections that are difficult to acquire. The impressive list recently

earned Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence for the second consecutive year. "This award lends to the credibility we seek," said Richardson. "We're very proud of it and will continue to grow our list each year we keep the award." The price ranges from \$5 glasses up to \$1,500 bottles, with most of the reds on display at the front of the room. The whites are stored at their proper temperatures at the back of the house, so they can be presented as soon as they're ordered.



Executive Chef Barry Rhodes

Copper Rock's menu was designed to offer classic steakhouse fare, with an abundant selection of dry-aged steaks. Though the menu includes other tantalizing offerings, such as duck foie gras 'torchon,' chicken saltimbocca, and whole Maine lobster, the steak selections are the most popular. "We're very particular about the quality of our meat and have tight specifications, especially for Copper Rock," said Barry Rhodes, Executive Chef for Four Winds. The property has a contract with Allen Brothers in Chicago, one of the nation's most reputable beef suppliers. "People are paying top dollar for our product and we serve them the best we can find on the market."

The restaurant uses the freshest ingredients available and buys from local growers, including a tribal member with 30 acres of farmland. "I go with her to choose tomatoes, squash, fresh herbs and other produce," said Rhodes. The property has established programs to obtain the freshest seafood, flying in lobsters from New England and storing them in a saltwater tank. "When you order a lobster, we go to the tank and pick it out. So you're getting the freshest lobster possible." The menu also changes seasonally, so the selections guarantee the freshest ingredients.

"I think it's the unexpected element of our cuisine that tends to keep Copper Rock above the standard," said Frank Freedman. "We put just as much care into the quality of our fish and shellfish as we put into our meats." Quality is essential to the restaurant, not only in its menu, but in its level of service. With its savory menu and diligent training, it's little wonder Copper Rock is so popular with guests. "You can step into this little oasis and not only have a great dining experience, but wonderful service to go with it. I think that's what helps set us apart." ♣

For more information about Copper Rock Steakhouse or Four Winds Casino Resort, visit [www.fourwindscasino.com](http://www.fourwindscasino.com).

**sci** SYSTEM  
CONCEPTS, INC.  
consulting • training • automation

Developers of  
**FOOD® TRAK®**  
Food & Beverage Management System



## Bulletproofing Food & Beverage Operations

Reducing F&B costs by 1%  
can have the same impact as  
a 20% increase in sales!

Exceeding expectations since 1980  
for more than 10,000 clients.

Contact us so we can assist you: **(800) 553-2438** • [www.foodtrak.com](http://www.foodtrak.com)

Gila River Casinos • Fort McDowell Casino • Santa Ana Star Casino • Lucky Eagle Casino • Little River Casino Resort • Desert Diamond Casino • Inn of the Mountain Gods • Commerce Casino • Seminole Casino • Odawa Casino • Casino of the Sun