Introduction

Dear Hospitality Professional,

On behalf of AAA, I am pleased to introduce to you the latest edition of the AAA Approval Requirements & Diamond Rating Guidelines for restaurants.

These guidelines are provided with two objectives in mind:

♦ To ensure our ratings program is accurate and relevant to the restaurant information needs of over 59 million AAA/CAA members.
♦ To provide a valuable reference for helping you achieve your establishment’s AAA Approval and Diamond Rating goal.

To that end, we feel it is important for AAA to partner with the hospitality industry by gathering your input, discussing our ratings and openly sharing with you how the Diamond Rating System applies to your restaurant. We urge you to take full advantage of the information provided by AAA inspectors during evaluations, as each of our experts eats in over 200 restaurants every year — representing insight on a wide range of dining experiences across the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

We appreciate your continued service to members and participation in AAA programs.

Sincerely,

Michael Petrone
Michael Petrone, CEC
Director, AAA Content Development

A brief note about AAA and property inspections: Since its inception in 1902 as a federation of independent motor clubs, AAA has existed to help make road travel safer and more enjoyable for its now more than 59 million members. AAA is a leading provider of roadside assistance, travel services and trip planning products, and an influential voice in automotive and travel safety legislation and funding. AAA offers member discounts, insurance and financial services.

More than 80 years ago, in 1937, AAA hired its first field representatives to inspect and report on lodgings and restaurants. In 1963, AAA introduced a rating system for hotels, adding the diamond symbol in 1977 in honor of the association’s 75-year anniversary. A decade later, the Diamond Rating system was expanded to include inspector ratings for restaurants, prompting AAA to seek industry input for its first comprehensive AAA Approval & Diamond Rating Guidelines for restaurants, published in 1989. Prior to this, only minimum Approval Requirements were printed and distributed on request.
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SECTION ONE

AAA Inspections and Diamond Ratings

How do I apply for an inspection?

The first step to becoming AAA Approved, Diamond Rated and listed in AAA travel information products is to be inspected. To be considered a valid applicant for AAA inspection, establishments must meet all of the Approval Requirements for their restaurant category. The requirements reflect members' basic expectations for a restaurant experience. We recommend you carefully review the requirements to verify your establishment's eligibility before applying.

Currently listed establishments need not reapply, as our inspectors will routinely conduct follow-up inspections of your restaurant.

By applying for inspection, you agree that, if your establishment is selected and passes inspection, AAA may publish your restaurant's pertinent information and Diamond Rating in AAA travel information products, regardless of the rating level assessment. The decision to inspect a restaurant is at the sole discretion of AAA. The decision to Approve a restaurant and the choice of a rating level are based on conditions noted at the time of the inspection.

To expedite the application process, we suggest the following approach:

- Verify your establishment's eligibility by reviewing the AAA Approval Requirements. Restaurants must meet all Approval Requirements to be valid applicants.
- Complete and submit the Restaurant Inspection Application (pdf).
- Complete and submit the Restaurant Application Processing Fee Form (pdf). The nonrefundable $300 application processing fee helps offset the costs of validating property information; it does not guarantee an inspection or influence the outcome.

AAA guarantees a fair review of all applications and, for those who qualify, an inspection within one year of acceptance notification. AAA reserves all rights to apply priority consideration to establishments providing the highest degree of AAA member value in making travel-related decisions. Key considerations determined through ongoing member research include:

- HIGHLY DESIRABLE OR CONVENIENT LOCATION
- NEWLY BUILT, NEWLY OPENED, OR RECENTLY RENOVATED
- HIGH DEGREE OF COMFORT, CLEANLINESS AND CONDITION
- NOTABLE OR REPUTABLE
- UNIQUE CUISINE, DESIGN OR STYLE OF OPERATION

Once your establishment is Approved, an inspector will revisit periodically to confirm or update your status and rating. All inspections are unannounced to ensure an unbiased dining experience.
How are the Approval decision and Diamond Rating determined?

The AAA evaluation consists of three parts:

- RESERVATION
- DINING EXPERIENCE
- INTERVIEW

First, your property must meet all AAA Approval Requirements and provide member value. All establishments are validated through a combined process of applications, inspections, referrals and media research.

Second, if your restaurant qualifies, the inspector will dine anonymously while benchmarking the experience against our Diamond Rating guidelines, which reflect AAA member priorities and typical trends throughout the restaurant industry. Our inspector will also assess key subjective elements based on the on-site dining experience. The comprehensive evaluation includes a review of the following key dining essentials:

- CLEANLINESS AND CONDITION
- FOOD
- SERVICE
- DÉCOR
- MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

AAA’s intent is to capture the essence of the total dining experience rather than just particular attributes of your restaurant. Our research shows that AAA members consider the quality of the food and service to be the most significant factors when eating out — and décor to be less important in defining their dining experience. Therefore, we assign the highest weight (85% of the overall Diamond Rating) to food and service elements — with décor making up just 15% of the rating.

Once our assessment is complete, the inspector will recommend or assign a Diamond Rating (or other appropriate designation) based on existing conditions at the time of the evaluation. The achievement of a AAA Diamond Rating means that your restaurant is one of an exclusive group that has successfully completed this rigorous evaluation process.

Lastly, AAA will contact the owner, general manager or restaurant designee for a brief interview. This is an extremely important part of the evaluation, as the data gathered is used in our worldwide travel information applications.

The AAA Five Diamond Rating

If the AAA inspector determines that your establishment meets the Five Diamond guidelines for a world-class experience, your restaurant will be considered for the prestigious Five Diamond Rating. All Five Diamond Rating recommendations are forwarded to AAA’s Five Diamond Committee for thorough review. Those that qualify will be advised via email of the committee’s assessment.

A couple of tidbits:

- Rating adjustments are restricted to limited cases and are applied at the sole discretion of AAA.
- The frequency of subsequent AAA evaluations varies slightly, depending on factors such as classification, rating, history, AAA member and AAA club feedback, and operational changes at an establishment.
Defining AAA Approval Requirements and AAA Diamond Rating Guidelines

What's the difference between AAA Approval Requirements and AAA Diamond Rating Guidelines?

While the Approval Requirements are mandatory standards, the Diamond Rating guidelines are a reflection of what is typically seen throughout the various market segments of the restaurant industry. Therefore, failure to meet all Approval Requirements precludes an establishment from passing inspection, but variances in some rating categories does not necessarily preclude the achievement of that rating.

Additionally, while the same Approval Requirements apply to all restaurant types, not all Diamond Rating guidelines apply. AAA inspectors use only the sections of the Diamond Rating guidelines applicable to the restaurant’s classification. This approach allows restaurateurs to be creative in developing their market identity and steadfast in meeting the needs of their guests while achieving a Diamond Rating level relevant to AAA member expectations.

AAA Approval Requirements

The AAA Approval Requirements for restaurants are essential, common-sense qualifications AAA members say are important and, similarly, standards most professional operators routinely employ. To be AAA Approved, an establishment must meet the following requirements:

Cleanliness and Condition
1. Establishment must provide AAA members value in all aspects of operation.
2. All facilities directly associated with an establishment must be clean and well-maintained throughout.
3. All food and beverage must be wholesome, free from contamination and properly handled and stored.

Management Style of Operation
4. An establishment may not use AAA trademarks — including, but not limited to, the AAA logo and Diamond Rating — without AAA’s prior written consent.
5. The establishment must be appropriately located for business or leisure travel.
6. The establishment must assist AAA in the resolution of member complaints.
7. All restaurant staff must conduct business in a professional and ethical manner providing attentive, conscientious service to guests.
8. Restaurant management, or a designated representative, must be readily accessible at all times for guest needs or requests.
9. The primary business operation of the establishment must be directly related to the preparation and service of food.
10. Management must readily provide establishment information as requested by AAA on a continuing basis for the purpose of maintaining accurate travel information for AAA products and publications.
11. The establishment must be in compliance with all local, state and federal codes.
Exterior and Public Areas

12. Establishments must have accurate, legible signage in appropriate areas.

13. All facilities directly associated with an establishment (such as banquet rooms, bakeries and gift shops) provided for guest use must meet all appropriate AAA Approval Requirements.

14. Adequate illumination is required in all public areas. This includes sufficient lighting in all corridors, walkways, stairways, landings and parking areas.
SECTION TWO

AAA Diamond Rating Guidelines

AAA DIAMOND RATINGS FOR RESTAURANTS REPRESENT A COMBINATION OF THE OVERALL FOOD, SERVICE AND DÉCOR OFFERED. The widely recognized and trusted Diamonds help AAA members choose the right restaurant experience to fit the whim or special occasion.

AAA inspectors determine a restaurant’s Diamond Rating using standards based on AAA member priorities, insight from our expert inspectors and involvement from various restaurant industry professionals.

Diamonds are assigned using a member-solicited weighted average of all restaurant characteristics, with a focus on overall guest impression rather than on individual elements. The final factor is the professional judgment of our inspectors: North America’s travel experts in reviewing over 30,000 restaurants per year.

What the Diamonds Mean

One Diamond

Simple, economical food, often quick-serve, in a functional environment.

Two Diamond

Familiar food, often cooked to order, served in casual surroundings.

Three Diamond

Trendy cuisine, skillfully prepared and served, with expanded beverage options, in an enhanced setting.

Four Diamond

Distinctive fine-dining. Creative preparations, skillfully served, often with wine steward, amid upscale ambience.

Five Diamond

Leading-edge cuisine of the finest ingredients, uniquely prepared by an acclaimed chef, served by expert service staff led by maître d’ in extraordinary surroundings.
**FOOD**

(50% of overall Diamond Rating)

### Presentation

Overall impact or visual appeal incorporating dishware, food placement and garnish used in combination to present appetizers, soups, salads, main courses, desserts and other offerings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Placement &amp; Visual Appeal</th>
<th>1 Quick-Serve</th>
<th>2 Casual</th>
<th>3 Trendy</th>
<th>4 Distinctive</th>
<th>5 Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food Placement &amp; Visual Appeal</strong></td>
<td>Functional, not stylish</td>
<td>Common concepts are noticeably enhanced</td>
<td>Well-coordinated using innovative/expanded concepts implemented in precise fashion</td>
<td>3D plus*: Artistic/detailed concept with well-balanced portions and a variety of textures, colors and ingredients</td>
<td>4D plus: Extremely imaginative with uniquely exclusive concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No discernible garnish is used</strong></td>
<td>Limited use of common garnishes: primarily ornamental in nature (parsley, lemon wedge, lettuce leaf, kale, cherry tomato, etc.)</td>
<td>Garnishes are less familiar; refined placement or techniques (patterned slicing, fine dice, julienne, or other precise styles, carved vegetables or fruits, specialty greens, flowers, or herbs)</td>
<td>Artistically integrated as ornamental or flavor enhancements</td>
<td>Each ingredient and plate component supports a leading-edge plate design and enriches the concept; food and garnish are in perfect harmony</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Dishware

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dishware</th>
<th>1 Quick-Serve</th>
<th>2 Casual</th>
<th>3 Trendy</th>
<th>4 Distinctive</th>
<th>5 Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disposable materials or basic synthetic baskets</td>
<td>Predominantly basic quality ceramic, glass or washable synthetic (polycarbonate / melamine) or woven baskets; some disposable condiment containers or side dishes</td>
<td>Noticeable enhancements to design and materials with appropriate accessories, such as: bread &amp; butter plates, ramekins, pitchers</td>
<td>3D plus: The finest quality materials and design throughout (fine china, custom ceramic, porcelain, etc.)</td>
<td>4D plus: Predominant use of varied and unique pieces as part of the overall food presentation (creative packaging)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Plus - When you see this term used (such as 2D plus), it means that the rating includes the bolded elements of the previous columns in addition to elements of the current column.
### Menu Components

#### Ingredients
- **1** QUICK-SERVE
  - All forms of staple items (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, etc.);
  - No uncommon items

- **2** CASUAL
  - Predominantly staple items with some uncommon items

- **3** TRENDY
  - Blend of staple and uncommon, with some use of unique (artisanal)* items;
  - Predominantly fresh and/or specialty items

- **4** DISTINCTIVE
  - Increased use of uncommon and unique (artisanal) items.

- **5** LEADING-EDGE
  - Predominant use of unique (artisanal) and uncommon items;
  - Most ingredients are unique to each dish

* Relating to or being a food or beverage made by hand or by traditional methods

#### Preparation
- **2D plus:**
  - Menu incorporates a limited variety of common food preparation techniques

- **3D plus:**
  - Menu incorporates an increased variety of common food preparation techniques

- **4D plus:**
  - Menu incorporates some advanced food preparation techniques and chef-composed dishes à la minute*

* Typical of a short order* cook
  - *Someone in a restaurant kitchen who cooks food that can be prepared easily or quickly

- **3D plus:**
  - Typical of a highly experienced cook or chef

- **4D plus:**
  - Typical of a series of professionally-trained chefs

* Typical of a professionally-trained chef

- **3D plus:**
  - Commensurate with a mastery of the culinary arts; typical of a renowned professional chef

*Typical of a series of professionally-trained chefs

#### Standard Rotation (excluding daily specials)
- **2D plus:**
  - Predominantly standard menu selections throughout the year

- **3D plus:**
  - Limited menu selections change seasonally

- **4D plus:**
  - Most menu selections change daily/weekly, driven by market availability

*Most menu selections change daily/weekly

- **3D plus:**
  - Menus available suggesting food and beverage pairings

- **4D plus:**
  - A chef’s tasting menu is offered; typically in addition to à la carte selections

* A chef’s tasting menu is offered; typically in addition to à la carte selections

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### The “OH!” Zone

**FOOD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjective Zones</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>Quality and variety of offerings. At higher rating levels, beverages typically include sparkling and still bottled water along with a diverse selection of wines (varying degrees of complexity, price range, availability and production style). If alcoholic beverages are not provided or are limited, the inspector gives consideration to prevailing laws and restaurant concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread</td>
<td>Availability, appropriateness for the cuisine or meal and, to increasing degrees at higher rating levels, quality and complexity, from simple and processed to creative and imaginative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Extent to which the food is prepared and cooked as ordered; degree to which the cooking techniques preserve colors, textures and consistency of soups, sauces and emulsions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary Chef’s Extra</td>
<td>Availability, quality and creativity. Typically found only at the Four and Five Diamond levels. May include a chef starter (amuse-bouche), intermezzo (palate-cleansing course), soup, confections, pastries and/or cookies (mignardises and petits fours), a complimentary drink or parting gift.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Optional category for including additional observations or increasing the impact of a separately recorded observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portion Size</td>
<td>Appropriateness of serving size in relation to cuisine, style or rating level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>Measure of how ingredients, sauces and seasonings complement or conflict each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperature</td>
<td>Appropriateness of the food temperature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Appropriateness of cost in relation to elements of the food, service and décor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety</td>
<td>Degree to which variety fits guest expectations and the restaurant concept and its impact on quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subjective Zones**

Measures on several important aspects of the dining experience are strongly influenced by personal preferences and expectations. If offerings in these areas are noted by the inspector as typical, a “blank” (no score) is assigned; if the offering is atypical, either positively or negatively, a “+0.01” or “−0.01” is assigned. Zone scores are tallied, and the combined total impacts the establishment’s Diamond Rating computation.
## SERVICE
(35% of overall Diamond Rating)

### Initial Contact
Establishing a connection through interaction via remote communication or direct contact.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Greeting</th>
<th>1 QUICK-SERVE</th>
<th>2 CASUAL</th>
<th>3 TRENDY</th>
<th>4 DISTINCTIVE</th>
<th>5 LEADING-EDGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited or no greeting at entrance</td>
<td>Handled by an associate with multiple responsibilities (cashier/hostess/waitperson)</td>
<td>Solely dedicated greeter(s) handle(s) guest’s reservation, arrival and determines seating</td>
<td>Professional host/hostess is engaging, well-practiced and knowledgeable</td>
<td>Reservation time is honored within ten minutes; if delayed, the attendant is adept at making proper accommodations without hesitation</td>
<td>Greeter uses guest’s name upon engaging guest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Seating

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seating</th>
<th>1 QUICK-SERVE</th>
<th>2 CASUAL</th>
<th>3 TRENDY</th>
<th>4 DISTINCTIVE</th>
<th>5 LEADING-EDGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-seating</td>
<td>Associate leads guest to table; advises guest of server’s name</td>
<td>Associate is engaging; initiates a conversation as guest is seated</td>
<td>A well-practiced approach with personal assistance provided, such as the moving of a chair and/or table as appropriate</td>
<td>Guest’s name is used as appropriate; anticipates guest’s needs in some additional manner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Plus - When you see this term used (such as 2D plus), it means that the rating includes the bolded elements of the previous columns in addition to elements of the current column.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Quick-Serve</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Trendy</th>
<th>Distinctive</th>
<th>Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counter service order and pickup (quick serve, cafeteria or complete buffet-style service)</td>
<td>Some self-service aspects may be evident (digital device ordering and payment), however, table service is predominant; single server responsibility is clearly evident</td>
<td>No self-service aspects; team approach is clearly evident</td>
<td>Distinguished delivery, well-defined roles; proficient with a strong desire to be of assistance</td>
<td>Exceptionally efficient while seamlessly exceeding guest expectations; all service staff display expert knowledge of the menu; courses are described as they are served</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional approach</td>
<td>Service style is practical and deliberate; appropriate to the overall theme</td>
<td>Service style is skilled, measured and accommodating</td>
<td>Provides an elevated level of personal attention adapted to the convenience and comfort of the guest</td>
<td>Provides a meticulous degree of personal attention and demonstrates an unconditional desire to be of service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Beverage Information | Common reference of beverages available with no additional description provided | Enhanced beverage reference available, including additional descriptions of specialty drinks, wines and/or spirits | A knowledgeable staff representative is available to accommodate guest’s special needs. | Most associates are well-versed on providing menu-specific assistance with beverage selection (such as wine/beer pairings) | Expert beverage knowledge is readily available; (professional mixologist and sommelier) |

| Check Settlement | Payment is made by guest with the cashier | Server handles check settlement | Server is discreet in anticipating and presenting check for settlement | Check presentation includes mignardises and/or a take-home gift, such as a personalized menu, specialty item, boxed chocolates |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Staff acknowledgment not expected</th>
<th>Server thanks guest</th>
<th>Host/hostess acknowledges guest departure</th>
<th>Several staff members acknowledge guest departure</th>
<th>Guest’s name is used during departure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Staff anticipates guest’s needs in some manner, such as: validate parking, arrange transportation, offer to retrieve coats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Subjective Zones**

Measures on several important aspects of the dining experience are strongly influenced by personal preferences and expectations. If offerings in these areas are noted by the inspector as typical, a “blank” (no score) is assigned; if the offering is atypical, either positively or negatively, a “+0.01” or “-0.01” is assigned. Zone scores are tallied, and the combined total impacts the establishment’s Diamond Rating computation.

The Hospitality Zone

**SERVICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attentiveness</th>
<th>Degree to which the servers are thoughtful, caring, considerate and focused on guest satisfaction, with greater attention to detail expected at higher rating levels.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Measure of staff capabilities, awareness and aptitude for meeting guest needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congeniality</td>
<td>Cordiality of staff in all areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest Feels Well Served</td>
<td>At the end of the dining experience, degree to which the guest feels that staff has provided exemplary hospitality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Efficiency, style and correctness of staff in answering questions about food and beverage offerings and general restaurant information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile-Enabled Service Options</td>
<td>Extent to which the use of mobile devices for ordering and payment enhance or detract from service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Optional category for including additional observations or increasing the impact of a separately recorded observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservations</td>
<td>Ease and efficiency of the reservation process online, or by phone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Requests</td>
<td>Degree to which staff will accommodate special guest needs (within reason) and the chef will make menu alterations for reasons of taste, preference or health concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>Suitability and correctness of the experience (well-paced for guest needs).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**DÉCOR**
(15% of overall Diamond Rating)

**Design Elements**
The use of colors, space, texture, and other components to define the appearance, functionality and ambience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Predominantly basic materials</th>
<th>Obvious enhancements to materials</th>
<th>Significant enhancements to materials</th>
<th>Upscale materials</th>
<th>Luxurious and/or unique materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Impression</th>
<th>1D plus:</th>
<th>2D plus:</th>
<th>3D plus:</th>
<th>4D plus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic appeal; practical; purposeful</td>
<td>Enhanced level of overall comfort and appeal</td>
<td>Advanced level of overall comfort and appeal</td>
<td>Design is highly functional, well-suited for comfort and extended dining</td>
<td>Luxurious, leading-edge (innovative, intelligent, efficient)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary focus is on seating capacity and quick turnover rather than comfort</td>
<td>A good balance between a welcoming ambience and maximum seating capacity</td>
<td>Provides an enriched and efficient guest experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrance / Foyer</th>
<th>2D plus:</th>
<th>3D plus:</th>
<th>4D plus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No reception area</td>
<td>Clearly-defined reception area/stand</td>
<td>Design characteristics are clearly upscale</td>
<td>Design characteristics are clearly luxurious and uniquely appointed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waiting Area and/or Lounge</th>
<th>3D plus:</th>
<th>4D plus:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>Appropriately-sized waiting area or lounge (with tables, chairs/booths); distinctly separate from the main dining area</td>
<td>Design characteristics are clearly upscale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small waiting area or bar with seating</td>
<td>Design characteristics are clearly luxurious and uniquely appointed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Plus*: When you see this term used (such as 2D plus), it means that the rating includes the bolded elements of the previous columns in addition to elements of the current column.
## DÉCOR
(15% of overall Diamond Rating)

### Design Elements
The use of colors, space, texture, and other components to define the appearance, functionality and ambience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tabletop Covers</th>
<th>Quick-Serve</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Trendy</th>
<th>Distinctive</th>
<th>Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bare surfaces of basic quality materials (such as: laminate, wood, metal, acrylic, vinyl, resin, molded melamine) with standard finish</td>
<td><strong>1D plus:</strong></td>
<td>Modest enhancements, such as: paper placemats, paper/vinyl/plastic tablecloths, butcher paper/acrylic overlay</td>
<td>If exposed, table surfaces are of a decorative style with a polished /lacquered finish or glass overlay</td>
<td>If exposed, table surfaces are of designer quality materials, such as: highly polished fine wood, granite, marble</td>
<td>Tables are padded or double tablecloths are used as silencers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic treatments, such as: polyester, poplin, spandex, leatherette – tablecloths, placemats or runners</td>
<td>Enhanced with natural quality treatments, such as: cotton-synthetic blends, leather, rattran, bamboo – tablecloths, placemats or runners</td>
<td>Tablecloths are natural fabrics with a luxurious feel (typically cotton/linen) with a freshly-pressed appearance (minimal wrinkles or creasing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Napery</th>
<th>Quick-Serve</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Trendy</th>
<th>Distinctive</th>
<th>Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic, paper napkins</td>
<td><strong>1D plus:</strong></td>
<td>Enhanced design or weight</td>
<td>Synthetic cloth napkins</td>
<td>Natural fabrics (typically cotton)</td>
<td>Luxurious linen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table Setting Enhancements</th>
<th>Quick-Serve</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Trendy</th>
<th>Distinctive</th>
<th>Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None or basic need items, such as: condiment containers, salt, pepper, sugar, napkin dispenser</td>
<td>Common overall appeal</td>
<td>Trendy overall appeal</td>
<td>Well-coordinated first-class effect</td>
<td>Charger or show plate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utensils rolled in napkin, paper placemats, preset menu, children’s games and/or promotional flyers, etc.</td>
<td>Cloth napkin folds; preset utensils and glassware</td>
<td>Decorative table enhancement (flowers, candles, ornament, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flatware</th>
<th>Quick-Serve</th>
<th>Casual</th>
<th>Trendy</th>
<th>Distinctive</th>
<th>Leading-Edge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disposable materials</td>
<td><strong>2D plus:</strong></td>
<td>Washable materials, everyday quality of basic design; lightweight grade</td>
<td>Medium-weight grade stainless steel with obvious matching design enhancements</td>
<td>The finest quality stainless steel (18/10 or 18/8) heavyweight grade with upscale design enhancements</td>
<td>Silver plated or finer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3D plus:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinated set throughout with appropriate pieces for menu offerings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Plus - When you see this term used (such as **2D plus**), it means that the rating includes the bolded elements of the previous columns in addition to elements of the current column.
## DÉCOR
(15% of overall Diamond Rating)

### Design Elements (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>1 - QUICK-SERVE</th>
<th>2 - CASUAL</th>
<th>3 - TRENDY</th>
<th>4 - DISTINCTIVE</th>
<th>5 - LEADING-EDGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Glassware</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disposable materials</td>
<td>Disposable materials</td>
<td>Washable plastic (polycarbonate/melamine) or heavyweight glass of common style</td>
<td>Medium-weight glass with distinct style; appropriate pieces for beverage offerings</td>
<td>Lightweight glass of the finest quality</td>
<td>Consistent throughout all aspects of beverage service (design and quality of barware is comparable to table settings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pieces are often uncoordinated throughout</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chairs/Stools/Benches</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple, functional, unpadded; limited comfort</td>
<td>Enhanced design for good comfort</td>
<td>Well-coordinated materials and design with coverings or padding for sustainable comfort</td>
<td>Upscale materials and design with ample padding on seat and back for extended comfort</td>
<td>Luxurious; materials and design provide the highest degree of comfort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NEARLY 32,000
AAA APPROVED AND DIAMOND RATED RESTAURANTS
Throughout North America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-QUICK-SERVE</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-CASUAL</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-TRENDY</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-DISTINCTIVE</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-LEADING-EDGE</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Plus - When you see this term used (such as 2D plus), it means that the rating includes the bolded elements of the previous columns in addition to elements of the current column.*
Subjective Zones

Measures on several important aspects of the dining experience are strongly influenced by personal preferences and expectations. If offerings in these areas are noted by the inspector as typical, a “blank” (no score) is assigned; if the offering is atypical, either positively or negatively, a “+0.01” or “-0.01” is assigned. Zone scores are tallied and the combined total impacts the establishment’s Diamond Rating computation.

The Comfort Zone

DÉCOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambience</th>
<th>Impact of the surroundings on the dining experience.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleanliness</td>
<td>Cleanliness throughout the restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>Functionality and overall impression of the furnishings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Condition throughout the restaurant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illumination</td>
<td>Functionality, design and effect of the lighting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Design &amp; Presentation (menu, business card, etc.)</td>
<td>Character of the menu, wine list and business cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise Level</td>
<td>Impact of noise on the dining experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Optional category for including additional observations or increasing the impact of a separately recorded observation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AAA Restaurant Inspections Video

“From Soup to Nuts”

Watch the process AAA restaurant inspectors use to ensure AAA/CAA members have positive dining experiences at eateries across North America. Listen in as an inspector shares a meal — and the inside scoop — during a AAA restaurant evaluation. Learn why anonymity is important and how AAA’s restaurant listings offer members a detailed picture of what to expect at your restaurant.
SECTION THREE

The Listing

Once a restaurant is approved, AAA gathers factual information and descriptive details to add to our database, used to create restaurant listings in AAA’s print and digital travel planning products. The listings, which contain no advertising or promotional verbiage, are published in AAA products at no cost to the establishment.

Listing copy describing the restaurant is based in part on objective information provided by the establishment. This listing information is updated annually, and establishments are contacted accordingly. Failure to provide listing information in a timely manner may result in the deletion of your establishment from our database.

Listings also include narrative composed by AAA’s professionally trained inspectors. Inspectors employ a degree of skilled subjectivity to convey key components of the restaurant experience to AAA members.

AAA Approved and Diamond Rated restaurants are eligible to participate in AAA’s optional, fee-based Official Appointment logo licensing program. Licensees may promote the renowned AAA/CAA Approved logo and Diamond Ratings in media announcements, advertising materials and on signage. Licensees also receive enhanced listings in AAA products and are eligible to purchase display advertising. Visit AAA.biz/multimedia for more information.

FYI Designation

For restaurants, this designation identifies establishments that have not yet been evaluated by a AAA inspector but offer potential member value. These restaurants are unrated due to one of the following reasons:

- The establishment is undergoing extensive renovations.
- The establishment has not been evaluated.
Restaurant Classifications and Cuisine Types

All AAA approved and Diamond rated restaurants are classified by the overall dining and service concept, age of operations and/or historic status of building.

Brewpub: Specializes in the brewing of beer; typically limited food menu and full table service.

Buffet-style: Typically traditional comfort items available at self-service food and beverage stations; limited table service.

Casual Dining: Full table service in a relaxed atmosphere.

Classic: Renowned and landmark restaurant operations in business longer than 25 years; known for unique style and ambience.

Dinner Theater: Full or limited table service; typically limited food and beverage menu; entertainment provided in conjunction with the dining experience.

Fine Dining: Full table service; notable, upscale and complex elements are evident throughout.

Gastropub: Full table service; relaxed ambience of a tavern/bar but with enhanced focus on cuisine similar to that of a more advanced full-service restaurant.

Historic: Includes at least one of the following documented historical features:

- Maintains the integrity of the historical nature
- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Registered as or located in a National Historic Landmark or located in a National Register Historic District

Note: If a restaurant is located in a National Historic Landmark/District, it must retain the original historic character and/or significantly contribute to the historic value of the associated area to be designated as Historic.

Quick-Serve: Counter- or self-service food and beverages; includes traditional fast food menu items and casual setting.

Sports Bar: Full table service; sports theme experience.

Restaurants are also identified by more than 100 cuisine types (such as Italian or French) and, if applicable, additional descriptors (such as Northern or Traditional) to provide user a general sense of the type of cuisine offered.

Accessibility

Denotes a restaurant that has some accessible features. It may be fully accessible, semi-accessible, or meet some of the needs of hearing-impaired individuals.

Accessibility is not a requirement for listing and will not affect your Diamond Rating. However, we strongly encourage you to make every effort to meet the needs of all your guests – including the mature traveler and those with disabilities.
Member Comment Procedures

AAA MEMBER RELATIONS CLOSELY MONITORS THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF COMMENTS SUBMITTED ABOUT APPROVED PROPERTIES. All comments are carefully reviewed for validity and included as part of the property record. If complaints are received, AAA will notify the establishment and provide an opportunity to resolve the matter within a reasonable period of time. If a member complaint is determined to be of an extreme nature, AAA may act to disapprove a property immediately.

If a property is disapproved for member complaints, a written request for a re-evaluation may be submitted, accompanied by an explanation of the actions taken to limit future complaints.

**Note:** Properties may not reapply until one year has passed from the date of disapproval.

All requests may be addressed to:

**AAA Inspections & Diamond Ratings**
1000 AAA Drive, Mailstop 51
Heathrow, FL 32746-5063

The AAA Appeals Process

THE APPEALS PROCESS IS A RESOURCE FOR ALL INSPECTED PROPERTIES.

What can I appeal?

You may appeal your property’s Approval status or Diamond Rating. Each situation is handled on an individual basis.

How do I file an appeal?

First, contact:

**AAA Customer Service**
407-444-8370, Option 2
AAAListings@national.aaa.com

Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 5:15pm (Eastern Time)

In many cases, our analysts will be able to answer your question(s) immediately. If there is a continuing need for additional information or discussion, we will direct your call to the AAA Regional Manager for your area.
The AAA Appeals Process (cont’d)

If an issue remains unresolved after the above steps, an establishment may choose to present relevant information to the AAA Appeals Committee for objective review. All appeals must be submitted by property management in writing and may include pictures, documents or other pertinent materials to support the appeal. In order to expedite this process, appeals should outline the specific concerns in a succinct manner. Each appeal is thoroughly researched and given thoughtful consideration and a substantive reply by the committee. The committee’s decision on your appeal is considered as AAA’s final response. You will be notified as to the status of your appeal within 45 days of receipt of your written statement.

All appeals should be sent to:

AAA Appeals Committee
1000 AAA Drive, Mailstop 51
Heathrow, FL 32746-5063

Green Programs

AAA supports environmental management and sustainability throughout the restaurant industry to the extent that truly effective programs maintain quality standards of guest comfort. We strongly encourage continued use of programs that offer guests choices without negative consequences for noncompliance. Effective green programs are intended to reduce waste without reducing guest comfort.

In AAA travel information products, restaurants certified by approved green programs are identified with an ECO icon in their listing.

This icon indicates restaurants that are environmentally sustainable in their use of food, water, energy, waste, chemicals, disposables and more.
Establishments in all areas of the U.S. (excluding Southern California; see below), Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean should contact AAA at:

**AAA Listings/Customer Service**
AAAListings@national.aaa.com
407-444-8370, Option 2

**AAA Inspections & Diamond Ratings**
1000 AAA Drive, Mailstop 51
Heathrow, FL 32746-5063

**Official Appointments and Advertising**
407-444-8280

Establishments in Southern California should contact the following AAA club:

**Automobile Club of Southern California**
P.O. Box 25001
Santa Ana, CA 92799-5001

**Inspections and Official Appointments**
714-885-2247

**Advertising**
714-885-2394
A HISTORY OF SERVICE

In 1937, to provide improved travel information for members, AAA employed its first inspectors, called field reporters, to personally visit and report on hotels and restaurants. This information was made available to members in the three regional TourBook guides published at that time. Today, AAA’s professionally trained inspectors continue this practice as they inspect, Approve and rate more than 59,000 hotels and restaurants to help travelers enjoy a positive experience.