

As part of our Readers' Poll this year, we gave voters a chance to expand a bit on their favorites. In 25 words or less, they were invited to tell us more about one of the people or places they voted for, or write about something that should have won — if only we'd included a category for it.

The following enthusiasts wore their hearts on their sleeves, or on their ballots, so effectively that we gave them tickets to our Best of the Bay Beer Fest on Sept. 24 — and we're printing their comments here.

Honorable mentions to Amalia Royals, who chose the White Caddy Escalade as the "Most Popular Unnecessary Car in South Tampa"; Kirk Curtiss, who said the Best Bike Ride was "from Coffee Pot Park to the Pier, along the water, passing the docks, beautiful homes, and the smell of red tide!"; Douglas R.

Haggerty, whose ballot arrived in the best-decorated envelope; Luis Herrera, who cited Dube's Gas & Auto Repair in Clearwater as Best Honest Mechanic ("Yes, this is an oxymoron"); and Norma Caltagirone, who wrote eloquently about Stageworks, her favorite theater company (no wonder — she's president of their board of directors).



Annette & Bob Eriksen with Chef Chris Ponte.

VALERIE TROYANO

THE ERIKSENS: CAFÉ PONTE

"Café Ponte is indeed the place! Polished service, surroundings, fabulous and innovative food and one of the most amiable chefs around — a true 'master' — Chris Ponte!" The ErikSENS chose Café Ponte for Best Waitstaff, Best Chef and Best Martini.

HONORABLE MENTION:
Douglas R. Haggerty's
splendid envelope.