



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, November 17, 2014

CONTACT: Diane Stefani
212.255.8455

Diane@rosengrouppr.com

Alexandra Pearson
646.695.7048

Alexandra@rosengrouppr.com

**The James Beard Foundation Celebrates the
Life of Legendary Chef Charlie Trotter at 2014 Fall Gala**

*~ Norman Van Aken and Emeril Lagasse among Trotter's Friends and Protégés
Who Honored Influential Chef's Legacy at Sold Out Fundraising Dinner ~*

New York, NY (November 17, 2014) – The [James Beard Foundation](http://www.jamesbeardfoundation.org), the country's preeminent culinary organization, celebrated its annual gala and fundraiser at the Four Seasons Restaurant in New York City on Friday, November 14. The theme, [Celebrating Charlie Trotter and the New American Cuisine](#), paid tribute to one of the culinary industry's most illustrious leaders, the late Charlie Trotter, and celebrated his enduring influence on American dining. The evening featured a multi-course menu presented by a group of Trotter's dearest friends and protégés, including fellow James Beard Award winners **Norman Van Aken**, **Emeril Lagasse**, **Carrie Nahabedian**, and **Mindy Segal**, as well as **Michelle Gayer**, **Guillermo Tellez**, and **Tetsuya Wakuda**.

In a true display of veneration for Trotter, more than 275 guests were in attendance at this year's sold-out event, including Trotter's two brothers, Scott and Tom; his son, Dylan; his mother, Dona-Lee; and wife, Rochelle Smith Trotter. The evening began with an extravagant reception and silent auction, featuring live music by [Joelle & The Pinehurst Trio](#). An assortment of hors d'oeuvre were presented by the Four Seasons Restaurant's executive chefs **Pecko Zantilaveevan** and **Richard Brower**, which guests enjoyed between sips of **Peter Paul Lallier Grand Cru Champagne NV** and **BACARDÍ 8** cocktails prepared by BACARDÍ National Brand Ambassador, **Juan Coronado**.

The reception was followed by a sit-down dinner and live auction filled with money-can't-buy experiences, hosted by celebrity auctioneer **Billy Harris**. Each course was perfectly paired with wines selected by James Beard Award winner **Larry Stone** (Quintessa; St. Helena, CA) and breads from **Pain d'Avignon**. Courses included:

Petuna Ocean Trout Confit with Fresh Nori, Preserved Lemon, and Apple
Tetsuya Wakuda, Tetsuya's; Sydney, Australia

Key West Shrimp Ceviche with Salsa of Life; and Creamy Cracked Conch Chowder with Coconut Milk, Saffron, and Oranges
Host Chef Norman Van Aken, Norman's; Orlando, FL*

Ginger and Chile–Marinated Bluefin Tuna with Spicy Avocado and Red Miso; and Roasted Halibut with Truffled Boniato, Golden Beets, and Candied Tomatoes
Guillermo Tellez, Mercadito Hospitality Group; Chicago

Warm Veal Sweetbread Salad with Slow-Roasted Lacquered Bacon, Frisée, Persimmon, Beauty Heart Radishes, Pickled Mustard Seeds, and Green Peppercorns

*Carrie Nababedian**, *Naba; Chicago*

Truffle–Smothered Manchester Farms Quail with Andouille, Collard Greens, and Cheddar Curd Grits

*Emeril Lagasse**, *Emeril's; New Orleans*

“We honor the late Charlie Trotter, who was a dear friend and supporter of the Foundation and one of America’s most influential chefs,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “His Chicago-based restaurant was an international culinary destination for 25 years. Charlie was known as a mentor, an innovator, philanthropist, artist, and generous man. We are sure he’d be delighted to know that his best friends and protégés have joined together this evening to celebrate his remarkable life and career.”

Among the guests who enjoyed the festivities: James Beard Award–winning chefs **Jeremiah Tower**, **Bill Yosses**, and **Emily Luchetti**, chair of the James Beard Foundation’s Board of Trustees; co-owners of the Four Seasons Restaurant **Julian Niccolini** and **Alex von Bidder**; **Josh Elkes** and **Steve Elkes**, The Elkes Family Foundation; Event Chairs **Henni** and **John Kessler** and **Leslie Ziff**; Event Vice Chair **Don Welsh**, president and CEO, Choose Chicago; **Desirée Rogers**, chairman, Choose Chicago; and JBF scholarship recipients, **Matthew Johnson** and **Jessica Hernandez**.

An extraordinary silent and live auction of once-in-a-lifetime packages raised over \$300,000 to support the James Beard Foundation’s mission and programs. The live auction featured an array of unique offerings, including an extravagant multi-course private dinner for 30 prepared by Norman Van Aken and several of Trotter’s alumni and a private dinner for 40 prepared by Peter Chang and James Beard Award winners Danny Bowien and Andrew Zimmern, both to be held at the historic James Beard House. The auction, which also included a private cocktail party for 40 at James Beard Award winner Andrew Carmellini’s Lafayette, ended with a surprise pledge. For this last donation opportunity, the evening’s participating chefs signed 25 copies of Trotter’s favorite cookbook, *Ma Gastronomie*, written by his “spiritual mentor,” chef Fernand Point. This final moment raised more than \$200,000 for the **JBF Charlie Trotter Memorial Scholarship** when Josh Elkes and Steve Elkes of the Elkes Family Foundation kicked off the pledge with a generous \$15,000 contribution.

The evening ended with a delectable Pop-Up Dessert Lounge featuring Coconut Macaroons, Assorted Whole Pies, and Pie Bites from Pastry Chef **Michelle Gayer** (Salty Tart; Minneapolis), along with Brioche Doughnuts, Brittles, Tartlets, Cupcakes, Coffee Cake, Cookies, and Hot Chocolate Bar by James Beard Award–winning Pastry Chef **Mindy Segal** (HotChocolate; Chicago). The after-dinner reception also featured a selection of New American Chocolates provided by **TCHO** and fine artisanal cheeses provided by **Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board**, which guests enjoyed with coffee and espresso by **Lavazza** and an assortment of FACUNDO™ sipping rums.

The 2014 JBF Gala sponsors included **BACARDÍ 8**, **Delta Air Lines**, **Gourmet Settings**, **Langham Place Fifth Avenue**, **Lavazza**, **Manchester Farms Quail**, **Tabasco® Brand**, **TCHO**, **Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board**, and media sponsor, *Gotham* magazine.

Follow @beardfoundation and #JBFGala on Twitter and Instagram for more news.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors America’s diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a

champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts, instilling in them the value of wholesome, healthful, and delicious food. Today JBF continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships for culinary students, publications, chef advocacy training, and thought-leader convening. The Foundation also maintains the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. In September of 2012, JBF launched the Diplomatic Culinary Partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Protocol and helped create the American Chef Corps as a way to champion American chefs abroad, promote American food products, and foster an interest in American culinary culture and history through international programs and initiatives. One such project is the next world's fair, Expo Milano 2015, for which the James Beard Foundation is co-leading the effort for the State Department to design and produce the USA Pavilion, a global gathering of 147 countries addressing the challenges of how we will feed ourselves in the future. The pavilion, whose theme will be "American Food 2.0: United to Feed the Planet," will showcase America's contributions to global food security and gastronomy. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).