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**JAMES
BEARD
FOUNDATION**

Press Contacts:

Karlie Reitano / Mary Blanton Ogushwitz

Susan Magrino Agency

Tel: 212.957.3005

Email: karlie.reitano@smapr.com / mary.blanton@smapr.com

**RESTAURATEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE SIRIO MACCIONI NAMED
2014 JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD WINNER**

New York, NY (January 13, 2014) – Today the James Beard Foundation announced that **Sirio Maccioni**, one of New York’s most celebrated restaurateurs, will be the recipient of the 2014 James Beard Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award. The annual honor is bestowed upon a person in the industry whose lifetime body of work has had a positive and long-lasting impact on the way we eat, cook, and think about food in America. Sirio Maccioni will be honored at this year’s James Beard Foundation Awards, the culinary industry’s most prestigious recognition program, on **Monday, May 5, 2014** at Lincoln Center in New York City.

“Our Foundation is delighted to be honoring Sirio Maccioni whose hospitality is legend,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “Charming guests and indulging their palates for nearly half a century, Sirio has not only set a precedent for fine dining but helped launch the careers of some of the country’s most talented chefs. The James Beard Foundation looks forward to celebrating Sirio Maccioni’s continued legacy on our culinary world,” she added.

“Receiving the James Beard Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award is a tremendous honor,” said Sirio Maccioni. “It was always a dream to open my own restaurant, and one of my most cherished memories is when Le Cirque received the Outstanding Restaurant Award in 1995. I am especially proud to receive this prestigious recognition as Le Cirque celebrates its 40th anniversary, commemorating four decades of triumphs, challenges, and many milestones. I am also humbled to be recognized by the Foundation and join such an esteemed class of award-winners that have come before me,” he concluded.

In addition to receiving the significant honor at the Awards ceremony, Sirio Maccioni will also be lauded at a VIP event following the ceremony at Lincoln Center. Food will be prepared by the chefs at the helm of his three New York City restaurants – Le Cirque, Circo, and Sirio Ristorante at The Pierre. Tickets and tables for the dinner will be available online after March 17th at <http://www.jamesbeard.org>. For more information or to purchase VIP tickets and tables in advance of the online sale date, please call Bowen & Company at 914.231.6180.

Born and raised in the Tuscan town of Montecatini Terme, Sirio developed a love for the culinary world while attending restaurant and hotel training programs in Paris and Hamburg. After a series of apprenticeships in Montecatini and Paris, he held various positions at hotels and restaurants in Italy, France, and Germany before moving to the United States. Once in New York, he quickly settled in and developed a loyal following at the historic Wall Street eatery Delmonico's. From there he made his way to the renowned Colony restaurant where, as maître d', he became an institution amongst the who's who of New York. In March of 1974, Sirio achieved his life-long dream of opening his own restaurant, Le Cirque, in the Mayfair hotel. Le Cirque was the first privately owned hotel restaurant in the city and quickly became the hub of café society in New York. In 1997, the restaurant moved from the Mayfair to the gilded setting of the New York Palace Hotel and the landmark Villard Houses, under the name of Le Cirque 2000, where it remained until 2004. In May 2006, Sirio re-opened Le Cirque in its current home at One Beacon Court.

A love for the restaurant world runs in the Maccioni family and Sirio's three sons have followed their father into the restaurant business. In 1996 the family opened a casual version of Le Cirque called Circo in New York City; this was soon followed by the 1998 opening of Circo and Le Cirque in Las Vegas's Bellagio Hotel. In 2009 Sirio, along with his sons, opened their third Las Vegas restaurant, Sirio Ristorante at the Aria Resort and Casino Las Vegas. In addition to three Las Vegas restaurants, the Maccioni family has expanded globally, opening restaurants in the Dominican Republic (La Cana Restaurant & Lounge by Il Circo and the Beach Club by Le Cirque both at the exclusive Casa de Campo Resort) and India (Le Cirque at The Leela Palace New Delhi and Le Cirque Signature at The Leela Mumbai). Later in 2014, they will be opening their first restaurants in the Middle East with Circo at the InterContinental Abu Dhabi and Le Cirque at The Ritz Carlton, Dubai International Financial Centre, both in the United Arab Emirates). The Maccioni family has also partnered with Holland America Line cruises to offer "An Evening at Le Cirque" in the Pinnacle Grill aboard its fleet of 15 world-class ships, and, in October 2012, Sirio opened the eponymous restaurant, Sirio Ristorante at The Pierre, A Taj Hotel, New York.

Sirio's contributions to the restaurant industry through the years have included fostering the talent of some of the country's greatest chefs, including David Bouley, Daniel Boulud, Terrance Brennan, Andrew Carmellini, Michael Lomonaco, Marc Murphy, Alain Sailhac, Bill Telepan, Jacques Torres, and Geoffrey Zakarian. He is credited for creating Pasta Primavera, a signature dish prepared tableside at Le Cirque, and also for popularizing Crème Brûlée to the American audience with his "Le Cirque Crème Brûlée," arguably one of the most iconic New York City desserts to this day. Furthermore, in a tribute to the contributions Sirio has made to New York City, the New York Landmarks Conservancy designated him as one of its living landmarks.

On **Wednesday, February 19, 2014**, the Foundation will announce the James Beard Awards Restaurant and Chef Semifinalists at a live press conference in Orlando, Florida, at the East End Market.

On **Tuesday, March 18, 2014**, the Foundation will announce the final nominees for all Award categories during a press brunch at the Publican in Chicago. Nominations will also be announced live via the Foundation's Twitter feed at twitter.com/beardfoundation.

On **Friday, May 2, 2014**, the **James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast & Journalism Awards Dinner**, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists, will take place at Gotham Hall in New York City.

The **James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception** will take place at Lincoln Center in New York City on **Monday, May 5, 2014**. During the event, which is open to the public, awards for the Restaurant and Chef and Restaurant Design categories will be handed out, along with special achievement awards including Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America, and America's Classics. A gala reception will immediately follow, featuring top chefs and beverage professionals from across the country.

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and further the Foundation's mission to celebrate, nurture, and honor America's diverse culinary heritage through programs that educate and inspire. Each award category has an individual committee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards program. All JBF Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia. There are no cash prizes.

The 2014 James Beard Foundation Awards are presented with support by the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, Lenox Tableware and Gifts; Supporting Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, Celebrity Cruises®, The Coca-Cola Company, Delta Air Lines, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, Stella Artois, Valrhona; Gala Reception Sponsors: Breville, Ecolab, Pernod Ricard USA, Rums of Puerto Rico; Additional Support: Chefwear, VerTerra Dinnerware, Visit Orlando®.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture, and honor 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 the Beard Foundation 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, the Foundation 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

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