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## 2016 **James Beard Awards**

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### **JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2016 AMERICA'S CLASSICS AWARD HONOREES**

**New York, NY (February 23, 2016)** – The James Beard Foundation announced today the five recipients of its 2016 America's Classics Award. The America's Classics Award is given to restaurants that have timeless appeal and are cherished for quality food that reflects the character of their community. The 2016 honorees join the ranks of nearly 100 restaurants that have received the award since the category was introduced in 1998. This year's winners will be celebrated at the 26th annual James Beard Foundation Awards, taking place on Monday, May 2, 2016, at Lyric Opera of Chicago.

"James Beard would have loved these restaurants; they represent how America eats," says Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. "Each has played a role in bringing their communities together, representing the heart and soul of our national culinary landscape—we're proud to honor them as classics!"

#### **The 2016 James Beard Foundation America's Classics Award winners are:**

##### **Al Ameer Restaurant (12710 W. Warren Ave, Dearborn, MI; Owners: Khalil Ammar and Zaki Hashem)**

This restaurant, with its rows of floral print booths, is a bedrock institution in Dearborn, Michigan, and one of the nation's most welcoming introductions to the pleasures of Lebanese cuisine. Khalil Ammar, Zaki Hashem, and their families started this community-minded spot in 1989. Unfailingly warm servers explain the fine points of maza (a spread of dishes that might include falafel and hummus) and define the differences between fattoush and Lebanese salad. The owners also run a halal butcher nearby. Accordingly, Al Ameer is the place to savor sujuk sausage, vivid with paprika and cumin, or a feast of tender shredded lamb rich with almonds, yogurt, and rice.

##### **Brooks' House of BBQ (5560 State Highway 7, Oneonta, NY; Owners: Beth and Ryan Brooks)**

Brooks' began in 1912, when John McClelland and his wife founded a chicken farm in upstate New York. A catering business followed, then a drive-in, then, in 1961, Brooks' BBQ. Their grandson is at the helm today. The rust-and-toffee interior features rooster-print wallpaper, a scalloped lunch counter, and state-themed paper placemats that detail the entirety of the "Brooks' BBQ Campus." The complex includes a banquet center, gift store, children's park, picnic area, and a sauce bottling plant. Cooked on a 38-foot indoor charcoal pit, the barbecue chicken emerges with blistered skin

and backyard flavor that goes bone-deep. A spiced apple ring, dyed deep garnet, tops each bird. Set on a backroad that cuts into the Catskills, Brooks' is a memory-making place for families driving to and from the mountains.

**Matt's Place Drive-In (2339 Placer St, Butte, MT; Owners: Robin and Brad Cockhill)**

This whitewashed cottage with sky-blue trim opened in 1930 as a drive-in. The staff still deliver some meals curbside to this day, and they remain cheerful curators of community, working the soda-fountain counter in a room lined with midcentury-style wood paneling. The food does the roadside genre proud. Most everyone comes for the crisp, flattop-griddled burgers. The masterpiece is the nut burger, crowned with crushed peanuts mixed into mayonnaise; the topping melds with sliced pickles, tomatoes, and onions righteously. Served with homemade onion rings and a strawberry milkshake made with house-churned ice cream, such a meal is blissful evocation of Montana's culinary culture.

**Bully's Restaurant (3118 Livingston Rd, Jackson, MS; Owners: Tyrone Bully and Greta Brown Bully)**

Tyrone Bully and his father, both trained as masons, built this mansard-roofed restaurant with their own hands. Pride of place goes to a portrait of Civil Rights Movement martyr Medgar Evers. Bully's opened as a snack shop. Nearby factory workers flocked there for cold cut sandwiches. Regulars today include police officers, city council members, state legislators, musicians who record at a nearby studio. Folks from all walks of life arrive for oxtails, neckbones, macaroni and cheese, rice and gravy, and sweet potatoes. Tyrone Bully arrives at six each morning and stays until he locks the doors at night. Bully's serves three different greens daily—typically collards, turnips, and mustards—which cooks strip, wash, and simmer in pork-infused broth. This is back-of-the-range cooking without peer.

**Rancho de Chimayó Restaurante (300 Santa Fe County Rd 98, Chimayo, NM; Owner: Florence Jaramillo)**

Florence and Arturo Jaramillo envisioned this restaurant as a living tribute to the heritage of New Mexico, a way to honor the land and the culture. Arturo Jaramillo is a direct descendant of the first settlers to the Chimayó Valley in the late 1600s, and the hacienda was the home of his grandparents. The menu has expanded over the years. At the core are peerless regional dishes like carne adovada, tamales, posole, pinto beans, sopaipillas, flan, and natillas. The village of Chimayó is celebrated for its particular cultivar of red chile. Ristras of those chiles dangle decoratively from the eaves of the hacienda, a reminder of the import of local goods and local traditions.

To qualify for the America's Classics Award, establishments must have been in existence at least ten years and be locally owned. The honorees are selected each year by the James Beard Foundation's Restaurant & Chef Awards subcommittee, a group composed of restaurant critics, writers, editors and other experts. The selection process begins each fall with a public call for entries, allowing anyone the opportunity to suggest candidates for the awards.

This year, in recognition of past America's Classics Award recipients, Rizzoli and the James Beard Foundation is publishing ***James Beard's All-American Eats: Recipes and Stories from Our Best-Loved Local Restaurants***, a photo and anecdote-filled cookbook featuring more than 75 recipes from eateries across the country that have been honored with the America's Classics Award. The 256-page book goes on sale today; for more information, go to [jamesbeard.org/cookbook](http://jamesbeard.org/cookbook).

On **Tuesday, March 15, 2016**, the Foundation will announce the final nominees for all award categories during a press conference at the Presidio Officers' Club in San Francisco, California. Nominations will also be announced live via the Foundation's Twitter feed at [twitter.com/beardfoundation](https://twitter.com/beardfoundation).

On **Tuesday, April 26, 2016**, the **James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast & Journalism Awards**, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists, will take place at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers in New York City.

The **James Beard Awards Gala** will take place at Lyric Opera of Chicago on **Monday, May 2, 2016**. During the event, which is open to the public, awards in 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 2016 James Beard Awards are presented in association with HMSHost, Lexus, and Mariano's; and the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, American Airlines, Lenox Tableware and Gifts, True Refrigeration®; Supporting Sponsors: Acqua Panna® Natural Spring Water, Breville, Goose Island Beer Company, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, Skuna Bay Salmon, Valrhona; Gala Reception Sponsors: Braveheart Black Angus Beef® from PERFORMANCE Foodservice, Ecolab, Groupon, Royal Caribbean International, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts; with additional support from: Chefwear, VerTerra Dinnerware, and Wisconsin Cheese. The James Beard Foundation also gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Chicago Department of Aviation, Choose Chicago, and the Illinois Restaurant Association.

### **About The James Beard Foundation**

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, the late James Beard 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. For more information, please visit [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org). Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).