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**JAMES
BEARD
FOUNDATION**

VisitOrlando®

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JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION TEAMS UP WITH VISIT ORLANDO TO ANNOUNCE 2014 AWARD SEMIFINALISTS IN FLORIDA

New York, NY (December 19, 2013) – The James Beard Foundation and the official tourism association Visit Orlando announced today that it will reveal the 2014 James Beard Foundation Awards Restaurant and Chef Semifinalists at a live press conference in Orlando, Florida, on February 19, 2014. This is the first time the semifinalists will be announced at a live event.

“We’re thrilled to give special and well-deserved recognition to semifinalists this year,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “With a flourishing farm-to-table movement and a growing independent restaurant scene, Orlando provides a fitting setting for our first live semifinalist announcement.”

Twenty Semifinalists in each Restaurant and Chef award category will be revealed at a 10 A.M. press conference and breakfast at East End Market (3201 Corrine Drive, Orlando, Florida), a community food hub for entrepreneurs, tradespeople, artists and chefs. On the evening before the press conference, a ticketed dinner will be held at the Alford Inn at Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, and will feature a prestigious group of Orlando’s past James Beard Foundation Award semifinalists including: Kathleen Blake (Rusty Spoon and Pine22), Scott Hunnel (Victoria & Albert’s), Brandon McGlamery (Luma on Park and Prato), James and Julie Petrakis (The Ravenous Pig and Cask & Larder), Kevin Fonzo (K Restaurant), Henry Salgado (Txokos Basque Kitchen and Spanish River Grill) and Hari Pulapaka (Cress Restaurant). Proceeds from the dinner will support the James Beard Foundation and tickets can be purchased [here](#). Registration will open on Friday, December 20 at 9 A.M.

“Orlando is the perfect destination to host the James Beard Foundation’s first live semifinalist announcement,” said George Aguel, president & CEO of Visit Orlando. “Our diverse collection of high-quality restaurants and chefs has created a vibrant culinary scene that is receiving national recognition.” In

2013, Orlando led Florida as the city with the most JBF award semifinalists; during the same year, *Zagat* also published its first *Orlando City Guide*.

Semifinalists for the James Beard Foundation Awards, the culinary industry's most prestigious recognition program, are selected from thousands of online entries, a process that's overseen by a committee of industry professionals. After a first round of voting by committee members, judges and previous winners, the semifinalists are then narrowed down to a final list of official nominees, which will be announced in March 2014. The JBF Restaurant & Chef Awards comprise 20 categories representing a wide variety of culinary talent, from exceptional chefs and dining destinations in 10 regions across the U.S., to the nation's top wine and spirits professionals, best new restaurants, and rising star chefs.

The **James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception** will take place at Lincoln Center in New York City on **Monday, May 5**. 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 the 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.

About Visit Orlando

Visit Orlando is the official tourism association for the most visited destination in the United States, with representation in more than a dozen countries around the world. Visit Orlando, together with its 1,200 member companies that make up Central Florida's hospitality community, represent the area's leading industry that is responsible for more than \$50 billion of annual economic impact. For more information about Orlando's chefs and restaurants, go to OrlandoDistricts.com. For more information about visiting Orlando, travelers can log onto VisitOrlando.com or call an Official Travel Counselor at 1-800-551-0181 (United States and Canada) or 407-363-5872. For real time updates, follow Visit Orlando on Twitter at twitter.com/VisitOrlando or Facebook at facebook.com/VisitOrlando.

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

products and foster an interest in American culinary culture and history through international programs and initiatives. 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](#).

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