

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Diane Stefani or Emily Schneider
212.255.8455/ diane@rosengrouppr.com /
emilys@rosengrouppr.com



**JAMES
BEARD
FOUNDATION**

James Beard Foundation Announces Changes to 2013 Restaurant and Chef Regional Awards Categories

*“Best Chef Pacific” Becomes “Best Chef West” and inclusion of Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
Reflects Ever Evolving Restaurant Scene and State of Culinary Culture in the United States*

New York, NY (June 18, 2012) – The James Beard Foundation has announced changes in regions and category names for the culinary industry’s most prestigious honors. Beginning with the 2013 James Beard Awards, chefs in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will be eligible for “Best Chef South” Award and Nevada will join with California and Hawaii to form the new Western region of “Best Chef West.”

“The Restaurant and Chef Awards Committee is always looking for ways to improve the James Beard Awards to better reflect what’s happening in the industry across the country,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “These changes signal the growth and vitality of America’s ever-evolving culinary culture in different geographic regions.”

Chefs and restaurants in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will now be able to vie for a Beard Award in the category of “Best Chef South” along with chefs from Florida, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Puerto Rico restaurants will also qualify for awards in national categories, such as Outstanding Chef, Restaurant/Restaurateur and Service, as well as for the America’s Classic award, an honor bestowed annually on five restaurants with timeless appeal and that are beloved in their region for quality food that reflects the character of the community.

“Including Puerto Rico along with the 50 states and Washington D.C. recognizes the Commonwealth’s vibrant and expanding restaurant scene,” said Providence Cicero, *Seattle Times* restaurant critic and chair of the James Beard Foundation’s Restaurant and Chef Awards Committee. “We expect Puerto Rico’s participation will broaden and enrich the awards competition both in the Southern region and nationally.”

In addition, the Restaurant and Chef Awards Committee announced a redistricting change. Nevada, previously part of the Southwest region, will join California and Hawaii, forming a new three-state Western region. The award category previously known as “Best Chef Pacific” will now be called “Best Chef West”.

The change in the regional “Best Chef” awards more accurately showcases the state of culinary culture in the United States. Since the regions were last reconfigured in 2005, the Southwest region has grown dramatically in population. The previous seven-state region included nine of the 50 largest metropolitan areas in the country.

“Reducing the geographic size of the Southwest region will give chefs and restaurants in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, Texas, and Oklahoma a demographically appropriate chance to compete for a Beard award,” added Cicero. “Similarly, Nevada, California and Hawaii, each with metro areas that enjoy a high degree of culinary tourism, are well-matched to compete in the West.”

To submit a chef or restaurant to be considered for a nomination or to view the full list of 2013 James Beard Awards categories and deadlines, please visit jamesbeard.org/awards beginning October 15, 2012. The deadline for the Journalism, Broadcast, Restaurant Design & Graphics Awards is early January 2013, and the deadline for the Restaurant & Chef Awards is December 31, 2012.

The Awards are open to any industry professional who meets the criteria. Nominees will be announced on March 18, 2013. James Beard Foundation membership is not required for participation in the nomination process or to win an award. Ballot tabulation is handled by Lutz and Carr, an independent accounting firm.

The James Beard Foundation Books, Broadcast, and Journalism Awards will be held on May 3, 2013 in New York City. The James Beard Foundation Awards Gala will be presented on May 6, 2013 at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City.

For more information about the James Beard Awards, please visit jamesbeard.org/awards.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, nurturing, and preserving America's diverse culinary heritage and future. A cookbook author and teacher, James Beard was a champion of American cuisine who helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts. Today the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by offering a variety of events and programs designed to educate, inspire, entertain, and foster a deeper understanding of our culinary culture. These programs include educational initiatives, food industry awards, an annual national food conference, Leadership Awards program, culinary scholarships, and publications. In addition to maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs, the Foundation has created a robust online community, and hosts tastings, lectures, workshops, and food-related art exhibits in New York City and around the country. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. You can find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#), become a JBF member at jamesbeard.org/join, like the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#), and follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#).