



THE JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION

FOR RELEASE

Visa Signature Named Official Payment Card of the James Beard Foundation

NEW YORK and SAN FRANCISCO, May 3, 2010 – The James Beard Foundation and Visa Inc. (NYSE: V) today announced a partnership that makes Visa Signature the preferred payment method for all of the culinary organization's events and provides Visa Signature cardholders access to exclusive epicurean experiences featuring some of the world's most renowned chefs. The relationship brings the experience of dining at the famous the James Beard House to a national level, showcasing the excellence of the Foundation through the 2010 Celebrity Chef Tour program and encompasses the prestigious James Beard Foundation Awards as well as brand alignment on all sales, promotions and advertising of Visa offers and payment services.

"Visa Signature cardholders have a passion for the very best in food and wine," Stacey Pinkerd, Head of Global Consumer Products Strategy, Visa Inc. "This partnership provides Visa Signature cardholders with access to the chefs, vintners and restaurateurs that are leading their fields in quality, creativity and innovation."

Visa Signature cardholders will receive a number of benefits through this partnership, including exclusive Visa Signature presale and preferred pricing on tickets to Celebrity Chef Tour dinners benefiting the James Beard Foundation. The 2010 Celebrity Chef Tour will visit cities including New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Toronto, Atlanta, Boston, Seattle, Phoenix, Baltimore, San Francisco, Denver, Minneapolis, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Michael Schlow, Marcus Samuelsson and Walter "The American Chef" Scheib are among the host of celebrity chefs participating.

In addition, the 2010 James Beard Awards will be presented in association with Visa Signature. The annual awards show is the nation's most prestigious recognition program honoring professionals in the food and beverage industries. This year Food Network star and James Beard Award winner Alton Brown and two James Beard Outstanding Chef Award winners, Lidia Bastianich and Wolfgang Puck, will host the May 3 event at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City.

"We are proud to have Visa Signature as an integral part of the events and programs we present all year long which are designed to educate, inspire, entertain, and foster a deeper understanding of American cuisine," said James Beard Foundation President Susan Ungaro. "And we look forward to their

sponsorship of our ten regional Best Chef Awards, which is a perfect fit with a company that has been a leader in the restaurant and hospitality world.”

These and other special benefits for Visa Signature cardholders will be updated throughout the year. Visa Signature cardholders can visit <http://www.visa.com/signature> anytime to check out the latest perks and upcoming events.

Visa Signature is a premium payment card which offers cardholders a range of benefits, in addition to rewards programs that may be offered by Visa Signature partners, such as airline, hotel and cash back programs. Visa Signature cardholders enjoy access to a host of perks, including complimentary concierge services, the Visa Signature Luxury Hotel Collection, and everyday values, such as special offers on movie tickets and discounts at select retailers, to VIP tickets for premier concerts, Broadway shows and epicurean events, and once-in-a-lifetime packages for events such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cup. For more information about Visa Signature, visit www.visa.com/signature.

About Visa Inc.

Visa is a global payments technology company that connects consumers, businesses, financial institutions and governments in more than 200 countries and territories to fast, secure and reliable digital currency. Underpinning digital currency is the world’s most advanced processing network—VisaNet—that is capable of handling more than 10,000 transactions a second, with fraud protection for consumers and guaranteed payment for merchants. Visa is not a bank, and does not issue cards, extend credit or set rates and fees for consumers. Visa’s innovations, however, enable its financial institution customers to offer consumers more choices: Pay now with debit, ahead of time with prepaid or later with credit products. For more information, visit www.corporate.visa.com.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, preserving, and nurturing America’s culinary heritage and diversity in order to elevate the appreciation of our culinary excellence. 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. Today, the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships to culinary schools, and publications, and by maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City’s Greenwich Village as a “performance space” for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit www.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](#).

###

Contact:

Kate Mulhearn
Visa Inc.
650.432.1113
kmulhear@visa.com

Diane Stefani or Heather Caulfield
James Beard Foundation
212-225-8455
diane@rosengrouppr.com
heather@rosengrouppr.com