

2019 James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards

Entry Deadline: 12/31/2018 11:59:00 PM Eastern Time

Established in 1990, the James Beard Foundation's Restaurant and Chef Awards honor members of the American food, beverage, and hospitality industries who demonstrate excellence in their respective fields. Winners show exceptional talent and creativity in their craft and commendable leadership among their colleagues and peers. The James Beard Foundation is dedicated to promoting a strong, safe, inclusive, ethical food community, and these awards reflect those values.

Nominee Selection and Judging

Anyone can submit a chef or restaurant for consideration during the online open call for entries starting October 15, 2018. There is no entry fee.

The Foundation received more than 22,000 entries for the 2018 Restaurant and Chef Awards.

The Restaurant and Chef Committee produces a ballot with approximately 20 semifinalists in each category. This ballot is distributed online to a voting body of over 300 previous James Beard Restaurant and Chef Award winners; 250 panelists divided evenly among 10 regions (see below); and 18 members of the Restaurant and Chef Award subcommittee. All votes count equally and are tabulated by the independent accounting firm Lutz & Carr.

The 20 semifinalists in each category are announced on February 27, 2019. After this announcement is when the first ballot goes out electronically to the judges. The 5 semifinalists with the highest number of votes become the nominees. The 5 nominees in each category are announced on March 27, 2019.

A second ballot is then distributed to the same voting body to determine which nominee receives the most votes. Winners are announced at the Awards ceremony on May 6, 2019 in Chicago.

Criteria for Restaurant and Chef Awards

1. Outstanding Restaurateur

A restaurateur who demonstrates creativity in entrepreneurship and integrity in restaurant operations. Must have been in the restaurant business for at least 10 years. Must not have been nominated for a James Beard Foundation chef award in the past five years.

2. Outstanding Chef (Presented by All-Clad Metalcrafters)

A chef who sets high culinary standards and who has served as a positive example for other food professionals. Must have been working as a chef for the past five years.

3. Outstanding Restaurant (Presented by S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water)

A restaurant that demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, service, and operations. Must have been in business 10 or more consecutive years.

4. Rising Star Chef of the Year (Presented by S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Spring Water)

A chef age 30 or younger who displays exceptional talent, character, and leadership ability, and who is likely to make a significant impact in years to come.

5. Best New Restaurant

A restaurant opened in 2018 that already demonstrates excellence in cuisine and hospitality, and that is likely to make a significant impact in years to come.

6. Outstanding Pastry Chef (Presented by Lavazza)

A pastry chef or baker who demonstrates exceptional skill, integrity, and character in the preparation of desserts, pastries, or breads served in a restaurant. Must have been working as a pastry chef or baker for the past five years.

7. Outstanding Baker

A pastry chef or baker who demonstrates exceptional skill, integrity, and character in the preparation of desserts, pastries, or breads served in a retail bakery. Must have been working as a pastry chef or baker for the past five years.

8. Outstanding Service

A restaurant in operation for five or more years that demonstrates consistency and exceptional thoughtfulness in hospitality and service.

9. Outstanding Wine, Beer, or Spirits Producer

A beer, wine, or spirits producer who demonstrates consistency and exceptional skill in his or her craft.

10. Outstanding Wine Program (Presented by Robert Mondavi Winery)

A restaurant or bar that demonstrates excellence in wine service through a carefully considered wine list and a well-informed approach to helping customers choose and drink wine.

11. Outstanding Bar Program (Presented by Woodford Reserve Bourbon)

A restaurant or bar that demonstrates exceptional care and skill in the selection, preparation, and serving of cocktails, spirits, and/or beer.

12. Best Chefs (10 Regions)

Chefs who set high culinary standards and also demonstrate integrity and admirable leadership skills in their respective regions. A nominee may be from any kind of dining establishment but must have been working as a chef for at least five years, with the three most recent years spent in the region.

The Regions

Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH)

Mid-Atlantic (D.C., DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA)

Midwest (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD, WI)

New York City (Five Boroughs)

Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, NY State, RI, VT)

Northwest (AK, ID, MT, OR, WA, WY)

South (AL, AR, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, FL, LA, MS)

Southeast (GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, WV)

Southwest (AZ, CO, NM, OK, TX, UT)

West (CA, HI, NV)

America's Classics

A restaurant with timeless appeal, beloved in its region for quality food that reflects the character of its community. The establishment must have been in existence at least 10 years and be locally owned; preferably it is also informal and moderately priced.

Each year, five winners are chosen by the Restaurant and Chef Awards Committee. Winners are announced in March.