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# JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES CHEZ PANISSE AS 2020 DESIGN ICON

## RESTAURANT KNOWN AS THE INSPIRATION FOR CALIFORNIA CUISINE AND FARM TO TABLE COOKING HONORED FOR IMPACT BEYOND FOOD

**NEW YORK, NY (May 4, 2020)** – The James Beard Foundation announced today that Chez Panisse, the renowned restaurant in Berkeley, California will be honored with the 2020 Design Icon Award. At the center of the restaurant design, as with the food, service and ethics of the dining experience, is Alice Waters. The spirit of collaboration that she brought to the project shaped the space, from materials to people to dining ware. 50 years later it is still as relevant, beautiful, and affecting as ever, and is why Chez Panisse, in addition to being an American food legend, is a the James Beard Foundation Awards 2020 Design Icon.

Waters' time spent in France in her formative years inspired more than just the restaurant's name; it awakened her sensibilities to how food and design work hand in hand: what was on the plate, what that plate looked like, what the napkin looked like, and how the things in the room reinforced what was on the plate were all important. And in 1971, at a time when few people were looking at, much less reimagining, the Arts and Crafts movement, Alice Waters adopted it as the style that best expressed her ideas about handmade, locally sourced and detail-oriented craft, elevated to art.

From her gathered experience she commissioned the local artists, craftsmen, architects, glass makers, lighting designers, calligraphers and botanists who together created the restaurant that is Chez Panisse. Intuitively understanding that natural, hand-crafted materials –polished wood, copper, iron, leather and stained glass – could be the ingredients for the perfect way in which to savor a hand-crafted, organic meal was ahead of its time.

The tactile, luxurious and handmade interior reflects her idea that art and craft should be everywhere. The graphics are part Deco, part Japanese-influenced seen through the community of artists she loves. The lighting is crafted both as object and as a source of perfectly warm illumination. Stained glass helps color the light, and materials everywhere exude the warm glow of redwood. The materials are also a part of the idea of cooking: copper pots over wood-fired iron stoves, vessels of glass, and even the animal hide are at home in the kitchen. It's almost as though the front of house material palette is in conversation with the engine of the restaurant, the open kitchen.

After a fire in 2013 shuttered the restaurant for a three-month renovation, Waters was able to see the silver lining from the tragedy. She gathered many of the original craftspeople and builders to reinvigorate Chez Panisse in a sort of Bay Area artisan reunion, including the original architect Kip Mesirov. The restaurant re-opened with a fresh façade, reconfigured dining rooms, updated lighting fixtures throughout, and some technological and safety updates.

“Receiving this award is an unexpected and tremendous honor, not just for me, but for the eclectic group of artisans and craftspeople who have contributed to the design of Chez Panisse, a design that evolved from a harmonious convergence of influences—Bernard Maybeck, Christopher Alexander, and traditional Japanese architecture, to name only three—and from the aesthetic shared by all my collaborators, from the coppersmith Khalil Mujadedy to the builder Kip Mesirov, who masterminded our first alterations in 1971, returned to design the upstairs café in 1979, and returned twice more, to redesign and rebuild after the fires of 1982 and 2013,” said Chez Panisse founder Alice Waters. “A few details have been critically important to me since the night we opened. Lighting, for one: It’s taken years to find the exact mixture of candlelight, rose-colored filters, copper trim, and verre églomisé to produce exactly the flattering warm light I’m always looking for when I walk into a restaurant. And I’ve always insisted on human scale, natural materials, as little stainless steel as possible—and fresh flowers in season, grown nearby. On behalf of everyone who has been part of transforming Chez Panisse into what it is today, thank you to the James Beard Foundation for recognizing that we eat with all of our senses.”

“Other Design Icons recognized by the James Beard Foundation are driven by the names of the architects and designers: Philip Johnson, Warren Plattner, Raphael Guastavino and Roland Terry are credited with shaping some of the best buildings and interiors in the restaurant landscape,” said James Biber, Chair of the JBF Restaurant Design Awards Committee. “But at Chez Panisse, the name at the center is the same name that conceived, created, cooked, choreographed and codified the culinary statement; Alice Waters.”

### **About the 2020 James Beard Awards Presented by Capital One**

The 2020 James Beard Awards will mark the 30th anniversary of America’s most coveted and comprehensive honors for chefs, restaurants, journalists, authors, and other leaders in the food and beverage industry, celebrating culinary excellence and achievements from the previous year. Due to the devastating effects that COVID-19 has had on the food and beverage industry, this year’s Awards will look unlike any from the past. In March, the Foundation postponed both the Media and Restaurant & Chef Awards Ceremonies, and will now announce the winners of the Media Awards via a press release on Wednesday, May 27, foregoing a physical Media Awards ceremony in 2020. The Restaurant & Chef Award winners are slated to be announced on Friday, September 25, 2020, from Chicago and they will be broadcast live via the James Beard Foundation’s [Twitter feed](#). Additional details on the September announcement, including format and location, are forthcoming.

The Foundation knows the positive impact that a James Beard Award semifinalist nod, nomination, or win can have on a restaurant or chef, and now more than ever, celebrating these professionals is paramount for our community.

The James Beard Foundation is working diligently to ensure that independent restaurant industry doesn't only endure, but flourishes in a way that is more economically and environmentally sustainable, more inclusive, more equitable, and more delicious following the eventual resolution of the pandemic.

The Foundation has redeployed staff and redirected program support for the next 12-18 months to our Open for Good campaign to support the recovery and rebuilding of an independent restaurant industry that is stronger than ever. Emergency relief funding was the first phase of this commitment; with Open for Good, the Foundation is creating programs to help restaurants build the capacity to come back stronger, more resilient, and better prepared for the new economic, social, and cultural realities of this time. Among the components of the Open for Good campaign are workshops, trainings, expert advice, and best practices on reopening and restructuring; continued advocacy programs to support federal, state, and local legislation that benefits the independent restaurant industry; and financial support for restaurants to rebuild. The Foundation will continue to provide meaningful information disseminated via social media, newsletters, webinars, and online events, and engage with our 1 million plus audience base across platforms to bring awareness to major pandemic-related issues and advocate for the industry so we can be #OpenforGood.

The 2020 James Beard Awards are presented by Capital One, the official credit card and banking partner of the James Beard Foundation. Through this first-of-its-kind partnership, Capital One cardholders enjoy exclusive access to James Beard Foundation programming. The James Beard Awards are proudly hosted by Choose Chicago and the Illinois Restaurant Association and presented in association with Chicago O'Hare and Midway International Airports, as well as the following partners: Premier Sponsors: All-Clad Metalcrafters, American Airlines, the official airline of the James Beard Foundation, HMSHost, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water; Supporting Sponsors: National Restaurant Association®, Skuna Bay Salmon, Tabasco® Sauce, Valrhona, White Claw® Hard Seltzer, Windstar Cruises, the official cruise line of the James Beard Foundation; Gala Reception Sponsors: Ecolab, Front of the House®, Kendall College, with additional support from VerTerra Dinnerware. Intersport is the Official Broadcast Partner of the 2020 James Beard Awards.

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 chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. The first James Beard Awards were given in 1991. The James Beard Awards are governed by the volunteer Awards Committee. Each Awards program (Restaurants and Chefs, Books, Journalism, Design, Broadcast Media, and Leadership) has its own subcommittee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards programs. All James Beard Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia.

## About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation promotes *good food for good*™. For more than 30 years, the James Beard Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives. Through the [James Beard Awards](#), [unique dining experiences](#) at the James Beard House and around the country, [scholarships](#), hands-on learning, and a variety of [industry programs](#) that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has built a platform for chefs and asserted the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture, and policy change around food. To that end, the Foundation has also created signature impact-oriented initiatives that include

our [Women's Leadership Programs](#) aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in the culinary industry; advocacy training through our [Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change](#); and the [James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards](#) that shine a spotlight on successful change makers. The organization is committed to giving chefs and their colleagues a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone. For more information, subscribe to the digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#) and follow [@beardfoundation](#) on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in New York City.

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