



“The JBF Gala: A Night of Award Winners” Celebrated Susan Ungaro at the Annual James Beard Foundation Fundraiser at the Rainbow Room

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~ Honorary event chairs Ted Allen and Carla Hall joined Lidia Bastianich, Barbara Lynch, Fortunato Nicotra, Jonathon Sawyer, Michael Solomonov, and Mathew Woolf, in fêting the JBF President ~

New York, NY (November 13, 2017) – The culinary community came out in full force this past Friday for [The JBF Gala: A Night of Award Winners](#), to celebrate Susan Ungaro for her extraordinary leadership as the Foundation’s president since 2006. The [James Beard Foundation](#)’s annual fall gala and fundraiser at the iconic Rainbow Room featured a once-in-a-lifetime collaborative dinner by a distinguished lineup of James Beard Award–winning chefs and beverage professionals.

Among the chefs who created the menu for the reception and dinner were **Lidia Bastianich** and **Fortunato Nicotra** (Felidia, NYC); **Barbara Lynch** (Barbara Lynch Gruppo, Boston); **Jonathon Sawyer** (The Greenhouse Tavern, Cleveland); **Michael Solomonov** (Zahav, Philadelphia); and **Mathew Woolf** (Rainbow Room, NYC). JBF Award-winning sommelier **Larry Stone** curated the evening’s wines.

More than 250 guests were in attendance to enjoy the festivities including JBF Board of Trustees members Christy Brown, Peter Cameron, Jill Greenthal, Trevor Guthrie, Eric Kessler, John Kessler, Emily Luchetti, Nancy Lukitsh, Cindy McLoughlin, Richard Perlman, David Rivkin, Frederic Seegal, and John Washko, as well as JBF Award winners Paul Bartolotta, Daniel Boulud, Marion Nestle, and Art Smith.

The evening began with an elegant reception featuring cocktails by bar director William Elliott of JBF Award winner Maison Premiere, Brooklyn, NY; music by the Hot Club of Flatbush band, and a silent auction of over 100 unique travel, gift, and culinary packages.

At the start of the sit-down dinner, a sneak peek from “30 years: A Celebration of the James Beard Foundation,” a special premiering on the ABC Television Network on November 26, was shown. At the end of the evening JBF board chair Frederic Seegal and JBF board chair emeritus Emily Luchetti addressed the attendees.

“For the past 11 years, we have had the remarkable good fortune to have Susan help us realize our full potential as a major force for positive change in the culinary industry,” said Seegal. “It is because of her extraordinary leadership that we are so well positioned for decades to come and recognized as the foremost culinary arts organization in the world.”

“Perhaps most meaningful to all of us has been Susan’s dedication to the mission of the James Beard Foundation and the vast culinary community the organization serves,” added Luchetti. “Likely a daunting task to many, Susan built and nurtured close relationships with many of the country’s leading chefs and restaurateurs, step by step building trust and faith in her vision for the James Beard Foundation to serve and support the amazing people who make up our great American culinary community.”

Hosted by celebrity auctioneer Billy Harris, the live auction offerings included “A Glamorous Taste of Argentina,” a six-night, unique package for two in the wine country of Mendoza and cultural experiences in Buenos Aires; “An Insider’s Private Maui Getaway,” a seven-night exclusive getaway for two at Hotel Wailea; “The Gramercy Tavern Chef Alumni Dinner,” a dinner for 22 featuring an unforgettable meal prepared by JBF Award winner Michael Anthony and Gramercy Tavern alumni; “Your Starr-Studded Dinner Party,” a remarkable James Beard House dinner for 40 featuring JBF Award winner Stephen Starr, Daniel Rose, Daniel Skurnick, and more. The silent and live auction packages raised almost \$240,000 to support the James Beard Foundation’s mission and programs.

The Super Silent items included a four-night stay at the world-renowned Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman and tickets to the tenth-annual Cayman Cookout hosted by JBF Award-winning chef Eric Ripert and friends, including JBF Award winners José Andrés, Rick Bayless, Daniel Boulud, Anthony Bourdain, Sean Brock, Dominique Crenn, Robert Irvine, Emeril Lagasse, Michael Mina, and Alfred Portale; a lavish 18-course dinner at Thomas Keller’s restaurant French Laundry; and an eight-course dinner for 12 by the Rainbow Room’s chefs, paired with wines from the private cellar, and served in the exclusive private dining room with 270-degree views of the city.

The dinner concluded with a call for pledges to support the next generation of culinary leaders through the JBF National Scholars Program, which awards scholarship support of up to \$20,000 to students in each of the ten regions as defined by the James Beard Awards, as well as the Women’s Leadership Programs, which provide mentoring and internship opportunities for female chefs. Ahmass Fakahany of Altamarea Group and Steven Elkes and Josh Elkes of the Elkes Family Foundation together generously contributed a matching gift of \$40,000, resulting in more than \$100,000 raised in support of these important initiatives.

The evening also included spectacular passed sweets and dessert stations by pastry chef **Ghaya Oliveira** (Daniel, NYC) and host chef **Mathew Woolf** (Rainbow Room, NYC), who each presented a magnificent array of treats, including Mille-Feuille Kumbawa with Apple Confit; Salted Pistachio–Praliné Cubes; Concorde Pear with Vermicelli–Roasted Chestnuts; Flourless Bolivia Chocolate Cake with Cranberry–Spicebush Geleé; Espresso Tart with Candied Pistachios; Pumpkin-Spiced Latte Lollipops; and an Ice Cream Sundae Bar Station. Throughout the after-dinner reception, guests enjoyed their desserts between sips of Kracher Trockenbeernauleslese, as well as coffee graciously provided by La Colombe.

The JBF Gala: A Night of Award Winners was sponsored by Gourmet Settings, La Colombe®, and Saratoga Spring Water. The 2017 JBF Gala supporter is Chefwear.

About the James Beard Foundation

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation celebrates, nurtures, and honors chefs and other leaders making America’s food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, the late James Beard 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 JBF 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. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org. Get food news, recipes, and more at the James Beard Foundation's [blog](#), or subscribe to the free digital newsletter [Beard Bites](#). Follow @beardfoundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#), and Snapchat. Watch the James Beard House Kitchen Cam, James Beard Awards, and more on the Foundation's [Livestream](#) channel. Find more JBF-related video on the Foundation's [YouTube](#) channels.