



JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES “THE AMERICAN RESTAURANT” AS 2018 DESIGN ICON

NEW YORK, NY (March 7, 2018) – The James Beard Foundation announced today that The American Restaurant in Kansas City, Missouri, known equally for its architectural and culinary artistry, has been awarded this year’s Design Icon Award.

2018 Design Icon honoree The American Restaurant opened on Valentine’s Day 1974 atop Crown Center in Kansas City. Designed by Warren Platner, it became the conceptual parent of all the over-the-top top-of-the-building restaurants that followed, including some by Platner himself. Platner described it as, “Bridging the contrast in scale between great volume of space and the minute detail of food and tableware, between public gathering and personal intimacy, the design entertains the diner and gives distinction to the server in this emporium of elaborate meals.”

One travels to The American by elevator, arriving at the top of the three story-high restaurant in a carefully designed but modest entry space. As the visitor descends into the restaurant, the grand 6,500 square foot space is dramatically revealed as the terraced landings create an enormous glass lined theater with views to the city visible below. The lacy Gothic-inspired bentwood rosette-topped pillars above not only lend a “dining under the trees” feel, but, because they line the ceiling, make for an intriguing view from the street below. Miles of wood louvers cover the sheets of glass adding to the sense of tree-filtered light and making a very large space feel quite intimate. While design elements have been altered in the intervening decades, the largest gestures, including the decorative wood elements, are all intact.

"We are honored to receive the Design Icon Award from the James Beard Foundation," says Stacey Paine, president, Crown Center Redevelopment Corporation. "Warren Platner created a unique design, timeless in nature and a wonderful example of great architecture inspiring those around it. We are proud to have The American recognized."

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JBF MEDIA DROPBOX

[VIDEO: An Inside Look at 'The American Restaurant'](#)



Built and still owned by CrownCenter, the real estate development business for Hallmark Cards, the restaurant and its design is as much a confection as a considered confluence of space, form, light, and color. And because it was created by Joe Baum, in collaboration with James Beard, Barbara Kafka, and a host of other food-world luminaries, it was, and is, as much of a dining event as a design event. The American serves up a range of dining experiences from guest chef events to private dining, all under the signature wood tracery canopy that defined the space in 1974 as it does today.

The Design Icon Award is chosen by the Restaurant Design Committee. In order to qualify, a restaurant or dining space's design must have remained substantially unchanged for at least 20 years and must have influenced and inspired the design of subsequent restaurants and dining spaces. Additionally, the restaurant/dining space must still be in operation.

The James Beard Foundation Awards Gala will be held at the Lyric Opera of Chicago on Monday, May 7, 2018. During the event, which is open to the public, awards for the Restaurant and Chef and Restaurant Design categories will be handed out, along with special achievement awards Humanitarian of the Year, Lifetime Achievement, Design Icon, Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America, and America's Classics. A gala reception will immediately follow, featuring top chefs and beverage professionals from across the country.

On Friday, April 27, 2018, the James Beard Media Awards, an exclusive event honoring the nation's top cookbook authors, culinary broadcast producers and hosts, and food journalists, will take place at Pier Sixty at Chelsea Piers in New York City.

Established in 1990, the James Beard Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and furthers 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. Each award category has an individual committee made up of industry professionals who volunteer their time to oversee the policies, procedures, and selection of judges for their respective Awards program. All JBF Award winners receive a certificate and a medallion engraved with the James Beard Foundation Awards insignia. There are no cash prizes.

The 2018 James Beard Foundation 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, HMSHost, Illinois Office of Tourism, Lavazza, S.Pellegrino® Sparkling Natural Mineral Water, TABASCO® Sauce, Woodford Reserve Bourbon; Supporting Sponsors: Breville®, Corporate Essentials, Hyatt, Robert Mondavi Winery, Skuna Bay Salmon, Taylor Precision Products, Valrhona, Windstar Cruises; Gala Reception Sponsors: Dogfish Head Craft Brewery, Ecolab, Front of the House®, Kendall College; with additional support from: Chefwear, Emmi Roth, Locker, and VerTerra Dinnerware.

About the James Beard Foundation (JBF)

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.