

JBF CHEFS & CHAMPAGNE

James Beard Foundation's 2018 Chefs & Champagne® Toasts to a Better Food World

~ *The culinary community joins guest of honor Padma Lakshmi and over 35 chefs to support JBF Impact Programs and educational initiatives at annual summer fundraiser* ~

New York, NY (July 30, 2018) – More than 900 culinary connoisseurs, farm-to-table foodies, New York influencers, and a host of sponsors came out in full force to celebrate **Padma Lakshmi**, this year's [James Beard Foundation Chefs & Champagne](#) guest of honor. The host and executive producer of Bravo's James Beard Award-winning and Emmy awarding-winning *Top Chef* set the tone with her passion for food, family, feminism, and the work that the JBF does to implement a better food system. Over 35 chefs from around the country created delectable dishes for the celebration at the Wölffer Estate Vineyard in Sagaponack, which also featured flowing Champagne Boizel, and wines and ciders from Wölffer Estate Vineyard.

“This year’s summer fundraiser had the greatest impact yet,” said Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation. “The annual event exemplifies our continued commitment to create exceptional experiences all in support of the Foundation’s mission to change the world through food. It was fantastic to honor Padma Lakshmi, and to recognize her inspiring contributions to the culinary community. We are also hugely grateful to all the amazing chefs and attendees who raised funds in support of the Foundation’s programs to create a better food world.”

JBF Chefs & Champagne is considered the East End’s premier culinary summertime event. In addition to offering a unique and fun tasting experience for guests, the event embodies JBF’s yearlong RISE celebration to honor chefs and practices that are creating a more equitable food world. A silent auction, including one-of-a-kind dining experiences, wines and spirits, cookware, and culinary travel packages, raised over \$100,000 to help support JBF’s mission, scholarship, education and JBF Impact Programs, which include the Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change, Women in Entrepreneurial Leadership, and Smart Catch. To complement these efforts, this year’s chef lineup included five JBF Boot Camp alumni; and of the more than 35 participating chefs, 20 were women. Also new this year, in an effort to

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lead industry efforts, all seafood served at the event was sustainable. Additionally, JBF partnered with Rethink Food NYC, a food rescue non-profit, to transform excess food from the event into ready-to-eat meals for New York's food insecure populations.

Carrying on its long tradition of supporting culinary education, JBF was proud to announce Franco Fugel as the recipient of the 2018 Christian Wölffer Scholarship. Established in 2006, the scholarship assists students in their study of food and wine. As of July 2018, nearly \$8 million has been awarded to over 2,000 recipients through the JBF Scholarships program.

Chefs & Champagne participating chefs included: Alex Baker, Yves, NYC; Emma Bengtsson, Aquavit, NYC; Stephan Bogardus, The North Fork Table & Inn, Southold, NY; Janine Booth and Jeff McInnis, Root & Bone, NYC and Stiltsville Fish Bar, Miami Beach, FL; Peter Botros, The Stone House at Clove Lakes, Staten Island, NY; PJ Calapa, Scampi, NYC; Adrienne Cheatham, Sunday Best Dinner Series, NYC; Michael Corvino, Corvino Supper Club & Tasting Room, Kansas City, MO; Pastry Chef Jessica Craig, L'Artusi, NYC; Suzanne Cupps, Untitled at the Whitney, NYC; Georgette Farkas, Rotisserie Georgette, NYC; JBF Award Winning-Pastry Chef Claudia Fleming*, The North Fork Table & Inn, Southold, NY; Tom Fraker, Melissa's Produce, CA; Nicole Gajadhar, Saxon + Parole, NYC; Gregory Gourdet, Sage Restaurant Group, Portland, OR; Joseph Gurrera, Citarella, Bridgehampton, East Hampton, and Southampton, NY, Greenwich, CT; and NYC; Patti Jackson, Delaware and Hudson, Brooklyn, NY; Jimmy Lau, Shuko, NYC; Mina Newman, Sen Sakana, NYC; Ayesha Nurdjaja, Shuka, NYC; Chintan Pandya, Rahi, NYC;; Angie Rito and Scott Tacinelli, Don Angie, NYC; Michael Ronzino, Wölffer Kitchen, Sag Harbor, NY; Laëtitia Rouabah, Benoit Restaurant and Wine Bar, NYC; Surbhi Sahni, Saar Indian Bistro, NYC; Barbara Sibley, La Palapa, NYC; Roxanne Spruance, Kingsley, NYC; Chris Starkus, Urban Farmer, Denver; Nick Stefanelli, Masseria, Washington, D.C.; Hillary Sterling, Vic's, NYC; Audrey Villegas, 2 Spring, Oyster Bay, NY; Jason Weiner, Almond, Bridgehampton, NY and NYC; Mathew Woolf, The Rainbow Room, Bar SixtyFive, NYC; Emily Yuen, Bessou, NYC.

*James Beard Award winner

As guest of honor, Padma Lakshmi, joins the ranks of culinary icons such as Marcus Samuelsson, Daniel Boulud, Julia Child, Bobby Flay, Thomas Keller, Wolfgang Puck, and Martha Stewart, who have all been fêted at the event in the past 27 years. Lakshmi is an internationally known food expert, model, actress, and best-selling author, as well as the recipient of the 2016 NECO Ellis Island Medal of Honor and Variety's 2018 Karma award. *Top Chef*, the Emmy award-winning show she hosts and executive produces, is currently filming its 16th season. Lakshmi established herself as a food expert early in her career, having hosted two successful cooking shows and writing the best-selling cookbook, *Easy Exotic*. Lakshmi followed this success with the publication of her second cookbook, *Tangy, Tart, Hot & Sweet*. In 2016, she released her food memoir, *The New York Times* best-seller *Love, Loss and What We Ate*, followed by *The Encyclopedia of Spices & Herbs*. In addition to her work as a writer, Lakshmi is a savvy businesswoman, having had multiple companies of her own, including the home décor line, *The Padma Collection*; and *Padma's Easy Exotic*, a collection of frozen rice, lentils, and other culinary products. Last year, Lakshmi became an

ambassador for the ACLU, focusing on women's reproductive health and immigration issues. She is also co-founder of the Endometriosis Foundation of America.

Sponsors for the James Beard Foundation's Chefs & Champagne include Audi; Big Green Egg; Calvisius Caviar; Hamptons.com; *Hamptons* Magazine; Heineken®; Lakhani Coaching; Loaker; Melissa's Produce; Natalie's Orchid Island Juice Company; Royal Cup Coffee and Tea; Saratoga Spring Water Company; Seedlip Drinks, Tito's Handmade Vodka; VerTerra Dinnerware; Windstar Cruises; WEHM; WVVH.

For more information, visit jamesbeard.org/chefsandchampagne; follow @beardfoundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). To become a member of the James Beard Foundation, [click here](#).

About the James Beard Foundation

The James Beard Foundation's mission is to celebrate, nurture, and honor chefs and other leaders making America's food culture more delicious, diverse, and sustainable for everyone. For more than 30 years the Foundation has accomplished this mission through programs that highlight food's central role in our lives. In addition to hosting guest-chef dinners throughout the year at the historic James Beard House in New York City, the Foundation administers the James Beard Awards; grants scholarships for culinary students; produces national events that include our Taste America tour; and creates educational programs for the culinary community and food lovers. The Foundation addresses the growing challenges facing our food system through its Impact Programs, which include the Leadership Awards; Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change; Issue Summits; and Culinary Labs. Industry issues, such as gender imbalance and diversity in culinary leadership, are addressed through our Industry Programs. For more information, please visit jamesbeard.org and follow @beardfoundation on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).