



Media Contact

Lisa Scholin

503 320 9379

lscholin@cplusc.com

The James Beard Foundation Announces Launch of “Smart Catch” Sustainable Seafood Pilot Program for Restaurants

Border Grill Restaurants, Batali and Bastianich Hospitality Group are among the leading restaurants committed to the new JBF Impact Program

SEATTLE (June 5, 2017) – One of the country’s most prominent culinary institutions is taking on the sustainability of the world’s seafood supply — starting with the menus from some of America’s favorite chefs. Today at the SeaWeb Seafood Summit in Seattle, the James Beard Foundation (JBF) announced the national launch of Smart Catch – a program created by chefs for chefs with the purpose of increasing the sustainability of the seafood supply chain. More than 60 chefs representing more than 100 restaurants have already committed to the program, including a number of James Beard Award nominees and winners, such as:

- Mario Batali’s Batali and Bastianich Hospitality group of restaurants
- Michael Cimarusti’s Providence in Los Angeles
- Renee Erickson’s Seattle restaurants
- Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger's Border Grill restaurants in Los Angeles and Las Vegas
- Bill Telepan and Oceana in New York City
- Ryan Prewitt and Pesche in New Orleans
- Hari Pulapaka’s Cress in Deland, Florida

The idea for Smart Catch is simple and powerful: the program provides training and support to chefs so they can serve seafood fished or farmed in environmentally-responsible ways. And, by earning a Smart Catch emblem, consumers have a simple way to identify and support their restaurants. With more than 90 percent of the world's fisheries either fully fished or overfished, preserving marine life to assure

stable fishing stocks and promoting sustainably farmed options is more important than ever.

“Chefs have the influence to educate our palates and our views,” said Susan Ungaro, president of the James Beard Foundation. “Through Smart Catch, they are becoming new environmental heroes, as they use their influence to lead industry efforts to maintain healthy, sustainable food sources both now and for future generations.”

Smart Catch works to increase the amount of sustainable seafood sold through U.S. restaurants by addressing the many barriers to getting sustainable seafood on a diner’s plate — from reliable sources to chef training and consumer awareness. The program also seeks to engage the chef community in efforts to improve seafood production both domestically and abroad.

Chefs who commit to serve more than 80 percent sustainable seafood on their menus earn the Smart Catch emblem for their restaurant. Those who achieve more than 80 percent receive designation as a Smart Catch Leader. All Smart Catch restaurants are provided with menu consultations, staff training materials, up-to-date online sustainability assessments powered by FishChoice.com, marketing support, and guidance in working with their suppliers so they can make smart, environmentally responsible seafood choices.

Smart Catch’s sustainability criteria uses data from Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch Program and NOAA Fish Stock Sustainability Index. The criteria is based on wild and farmed seafood production and includes the health and abundance of fish stocks and impacts on the surrounding environment.

Developed by Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul G. Allen to make change on the water, Smart Catch piloted in Seattle in 2015 with almost 50 local chefs representing 80 Seattle restaurants taking part, including Renee Erickson, Ethan Stowell, Tom Douglas, Thierry Rautureau and Brendan McGill.

“The future of the world’s oceans depends on all of us choosing sustainable seafood,” said James Deutsch, conservation director for Paul Allen. “James Beard Foundation’s announcement of their national rollout of Smart Catch represents a giant step in that direction. We couldn’t be more proud of the continued growth of this pioneering program we piloted in Seattle.”

The new national pilot is one of James Beard Foundation’s Impact Programs, which aim to establish a more sustainable food system through education, advocacy, and thought leadership. In addition to running Smart Catch, the historic James Beard House will also become a Smart Catch participant.

For more information on the Smart Catch program and a list of participating Smart Catch restaurants, visit www.jamesbeard.org/smartcatch.

About the Smart Catch Program

Smart Catch is the James Beard Foundation's sustainable seafood pilot program created with chefs for chefs, with the purpose of increasing the sustainability of the seafood supply chain. The program provides training and support to chefs and gives consumers a simple way to identify and support restaurants that serve seafood fished or farmed in environmentally responsible ways. With more than 90 percent of the world's fisheries either fully fished or overfished, preserving marine life to assure stable fishing stocks and promoting sustainable farmed options is more important than ever.

Created by Paul G. Allen to make change on the water, Smart Catch is part of the James Beard Foundation's Impact Programs, which aim to establish a more sustainable food system through education, advocacy, and thought leadership.

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.

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