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**James Beard Foundation and Audi of America announce expanded Women's Leadership Programs for 2019-2020**

- Annual five-day entrepreneurial leadership retreat to take place this month in Bay Area
- James Beard House dinner series celebrating women culinary leaders planned for 2020

**New York, NY (October 9, 2019)** -- The James Beard Foundation (JBF) will renew its successful partnership with Audi of America for a third year, in support of entrepreneurs and business leaders from the food, culinary, and hospitality industries. The Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership (WEL) program, part of JBF's Women's Leadership Programs Presented by Audi, is a multi-year initiative that provides in-depth education, fellowship, and networks to help owners expand their businesses and strengthen management skills, as well as support personal and professional growth. This past summer, graduates of the WEL Program participated in PROOF, the Audi Culinary Dinner Series, which visited Nashville, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis and Seattle.

WEL's 2019-2020 program kicks off with its annual five-day business retreat for 20 leaders, October 27 to November 1 at Costanoa Lodge in Pescadero, CA.

"Bringing these leaders together with other experts in the fields of business and finance produces tangible results. Since we started WEL in 2017, more than half of the program's fellows have expanded their businesses materially, and the network forged amongst the fellows is hugely valuable," said Clare Reichenbach, chief executive officer of the James Beard Foundation. "We're deeply committed to empowering chefs and owners in the culinary industry and are thrilled to partner with Audi of America to be a part of these impressive success stories."

The 2019 class of Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership fellows are:

**Ann Ahmed**, Lat14 Asian Eatery, Lemon Grass Thai Cuisine, Golden Valley, MN  
**Mary Aregoni**, Saigon Sisters, Chicago  
**Caitlin Carney**, Marjie's Grill, New Orleans  
**Gina Chersevani**, Buffalo&Bergen, Suburbia, Washington, D.C.  
**Penny Chutima**, Lotus of Siam, Las Vegas  
**Vicky Colas**, Pro Kitchen Hub, Sunrise, FL  
**Christina Corvino**, Corvino Supper Club & Tasting Room, Kansas City, MO  
**Sonya Cote**, Eden East, Hillside Farmacy, Austin  
**Sarah Ecolano**, Copper River Fish Market, Cordova, AK  
**Rohani Foulkes**, Folk Detroit, Farmer's Hand, Detroit  
**Sarah Gavigan**, Otaku Ramen, Nashville  
**Jocelyn Guest**, J&E Small Goods, NYC  
**Katy Kindred**, Hello, Sailor; Kindred, Davidson, NC  
**Tiffany MacIsaac**, Buttercream Bakeshop, Washington, D.C.  
**Tim McDiarmid**, Tim the Girl, The Good Kind, San Antonio  
**Caroline Morrison**, The Fiction Kitchen, Raleigh, NC

**Nikki Nickerson**, Cowgirl Enterprises Restaurant & Retail Group, Rosemary Beach, FL  
**Evelyn Padin**, Hardgrove Restaurant, Jersey City, NJ  
**Teresa Razo**, Cambalache & Villa Roma Restaurants, Orange County, CA  
**Trish Rothgeb**, Wrecking Ball Coffee Roasters, San Francisco

As part of its WEL program support, Audi has once again offered fellowships to two members of this year's class: Sarah Gavigan of Otaku Ramen in Nashville, and Katy Kindred of Kindred and Hello, Sailor in Davidson, NC. Last year's Audi fellows, Esther Choi and Sandra Cordero, participated in events throughout the year, such as the Audi-sponsored AFI FEST, Forbes Women's Summit, and the Harvest Summit.

As part of the PROOF series, Audi and the James Beard Foundation created the Audi #DriveProgress Scholarship, awarded to an aspiring woman-identifying student from each city in the fall of 2020. To date, these scholarships, which are made possible by consumer donations and matching contributions from Audi of America and OpenTable, have granted a total of \$40,000. Applications for this year's scholarship will be accepted April 1, 2020 through May 15, 2020.

WEL, along with JBF's Owning It program, which champions aspiring entrepreneurs and trains them in best practices related to visioning, business planning, and fundraising, comprise the Foundation's Women's Leadership Programs, made possible by generous support from Audi of America, whose #DriveProgress initiative supports gender equality.

"We look forward to continuing to provide opportunities to elevate female leaders in the culinary industry, a field where women are largely underrepresented, and to further collaborating with the James Beard Foundation," said Loren Angelo, vice president, marketing, Audi of America. "It's been incredibly rewarding to watch each class of WEL fellows take their newly acquired learnings and apply them to their businesses to take them to the next level."

Developed in partnership with Babson College, the top-rated business school whose central focus is entrepreneurship education, WEL retreats offer curricula that address advanced trade and finance concerns, as well as gender-specific training on leadership development, work/life balance and other cultural issues.

For the second year, in addition to the 2019 retreat later this month in California, a special series of dinners created by WEL fellows and sponsored by Audi of America is planned during the first quarter of 2020 at the historic James Beard House in New York City, culminating in a celebration of Women's History Month in March.

For more information on JBF's Women's Leadership Programs Presented by Audi, please visit: [jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs](https://jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs).

## **About Audi of America**

Audi of America, Inc. and its U.S. dealers offer a full line of German-engineered luxury vehicles. AUDI AG is among the most successful luxury automotive brands, delivering about 1.812 million vehicles globally in 2018. In the U.S., Audi of America sold nearly 224,000 vehicles in 2018. 2019 marks 50 years for the brand in the U.S. Visit [audiusa.com](http://audiusa.com) or [media.audiusa.com](http://media.audiusa.com) for more information regarding Audi vehicles and business topics.

### **About the James Beard Foundation**

The James Beard Foundation's mission is to promote 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, which 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, please visit [jamesbeard.org](http://jamesbeard.org) and follow @beardfoundation on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/beardfoundation), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/beardfoundation), and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/beardfoundation).

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