

James Beard Foundation: Arizona Honors

Written by Ashley Loose

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The Official James Beard Foundation recently released the list of semifinalists for the 2012 James Beard Foundation Restaurant and Chefs Awards. Awards to talented chefs and professionals and outstanding restaurants and programs from this organization are considered the "highest honor...in North America," according to their Web site.

This year, Arizona took in some pretty impressive nominations for great chefs, restaurants and restaurateurs alongside competition from across the country.



Best New Restaurant

Scottsdale's very own ShinBay is nominated for Best New Restaurant this year. ShinBay prides itself on their tranquil, Tokyo-inspired setting, nestled in the Scottsdale Seville. Chef Shinji Kurita utilizes the finest ingredients and crafts beautiful, delicious entrees with the perfect doses of tradition, hospitality, and luxury. ShinBay has already won the title of Best New Restaurant from Phoenix Magazine as well as other honors from Phoenix New Times, Arizona Republic and more. For more information, visit <http://www.shinbay.com/shinbay/HOME.html>.

Photo Credit: Yelp



Outstanding Chef

Janos Wilder from Janos in Tucson is nominated as an Outstanding Chef. Aside from being nominated between 1992 and 1999 for Top Chef in the Southwest with the James Beard Foundation, he won the title in 2000. Chef Janos has also been recognized by over a dozen other organizations. Aside from his work at Janos, offering a gourmet menu of Southwestern appetizers and land and sea entrees, he also offers cooking classes with discussions, demonstrations and more. For more information, visit <http://www.janos.com/>.

Photo Credit: Tucson Citizen



Outstanding Restaurant

Vincent on Camelback in Phoenix is in the running for Outstanding Restaurant. Vincent Guerithault opened his first restaurant in 1986, Vincent on Camelback, and has been practicing his passion for culinary arts ever since. The business has expanded to include catering services, outdoor markets, a lounge and bar area and much more. Vincent on Camelback offers a variety of dishes, desserts and wines. For more information, visit https://www.vincentsoncamelback.com/vincents/index_main.php.

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Outstanding Restaurateur

Sam Fox and Fox Restaurant Concepts in Scottsdale is nominated as an Outstanding Restaurateur. "The secret to our success is listening to our guests- a lot," says Sam Fox on their Web site. Fox Restaurant Concepts is in charge of restaurants in Arizona, Colorado, Texas, California and Kansas, including The Arrogant Butcher, Blanco, Culinary Dropout, The Greene House, Modern Steak, NoRTH, Olive & Ivy, Sauce, True Food Kitchen, Wildflower and Zinburger. For more information, visit <http://foxrc.com/home.html>.



Best Southwest Chef

Kevin Binkley of Binkley's Restaurant in Cave Creek, Silvana Salcido Esparza of Barrio Café in Phoenix, and John Sharpe at The Turquoise Room at La Posada Hotel & Gardens in Winslow are nominated as the Best Southwestern Chefs. Binkley has a great reputation for his passion of creating delicate and sophisticated dishes for Cave Creek. Esparza was inducted into the Arizona Culinary Hall of Fame in 2004, has been nominated for other James Beard Foundation awards and was named as one of the country's top Latino chefs by Latino Magazine. Sharpe has showcased his culinary talents across the lands of England, California and Arizona and has an impressive background of executive chef titles, company ownership and business ventures. For more information, visit <http://binkleysrestaurant.com/>; <http://www.barriocafe.com/>; <http://www.theturquoiseroom.net/index>.