



Chef Tom Nominated for 2010 James Beard Award

Congratulations, Chef Tom!

Nominations were announced on Thursday for the [2010 James Beard Foundation's Restaurant and Chef Award](#) Semifinalists and include Chef Tom Gray, Executive Chef and Partner of Bistro AIX in the *Best Chef: South* category. This is Chef Tom's second consecutive nomination.

The foundation's Restaurant and Chef Committee selected the nominees from among 21,000 online nominations that were received. The next phase of the competition will reduce the semifinalists in each of the various categories from 20 nominations to five finalists. An independent volunteer panel of more than 400 judges from across the country will vote in specific award categories to determine the final five nominees in each category.

Deemed the "Oscars of the food world", by *Time* magazine, the James Beard Foundation Awards are the country's most coveted honor for chefs and professionals in the food industry.

There are 19 restaurant and chef categories representing 10 different regions across the United States. Chef Tom is one of 20 chefs in the running to claim the *Best Chef: South* award along with top chefs from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana and Mississippi.

"Last year, a guest e-mailed us the news that we had been nominated. We were incredulous because we had not received any word or communication from the Foundation, so it came as a complete surprise", recalled Chef Tom. This year, my wife saw a Tweet from Ruth Reichl (former editor of *Gourmet Magazine* and *The New York Times* restaurant critic) that the announcements had been made. She immediately followed the link and was literally jumping for joy when she saw my name in the listing!"

According to the Foundation's website, "The James Beard Foundation Awards recognize culinary professionals for excellence and achievement in their fields and continue to emphasize the Foundation's mission: to celebrate, preserve, and nurture America's culinary heritage and diversity. Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, preserving, and nurturing America's culinary heritage and diversity in order to elevate the appreciation of our culinary excellence. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard, who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts. Today, the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships to culinary schools, and publications, and by maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting



chefs." For more information, please visit www.jamesbeard.org."

On Monday, March 22, the James Beard Foundation will announce the final restaurant and chef nominees during an invitation-only breakfast in New Orleans. Winners will be announced at the James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception on Monday, May 3, 2010 at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City. To see a complete listing of the semifinalists in each of the categories, please follow this [link](#).

"Thank you to everyone who helped me achieve this honor to make it to the semifinals; our guests, my strong support team at the restaurant, and my family. I would love to bring this award home one day for myself, Bistro AIX *and* Jacksonville!" adds Chef Tom. **Go, Chef Tom, go!**

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