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Destinations & Diversions

Beard awards shift palate

Vegas, Chicago are high on list of nominations

By Jerry Shriver
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NEW YORK — Culinary professionals from Chicago and Las Vegas made strong showings among the nominees for the 16th James Beard Foundation awards, which were announced Thursday, signaling a shift in the traditional dominance of New York and the West Coast.

Chicago boasted six nominees among the top categories, including two for outstanding restaurant (places opened at least 10 years). Everest and Spiaggia will compete against Boulevard in San Francisco, Dahlia Lounge in Seattle and The French Laundry in Yountville, Calif.

Las Vegas has four nominees in top categories, including two for best new restaurant (places opened in 2005). Bartolotta Ristorante di Mare at Wynn Resort and Joel Robuchon at the Mansion will compete with Alinea in Chicago, Providence in Los Angeles and Del Posto and The Modern in New York.

The awards in 62 categories honor the nation's top chefs, restaurateurs, cookbook authors, waitstaffs, journalists and beverage makers.

Winners will be announced May 8 at a gala in New York that will celebrate the culinary legacy of New Orleans. The nominees in other top categories:

► **Outstanding chef:** Tom Colicchio, Craft, New York; Hubert Keller, Fleur de Lys, San Francisco; Nobuyuki Matsuhisa, Matsuhisa, Beverly Hills; Alfred Portale, Gotham Bar & Grill, New York; Michel Richard, Michel Richard Citronelle, Washington, D.C.

► **Restaurateur:** Daniel Boulud, The Dinex Group, New York; Richard Melman, Lettuce Entertain You Enterprises, Chicago; Drew Nieporent, Myriad Restaurant Group, New York; Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Jean Georges, New York; Wolfgang Puck, Fine Dining Group, Las Vegas.

► **Rising-star chef:** Graham Elliot Bowles, Avenues at the Peninsula Hotel, Chicago; David Chang, Momofuku Noodle Bar, New York; Corey Lee, The French Laundry, Yountville, Calif.; Lachlan MacKinnon-Patterson, Frasca Food and Wine, Boulder, Colo.; Tre Wilcox, Abacus, Dallas.

► **Pastry chef:** Gina DePalma, Babbo, New York; Johnny Iuzzini, Jean Georges, New York; Leslie

Mackie, Macrina Bakery & Café, Seattle; Sam Mason, wd-50, New York; Elizabeth Pruitt and Chad Robertson, Tartine Bakery, San Francisco.

► **Restaurant service:** Gary Danko, San Francisco; Le Grenouille, New York; Lucques, West Hollywood, Calif.; Terra, St. Helena, Calif.; Tru, Chicago.

► **Wine service:** Aureole, Las Vegas; Blackberry Farm, Walland, Tenn.; I Trulli, New York; Mary Elaine's at The Phoenix, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Patina, Los



Matsuhisa: Nominated for best chef.

Angeles.

► **Wine/spirits professional:** Dale DeGroof, Museum of the American Cocktail, Malverne, N.Y.; Paul Draper, Ridge Vineyards, Cupertino, Calif.; Dan Duckhorn, Duckhorn Vineyards, St. Helena, Calif.; Daniel Johannes, Daniel, New York; Helen Turley, HTM Consultants/Marcassin Winery, Calisto-

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ga, Calif.

► For a full list of nominees, visit travel.usatoday.com.