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PHILADELPHIA EARNS TOP NATIONAL HONORS AT JAMES BEARD AWARDS
Best-In-Nation Awards For Chef, Restaurateur & Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic Go To Philly

PHILADELPHIA, May 4, 2017 – It’s called “the Oscars of food,” and this week in Chicago, three Philadelphia culinary stars brought home gold. At the James Beard Foundation Awards on May 1, **Michael Solomonov** of Zahav won the very top prize of “Outstanding Chef.” **Stephen Starr** of Starr Restaurant Organization also won the top-in-nation honor of “Outstanding Restaurateur.” And **Greg Vernick** of Vernick Food & Drink won “Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic.” These wins do more than merely showcase Philadelphia’s emergent culinary talents: They cement the city’s status as a culinary destination.

Michael Solomonov is the chef and co-owner of Philadelphia’s **Zahav**, along with **Rooster Soup Co.**, **Abe Fisher**, **Federal Donuts** (several locations), **Dizengoff** and just-opened **Goldie**. His 2017 Outstanding Chef award makes him a four-time James Beard winner. In 2011, he won “Best Chef, Mid-Atlantic.” Last year, he and business partner Steve Cook shared “Book of the Year” and “International” Foundation Book Awards for *Zahav: A World of Israeli Cooking*. Solomonov and Cook have a second Dizengoff in New York City’s Chelsea Market and both Dizengoff and Federal Donuts opening in Miami this spring.

Outstanding Restaurateur winner Stephen Starr is the owner of 35 restaurants, starting with Old City, Philadelphia’s groundbreaking **Continental** and **Buddakan**, and now 18 more Philadelphia restaurants, plus destination eateries that span New York to Florida to Paris, including **Le Diplomate** in Washington, DC and New York City’s **Le Coucou**, the 2017 winner of the James Beard Foundation’s “Best New Restaurant.”

Greg Vernick, Best Chef: Mid-Atlantic is the chef and co-owner of Rittenhouse Square’s New American **Vernick Food & Drink**. He’s also a Philadelphia-area native, graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and former protégé of Jean-Georges Vongerichten.

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Note to Editors: For high-resolution photos of Greater Philadelphia, visit the photo gallery of visitphilly.com/pressroom.