



## The 2014 James Beard Awards finalists are announced

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Chicago mayor [Rahm Emanuel](#) just couldn't resist. As nationally recognized chefs and restaurateurs patiently waited at The Publican restaurant in Chicago's West Loop neighborhood to hear who made the final list of nominees for the 2014 [James Beard Foundation Awards](#), Emanuel decided to joke.

"I am a middle child," he said. "I used to joke, we wrote a book called *War or Peace* and you could do either one of them. I say that only because New York usually hosts the stars of the culinary industry, but here in Chicago we produce them."

This year didn't disappoint the [Chicago](#) mayor with many finalists in the 59 categories coming from the [Windy City](#). That includes the city's two of five spots in the Rising Star Chef of the Year category, which is given out to an outstanding chef in the U.S., who is 30 or younger. [Jimmy Bannos Jr.](#), the Chicago chef of [The Purple Pig](#), was nominated, calling it a "dream come true" and a good motivation tool to continue pushing himself.

[Dana Cree](#) of Chicago's [Blackbird](#) joked that "it's humbling and hard to know if anybody is paying attention to you."

"We slave away in our kitchen for 14 hours a day and don't see sunlight for six months out of the year," adds Cree, who is one of the five finalists in the Outstanding Pastry Chef category along with [Dominique Ansel](#) of New York City's [Dominique Ansel Bakery](#), [Belinda Leong](#) of [b.patisserie](#) in San Francisco, [Dahlia Narvaez](#) of [Osteria Mozza](#) in Los Angeles, and [Christina Tosi](#) of New York City's [Momofuku](#).

"And it's not because we live in Chicago," said [David Posey](#), the chef of [Blackbird](#), who is one of the five finalists in the Rising Chef of the Year award that also includes Bannos, Jr., [Katie Button](#) from [Cúrate](#) in [Asheville, N.C.](#), [Jessica Largey](#) of [Manresa](#) in [Los Gatos, Calif.](#), and [Blaine Wetzel](#) of [The Willows Inn](#) on [Lummi Island](#) in Washington. "This is such an incredible honor."

"It's validation for all the completely unglamorous hours we spend in the kitchen," says Cree, who was also nominated last year. Her advice to future James Beard Foundation hopefuls: "Keep your head down and work as much as possible," she says. "The awards come to people who don't chase them. You just have to find what resonates with you."

It's the second time in the past six years that the James Beard Foundation has announced its list of awards nominee finalists in Chicago. The Outstanding Restaurant finalists are New York City's [Hearth, Highlands Bar and Grill](#) in [Birmingham, Ala.](#), San Francisco's [The Slanted Door](#), [Spiaggia](#) in Chicago, and [wd-50](#) in [New York City](#). While the finalists in the Outstanding Chef category are [Michael Anthony](#) of [Gramercy Tavern](#) in New York City, [Sean Brock](#) of [McCrary's](#) in [Charleston, S.C.](#), [Suzanne Goin](#) of [Lucques](#) in Los Angeles, [David Kinch](#) of [Manresa](#) in Los Gatos, Calif., [Nancy Silverton](#) of Los Angeles' [Pizzeria Mozza](#), and [Marc Vetri](#) of [Vetri](#) in Philadelphia.

[Finalists for the 2014 James Beard Foundation Awards](#) will be honored at one of two ceremonies in New York City. On May 2, food journalists, book authors, broadcast producers and others will be honored at the invite-only James Beard Foundation Book, Broadcast and Journalism Awards ceremony. Several days later, [Food Network's](#) [Ted Allen](#) will serve as Master of Ceremonies with chef [Mario Batali](#) as Gala Chef Chair to the 2014 James Beard Foundation Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception on May 5, which is open to the public.

It's the third time [Paul Virant](#) of [Vie Restaurant](#) in Western Springs, Ill. has been nominated. He is one of the five finalists in the 2014 Best Chef: [Great Lakes Region](#) category, following his 2011 and 2012 nominations. "I'd love to say this is the year, but you just never know," Virant says. "Either way it's such a big honor. Plus, it's a trip out to New York."