



2017 FINALISTS

Uniquely Arizona - Home to some of the oldest documented food traditions, Arizona has a rich culinary past steeped in tradition. We are searching statewide for the restaurants that embrace not only the local food but are staples of the state.

- Cress on Oak Creek at L'Auberge de Sedona
- Tomaso's on Camelback
- Tonto Bar & Grill

Innovative Restaurant Concept – Recognizes a restaurateur or restaurant group who demonstrates that they don't follow trends; they define them, setting the bar in restaurant operations and the overall customer dining experience.

- Crujiente Tacos
- El Panzon y Frida
- Hash Kitchen

Outstanding Multiple Location Restaurant – Honors a culinary concept with multiple locations, demonstrating exceptional achievement and commitment to excellence in marketing, menu design and customer service.

- Hash Kitchen
- Postino Wine Café
- The Capital Grille

Emerging Restaurant of the Year – Honors promising up-and-comers that demonstrate exemplary talent, showcase innovation and have already distinguished themselves as pacesetters in food, beverage and service.

- Crujiente Tacos
- Fat Ox
- Hand Cut Burgers & Chophouse

Outstanding Food Truck – Recognizes outstanding achievement in mobile nourishment, operations and community development.

- Frites Street
- Mustache Pretzels
- Short Lease Hot Dogs Food Truck

Best Dish: Tacos – Honors the restaurant that quite simply does it best.

- Casa Añejo
- Crujiente Tacos
- Tacos Chiwas

Restaurant Manager - Recognizes the manager that has set the gold standard for exemplary customer service and leadership as well as enhancing the overall dining experience.

- Justin Cohen (Riot Hospitality Group)
- Nicholas Campisano (The Clever Koi)
- Pauline Martinez (Char Kitchen + Bar)

Restaurant Employee – Recognizes the front or back of house employee (non-managerial) that has set the gold standard for exemplary customer service and enhancing the overall dining experience.

- Garrit Guthrie (Market Street Kitchen)
- Kevin Lewis (Kai)
- Sherry Dierauer (Ling & Louie's Asian Bar & Grill)

Premier Cocktail Program – Recognizes an outstanding restaurant or bar that demonstrates excellence and innovation in their cocktail program.

- Bitter & Twisted Cocktail Parlour
- Counter Intuitive
- Hand Cut Burgers & Chophouse

Best Cocktail – Raising a glass to the best cocktail made in Arizona. This beverage is an exceptional cocktail that is without a doubt delicious, garnished to perfection while pushing the limits with flavors.

- Kombucha Cocktail (Farm & Craft)
- The Drunken Gardener (Market Street Kitchen)
- The Smoking Cannon (UnderTow)

Premier Beer Program – Recognizes an outstanding restaurant or bar that demonstrates excellence and innovation in their beer program.

- Craft 64
- Federal Pizza
- TapHouse Kitchen

Best Arizona Beer – Raising a glass to the best beer made in Arizona – from ales to malts, this beer is the best of the best from State 48.

- Kilt Lifter (Four Peaks Brewing Company)
- Papago Orange Blossom Ale (Huss Brewing Company)
- Scottsdale Blonde (Huss Brewing Company)

Premier Wine Program – Recognizes an outstanding restaurant or bar that demonstrates excellence and innovation in their wine program.

- FnB Restaurant
- J&G Steakhouse
- Postino Wine Café

Best Arizona Wine – Raising a glass to the best wine made in Arizona – from rose to chardonnay, this wine is the best of the best from State 48.

- Arizona Stronghold Vineyards
- Dos Cabezas WineWorks
- Flying Leap Vineyards

Top Mixologist – Honoring an individual who is behind the bar, constantly raising the bar and setting trends in the beverage scene.

- Garrit Guthrie (Market Street Kitchen)
- Keifer Gilbert (Counter Intuitive)
- Matt Thompson (Riot Hospitality Group)

Best Overall Beverage Program – Recognizing a bar or restaurant that keeps their beverage menu edgy yet approachable embracing all things beverage – cocktails, spirits, wine and beer.

- Blue Hound Kitchen & Cocktails
- Counter Intuitive
- Market Street Kitchen

Good Neighbor – Recognizes the outstanding community leadership and exceptional devotion to making a difference in our neighborhoods and community at large.

- Chompie’s Restaurant, Deli, and Bakery
- Fox Restaurant Concepts
- Raveen Arora (The Dhaba)

Food Pioneer – Honors a lifetime of outstanding culinary excellence that continues to educate, inspire, entertain and foster a deeper understanding of the culinary culture in Arizona.

- Chef Christopher Gross (Christopher’s & Crush)
- Chef Jeff Smedstad (Elote Café)
- Chef Tomaso Maggiore (Tomaso’s on Camelback; Tomaso’s When in Rome)

Top Chef – Pays tribute to outstanding culinary excellence, breaking new ground with an innovative menu while enhancing the dining experience.

- Chef Cullen Campbell (Crudo; Okra Streakhouse & Cocktails)
- Chef Joey Maggiore (Hash Kitchen)
- Chef Michael O’Dowd (Cress on Oak Creek at L’Auberge de Sedona)