

RESTAURANT BUSINESS

6 restaurants win America's Classics Awards from James Beard Foundation

The locally owned independent restaurants are recognized for quality food, timeless appeal and their ability to reflect the character of their communities.

By Patricia Cobe on Feb. 29, 2024

The James Beard Foundation on Wednesday announced the 2024 recipients of its annual America's Classics Award. Six locally owned independent restaurants from around the country were recognized for their quality food, timeless appeal and their ability to reflect the character of their communities.



The winners represent locales as diverse as San Francisco and South Dakota; Harlem, N.Y. and Spartanburg S.C. And their menus run the gamut from traditional Vietnamese dishes to Nordic waffles, smothered pork chops, meat-and-three plates, oversized cocktails and Burmese cuisine.

The James Beard Foundation named six iconic restaurants recipients of the America's Classics Award. | Photo courtesy of the James Beard Foundation.

Here are the six America's Classics Award recipients:

Vietnam Restaurant Philadelphia, Pa.

Current owner: Benny Lai

Founding couple Nhu Lai and Thuyen Luu arrived in Philadelphia in 1979 and opened a grocery that transitioned into a Chinatown restaurant five years later. By 2000, after handing the business over to their son, Benny, Vietnam moved to a larger, upgraded multi-floor space and evolved into one of Philly's favorite date-night destinations for classic Vietnamese cuisine. A second branch in West Philadelphia, Vietnam Café, has become a neighborhood favorite, too.