



**JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION AWARDS *BEST CHEF IN THE SOUTHEAST* TITLE
TO CHARLESTON CHEF FOR THIRD YEAR IN A ROW**

CHARLESTON, S.C., May 5, 2010 – For the third year in a row, a Charleston, S.C. chef was named “Best Chef of the Southeast” during the annual James Beard Foundation Awards held on May 3, 2010 in New York City. Sean Brock of McCrady’s Restaurant beat out stiff competition to continue the three-year tradition for the destination, riding the wave of success started by two other star Charleston chefs, FIG’s Mike Lata (2009) and Hominy Grill’s Robert Stehling (2008).

This accomplishment underscores Charleston’s position as one of the country’s top epicurean destinations. Charleston’s culinary offerings have gained increasing praise in recent years from the success of its annual festivals highlighting its gastronomic delights, such as the Lowcountry Oyster Festival in January, the BB&T Wine + Food Festival in March and Taste of Charleston in October.

Charleston’s cuisine garners praise because it is found nowhere else in the U.S. and boasts a long history, influenced by African and Caribbean traditions. Highlights of Lowcountry cuisine include fresh seafood, especially shrimp, oysters and crabs, and southern specialties such as grits and barbeque.

Charleston’s Lowcountry fare is highlighted in its annual festivals, which are recognized by and welcome guest appearances of world-renowned chefs, authors and wine experts. The 2010 BB&T Wine + Food Festival was headlined by Daniel Boulud, of famed Daniel in New York City, and in 2009 by Bobby Flay, an Iron Chef on the Food Network’s hit show Iron Chef America.

Charleston chefs have been finalists for multiple James Beard Awards in recent years. Brock was a finalist for Rising Star Chef of the Year Award in 2008; Lata was in the running for 2008 Best Chef of the Southeast before his win in 2009; and Bob Waggoner of Charleston Grill was also a finalist for Best Chef of the Southeast in 2009.

The mission of the Charleston Area Convention & Visitors Bureau is to unify and lead the local travel industry in marketing the Charleston area as an individual, meeting, incentive and group destination to both the domestic and international markets. For more information, visit www.explorecharleston.com

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