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VI–Born Chef Digby Stridiron to Headline James Beard Taste America Dinner, Sponsored by Capital One

USVI native and Latha chef Digby Stridiron will represent Caribbean-influenced cuisine at a James Beard Foundation Taste America pop-up dinner in Phoenix, joining a national series spotlighting chefs shaping the future of American dining.

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U.S. Virgin Islands–born chef Digby Stridiron.

A one-night-only culinary event featuring U.S. Virgin Islands–born chef Digby Stridiron will bring national attention to Caribbean-influenced cuisine when the James Beard Foundation stages a Taste America pop-up dinner in Phoenix, Arizona, later this year.

The James Beard Foundation announced that its celebrated Taste America culinary series will return to Phoenix on Sunday, March 22, with a special pop-up dinner hosted at The Gladly. The event is presented by Capital One and is part of a national series spanning 20 U.S. cities, designed to spotlight independent restaurants and chefs shaping American food culture.

The Phoenix dinner will feature Digby Stridiron, chef and owner of Latha, in collaboration with Bernie Kantak, a longtime Phoenix culinary leader and co-owner of several restaurants through the In Good Spirits Hospitality Group. Kantak is a two-time James Beard Award Semifinalist for Best Chef Southwest.

Stridiron is a member of the 2025–2026 TasteTwenty class, an annual selection of chefs recognized by the Foundation as “ones to watch” for outstanding culinary talent and leadership within the industry.

“Our Taste America series showcases the independent restaurants and visionary chefs who are leading American food culture forward through excellence and through the kind of positive leadership our industry needs,” said Clare Reichenbach, Chief Executive Officer of the James Beard Foundation. “We’re thrilled that Phoenix diners will experience our Good Food for Good® mission and the cooking of these incredible chefs, who are shaping the future of American dining, at this special event.”

Guests attending the Phoenix pop-up will experience a multi-course collaborative menu prepared by Stridiron and Kantak, paired with wine selections. The menu will be released closer to the event date. Tickets are scheduled to go on sale in November 2025.

“What makes TasteTwenty chef Digby Stridiron exceptional goes far beyond his innovative approach to African cuisine, highlighting the rich, interconnected foodways of Africa, Brazil, the Caribbean, and the Southern US,” said Siobhan Flaherty Haber, Vice President of Events for the James Beard Foundation. “He is also a leader committed to making a difference beyond the kitchen — for example, serving as founder of the West Indian Chefs Alliance and as a culinary ambassador for the U.S. Virgin Islands. This combination of outstanding craft and leadership is exactly what our TasteTwenty program celebrates, and we are so excited to highlight both of our incredible chefs at this special event.”

Kantak echoed that enthusiasm, saying, “I’m incredibly excited about this James Beard Taste of America menu and can’t wait to cook alongside Chef Digby. He brings bold flavors to everything he does and is truly among the best culinary talents in Phoenix. It’s going to be a fun night.”

The Taste America series is designed to give diners firsthand exposure to the flavors, regional influences, and innovation shaping American dining. Proceeds from the events support the James Beard Foundation’s Good Food for Good® mission, which promotes a more sustainable, equitable, and thriving future for independent restaurants and the broader food system.

The Phoenix dinner is one of several Taste America events scheduled nationwide between January and March 2026, with box office access opening in November 2025. Eligible Capital One cardholders will receive early ticket access and select onsite benefits through Capital One Entertainment, while supplies last.

The James Beard Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing excellence in the culinary arts and supporting the individuals who shape American food culture. Its work includes the James Beard Awards, advocacy initiatives, educational programming, and culinary events across the country.

Capital One serves as the Foundation's official credit card and banking partner, offering cardholders access to dining, entertainment, and cultural experiences nationwide through its rewards programs.

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