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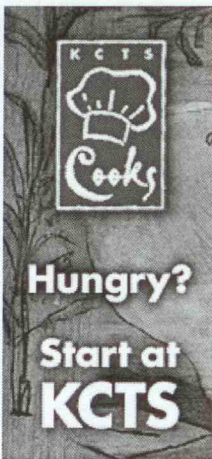
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Seattle StarChefs Awards

Events come to Seattle

If you're not a restaurant industry insider or generally un-obsessed with chefs, you may not be aware of New York City's StarChefs.com. It's an online magazine that focuses on working chefs, giving them the tools they need to overcome challenges and help them succeed. To give you an idea of how popular it is, they have 680,000 unique readers on the site each month. So why are we telling you about it? Because they've added Seattle to their four U.S.-city tour this year, are planning three events here in March and have handed out awards to Seattle culinary professionals. We thought you'd like to know.



Rising Star awards go to "up-and-coming chefs and culinary professionals who represent the vanguard of the contemporary American dining scene. They are the future of American cuisine." Chefs, pastry chefs, sommeliers, mixologists and hotel chefs should have less than ten years of experience and be under 40 years of age. Mentor, restaurateur and restaurant concept awards are considered "senior" awards and can be won by past Rising Stars and more senior chefs. Rising Stars are nominated by: StarChefs Advisory Board, previous award winners, local food media, StarChefs editorial research and through the StarChefs website. Once nominated, they are chosen by the StarChefs editorial team that does onsite tastings and interviews with 60-100 nominees in each city. Their annual Rising Star picks in various cities have proved prescient. StarChefs last spotlighted Seattle in 2003, picking out Holly Smith of Cafe Juanita and John Sundstrom of Lark (and now Licorous), Eric and Sophie Banh of Monsoon, Scott Staples of Restaurant Zoe (and now Quinn's) and other notables.

Seattle's Rising Stars are:

- Chef Mark Fuller of Springhill in West Seattle
- Chef Stuart Lane of Cafe Juanita in Kirkland
- Chef Vuong Loc of Portage on Queen Anne
- Chefs Brian McCracken and Dana Tough of Spur in downtown Seattle
- Chef Colin Patterson of Sutra in Wallingford
- Chef Jason Wilson of Crush in Madison Valley

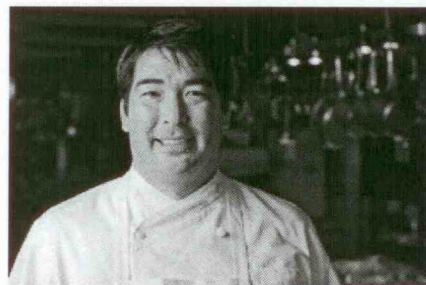


Photo above: Chef Mark Fuller courtesy of Spring Hill

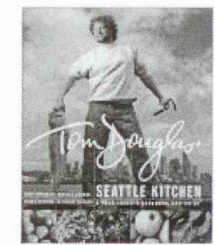
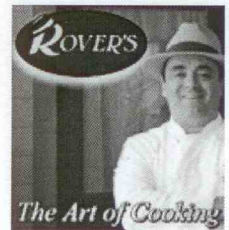
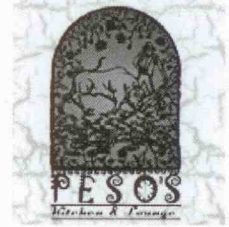
Hotel Chef Adam Stevenson of Earth & Ocean at the W Hotel in downtown Seattle (W Seattle)



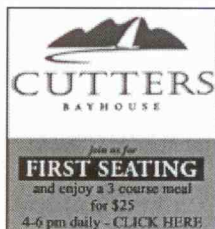
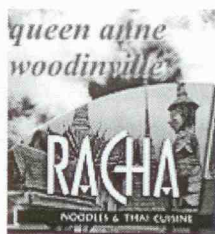
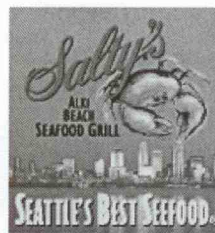
Pastry Chef Dana Cree of Poppy on Capitol Hill
Pastry Chef Matt Kelley of Rover's in Madison Valley (pictured at left)

Mixologist Jim Romdall of Vessel in downtown Seattle

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Sommelier Nelson Daquip of Canlis on Queen Anne

Restaurateur Ethan Stowell of Union in downtown Seattle, How to Cook a Wolf on upper Queen Anne and Tavolata in Belltown

Concept Award Chefs Joshua Henderson of Skillet Street Food

Sustainability Award Chef Maria Hines of Tilth in Wallingford

Being acknowledged by your own is pretty powerful. When asked how they felt about the awards, most had similar reactions. Jason Wilson says, "I am very excited about the award. I've followed StarChefs since its inception and have always dreamed of the opportunity to cook for Antoinette Bruno and her team. Upon learning of my rising star recognition, I felt extremely fortunate to be noted with my peers, amongst some of the great leaders in the culinary field and best chefs around." ([Click here](#) to see Jason's sorbet recipe.)

Joshua Henderson of Skillet echoed the idea: "I have been aware of StarChefs.com since culinary school. It is pretty exciting and gratifying to have people in the industry appreciate your hard work."

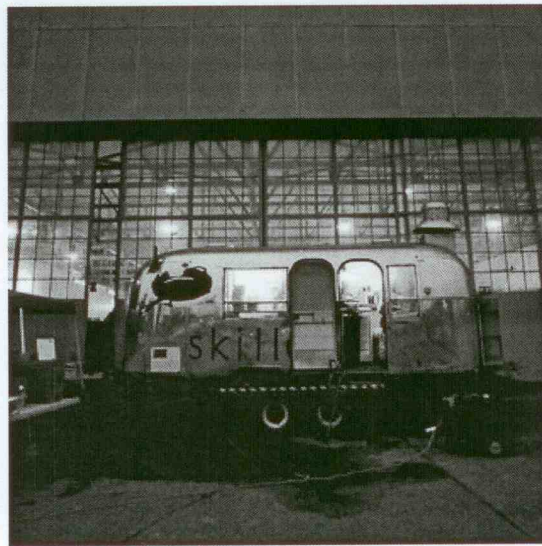


Photo courtesy of Skillet Street Food

Stuart Lane of Cafe Juanita had been on the StarChefs.com website and appreciated how professional it is. "When I received the nomination and looked at the past winners, I was amazed. These are renowned restaurants and great chefs. I didn't think I had shot, that this was just for fun. Then to win was so exciting. Of course, I've been teased a lot. If I make a mistake, everyone says 'Oh, StarChef!' I respect these other chefs so much, I feel like I have to pinch myself that I'm in their company."

As anyone knows who has ever eaten out, restaurant work is hard work. It's really a labor of love for the people who stay in it. Mark Fuller of Springhill acknowledges that, saying "As hard as we all work in the restaurant business, it's nice to be recognized. The experience has helped to bring a fine group of chefs together."

Vuong Loc agrees. "It is always flattering to get any type of recognition for what you do as your career. I have always had the belief that if you provide a quality product, people will appreciate it."

No one takes the honor lightly. As Ethan Stowell says, "The most important thing to me about winning one of the awards is that it's great to be included in such a great group of people. Any time I get mentioned in the same sentence with cooks as good as Jason, Maria and the others. It is very flattering and makes me feel great about the time that not only I put in but all the people that I work with put in



as well."

Photo: Ethan Stowell

Acknowledgement of sometimes overlooked areas is a big boost, too. The Concept Award really points that out. As Danny Sizemore, formerly of Skillet, says, "It's an honor that street food in Seattle is getting recognized on this type of stage." (Note: Danny resigned from Skillet in December 2008.)

Maria Hines feels the same about the focus on sustainability: "I am absolutely honored to have been given the Sustainability award this year. It means a lot to me personally to be recognized for our efforts here at Tilth to help support our farmers and it means a tremendous amount to me that there is an award out there to encourage chefs to nourish the land."

And there are those who might have considered an alternate career, but love of the job and then an award make all the difference. Consider Jim Romdall of Vessel: "This is my first big award and it means so much to me. I had actually planned on going back to school and to slowly work my way out of the industry. When the opportunity came to manage Vessel, I pushed those plans aside and decided to pour myself into the bar. It's just wonderful to be recognized for something that you love so much and give your all to. I think I made the right choice!"

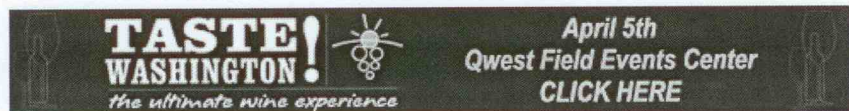
We know that Seattle has many truly fine professionals in the restaurant industry; it's always nice to see some of them getting national recognition.

Connie Adams/February 2009

Monday, March 2, 2009. A multi-course dinner prepared by several of Seattle's top talents at Cafe Juanita. The event celebrates *Chefs to Know: A Guide to Chefs for Chefs*, a guide to more than 600 notable chefs across the country. For details, go to www.starchefs.com/chefs_to_know/index.shtml. Reserve your spot at the dinner by calling 425-823-1505.

Tuesday, March 24, 2009. The *Rising Stars Revue* at McCaw Hall is a walk-around tasting gala for the public featuring the **Seattle Rising Stars** and their signature dishes, cocktails and wine pairings. More information available at www.starchefs.com/risingstars. link http://www.starchefs.com/chefs/rising_stars/2009/seattle/index.shtml

Wednesday, March 25, 2009. Seattle's Rising Star Chefs head out to a local culinary school to share their thoughts on how best to make it in the industry. They'll talk with existing culinary students and those curious about a cooking career. Location details to come.



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