**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# two columbia, Sc establishments officially advance as 2023 james beard award finalists

**(Wednesday, March 29, 2023) COLUMBIA, S.C. –** The James Beard Foundation announced its 2023 Restaurant and Chef Award nominees this morning during a live ceremony at the Musicians Hall of Fame & Museum in Nashville, Tennessee. And in an historic turn of events for our region, two of these finalists are from Columbia, SC.

Both in national categories, the finalists include Lula Drake Wine Parlour for Outstanding Hospitality and Aaron Hoskins, Sarah Simmons and Elie Yigo of CITY GRIT Hospitality for Outstanding Restaurateur. What’s more, Columbia is the only South Carolina city represented among this group nominees and is the only city in the entire Southeast region (GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, WV) with two finalists.

“The Columbia region continues to expand its culinary talent and experiences. This truth could not be any more reinforced than by this latest recognition by the prestigious James Beard Foundation,” says Bill Ellen, president and CEO of Experience Columbia SC. “We’re extremely proud to be a standout within the state of South Carolina and the broader Southeast region. This achievement is evidence of the incredible talent who call Columbia home. We wish both of our finalists the best and want them to know how proud we are of them.”

Each of these nominees will be invited to the James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards ceremony on Monday, June 5, at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, where this year’s winners will be announced. You can find the complete list of finalists [here](https://www.jamesbeard.org/blog/the-2023-restaurant-and-chef-nominees).

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**About Experience Columbia SC:**

Experience Columbia SC is the region’s destination marketing organization. We’re responsible for all marketing efforts intended to help more visitors discover all that makes Columbia the real Southern hot spot. Think of us as the biggest cheerleader for the heart of South Carolina. For more information, please visit [www.experiencecolumbiasc.com](http://www.experiencecolumbiasc.com).