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THE 7TH ANNUAL *BON APPÉTIT*

AMERICAN FOOD & ENTERTAINING AWARDS

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It's time to celebrate.

Each year for the past seven years, the editors of *Bon Appétit* have honored the best and brightest members of the culinary community. It's our chance to pay tribute to the chefs, restaurateurs, sommeliers, designers, writers, and others who make the world of food so rich and rewarding.

With all the talented people we have to choose from, it's never easy to pare down our list to just a few names. But there's no question that this year's recipients have made a lasting mark. We are commemorating their achievements at a gala dinner September 20 at the restaurant Daniel in New York. Celebrate along with us in the pages that follow and meet some of the food world's brightest stars.

—The Editors >>

FOOD ARTISAN

V Katrina Markoff

Okay, some of the flavors Katrina Markoff uses in her exquisite chocolates are a little, well, unusual (Taleggio cheese? wasabi?), but the proof is in the eating. They taste amazing and create a whole new way to appreciate everyone's favorite sweet. A childhood obsession with her Easy-Bake Oven led Markoff to study with hyper-experimental chef Ferran Adrià in Spain. "He encouraged me to travel the world and use my palate as a guide," she says. Ingredients from those adventures—Australian fruits, Rastafarian spices—now infuse her revolutionary chocolates, available at retail stores in New York and Chicago and through her website, vosgeschocolate.com.

PASTRY CHEF

Michael Laiskonis >>

How can a dessert maker improve his craft? Lay off the sweets for a while. Laiskonis owes much of his originality to stints as a line cook and sous-chef—jobs that required him to sauté fast on his feet, not bake at a leisurely pace. Now that he's back in the sweet realm (his first job was in a bakery, where he "caught the bug"), he's putting his savory skills to good use. At the renowned Detroit-area restaurant Tribute, where he worked for five years, Laiskonis made a name for himself creating Asian-tinged treats like crisp strudel stuffed with ginger-lemongrass rice pudding. Now pastry chef at the noted Le Bernardin in New York, Laiskonis continues to push the sugarcoated envelope. "People normally associate spontaneity with savory cooking, not pastry," he says. "But I do as much last-minute work as possible." ➤

