**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY PRESENTS CASACUBA TO NEW YORK COMMUNITY AT CUBAN CULINARY CELEBRATION AT RENOWNED CULINARY INSTITUTION JAMES BEARD HOUSE**

Award-winning Latin American and Cuban Chefs - Guillermo Pernot, Fernando Saralegui, Mark Paul and Víctor Albisu – delighted guests with unique Cuban dishes

CasaCuba is an initiative of FIU to build a leading global venue for the creation and sharing of impactful knowledge about Cuba, and the celebration of Cuban culture

**April 26, 2019, NEW YORK, NY** – At a celebration honoring Cuba’s culinary heritage at New York’s acclaimed culinary institution James Beard House, Florida International University (FIU) presented its new initiative CasaCuba to the New York community. FIU is building CasaCuba on its university campus in Miami as a leading intellectual and cultural center that will foster global understanding of Cuban affairs and culture through education, research, discussion and the arts.

In partnership with its Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, FIU collaborated with the James Beard Foundation for a delicious and vibrant night of Cuban delicacies. Award-winning Latin American and Cuban chefs - Guillermo Pernot, Fernando Saralegui, Mark Paul and Víctor Albisu – delighted guests with dishes reflecting Cuba’s past, present and future, ranging from duck empanadas and suckling pig confit to polenta tamal and bananas foster.

“We are very pleased with the opportunity to lead the way with CasaCuba in celebrating this momentous and historic occasion at the legendary James Beard House!” said Michael Cheng, Dean of FIU’s Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. “This special collaboration with five award-winning chefs, cookbook authors and television personalities in one magical evening of culinary exquisiteness is just the first of many, many more experiences in the celebration of Cuba’s heritage, arts, food and culture.”

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) recently announced it had awarded a $750,000 matching grant to CasaCuba. FIU’s Next Horizon campaign <https://nexthorizon.fiu.edu> is raising funds to secure the match for this grant and make the vision for the facility a reality. To learn more about CasaCuba, [click here](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__fiu.us1.list-2Dmanage.com_track_click-3Fu-3Dd13d9ca5483e1889af5c1cd91-26id-3D1c87a06f17-26e-3Df216a47eeb&d=DwMFaQ&c=lhMMI368wojMYNABHh1gQQ&r=u329b4_yn4JKuUqScYRcjg&m=qoBhbS766mZ4bmkCNa8Vxpkg71qIZ835PmPyRKPUeI4&s=mU7SX59bYgdYDlk04K1_DAxZfaCx0OL71NMjRA27G2o&e=) [https://casacuba.fiu.edu].

“We are honored to partner with the prestigious James Beard Foundation and the FIU Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management to present CasaCuba to the New York community,” said CasaCuba Executive Director María Carla Chicuén. “Given the historic ties between Cuba and New York, it is our hope that this community will participate actively in our efforts to build CasaCuba as a leading global venue to study and share impactful knowledge about Cuba, and to celebrate the Cuban culture.”

“The James Beard Foundation was thrilled to partner with CasaCuba as we immediately recognized its potential to be a prominent and powerful center for Cuban culture and scholarship. And we felt certain that Cuba’s undeniable allure and mystique would inspire a talented group of chefs and storytellers to create a magical night at The James Beard House,” said Izabela Wojcik, James Beard Foundation’s Director of House Programming. “Our goal of putting a spotlight on Cuba is not only part of James Beard’s own legacy to celebrate the way immigrants have shaped America’s regionalized cuisine, but it’s also the Foundation’s greater belief in the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture and policy change around food.”

“I always love cooking at the James Beard House. I thought this was a great way to contribute to the fantastic project that is CasaCuba,” said Chef Guillermo Pernot, two-time James Beard Foundation award winner and Chef-Partner of Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar. “I have always been interested in the Cuban culture, and I am committed to contributing my part to its preservation and development through the culinary arts.”



**Left to right:**Michael Cheng, Dean of FIU's Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management; Chef Fernando Saralegui, Wink Restaurant & Wine Bar, Austin, TX; CasaCuba Executive Director Maria Carla Chicuen; Chef Mark Paul, Wink Restaurant & Wine Bar, Austin, TX; Chef Victor Albisu, Taco Bamba and Poca Madre, Washington, D.C.; and Chef Guillermo Pernot, Cuba Libre Restaurant & Rum Bar.

**About CasaCuba**

CasaCuba is a new initiative led by FIU that will harness the university’s scholarly assets to build a leading center to promote global understanding of Cuban affairs and culture, through education, discussion, research and the arts. CasaCuba seeks to inspire a strong sense of identity and cultural pride within the Cuban community, creating a space for the experiences of Cubans from around the world. To learn more about CasaCuba’s history, leadership and current activities, click here <https://casacuba.fiu.edu>.

**About James Beard Foundation**

James Beard Foundation promotes *good food for good*™. For more than 30 years, James Beard Foundation has highlighted the centrality of food culture in our daily lives. Through the [James Beard Awards](https://www.jamesbeard.org/awards), [unique dining experiences](https://www.jamesbeard.org/events) at the James Beard House and around the country, [scholarships](https://www.jamesbeard.org/scholarships), hands-on learning, and a variety of [industry programs](https://www.jamesbeard.org/impact-programs) that educate and empower leaders in our community, the Foundation has built a platform for chefs and asserted the power of gastronomy to drive behavior, culture, and policy change around food. To that end, the Foundation has also created signature impact-oriented initiatives that include our [Women’s Leadership Programs](https://www.jamesbeard.org/women-leadership-programs) aimed at addressing the gender imbalance in the culinary industry; advocacy training through our [Chefs Boot Camp for Policy and Change](https://www.jamesbeard.org/education/bootcamp); and The [James Beard Foundation Leadership Awards](https://www.jamesbeard.org/leadershipawards) that shine a spotlight on successful change makers. The organization is committed to giving chefs and their colleagues a voice and the tools they need to make the world more sustainable, equitable, and delicious for everyone. For more information, subscribe to the digital newsletter [Beard Bites](https://www.jamesbeard.org/beard-bites) and follow @beardfoundation on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/beardfoundation/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/beardfoundation?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor), and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/beardfoundation/).

The James Beard Foundation is a national not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization based in New York City.

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