



2017 AFJ Conference Agenda

Conference Headquarters

Host hotel — [Loews Philadelphia Hotel](#), 1200 Market Street, 215-627-1200

Panel host — Philadelphia Inquirer, [801 Market Street](#). Conference panels will take place in the Public Room of the *Inquirer* unless otherwise noted on the agenda.

Tuesday, September 12

3-6 p.m. AFJ Board Meeting (by invitation only)

Penn Room, Loews Philadelphia Hotel

7:30-9:30 p.m., AFJ Board Dinner (by invitation only)

Whiskey Room, Loews Philadelphia Hotel

5:30-7 p.m. Casual Meet 'n' Greet for early arrivals

Bank & Bourbon bar, Loews Philadelphia Hotel

Wednesday, September 13

Breakfast on your own

8 a.m. Early Morning Guided Walk to Dilworth Plaza: A rare opportunity to tour [Philadelphia City Hall](#) tower and observation deck

Meet in Loews Philadelphia lobby. Maximum of 30 participants; preregistration required

8:30 a.m. Conference registration opens

PSFS room, Loews Philadelphia Hotel

9-11 a.m. Coaching and critique sessions with Melissa Hamilton and Christopher Hirsheimer, [Canal House](#)

Christopher Hirsheimer and Melissa Hamilton are cofounders of Canal House, a culinary and design studio and publishing venture in Frenchtown, New Jersey. Their collaboration includes *Canal House Cooking*, a series of seasonal cookbooks for which they do all the writing, recipes, photography, design and production.

Recipients of the 2013 James Beard award for their cookbook, *Canal House Cooks Every Day* (Andrews McMeel, 2012), their next book, *Cook Something* (Little, Brown), will be published in fall 2018.

11:15 a.m. Conference Opening

Public Room, Philadelphia Inquirer

Welcome by AFJ president Kathleen Purvis

Brief overview of sessions and events by 2017 conference chair Maureen Fitzgerald

11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Keynote Address: Melissa Hamilton and Christopher Hirsheimer, Canal House

“The recipe: preserving memory, culture, and food traditions. *We eat to remember who we are.*”

12:30-1:30 p.m. Walk to Lunch at [Talula’s Garden](#), 210 West Washington Square

This seasonally driven restaurant with its cozy chic décor is a partnership between Aimee Olexy and über restaurateur [Stephen Starr](#). It embodies some of the best cooking in the city, including an entire bar dedicated to cheese, with a lovely garden view of Washington Square.

2-3 p.m. Panel Discussion by 2017 James Beard Award winners from Philadelphia

Public Room, Philadelphia Inquirer

How did Philadelphia produce four James Beard award winners this year and what does it mean for the city and its culinary identity?

Panelists include Michael Solomonov, the modern Israeli master behind [Zahav](#) (and [Dizengoff](#), [Abe Fisher](#) and [Federal Donuts](#)), who was named the most outstanding

chef in America; [Greg Vernick](#), the chef whose wood-fired hearth has redefined American dining in Philadelphia, and who was named Best Chef Mid-Atlantic; [Stephen Starr](#), the owner of 32 restaurants in four states and two continents, who has gone from big-box concept impresario to Outstanding Restaurateur of the year, and also co-created this year's best new restaurant, Le Coucou in New York City.

3-3:20 p.m. Break

3:20-4:30 p.m. Farm to Table or Farm to Fable? A panel discussion with journalist Laura Reiley of the *Tampa Bay Times*, whose Farm to Fable series was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize, in discussion with Aimee Olexy, owner of Talula's Garden; Josh Lawler, chef at The Farm and Fisherman Tavern (formerly at Blue Hill at Stone Barns); and Rich Landau, chef at Vedge and V-Street, one of the pioneers of upscale vegan cooking, who is also a local farmer.

"Everywhere you look, you see the claims: sustainable, naturally-raised, organic, non-GMO, fair trade, responsibly grown. Restaurants have reached new levels of hyperbole," writes Reiley in her award-winning series. The discussion will focus on the challenges of sourcing quality local ingredients, truthfully disclosing the source of ingredients and how to figure out which restaurants are telling the truth.

6-6:45 p.m. And the Winners Are ...

Cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception for conference goers and 2017 AFJ competition finalists.

Concierge Lounge, Lowes Philadelphia Hotel

6:45-7:15 p.m. Presentation of 2017 Carol DeMasters Award for Service to Food Journalism to Marian Burros. Introduction by Maureen Clancy.

Congress Room, Loews Philadelphia

Throughout her career Burros has been recognized by myriad organizations for her contributions to food journalism. These awards include an Emmy in 1973 for consumer reporting, citations from the National Press Club and more. Burros has authored a dozen cookbooks. Her recipe for plum torte, originally written for *The New York Times* in September 1983, is the most requested recipe in the newspaper's history.

7:15-8 p.m. Announcement and presentation of first-, second- and third-place awards to winners of AFJ's 2017 food writing competition. Nancy Stohs and Bob Batz, Jr.

9 p.m. Cheesesteak Run to [Pat's](#) and [Geno's](#) in South Philly. Pat's and Geno's are not the best cheesesteaks in the city of Philadelphia, but they are an iconic part of its culture. These cross-street rivals on this Italian Market corner have drawn legions of

street food pilgrims for more than half a century. Come and taste for yourself.

Meet in lobby of Loews Philadelphia Hotel to board buses.

Thursday, September 14

Breakfast on your own

7:30-9:30 a.m. Sunrise walk in historic district, including private tours of [Independence Hall](#) and the [Liberty Bell](#) before the sites open to the public

Limited to 40 participants; sign-up in advance on registration form. Group starts from and returns to lobby of Loews Philadelphia hotel

10-11:30 a.m. Visit to [Reading Terminal Market](#), 12th and Arch Street

Walk to historic Reading Terminal Market (across the street from Loews Philadelphia Hotel) to meet with Anuj Gupta, general manager of the Market and Rick Nichols, former food columnist and editorial writer for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* who championed the preservation of the market when its future was uncertain. We will meet in the room named for him. Tour the market and enjoy tastes from a variety of vendors.

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Lunch on your own

12:30 p.m. Return to Public Room of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*

12:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Food Journalism in the Gig Economy

[Joy Manning](#) and other freelance writers

Credible food journalists are contributing to magazines like Sift (owned by King Arthur) and *Extra Crispy* (which blurs the line between branded and editorial content). The waters are muddy as freelance journalists try to earn a living with many fewer opportunities for traditional journalism. This session provides strategies for managing your portfolio of work, calculating your per-hour rate, determining whether a new job creates a conflict of interest, deciding whether or not to write a book when there is so little money on the table and other important issues.

1:45 p.m. Board buses for trip to [Fishtown](#) and Distillery Tour

Meet in lobby of Loews Philadelphia Hotel

Explore Fishtown and Kensington, two of Philadelphia's hottest emerging neighborhoods that have become the epicenter for artisan food and spirit production.

2:15-3 p.m. [La Colombe](#) Coffee Roasters, 1335 Frankford Avenue

Philadelphia's specialty coffee pioneer, now a national player, invested big in this Fishtown headquarters, a converted warehouse cafe that combines an artisanal bread bakery, rum distillery and, of course, a sprawling eatery where the casual menu pairs with pour-over coffees.

Todd Carmichael, founder of La Colombe Coffee Roasters and host of the Travel Channel's [Dangerous Grounds](#), speaks about the state of coffee and his own coffee-rum distillery

3-5 p.m. *Philadelphia Inquirer* restaurant critic Craig LaBan kicks off a tour of the neighborhood distilleries with [New Liberty Distillery](#). Craft distilling pioneer Rob Cassel launched this Kensington distillery in a converted 19th century stable. He is dedicated to making whiskey from Pennsylvania grains and to reviving historic Philadelphia brands. [Row House Spirits](#) is a quirky microdistillery that embodies the adventurous spirit of today's craft beverages, delving into the esoteric world of Amari, coffee spirits gins and other liquors. [Philadelphia Distilling](#), Pennsylvania's first craft distiller, recently stepped up to this spectacular new home in a converted former Ajax metal factory (Blue coat gin, 1681 vodka, Vieux Carre absinthe).

3:30 p.m. Board buses for tour or explore Fishtown on your own

5 p.m. Meet at La Colombe to board buses back to Loews Philadelphia Hotel

6:30 p.m. Taste of Philadelphia at the [Museum of American Revolution](#), 101 South 3rd Street

Walk six blocks, cab or Uber/Lyft to the new Museum of the American Revolution, which features life-like tableaux of historical scenes from the revolution and artifacts including George Washington's tent, revolutionary arms, pottery, china and much more.

Tour the museum then dig into some of the City of Brotherly Love's most iconic foods, including pork and cheesesteaks from John Bucci of John's roast Pork; [Dizengoff](#) hummus from Michael Solomonov and Steve Cook; [Capogiro gelato](#) from Stephanie Raitano; rotolo from [Marc Vetri and Jeff Benjamin](#); oysters on the half-shell from [Sam Mink's Oyster House](#); artisanal cheeses; bread from [Ellen Yin at High Street](#); honeycomb ice cream and gingerbread from [Franklin Fountain](#); sweets from the Berley Brothers' [Shane Confectionary](#); and Jean-Marie Lacroix with a selection of appetizers from [Brulée Catering](#).

Friday, September 15

Breakfast on your own

8 a.m. Hidden Philadelphia: Early morning walk to charming and little-known

historic cobblestone streets featuring colonial architecture

Limited to 40 participants; sign-up in advance on registration form. Group starts from and returns to lobby of Loews Philadelphia Hotel.

9:30-11 a.m. [Drexel University](#)'s unique approach to culinary arts

Public Room, Philadelphia Inquirer

Jonathan Deutsch, who runs Drexel's culinary arts program, joins members of his staff to discuss the school, which includes much more than teaching students to cook and become restaurant chefs. Students work with businesses and chefs to solve real world problems, such as dealing with food waste (creating recipes that making use of overripe produce and products out of wasted food), as well as on product development (creating new flavors for a local tahina producer; working on the science behind the development of a canned carbonated draft latte for La Colombe). An East Coast satellite of Stephen Jones' bread lab is also housed here, and is collaborating with chef Marc Vetri to create bread with local grains that will be sold at Whole Foods Market.

11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Food for Good: More Than Just a Trend

Yael Lehmann from the [Food Trust](#), Jeff Benjamin from [Vetri Community Partnership](#), Steve Cook from [Rooster Soup](#) and Liz Fitzgerald from the [Culinary Literacy Council](#) at Philadelphia Free Library café will talk about their nonprofits that seek to make food more accessible to people in all circumstances across the city

12 :15 to 1:15 p.m. Lunch on your own

1:30-2:45 p.m. Show Me the Money: How to host events that produce income, drive traffic, reward your readers — or all three

Public Room, Philadelphia Inquirer

Cheese blogger Tenaya Darlington ([Madame Fromage](#)); Melissa Hamilton and Christopher Hirsheimer of [Canal House](#); Marisa McClellan, [Food in Jars](#) blogger and cookbook author; and Jen Wolf, [Inquirer](#) event coordinator, talk about the benefits of hosting food-related events to make money, build your audience and reward your readers. What are the joys and perils of these events? Join us to learn what to avoid and what to embrace.

2:45-3 p.m. Break

3-4:30 p.m. Annual Meeting (members only)

4:30-4:45 Conference Closes

AFJ president Kathleen Purvis and 2017 conference chair Maureen Fitzgerald