### -Get-Konnected!

The hub of Boston's cross cultural connections BOSTON'S TOP 10 CHEFS OF COLOR &





#### **FOUNDERS MESSAGE**

#### Dear Honorees, Corporate and Institutional Partners, Allies, and Get Konnected! Network,

Get Konnected! and Colette Phillips Communications, Inc. are proud to produce this historic inaugural list of Boston's 25 Best Ethnic Restaurants and Boston's Top Chefs of Color honoring the culturally diverse restaurants and chefs who are contributing to making Boston an international culinary destination. We extend our heartiest congratulations to all the honorees. In creating this list, we invited members of the public and the Get Konnected! network to identify and nominate restaurants and chefs who have distinguished themselves in the culinary and hospitality field. The nominees were then voted on by a distinguished group of members from the hospitality, tourism, culinary, media and business communities. Boston is a thriving world class city, that is both rich in history and diversity. Today, the city is considered one of the most culturally, ethnically and racially diverse cities in the U.S.

Thanks to our status as a center for innovation in technology, healthcare, academia, and culture, Boston continues to draw people from all ethnicities from across the globe. The richness and influence of the city's cultural diversity, however, has not always been recognized, celebrated and appreciated as it should be. The Get Konnected! Best Ethnic Restaurants and Top Chefs of Color List aims to change that. It represents an unique opportunity to celebrate, document and validate culturally diverse chefs and restaurants who are making positive contributions to the culinary ecosystem of Boston and the region, by bringing the flavors from many cultures around world for us to experience and savor.

Founded 16 years ago on the premise of "inclusion," GetKonnected! is Boston's premier inclusive business networking event organization. Our events have fostered successful business networking; facilitated mentoring and coaching, increased employee engagement and retention and curated hundreds of positive cross-cultural connections.

GetKonnected! is also the creator of a series of specialized lists that celebrate, document and showcase the contributions people of color are making to the economic, civic and social fabric of Boston and Massachusetts. We are proud to have been cited by Boston Magazine as Boston's Best Networking Group in its Best of Boston, for four consecutive years including 2024, and featured in a Harvard Business School case study in 2023 for creating a diversity, equity and inclusion ecosystem in Boston contributing to making Boston a more welcoming and inclusive city.

Lastly, we are deeply grateful to all our corporate and institutional sponsors and partners without whom Get Konnected! and this project would not be possible. We are profoundly grateful to Trillium for sponsoring and hosting tonight's celebration and to Meet Boston, NBC10 Boston, Big Night Entertainment Group and Boston Beer Company for their partnership of Get Konnected!'s A Taste of Ethnic Boston. To all our allies and members of the Get Konnected! network as well as Boston residents and visitors alike we want to encourage you to patronize these establishments many of which are in Boston's culturally diverse neighborhoods.

With Great Admiration and Respect,

Colette A.M. Phillips President & CEO Colette Phillips Communications, Inc. Founder Get Konnected! & GK Fund



Patricia Estorino Gustazo Cuban Kitchen & Bar

Patricia Estorino is a Cuban-American chef and the owner of Gustazo Cuban Cafe, a popular restaurant located in Waltham, Massachusetts. Originally from Havana, Estorino transitioned from a career in ballet to culinary arts, inspired by her longing for the flavors of her homeland. She opened Gustazo after moving from a smaller location in Belmont to a larger space on Main Street in November 2023, where she continues to serve imaginative Cuban dishes that reflect her heritage. Estorinos culinary journey began as a way to reconnect with her roots, and she has since become a notable figure in the local dining scene, celebrated for her vibrant cooking and dedication to Cuban cuisine by the Boston Globe.



Cecilia Lizotte Suya Joint

Nigerian chef and owner Cecelia Lizotte is dedicated to sharing Nigerian flavors with the New England community through Suya Joint, a restaurant with locations in Boston and Providence that specializes in West African cuisine. She focuses on creating authentic West African dishes that not only nourish the body but also the soul, drawing from the culinary traditions she learned growing up in Nigeria. She has gained recognition for her work, including appearances on cooking shows where she showcases traditional dishes, such as her signature West African stew. Through Suya Joint, Lizotte continues to introduce diners to the rich culinary heritage of West Africa.



Hector Pina Merengue & Vejigantes

Hector Piña is the founder and co-owner of Tres Islas Restaurant Group in Boston, including Merengue Restaurant (established in 1994), Vejigantes Restaurant (co-founded in 2012), Doña Habana. Piña's restaurants have garnered numerous accolades, including Best of Boston awards and recognition from Zagat, and he was named Business of the Year by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. He has been recognized as one of the 100 Most Powerful Latinos in Boston by El Planeta for four consecutive years, highlighting his impact not only in the kitchen but also as a community leader and advocate for Dominican and Latin American cuisine



#### Dave Welch Chef Dave's

Chef Dave Welch was inspired to open his own restaurant, Chef Dave's, in Chestnut Hill by a combination of his extensive culinary experience and a desire for independence in the kitchen. After spending over two decades in the food industry, including 12 years at Formaggio Kitchen and a successful private catering business serving high-profile clients, he felt ready to create a space that reflected his culinary vision. Welch aimed to offer an intimate dining experience that emphasizes top-quality ingredients and a chophouse-style menu, showcasing his passion for exceptional food and hospitality. By establishing Chef Dave's, he sought to build a community-focused eatery where he could connect with guests and provide a memorable dining experience, free from the constraints of working for others.



#### Joanne Chang Flour Bakery

Joanne Chang is a celebrated chef, baker, and restaurateur based in Boston, Massachusetts, known for her innovative approach to baking and her commitment to community. In 2000, she founded Flour Bakery + Café, which has since expanded to multiple locations and garnered a loyal following for its freshly baked goods and inviting atmosphere. Alongside her husband, Christopher Myers, she co-owns the Asian-inspired restaurant Myers+Chang. A James Beard Award winner for Outstanding Baker, Chang is also the author of several cookbooks, including the acclaimed "Flour: Spectacular Recipes from Boston's Flour Bakery+Cafe." Through her work, she emphasizes the importance of ethical business practices and community engagement, making her a beloved figure in the Boston culinary scene.



Kwasi Kwaa Comfort Kitchen

Kwasi Kwaa is a talented chef and entrepreneur who serves as Chef Partner at Comfort Kitchen in Boston. Born in Ghana, Kwaa has honed his culinary skills over more than 12 years in restaurants and catering. In 2016, he launched The Chop Bar pop-up to explore global street fare, which eventually led to his collaboration with Comfort Kitchen. Kwaa's passion lies in connecting people through food that reminds him of his homeland, and he frequently shares this passion through local cooking demonstrations and competitions. At Comfort Kitchen, he works with a skilled culinary team to develop dishes that celebrate the untold stories of ingredients from the African diaspora and the spice trade. His journey from pop-ups to becoming a partner in a James Beard-nominated restaurant showcases his dedication to community, culture, and innovative cuisine.



Tracy Chang Pagu

Tracy Chang is a chef and the owner of PAGU, a Japanese tapas restaurant located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Born to Taiwanese immigrants, Chang grew up in a family deeply connected to the culinary world, particularly through her grandmother, who opened a prominent Japanese restaurant in Boston. In addition to her restaurant work, Chang is a teaching fellow in Harvard University's Science and Cooking program, collaborating with acclaimed chefs and contributing to the culinary community. At PAGU, she aims to celebrate her heritage and create a collaborative dining experience that reflects her diverse culinary influences and experiences.



Baheja Rostami Aríana Restaurant

Baheja Rostami is the owner and chef of Ariana Restaurant, a beloved Afghan eatery in Brighton, Massachusetts. Born in Afghanistan, Rostami immigrated to the United States in the 1980s, bringing with her a passion for the flavors and culinary traditions of her homeland. For over 25 years, Rostami has been serving authentic Afghan cuisine to the Boston community, introducing many to the rich flavors and aromatic spices of dishes like kabuli palaw, mantu, and bolani. Her dedication to preserving traditional recipes while adapting to local tastes has earned Ariana Restaurant a loyal following and critical acclaim.



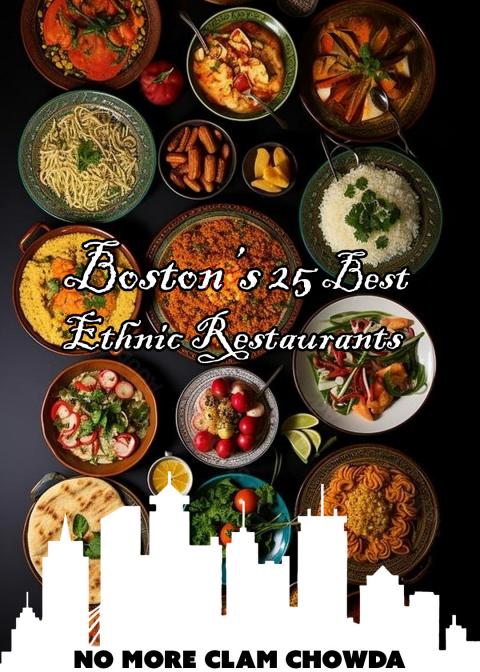
Irene Shang Li Mei Mei Dumplings

Irene Li co-founded Mei Mei in Boston in 2013, starting as a food truck before expanding into a brick-and-mortar restaurant. "Mei Mei," meaning "little sister" in Mandarin Chinese, reflects the Li siblings' cherished childhood eating experiences as Chinese-American kids growing up in Boston. Under Irene's leadership, Mei Mei has evolved into a dumpling company that prioritizes sustainable sourcing and fair employment practices, creating a culinary venture that uniquely blends innovative Chinese-inspired cuisine with a strong commitment to social responsibility and ethical business practices.



Douglass Williams

Douglass Williams is the chef and owner of APIZZA, DW FRENCH, and MIDA, an acclaimed Italian restaurant in Boston's South End neighborhood, as well as MIDA Newton, and MIDA East Boston. Williams is known for his expertise in hand-made pasta and his commitment to generous hospitality. At MIDA, he focuses on creating dishes inspired by classic Italian culinary traditions. His restaurants have earned accolades such as "Best Restaurants in Boston" and "Best Pasta."





#### Ariana Restaurant (Afghani)

At Ariana, guests can experience the essence of Afghan cuisine with a fresh New England twist. The restaurant's dishes celebrate traditional Afghan flavors while utilizing locally sourced ingredients, expertly blended spices, and modern presentation. Diners can indulge in signature lamb dishes like the Chopan, which features marinated and grilled rack of lamb served on a bed of bread, or the Korma Challow, a savory leg of lamb sautéed with onions, tomatoes, garlic, green beans, potatoes, and spices. Each entrée, complemented by a curated wine selection, promises a memorable dining experience.



#### Ali's Roti Restaurant (Caribbean)

Ali's Roti offers authentic Trinidadian cuisine at the western edge of the South End. The menu features seven types of stewed halal meats and seafood in savory gravies, four varieties of rice, five vegetable sides, and 14-inch whole-wheat roti. Guests can choose between a roti, where everything is rolled together in flatbread, or a dinner, which is served separately with bread. Large orders come with three sides, while small orders include two. The dishes highlight complex spices such as garlic, cumin, and turmeric, with optional chili sauce available for those who prefer added heat.



#### Banh Mi Oi (Vietnamese)

Bánh mì Oi is one of the most popular Vietnamese street foods, found in nearly all regions of Vietnam. Influenced by the French, this Vietnamese baguette sandwich combines savory flavors, proteins, and fresh vegetables. Known for its lightness and healthy ingredients, bánh mì is a perfect choice for a quick meal on the go or for savoring while sipping on a Vietnamese iced coffee on a leisurely day of people-watching.



#### Bistro 781

At Bistro781, the team takes pride in offering a diverse menu in an upscale yet casual setting. The founders, who were born and raised in Waltham, honor the city's rich tradition of business and industry while aiming to provide a dining experience that blends familiarity with fine dining. Their seasonal menus strike a delicate balance between originality and classic preparation, with dishes crafted in-house from scratch and utilizing locally sourced ingredients whenever possible. Creativity flourishes at Bistro781, whether in developing new ideas for the scratch kitchen or exploring cocktail recipes for the bar. The restaurant's upscale, casual ambiance serves as a continual source of inspiration. From start to finish, Bistro781 offers a dining experience that promises ongoing enjoyment.

#### Blue Nile Restaurant (Ethiopian)

At Blue Nile, the restaurant specializes in authentic Ethiopian cuisine made from scratch using the highest-quality natural ingredients. Situated in the heart of JP, Blue Nile offers fresh, healthy meals that capture the rich flavors and traditions of Ethiopia. Guests can enjoy a variety of dishes, from flavorful stews and spicy sambusas to savory injera, all at an affordable price. The vibrant taste of Ethiopian food awaits at Blue Nile.



#### Comfort Kitchen Boston (International)

Named James Beard Best New Restaurant for 2024. Comfort Kitchen is an intimate and lively spot nestled in Upham's Corner, Dorchester. The restaurant serves brunch on weekends and dinner in the evening, featuring a full bar and an outdoor patio. The menu celebrates the ingredients and flavors of the African diaspora, connecting influences from Asia to the Americas with a focus on global comfort food. Proudly Black-owned, immigrant-owned, and woman-owned, the restaurant offers a vibrant dining experience that reflects its diverse heritage.



#### Hue Boston (American - Caribbean)

Located at the corner of Huntington & Exeter in the Copley Square Hotel, HUE offers a vibrant blend of history and modern luxury. Their Supper Club and Speakeasy features elevated dining, lively nightlife, brunch, day parties, and VIP events. Ideal for special occasions, weekend gatherings, or corporate functions, HUE promises unforgettable experiences with family-style dining and dynamic entertainment.

# **APLING ADAUGHTER**

#### Dumpling Daughter (Asian)

Dumpling Daughter is a family-inspired restaurant, grounded in two generations of culinary tradition. The founder, who grew up with a deep appreciation for her parents' renowned 5-star Chinese restaurant, Sally Ling's, as well as her mother's comforting homemade dishes, drew inspiration from these experiences. Cherished memories of savoring steamed buns and dumplings, particularly on Sundays spent with her grandmother, led to the creation of Dumpling Daughter. Here, family recipes and flavors are shared with the community, reflecting a rich heritage of culinary excellence.





#### Estella's (American Fusion)

Nestled in downtown Boston, Estella Restaurant offers a diverse dining experience that blends various culinary traditions. Founded by George Brandao in honor of his devoted mother, Estella, the restaurant embodies her spirit. The multi-level space caters to all preferences, from intimate gatherings to lively events, ensuring a perfect spot for every guest.



#### Grace by Nia (Southern Soul Fusion)

The alluring, modern-day supper club puts a new twist on the timeless charm and the decadent aesthetic of supper clubs from a bygone era. Flaunting whimsically chic decor, a soul-infused menu, an intimate stage for live music, creative entertainment, and enchanting cocktail lounge, Grace by Nia ventures to bring a new brand of cultural vibrancy to Boston's Seaport.



#### Celeste (Peruvian)

Celeste is a collaborative venture between friends who aim to create a unique experience that combines exceptional food with carefully curated drinks, all within a distinctive environment that celebrates provocative design, art, and music. Central to their mission is the concept of a shared experience. The restaurant's cuisine features ancient Peruvian recipes passed down through generations, highlighting the richness of Peruvian culture. By collaborating with artists and musicians, Celeste has developed an audiovisual journey that explores the roots of Peruvian and Andean culture, encompassing its music, art, and flavors.



#### Mahaniyom (Thai)

Named one of the New York Times Best Restaurants in Boston, the establishment is a group of individuals passionate about exceptional Thai food. Their dream is to create homey Thai dishes and handcrafted cocktails that evoke what they call "the taste of home," sharing these flavors with friends and the community in their intimate and familiar space. The team comprises experienced professionals from the restaurant industry, including alumni from Shojo and Thai restaurants in both Boston and the West Coast.

## M I D A

#### Mida (Italian)

MIDA is an inspired Italian neighborhood restaurant that values generosity and thoughtfulness in both food preparation and community engagement. Understanding the significance of a meal shared among friends, the restaurant strives to create memorable dining experiences. The name "MIDA," which means "he gives me," reflects their philosophy: every meal is crafted as a special gift for their guests.



#### Merengue (Dominicana)

In 1994, Merengue Restaurant opened its doors with the aim of introducing a unique concept to both the growing Latino community and the general public in Boston. The restaurant draws inspiration from the music and art of merengue, infusing its essence into the Dominican cuisine it serves. Each dish captures the flavors of the Dominican towns and the warmth of its people, creating a familiar environment with personalized service.



#### Mo'Rockin Fusion (Moroccan)

Morad's passion for cooking originated from his childhood in Morocco, where he helped his mother in the kitchen. After moving to the U.S. in his 20s, he gained experience working at various fine dining restaurants in Atlantic City and Boston. Despite his successful career, Morad always dreamed of owning his own business. Recognizing the uniqueness and deliciousness of the food he enjoyed preparing, he decided to test the market by launching a food truck.





#### Park 54 (Caribbean Soul Fusion)

Inspired by the courageous 54th Regiment of Black American soldiers from Hyde Park, Park 54 honors their legacy of bravery and self-expression. Since opening less than a year ago, they've created a welcoming space for Hyde Park and neighboring communities to enjoy great food, innovative drinks, live music, historical artifacts, and a vibrant atmosphere. Join them in celebrating the freedom and spirit the 54th Regiment fought for.



#### Pho Le Restaurant (Vietnamese)

The Le Family has been in the restaurant industry for over 30 years in the Boston and Cambridge areas. Starting from a small noodle soup only restaurant and building up to a full array of food from the many different regions of Vietnam over the decades, they are proud and excited to share the delicious flavors and mouthwatering foods of their native motherland with you.

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#### Peruvian Taste Restaurant

In the kitchen, freshly prepared dishes are crafted using authentic Peruvian products imported from artisanal farms and markets. At the same time, the use of locally sourced ingredients is maximized to create a perfect blend for a flavorful and authentic Peruvian meal.



#### Restaurante Cesaria (Cape Verdean)

One thing that is always consistent with Restaurante Cesaria is the quality of the food and service. The menu represents the traditional culinary riches of the Cape Verdean diet, as well as contemporary and American-influenced alternatives.



Rhythm 'n Wraps (Vegan)

Rhythm 'n Wraps is a vegan restaurant that offers an exciting food experience. Known for its flavorful and unique dishes, the restaurant creates an inclusive space where people can connect over good tunes and positive vibes. Starting as a food truck in Boston in 2012, Rhythm 'n Wraps gained prominence with standout locations at Boston University's Morse Auditorium and the Harvard Science Center in 2015. By 2018, the restaurant established itself as a brick-and-mortar establishment in Allston, where it now provides an expansive menu and catering services.



Suya Joint Nigerian Restaurant

Suya Joint Bar & Lounge Restaurant is a sophisticated West African bar and lounge designed to appeal to both local Africans seeking a taste of home and non-Africans looking for an exotic and flavorful dining experience. The restaurant's Suya kabobs feature thinly sliced beef or chicken seasoned with authentic Nigerian herbs and spices. Suya Joint offers the finest suya available, along with a full array of traditional Nigerian cuisine.



#### Tawakal Halal Café (Somalian)

Tawakal Halal Cafe, a small, unassuming restaurant in East Boston, exploded on the Boston scene when Bon Appetit shortlisted it as one of 50 best new restaurants in the country in 2019. The owner Yahya Noor was named a James Beard semi-finalist for Best Chef. Noor, along with his mother and seven sisters, create dishes from their homeland, Somalia (which they fled when Noor was a boy to escape the civil war), and showcase all the spices, influences and flavors that make up their native cuisine.



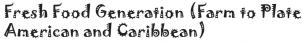
#### Vejigantes (Puerto Rican)

Puerto Rican cuisine has been influenced by an array of cultures including Taino Arawak, Spanish, and Africa. Although Puerto Rican cooking is somewhat similar to both Spanish and other Latin American cuisines, it is a unique tasty blend of influences, using indigenous seasonings and ingredients. Vejigantes brings the best of the traditional food of the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, carefully prepared and presented by craftsmen to fill a void in the community of Villa Victoria bastion of the fight of our community. Walking distance from Copley, Vejigantes offers authentic food of the island since 2012 and has been featured by the Phantom Gourmet, Improper Bostonian, Boston Magazine and Boston Globe among others.



#### Vanak Café (Persian Food)

Conde Naste Readers' Choice 2022. Authentic Persian Pastries and Goods, Experience True Flavor! Vanak Food is proudly provided the best quality fresh products in Boston since 2021. Our commitment to healthy food leads our valuable customers to trust us. Super Vanak & Cafe Vanak are two brands of Vanak Food to serve Halal Iranian and Middle Eastern pre cooked and ready made foods and products.





Since 2015, the business has evolved from a vibrant red food truck into a cornerstone of innovative Caribbean and American fusion cuisine. The menu features fresh, preservative-free dishes made from scratch using whole vegetables and spices. They prioritize fair wages for their team, believing that happy, well-compensated staff create better food. Seasonally sourced from local farms, the ingredients include hormone-free, pasture-raised meats. The diverse, multi-generational culinary team brings together flavors from Jamaica, Cape Verde, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Boston, and the South, resulting in a rich blend of Latin, Caribbean, and African American influences. Each dish reflects a commitment to quality and tradition.

#### SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!











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For more than two decades, Colette Phillips Communications has been breaking barriers and building bridges. CPC Global is an award-winning marketing and communications firm, and the first minority and woman-owned public relations firm in the city of Boston. CPC Global has received local and national awards and recognition for its work advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the marketplace.

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At Get Konnected!, we believe that a vibrant and diverse culinary scene is essential to a thriving community. It not only enriches our cultural understanding but also fuels local economies, fosters community connections, and drives innovation. Our event highlights the richness of Boston's ethnic kitchens from Caribbean and Mediterranean flavors to soulful Black-owned lounges, lively Latino venues, and inventive Korean and Hawaiian-inspired dishes. By showcasing these diverse culinary voices, we aim to support Black, Brown, and Asian restaurateurs, ensuring their businesses thrive and contribute to Boston's growing reputation as a top culinary destination.

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