



Honoree Nora Pouillon (m) with event co-hosts Ris Lacoste (l) and Spike Gjerde
Photo: Linda Roth

The Freshest of FEASTS

BY LINDA ROTH AND LISA KEATHLEY

FRESHFARM held its annual fundraiser — FEAST — on October 17, celebrating 20 years in operation and honoring organic food pioneer Nora Pouillon. Pouillon, a founding board member of FRESHFARM, was awarded the James Beard Foundation's Lifetime Achievement Award this past May. When she opened Restaurant Nora in 1979, the term "organic" had not even been coined and the idea of buying local, fresh ingredients was merely that, an idea. Over the years, and with her leadership, she set the standards for organic certification and spearheaded the farm-to-table movement across the country.

Spike Gjerde and Ris Lacoste were co-hosts at the October event, which was held at Dock 5 of D.C.'s Union Market. Gjerde is a chef, restaurateur, food entrepreneur, and local food advocate who lives and works in Baltimore. His Baltimore restaurants, including Woodbury Kitchen, rely almost entirely on locally sourced ingredients, as will A Rake's Progress, currently set to open before the end of the year in Washington, D.C.'s new Line Hotel. Through his work, he is committed to creating meaningful and measurable change within the local food system to help ensure a

future for Mid-Atlantic farmers and watermen.

Ris Lacoste is executive chef and owner of the West End D.C. bistro, RIS. A member of the State Department's Culinary Diplomatic Corps and one of *Washingtonian Magazine's* Class of 2015's Most Powerful Women, her "favorite place to be is in the middle of a local farmers market, hunting down the freshest fruits and vegetables and creating relationships with her farmers" in order to promote the goal of local and sustainable farming.

The FEAST event's fresh, locally grown, organic food came from Coulter Farms, Shepherd's Whey Creamery, Rappahannock Oyster Co., EcoFriendly Foods, Chris' Marketplace, and Urban Butcher. The spirits, wine, and beer came from One Eight Distilling, New Columbia Distillers, Rockland's Farm, and Right Proper Brewing.

FRESHFARM is a non-profit that promotes sustainable agriculture and improved food access. It operates 14 producer-only farmers markets in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia that provide vital economic opportunities to local farmers and food producers. Proceeds from the fundraiser will be directly invested in the food and farms of the Mid-Atlantic watershed and will support outreach programs to educate children and the public about food and related environmental issues.

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