Alum wins James Beard Rising Star Chef of the Year Award

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Freeman alum Zachary Engel won the James Beard Award for Rising Star Chef of the Year at the James Beard Foundation's 2017 awards ceremony in Chicago.

Zachary Engel (BSM ’10), chef de cuisine at Shaya Restaurant in New Orleans, won the James Beard Award for Rising Star Chef of the Year on May 1 at the Beard Foundation’s 2017 Awards Gala in Chicago. The award recognizes the country’s top chef under the age of 31.

Engel was raised in Orlando and began his culinary career as a cook at Tulane Hillel. He later worked at Domenica in New Orleans, at Catit Restaurant in Tel Aviv and at Madrona Manor in Northern California. He joined Shaya in 2015 after cooking in Philadelphia at Zahav, another celebrated Israeli restaurant.

“To everyone in New Orleans, you’ve been the perfect audience for us to tell this brand new story of Israeli food down in the south,” Engel said in accepting the award. “I'm so grateful that you guys have been so open to it.”