



Windstar Cruises Introduces its Five New 2026 James Beard Foundation® Chefs Plus Exclusive Itineraries with GALLO Luxury Wine Group

The small-ship cruise line rings in 10 years of collaboration with the James Beard Foundation by introducing five new James Beard chef-led culinary sailings, plus exclusive GALLO Luxury Wine voyages with top California vineyards.



MIAMI, FL, October 20, 2025 – [Windstar Cruises](#) announces five new chefs for its [2026 James Beard Foundation sailings](#), the latest milestone in a ten-year collaboration that has redefined culinary travel at sea. Windstar's relationship with the James Beard Foundation celebrates chefs who embody creativity, cultural leadership, and a deep connection to regional traditions—values that mirror Windstar's own passion for pushing culinary boundaries. This season, select voyages will feature premium wines from the [GALLO Luxury Wine](#) portfolio, typically reserved for private tasting rooms. Having these rare vintages on board offers guests an exclusive pairing with the chef-led experiences Windstar is known for.

The 2026 season brings together James Beard Foundation affiliated chefs and luminaries like José Garzón, Belinda Bishop, mother-daughter duo Kirsten and Mandy Dixon, Gabriel Kreuther, and David Uygur. Complementing this roster of acclaimed chefs are some of California's most distinguished wine producers: Orin Swift, J Vineyards and Winery, Louis M. Martini, and Denner Vineyards.

What is a James Beard Foundation Themed Cruise?

Each year, chef-hosted culinary voyages invite guests into an immersive world of flavor — from live cooking demos, time to interact with the chefs, and chef-led market tours to intimate four-course dinners with wine pairings, all curated by some of the most celebrated chefs in the U.S.

“Food and wine are universal languages—when you share a meal and a glass, you share traditions and personal stories,” says Stijn Creupelandt, chief operating officer at Windstar Cruises. “What began 10 years ago as a shared love of exceptional food has become one of the most rewarding parts of our onboard experience, and we’re expanding that journey to include rare wine experiences with California’s top vineyards, further elevating the culinary experience in a way that engages and inspires our discerning guests.”

What Are the Five James Beard Foundation Themed Cruises in 2026?

- [Mayan Legacies with Chef José Garzón](#)

Colón to Cozumel | 8 days; February 9 – 17, 2026 | *Wind Surf*

Mayan Legacies explores the uncommon Caribbean along the Gulf of Honduras with **Chef José Garzón**, where Latin and Island culinary influences come together in vibrant port cities. Discover unspoiled beaches, ancient Mayan temples rising above rainforest canopies, and remote islands like the UNESCO biosphere reserve— Isla San Andres— accessible only by small ships like *Wind Surf*.

About Chef José Garzón - Chef José Garzón is the innovative force behind Garzon Latinx Street Food and Bad Chancla on Capitol Hill in Seattle, Washington, where he has earned acclaim for his vibrant, bold approach to modern Latin American cuisine. At Bad Chancla, he uses locally sourced ingredients to create plates that celebrate community, tradition, and creativity, with each dish telling its own story. His commitment to sustainability and pushing the boundaries of Latin American cuisine have garnered accolades from food critics and loyal patrons alike.

- [Beach Fun & Sun: A Remote Caribbean Getaway with Belinda Bishop](#)

Philipsburg to Philipsburg | 7 days; March 14 – 21, 2026 | *Wind Surf*

This relaxing 7-day Caribbean escape with **Chef Belinda Bishop** brings travelers to secluded beaches and experiences like snorkeling a historic wreck in Tortola or piloting a RIB through the bays of Jost Van Dyke.

About Chef Belinda Bishop – As Grenada's culinary ambassador and award-winning American-Grenadian chef, Chef Bishop specializes in fusing traditional Caribbean cuisine with contemporary techniques, creating healthy, well-balanced dishes using garden-fresh vegetables and spices that incorporate historical cultural references from across the region. Her career highlights include managing restaurants in New York, Florida, and Atlanta, cooking for celebrities like Oprah Winfrey and President Bill Clinton, and founding The Grenada Culinary and Mixology Federation to train aspiring chefs and mixologists. Her latest venture, Belinda's at the Tower Estate, offers an intimate farm-to-table multi-course dining experience in a Historic Great House, while she also serves with World Central Kitchen on global humanitarian food initiatives.


- [Scenic Alaska with Kirsten and Mandy Dixon](#)

Juneau to Vancouver | 8 days; May 15 – 23, 2026 | *Star Seeker*

See glaciers up close, watch whales, and look for bears. This is the best of Alaska with coastal wilderness cruising along the Canadian Inside Passage, Alaska's Misty Fjords, and Tracy Arm—plus stops in Ketchikan, Sitka, Skagway, and Juneau, all in a single week.

Chefs Kristen and Mandy Dixon will craft menus highlighting Alaska's bold, frontier flavors, reflecting the approach that has made their wilderness lodges award-winning destinations.

About Chefs Kirsten and Mandy Dixon - Kirsten and Mandy Dixon are a mother-daughter team of acclaimed Alaska chefs, authors, and lodge owners known for highlighting local flavors at Within the Wild Adventure company and Tutka Bay Lodge. Kirsten is Le Cordon Bleu-trained; Mandy is a Culinary Institute of America graduate with experience in top restaurants, including working with Thomas Keller. They blend classical and Alaskan cuisine, have written cookbooks, mentored emerging chefs, and advanced Alaska's culinary scene internationally.

- **French Feast: Normandy, Brittany & Aquitaine with Chef Gabriel Kreuther** 
 Rouen to Bordeaux | 7 days; August 19 - 26, 2026 | *Star Legend*
 Chef Gabriel Kreuther, a two-Michelin-star chef and 2025 finalist for JBF's Outstanding Chef Award (one of only four nominees), headlines this sailing exploring France's most captivating corners, including neolithic stones and Arthurian legends in Brittany and walking the legendary streets of Paris and vineyards of Bordeaux. Kreuther will lead cooking demos, market tours, and an elegant wine-paired dinner curated to reflect the region's rich culinary heritage.

About Chef Gabriel Kreuther – A two Michelin star chef, Gabriel Kreuther honed his craft at Michelin-starred kitchens across Europe before serving as Executive Chef at The Modern in New York, where he won the James Beard Award for Best Chef: New York City in 2009. In 2015, he opened his eponymous restaurant Gabriel Kreuther, fusing classic French training with his Alsatian heritage to create a comfortably luxurious dining experience that has garnered two Michelin stars, three stars by the New York Times, and the Wine Spectator Grand Award. His culinary approach blends traditional Alsatian techniques with New York-inspired flavors, emphasizing quality ingredients and meticulous craftsmanship.

- **Classic Italy & Dalmatian Coast with Chef David Uygur and Denner Vineyards**
 Rome to Venice | 8 nights; October 7 – 15, 2026 | *Wind Surf*
 From the glittering fountains of Rome to the storied canals of Venice, guests explore the wonders of Italy's iconic cities along with the breathtaking Amalfi and Dalmatian Coasts. On board, **Chef David Uygur** leads a culinary journey inspired by Balkan, Mediterranean, and Italian traditions, featuring food and wine pairings with **Denner Vineyards'** meticulously crafted Rhône and Bordeaux varietals, and a special chef-hosted dinner.

About Chef David Uygur - Inspired by his Turkish-American heritage and trips to Italy, Chef Uygur taught himself to cure meats nearly two decades ago and honed his skills at Lola before opening Lucia in Dallas's Bishop Arts neighborhood in 2010. His restaurant features house-cured salumi and pasta made fresh daily served in a relaxed, polished atmosphere that feels like dining at his home, earning a 2024 James Beard Award nomination for Outstanding Chef and Michelin Bib Gourmand status. Lucia's ever-changing menu reflects his eclectic approach, blending Italian techniques with diverse culinary influences, and has consistently garnered acclaim from local and national press since opening.

2026 LUX Wine Cruises

- **Treasures of the Greek Isles with Orin Swift Winery**
Athens to Athens | 7 days; May 14 – 21, 2026 | *Wind Spirit*
From Santorini and Mykonos to the Acropolis and ancient Ephesus, experience the itinerary alongside avant-garde winemaker Dave Phinney of **Napa's Orin Swift winery**. Known for its bold, boundary-pushing wines, Orin Swift is sure to captivate enthusiasts.
- **Scenic Alaska with J Vineyards and Winery**
Vancouver to Juneau | 8 days; May 7 – 15, 2026 | *Star Seeker*
Guests will uncork a single-vineyard Pinot Noir from Sonoma's **J Vineyards and Winery** and toast Alaska's majestic beauty.
- **French Feast: Normandy, Brittany & Aquitaine with Louis M. Martini**
Rouen to Bordeaux | 7 days; June 3 – 10, 2026 | *Star Legend*
After exploring the culinary prowess France has to offer, compare the legendary wines of Bordeaux to the award-winning Cabernet Sauvignon—a staple from Napa's **Louis M. Martini** vineyards.
- **Connoisseur's Delight: Northern Spain & Portugal with Maze Row Wine Merchant**
Bordeaux to Lisbon | 8 days; August 26 – September 3, 2026 | *Star Legend*
Travelers enjoy long days in port and overnight stays as they explore everything from Galicia's legendary seafood and port wine within sight of the Douro River. Along the way, they'll sip their way through pop-up tastings and presentations from the **Maze Row Wines portfolio**, pairing each destination with rich local flavor.
- **JBF + LUX Wines: Classic Italy & Dalmatian Coast with Chef David Uygur and Denner Vineyards**
Venice to Rome | 8 nights; October 7 – 15, 2026 | *Wind Surf*
See details of this itinerary among the James Beard Foundation sailings above.

What to Expect on a Windstar James Beard Foundation Cruise

Windstar's intimate yachts offer an upscale yet relaxed sailing experience that combines elegant accommodations with immersive exploration, accessing secluded beaches, remote islands, and pristine wilderness that larger ships cannot reach. Guests enjoy ocean-view suites, expansive open decks with panoramic views, onboard Marinas with complimentary watersports equipment (some with AquaBanas resort-style loungers), and refined dining in intimate atmospheres. The small-ship experience feels personal and unhurried, designed to immerse travelers in each destination while providing modern luxuries like infinity pools, private verandas, and full-service spas—creating the perfect balance of adventure and comfort.

How to Book a James Beard Foundation and LUX Wines Cruise

- Learn more about the 2026 James Beard Foundation [culinary cruises](#) and [LUX Wines sailings](#) here.

- To plan a small ship cruise with Windstar [book online here](#), contact a travel advisor, reach out to Windstar Cruises by phone at 866-258-7245, or [request a call](#) by a Windstar vacation planner.

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Windstar Cruises press images [here](#).

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About Windstar Cruises

For four decades, Windstar Cruises has been reimagining small-ship cruising with a distinctive blend of relaxed luxury and genuine connection to the world's most captivating destinations. From its origins with motor sailing yachts tailored for upscale yet casual travel, Windstar has grown into a diverse fleet of three Star Class all-suite yachts and three Wind Class sailing yachts, offering voyages that are both intimate and inspiring. Two highly anticipated new yachts, Star Seeker and Star Explorer, set to debut in December 2025 and 2026, expand the fleet to eight yachts accommodating 150-350 guests. Windstar's legendary Wind Class sailing yachts are also undergoing a meticulous two-phase redesign to be completed by 2027. Windstar yachts sail to more than 330 ports across Europe, the Caribbean, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal, Alaska, Canada and New England, Japan, the South Pacific, and Asia. Unlike most cruise lines, Windstar sails year-round in the Mediterranean and Tahiti, offering different destination experiences seasonally. Each Windstar voyage is designed to immerse guests in authentic cultural experiences, all while delivering the comfort, service, and style that define the Windstar difference.

Windstar Cruises is proud to be part of the Xanterra Travel Collection®, a distinguished group of global hospitality and travel companies with a legacy spanning over a hundred years. Xanterra operates iconic national parks, including Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, Glacier, and Death Valley. The Xanterra Travel Collection® is owned by The Anschutz Corporation, the ultimate owner of the Broadmoor, Sea Island, and entertainment giant AEG, Anschutz Entertainment Group.

About The James Beard Foundation

The [James Beard Foundation®](#) (JBF) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to leading chefs and the broader culinary industry toward a new standard of excellence. Our guiding principle, Good Food for Good®, informs our vision of a vibrant, equitable, and sustainable independent restaurant industry that stands as a cornerstone of American culture, community, and economy, and drives toward a better food system. For 40 years, JBF has been instrumental in recognizing, amplifying, educating, and training the individuals who shape American food culture. Today, our mission comes to life through the prestigious James Beard Awards, industry and community-focused programming, advocacy and policy initiatives, and culinary events and partnerships nationwide—including at Platform by JBF® and the James Beard House in New York City. Learn more at jamesbeard.org, sign up for our emails, and follow [@beardfoundation](#) on social media.

About GALLO Luxury Wine Group

Founded in 1933 by brothers Ernest and Julio Gallo, GALLO is a family-owned company and global leader in wine, spirits, malt beverages, and RTDs. With a goal of serving joy in moments that matter, GALLO is deeply committed to sustainability and providing the highest quality products for every occasion. GALLO's entire portfolio is featured here: <https://www.gallo.com/portfolio/>