

**BARBADOS CULINARY TEAM TAKES TOP HONOR AT
2024 TASTE OF THE CARIBBEAN COMPETITION**



Team Barbados (left) earned the number one team ranking while Rhashindra Donge of Bonaire (right) secured the top senior chef spot at the region's leading culinary event, hosted by the Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA).

MIAMI, Fla. - (November 21, 2024) – Yesterday, Barbados was named the **Caribbean National Culinary Team of the Year**, while Rhashindra Donge of Bonaire was crowned **Caribbean Chef of the Year** at the **2024 Taste of the Caribbean** competition. Regarded as the Caribbean's premier culinary competition, food and beverage educational exchange and cultural showcase competition, the event was held in conjunction with the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association's (CHTA) annual industry conference, the Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum (CHIEF), which ran November 18-20, at Florida International University's Kovens Center in Miami.

“Beyond showcasing our region’s exceptional and diverse culinary and mixology offerings, Taste of the Caribbean is a demonstration of our unwavering commitment to nurturing talent, providing essential resources, and cultivating opportunities that empower Caribbean culinary and hospitality professionals to thrive,” said CHTA CEO Vanessa Ledesma. “The heartbeat of Taste lies in the community it has created; the camaraderie, the connections, and the collective spirit are what make it truly extraordinary.”

Returning to the stage for the first time in five years, this year’s event featured seven Caribbean destinations, competing in a friendly but fierce battle for culinary supremacy. Participating teams included Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bonaire, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia, Turks & Caicos and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Winners of the following additional categories were also recognized:

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The **Caribbean Bartender of the Year** award went to Puerto Rico's José "Yeye" Ortega, who also took home **Best Rum Drink, Best Mystery Bar Drink and Most Creative Bartender**.



Caribbean Pastry Chef of the Year went to Saint Lucia's Emmany Hippolyte



Caribbean Junior Chef of the Year went to Barbados' Dejuan Toppin.



Bonaire's Rhashindra Donge received **Best Use of Beef, Sponsored by Certified Angus Beef**.



The Tony Mack Spirit of the Competition winner was St. Lucia's team manager, Fabien Vigeo.



Alex Chandler of Barbados captured **Best Non-Alcoholic Drink**.



Junior Chef Dejuan Toppin of Barbados earned the Hans Schenk Commemorative Award for the **Most Innovative Dish Utilizing Indigenous Ingredients**.



The Josue Merced-Reyes Spirit of the Competition Winner was Bonaire's Kelvin Ventura.

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Taste of the Caribbean's 2024 event sponsors included Anything But Advertising, Certified Angus Beef (CAB), Interval International, Mastercard, Carnival Corporation & PLC., The Anything Group (TAG), Halperns', U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and U.S. Pork. For the full list of winners, visit <https://chtataste.com/taste-of-the-caribbean-2024-winners/>

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About the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA)

The Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA) is the Caribbean's leading association representing the interests of national hotel and tourism associations. For more than 60 years, CHTA has been the backbone of the Caribbean hospitality industry. Working with some 1,000 hotel and allied members, and 33 National Hotel Associations, CHTA is shaping the Caribbean's future and helping members to grow their businesses. Whether helping to navigate critical issues in sales and marketing, sustainability, legislative issues, emerging technologies, climate change, data and intelligence or, looking for avenues and ideas to better market and manage businesses, CHTA is helping members on issues which matter most.

For additional information, visit www.caribbeanhotelandtourism.com.

High-resolution photos are available here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14fkIYwJNn5y0uR8zfMTwzEmluKoE8Vde?usp=sharing>

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