

Tom Sietsema's Dish: Jose Andres receives Vilcek prize

Wednesday, March 10, 2010

[José Andrés](#) remembers driving to work and being somewhat distracted when he got the official call informing him of his most recent award: the 2010 grand prize from the Vilcek Foundation, which annually honors the contributions of foreign-born Americans in the areas of art, culture and science.

"How much do I have to pay for this?" the Spanish chef-restaurateur recalls asking the bearer of the good news, who was no less than Jan Vilcek, president of the New York foundation that bears his name.

It turns out Andrés is *getting* \$50,000 and a sculpture by designer Stefan Sagmeister when he accepts the award at a dinner presentation at the Mandarin Oriental in New York on April 7. For the first time, the foundation is highlighting achievements in the culinary field.

The attention paid to his industry, and to what his peers are doing beyond selling their cooking, thrills the chef. "Food can be a powerful tool," he says.

Andrés, 40, has groundbreaking restaurants on two coasts, including [Minibar](#) in Washington and [the Bazaar](#) in Los Angeles, and hosts a PBS food series, "Made in Spain." He is also a leader on hunger and nutrition issues, especially those focusing on children.

His prize money, he says, will go to benefit some of those causes.

-- Tom Sietsema

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