



Baker who rose from hardship crowned Bread Hero of the USA

The winners of the Bread Heroes campaign by **Tiptree World Bread Awards USA supported by the International Baking Industry Exposition (IBIE)** were announced on Wednesday November 3, 2021 in a special online awards evening, celebrating the incredible endeavours of the bread community.

The Overall Winner was Manolo Betancur of Manolo's Bakery in Charlotte, North Carolina. Manolo, who came to the USA 20 years ago with very little money, a handful of clothing and no English, has worked hard to rise from washing dishes to today owning a thriving bakery business.

After arriving from Columbia, Manolo spent his first few months working odd jobs in Miami. He then went on to win a scholarship to study at King University, Tennessee and graduated with a BA in Modern Languages.

A few years later, and with more experience under his belt, Manolo moved to Charlotte, NC, where he became involved in the city's first Hispanic bakery. In 2011 he bought that bakery, and 7 years later he renamed it Manolo's Bakery.

Today, the bakery is thriving; it produces over 65 types of artisan breads and a vast variety of cakes and desserts. Manolo's supplies baked goods to more than 100 stores, restaurants and supermarkets in North Carolina and Virginia.



Manolo Betancur of Manolo's Bakery in Charlotte, North Carolina, has been crowned the Overall Winner of 'Bread Heroes' by the Tiptree World Bread Awards USA supported by IBIE.

Manolo is a strong believer in supporting his local community. His bakery's vision is: *Nuestro Pan, Nuestra Gente, Nuestro Futuro* (Our Bread, Our People, Our Future).

As part of his support for the local community, Manolo's donate 10% of their profits from the week of Epiphany (the most profitable time of the year for the bakery) to a local charity. In 2021, the team decided to donate thermal blankets to Charlotte's homeless neighbors in the encampments uptown.

Reflecting on what lies ahead Manolo says, 'With so much going on and all the uncertainty, many think they can't change what's happening around them, but with the right support, we can change our future by creating opportunities that will allow us to grow and keep dreaming.'

In normal times, the Tiptree World Bread Awards celebrates the bread; hundreds of loaves would be delivered to Manhattan for assessment by a panel of esteemed judges. Building on the great success of last year, the Awards once again celebrated the USA's Bread Heroes - the people behind the loaves: from farmers and millers, to bakers and educators.

Nominations for the Bread Heroes came in from across the USA. 'All the nominees in this year's Awards truly deserve recognition for their generous, considerate and often altruistic initiatives to help others.' said Stephen Hallam, Chairman of the Judges.

This year's illustrious judging panel, chaired by Hallam, included Zachary Golper, Baker and James Beard Foundation Award nominee, Bien Cuit, Dana Cowin, Founder, Speaking Broadly and Maurizio Leo, The Perfect Loaf.

5 regional winners were selected by the judging panel. These ranged from Mo Cheeks of Bread & Justice in Madison, WI, whose bread sales profits are all donated to organizations raising awareness for racial justice and working to build a more just society; to Guy Frenkel from Céor Bakery in Los Angeles, CA who founded the Cast Your Bread collective which gathers up donated loaves from bakers all over LA and distributes them to charities.

In addition to the regional awards, there were a selection of special awards. These included the Tiptree Outstanding Achievement Award, IBIE Innovation Award, Brook Bake Dream Team Award, Home Baker Bread Hero, and Sustainability Hero.

'We've been exporting Tiptree jam to the USA for decades, and in normal times I'd be popping over to meet the retailers and bakers who use our products,' said Scott Goodfellow, Joint Managing Director, Tiptree. 'I can't do that right now, but what I can do is recognise the contribution that American bakers have made to their communities in challenging times. It's inspiring to read their stories.'

One of the judging panel, Babette Kourellos, Owner, Baker and Educator @Babette's Bread said, 'These stories serve as a reminder of the versatility of bread and the immense generosity of bakers.'

-ENDS-

Read all their Bread Hero stories in more detail [here](#).

The full list of winners:

Southeast (and Overall Winner): Manolo Betancur from Manolo's Bakery in Charlotte, North Carolina

Southwest: Don Guerra from Bread Barrio in Tucson, Arizona

Midwest: Mo Cheeks from Bread & Justice in Madison, Wisconsin

West (and Tiptree Outstanding Achievement Award, and IBIE Award for Innovation): Guy Frenkel from Céor Bakery in Los Angeles, California

Northeast (and Brook Bake Dream Team Award): Shiri Reuveni-Ullrich from Rising Above Bakery in Bergen County, New Jersey

Home Baker Hero: Veda Karlo from New York City

Award for Sustainability: Josh Allen from Companion Baking from St Louis, Missouri

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#BreadHeroes21

EDITOR'S NOTES

Tiptree is headline sponsor of the World Bread Awards. The first Tiptree preserves were made in 1885 and Tiptree jams and preserves are now sold across the world, many of them made with fruit still grown on their farms in Essex www.tiptree.com

The **International Baking Industry Exposition (IBIE)** is the largest event in the Western Hemisphere, bringing together all segments of the grain-based foods industry supply chain. Held in Las Vegas every three years, IBIE gathers the baking community to fuel the next generation of bakers, promote economic growth, educate and advance the future of baking together. Owned by the American Bakers Association (ABA), and the Bakery Equipment Manufacturers and Allied (BEMA) and supported by the Retail Bakers of America (RBA), all proceeds from this non-profit event are invested back into the grain-based food industry. www.bakingexpo.com

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The **American Bakers Association (ABA)** is the Washington D.C.-based voice of the wholesale baking industry. Since 1897, ABA has represented the interests of bakers before the U.S. Congress, federal agencies, and international regulatory authorities. ABA advocates on behalf of more than 1,000 baking facilities and baking company suppliers. ABA members produce bread, rolls, cookies, crackers, bagels, sweet goods, tortillas and many other wholesome, nutritious, baked products for America's families. ABA works to grow and enhance the industry through public policy advocacy, education and networking. ABA brings together industry leaders to share ideas, develop industry solutions and network with industry colleagues. www.americanbakers.org