

OCTOBER 2011  
THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO GO®

Washington

# Where



Celebrating  
75 years  
of Where

## Warm Up

The season opens for art,  
dance, theater and music

**WIN!**

A FREE TRIP TO  
NEW YORK  
[wheretraveler.com](http://wheretraveler.com)

ALSO INSIDE:  
15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
DINING GUIDE



# Hail to the Chefs

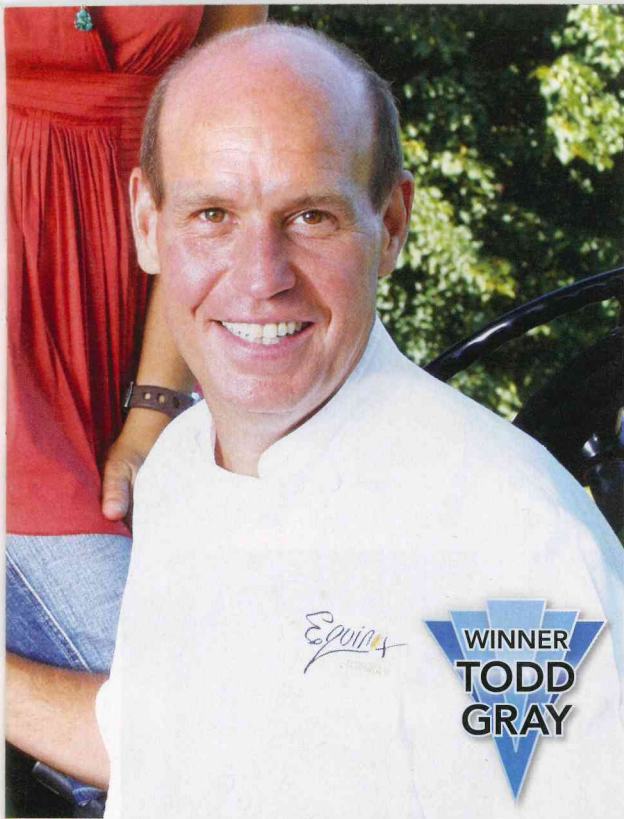
Awards confirm the power of personality | BY JEAN LAWLOR COHEN

**Top Chefs:** Bryan Voltaggio at work in his Volt kitchen (above) and fellow nominees (facing page, from the top) Todd Gray, Haidar Karoum (left), Bernard Chemel and Vikram Sunderam.

Each year, the Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington hosts a black-tie gala to announce who's won the prizes known as (clever enough) "Rammys." Anonymous food writers and industry veterans determine the nominees, then pick finalists in all but four categories which are decided by on-line voters. RAMW celebrated its awards' 29th year with 1,600 revelers, many in masks and Mardi Gras mode, at a Carnevale da Cuisine.

## Chef of the Year

All Rammys matter, but the most coveted goes to the person who's made his or her presence felt in the community as well as in a serious kitchen. Outstanding cooks on the short list: French-born Bertrand Chemel whose lakeside 2941 in Virginia captured the gold for Fine Dining 2010; Haidar Karoum whose talent factors at both Proof in Penn Quarter and this year's



**WINNER  
TODD  
GRAY**



GRAY ©STACY ZARIN-GOLDBERG; SUNDERAM ©MICHAEL COLELLA; CITRONELLE ©CRIS MOLINA; KARUUM & SOURCE ©DARKO ZAGAR; CHEMEL ©ADAM FAZACKERLEY; OTHERS COURTESY THE RESTAURANTS

top new spot Estadio on Capitol Hill; Vikram Sunderam, the Mumbai native responsible for a renaissance of interest in Indian cuisine at Penn Quarter's Rasika; and Bryan Voltaggio, whose remarkable Volt has made Frederick, Maryland a dining destination.

But the winner is Todd Gray, a descendant of Patrick Henry and a pioneer in his own right, who at his upscale Equinox (Fine Dining winner

2008) early on embraced sustainability and regional sourcing. His idealism now powers good causes from mentoring young chefs and supporting the ASPCA to green practices at his casual Watershed and at new Muse café in the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

### Fine Dining

The name of this award once signaled hushed rooms, white tablecloths,

men in ties and pricey entrées. Now it describes bustling quarters, diners in casual dress, "name" chefs popping out to talk and...still pricey entrées. The award goes to The Source by Wolfgang Puck, the Newseum's sleek neighbor that in 2009 won best new, in 2010 chef of the year. Credit for the latter goes to Scott Drewno, the amiable, imposing force who spins the glam, Asian-inflected fare. >

### Elite Rooms

Luxe quarters of the final five (stacked above)—Bourbon Steak (top left), Michel Richard Citronelle, Trummer's on Main and The Source by Wolfgang Puck