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**Restaurateur of the Year Named**

***Sarah Foster, owner of Foster's Market, wins Restaurateur of the Year***

**(Raleigh – For Immediate Release)** The North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association (NCRLA), the trade association representing the state's \$17.5 billion restaurant and lodging industries, awarded its prestigious Restaurateur of the Year award to Sara Foster, owner of Foster's Market in Chapel Hill and Durham, North Carolina. Foster will receive her award at the first annual Taste of North Carolina, which will be held on February 8, 2010 at the Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club of Durham, NC from 6-9pm.

The Restaurateur of the Year award is given each year to a restaurant operator that is viewed as highly successful in the eyes of other restaurateurs, employees and within the community. Level of involvement in the industry as well as contributions to enhancing the overall image of the food service industry are considered in determining the winner. A special committee made up of former award recipients makes the final decision on who receives the award.

Foster has provided over 20 years of hospitality as the owner of Foster's Market, which has become a favorite restaurant for students, families and young professionals. She has led the way with innovative concepts, such as combining specialty food groceries with dine-in options. She has also partnered with a local yoga studio to offer yoga to the community.

Foster has won several other awards throughout her many years of service, including the 1994 Small Business of the Year Award, 2003's Best Lunch Spot in the Triangle from citysearch.com, and The Foster's Market Cookbook won the 203 SE Booksellers Association Cookbook of the Year award. In 2005, citysearch.com once again honored Foster's Market with its award for Best Takeout.

"Sara Foster has earned a stellar reputation in the hospitality industry on a multitude of levels. This award is a testament to her dedication and hard work," said NCRLA President and CEO Paul Stone.

Tickets to the Taste of North Carolina can be purchased online at [NCRLA.biz](http://NCRLA.biz). Tickets are \$79 a piece for the event, which will be celebrating the best food, beer, wine and hospitality service in North Carolina. For more information on the event, the awards, or how to become a sponsor, contact Rebecca Crews at 1-800-582-8750.

**About NCRLA:** NCRLA, the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association is the leading advocate and resource for the state's \$17.5 billion hospitality industry. Combined, restaurants and hotels are one of North Carolina's largest employers providing jobs to more than 10 percent of the state's workforce. To learn more, visit <http://www.ncrla.biz>.

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