

Big Heat 2018: Chicago's Food and Drink Fifty

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During our Big Heat photo shoot, chefs, bakers, bartenders and others whose images appear on these pages gathered in the dining room of Mi Tocaya Antojería, waiting for their moment in front of the camera. Around the room, they chatted in random clusters, sharing stories, telling jokes, reflecting on news of the day, gossiping; it was all very social and friendly, and one could sense the spirit of a powerful, mutually supportive community.

That community is why Chicago has fostered one of the nation's most vital culinary cultures. In that room, it was clear that these men and women—some in chef's whites, others in t-shirts and hoodies—were less competitors and more colleagues, in it together, offering friendly words to fellow travelers on the road between kitchen and table.

Tradition demands that everyone be ranked, but that shouldn't cloud the fact that in a basic sense, all these people—as well as many others in the city—are on the same playing field, pulling together to put before the world the best food and drink. (David Hammond)

Big Heat was written by David Hammond and Lauren Knight with additional contributions from John Carruthers, Rebecca Holland, Rosemary Lane, Danielle Levsky and Kristine Sherred.

All photos by Monica Kass Rogers shot on location at Mi Tocaya Antojería in front of a mural by Jason Brammer.



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**Bruce Sherman
Chef**

Bruce Sherman has been lauded for his farm-to-table French-American cuisine at Michelin-starred North Pond since 1999. Sherman aims to “provide an exceptional experience,” supported by “an inclusive environment for the staff to practice, refine and grow their personal and professional skills.” Sherman plans to refresh the entire restaurant across the coming year, to “celebrate and toast to the next twenty years.” At the 2008 Chicago Taste of the Nation event, Share Our Strength named Sherman “Most Sustainable Chef.” That same year he accepted, and continues to hold, the position of national board chair of Chefs Collaborative. Sherman hopes others in the Chicago food community recognize how they can create social change and community consciousness. Sherman created and executed the Solidarity Soup campaign in 2017, in which contributions for immigrants rights channeled funds into organizations doing “the really important work.”