

HOUSTON, TX
HUGOSRESTAURANT.NET

Chef Hugo Ortega, award winner of the 2017 James Beard “Best Chef: Southwest,” draws on his childhood memories spent cooking with his mother and grandmother in his native Mexico.

In 2002, the critically acclaimed Hugo’s was born in Houston, Texas bringing authentic regional Mexican cuisine to the forefront of dining.

“Before opening Hugo’s, my father, brothers and I made a culinary pilgrimage back to Mexico,” Ortega explained. “Our journey took us some 4,000 miles around Mexico, along the east and west coasts and across the interior, eating, meeting the local cooks and rediscovering the remarkable history, textures, flavors and diversity found throughout this, beautiful, rugged land.”

Ortega returned with a renewed passion for the bounties found in Mexico and its delicious cuisine. “The street foods of Mexico are in many ways the most authentic record of Mexico’s culinary tradition,” stated Ortega. “It’s extremely diverse – as light and fresh as a seafood cocktail prepared by fishermen on the beach; as deep and complex as the moles of Oaxaca, Mexico, made with an astounding number of ingredients; and as earthy as the simplest homemade corn tortilla. It’s truest, purest forms are served by comericantes (merchants) in the streets.”

Choosing a favorite dish is difficult for Ortega – but he has a fondness for Cabrito. “Whenever someone would come to the ranch where I grew up with my grandmother, Cabrito was the celebratory dish we prepared. It reminds me of home,” he reflected. Other signature items include Cochinita Pibil, Taquito de Langosta (lobster taco), and churros stuffed with dulce de leche and served with Mexican hot chocolate.

Winning a James Beard Award has been the highlight of his career. “It is a great honor to be recognized by and among the top talents in the culinary world. I am so very grateful – and I accepted the award on behalf of not just myself, but my entire restaurant family, my loyal customers, and the great city of Houston. I also accepted it in honor of all the hardworking men and women across the country who spend long hours on their feet working to serve others, working to make a name for themselves and create a better life for themselves and their families. Winning the James Beard Award was the newest page in my American Dream story. I hope it made all of Houston proud!”

Hugo's



2017 BEST CHEF: SOUTHWEST
CHEF HUGO ORTEGA

