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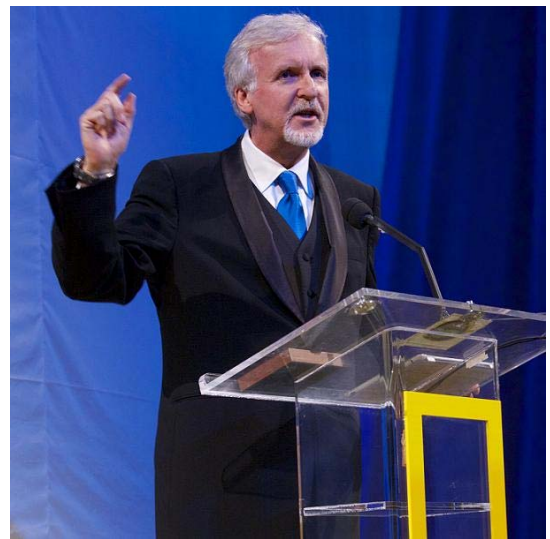
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## National Geographic 125th gala: James Cameron goes vegan, Felix Baumgartner dazzles the ladies

BY THE RELIABLE SOURCE June 15, 2013 at 9:00 am

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The National's Geographic went all out for its 125th anniversary gala Thursday, filling the National Building Museum with the world's greatest explorers and scientists, custom designed tables featuring compasses, maps and live plants, and a massive, roof-high screen with amazing nature photography. What's better than video of adorable penguin chicks playing in the snow? Video of adorable penguin chicks playing in the snow *on an 80-foot screen.*



James Cameron challenged the gala guests to go vegan. (Rebecca Hale)



But you probably want to know how cute skydiver Felix Baumgartner is: Very, very cute. Last year, the [base jumper successfully dropped from 24 miles](#) — breaking the sound barrier along the way — last year and landed into the history books, so Nat Geo gave him the “Adventurer of the Year” award, and everyone (especially the ladies) clamored for a moment with the daredevil Austrian skydiver.



Felix Baumgartner (Mike Busada)

“Titanic” director/oceanographer James Cameron received the organization’s “Explorer of the Year” for his successful solo dive last year to the deepest point of the Pacific Ocean. Cameron, [the magazine’s first Hollywood cover boy](#), used the occasion to share his newfound solution to saving the earth.



“I’ve had an epiphany recently,” Cameron continued. “I want to challenge all of you as people of deep conscience, people who are



Chef Barton Seaver shows off the entree course.  
(Robert Isacson)

environment stewards of the earth and oceans...By changing what you eat, you will change the entire contract between the human species and the natural world.” Cameron revealed he went vegan a year ago, and urged everyone at the gala to read up and do the same. “I felt like I was waking up from a long sleepwalk. I believe we are all sleepwalking off a cliff if we don’t do this.”

This came immediately after the shrimp course and just before the entree: bison. The menu was created by chef/National Geographic Fellow Barton Seaver with ingredients sourced from sustainable farms. So, yeah, kind of awkward.

The room was filled with deep-pocket, nature-loving donors; National Geographic has already raised \$35 million to mark this milestone year — including \$1 million from Alex Trebek, host of the National Geographic Bee, which ensures students will be saying “Lake Titicaca” for decades to come.





The scene at the dinner. (Robert Isacson)



Alex Trebek makes a toast. (Rebecca Hale)

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