

Academy of Food & Wine launches search for Restaurant Manager of the Year 2010



The Academy of Food & Wine, the professional training body for front-of-house service, has launched its prestigious UK Restaurant Manager of the Year 2010 competition, and is inviting entries from managers of any style of catering establishment. The competition, supported by the National Skills Academy for Hospitality and sponsored by OpenTable.com, will endeavour to find someone who has all the skills needed to be a top class restaurant manager in today's demanding climate - great business acumen, bags of personality and confidence, the ability to get on with people and a thorough knowledge of his or her trade. The winner will also have the sensitivity to judge when customers want to chat and when they don't, and, crucially, be able to recruit, manage and motivate his or her team.

Last year's popular winner was Peter Avis, restaurant manager at London's Babylon restaurant at the Roof Gardens, part of the Virgin Exclusive Collection. Peter won the competition after the judges agreed he encapsulated the perfect restaurant manager, having a thorough knowledge of the business and the ability to get on with anyone.

?'It's a fabulous competition to have won, I've had an amazing year and have raised my profile in the industry hugely,' said Peter. ?As part of my prize I completed a stage at Danny Meyer's restaurant in New York which taught me a massive amount and was great fun, but I've also had speaking engagements at colleges, lots of media interviews and contact with other restaurant managers that I've found invaluable.?

This year's prestigious panel of judges will include former Le Gavroche maitre d' Silvano Giralдин, now director of Roux Consulting, Academy director Matt Wilkin MS, proprietor, Princess Victoria, London, and chair of judges Conor O'Leary, F&B manager at Andaz, London.

?'Last year was the first time we'd held this competition and we were delighted with the response,' said Academy executive director Sophie Roberts-Brown. ?This competition truly tests the skills required of a restaurant manager and these are the same in a Michelin-starred establishment as they are in a high street brasserie ? great business sense, knowledge of the trade and fantastic people skills.?

Competitors will initially be asked to complete a paper questionnaire, from which the semi finalists will be drawn. Winners from the semi finals, to be held in London on 8 March 2010, will then go through to the final, taking place at Babylon Restaurant at the Roof Gardens, Kensington, London, on 17 May 2010. The name of the winner will be announced at a gala dinner at Babylon Restaurant the same evening.

For an entry form call the Academy on 020 8661 4646 or download one from the Academy website at www.afws.co.uk. Entries must be received by 29 January 2010.

For further information or comment please contact Linda Pettit at Tilburstow Media Partners on 01883 742955, mobile 07973 789853 or email press@acfws.org. Alternatively call Sophie Roberts-Brown or Nicky Barwood at the Academy of Food & Wine on 020 8661 4646 or email sophie@acfws.org or nicky@acfws.org.

Editor's notes

About the Academy. Founded in 1988, the Academy of Food and Wine is the industry's professional training body dedicated to the skills of wine and food service. The Academy's purpose is to identify, promote and maintain the highest professional standards for the education and training of food and wine waiting staff and bar assistants in the UK hotel, restaurant, catering and bar industry.

Its objectives are: for every waiter/waitress, wine waiter and bar assistant in the industry to be a member of the Academy ? their professional body; to gain greater recognition for these operatives throughout the industry by accreditation, badging and recognition; to help members develop, maintain and advance their knowledge, skills and ability; to provide an interface between educators, service staff and their employers; and to enhance member's career prospects.

Currently the Academy has over 1,000 members.

About the competition. Following the submission of entry, membership form and written answers to questions, the judges will select the best entrants from five regions - The South, London, Wales & The Midlands, The North, and Scotland.

These entrants are then invited to attend a semi final where they will be interviewed by the judges on their knowledge and expertise. Five semi finalists will then go forward to the final, to be held in London in May 2010.

There are two stages to the final.

Stage 1: The finalists will be sent a paper outlining a particular scenario. They will have 14 days to familiarise themselves with the scenario and prepare an oral presentation.

Stage 2: The finalists will attend the 'closed door' session where they will give a 5-10 minute oral presentation to the judges. Following this, the panel of judges will ask the candidates a number of questions, based on the scenario and their presentation.

Entries are welcome from all restaurant managers working in a UK establishment, regardless of size and style. Entrants must be members of the Academy of Food & Wine or apply at the time of entering.

The winning restaurant manager will receive a week in New York, staying at top boutique Manhattan hotel, The MAve, in the trendy Flatiron District to complete a stage at one of Danny Meyer's Union Square Restaurants group. The winners' restaurant will also receive a 12-month subscription to the OpenTable reservation system.

The Restaurant Manager of the Year 2010 will join the Academy of Food & Wine's Restaurant Manager Hall of Fame, which includes such luminaries as: Elena Salvoni of Elena's L'Etoile; Silvano Giralдин; Jesus Adorno, director and maitre d' of Le Caprice;

Diego Masciaga, restaurant manager, the Waterside Inn, Bray; and David Morgan-Hewitt, managing director of The Goring, London.