

Academy of Food & Wine urges for better communication between front and back-of-house

The Academy of Food & Wine (AFW), the UK's professional training body for front-of-house service, has urged for better communication between front-of-house and back-of-house teams, as it launches its 2010 Gastronomy Team of the Year competition.

‘It’s vital that there is effective communication between the front-of-house team and the kitchen as it’s the only way customers will receive truly impressive service and get the best food and wine matches possible,’ said AFW’s chairman Nick Scade. ‘The service in many restaurants often suffers through lack of simple communication’ it’s vital that at all times one team knows what the other is doing.’

The Academy’s Gastronomy Team of the Year competition, now in its second year, is designed to highlight the importance of a good working relationship between kitchen and front-of-house staff. Entries are invited from chef/waiter teams from restaurants of any size and style. They will be asked to impress a panel of judges with the planning and serving of a two-course meal with accompanying wines, demonstrating careful consideration of ingredients, seasonality, balance of flavours, with a choice of wines that genuinely complement the food.

This year’s competition is held in association with food and drink campaign Discover the Origin, the campaign to educate food and wine professionals about the provenance and origin of five Discover the Origin PDO products: Parma Ham; Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese; Burgundy wines; Port; and Douro Valley wines. The teams will be asked that their choice of dishes include one of the two PDO ingredients, with their own selection of accompanying PDO wines.

‘Gastronomy Team of the Year is a great opportunity for employers and managers to encourage their front and back of house brigades to work together, fostering good teamwork and a greater understanding between the two departments,’ added Scade. ‘It’s a good training exercise as well as the chance to show-off their skills and raise the profile of their restaurant.’

Entries will initially be judged on answers to a questionnaire that may be researched. Successful teams will then be asked to send in written menu submissions with the chef required to outline the ingredients and preparation method for the dishes and the waiter or wine waiter to explain the choice of wines. Entries will also be assessed on presentation and the theory and reasoning behind the food and wine combination.

The best team from each of the five regions – The South, London, Wales & The Midlands, The North, and Scotland - will then be invited to compete for the top accolade during a practical ‘cook and serve’ final on 19 July 2010 at Westminster Kingsway College, London.

The winning team will receive a fabulous 10-day trip courtesy of Discover the Origin to the three regions involved including Burgundy, Parma and the Douro Valley to deepen their understanding of the history and provenance behind the products in the PDO campaign.

Please contact the Academy of Food & Wine on 020 8661 4646 for an entry form, or download one from www.afws.co.uk. The closing date for entries is 26 February 2010.

For further press information or comment please contact Linda Pettit at Tilburstow Media Partners on 01737 823721, mobile 07973 789853 or email linda@tilburstowmedia.co.uk. 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 Discover the Origin. ?Discover the Origin' is a three year campaign designed to raise awareness around five key European PDO products: Parma Ham; Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese; Burgundy wines; Port; and Douro Valley wines. The aim of the campaign is to highlight the importance of these products amongst distributors and food and drink professionals in order to drive sales. This will be achieved by educating people on the benefits their quality image offers the trade commercially.

The campaign supports the importance of provenance, good production methods and fair-trading. The trade bodies behind the campaign are: Burgundy Wine Board (BIVB); Port and Douro Wines Institute (IVDP); and the Parma Ham and Parmigiano-Reggiano Consortiums.

The PDO stamp of approval is attributed to these five food and drink products to certify that they are unique to a particular region and of outstanding quality.

Burgundy Wine Board (BIVB)? www.burgundy-wines.fr

Port and Douro Wines Institute (IVDP) ? www.ivdp.pt

Consortium of Parma Ham - www.prosciuttodiparma.com

Consortium of Parmigiano-Reggiano - www.parmigiano-reggiano.it

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