

Academy launches 2012 Awards and pledges support for vocational training

The **Academy of Food & Wine Service (AFWS)** has today pledged its support for vocational qualifications for 16-year olds, following this week's media reports of criticism of some of the more practical exam subjects on offer.

'Not all children are naturally academic,' commented AFWS executive director Sophie Roberts-Brown. 'The education system must continue to offer alternatives to young people who might not suit traditional academic subjects.'

'Many industries, including the hospitality industry, desperately need people with practical skills and good communication skills. Surely we should be preparing young people for industries where real job vacancies exist and offering suitable qualifications for these jobs?'

The Academy, the hospitality sector's only professional body for front-of-house service, works tirelessly to promote careers in the UK's hotel and restaurant sector by raising the profile of front-of-house, highlighting the variety of opportunities on offer and encouraging excellence in the profession.

The Academy's Annual Awards for Front of House Excellence 2012, launched this week, reward and recognise young people showing exceptional skills and commitment to their career in front-of-house. Many of the prizes include valuable work experience at top establishments.

Categories include the L'Academie de Lanson Taste Award, the Virgin Rising Star Award and the prestigious Award for Excellence, presented last year to Ashley Shaw, house manager at the five-star Westbury Mayfair Hotel, London. Previous winners of this award include Peter Avis, restaurant manager at Babylon, The Roof Gardens, London.

Other categories include the Savoy Educational Trust Phillip Thornton Award for students or junior members of staff, which offers the winner work experience at the Jumeirah hotel in London; and the Worshipful Company of Innholders' Sommelier Scholarship, which offers an educational visit with advanced practical experience of vineyard techniques and winery procedures.

This year also sees the launch of the Wine Service and Food Service Awards as well as the new Diamond Award, presented to an individual, chosen by the AFWS board, who is an outstanding personality in the UK hotel and catering industry. It may be someone who has shown exceptional leadership skills, mentored a host of individuals, achieved something spectacular or dedicated their life's work to their craft.

The awards will be held at London's Vintners' Hall on 2 October 2012.

To enter online log onto www.annualawards.co.uk. Entries close on 21 September 2012.

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Editor's notes

About the Academy. Founded in 1988, the Academy of Food & Wine Service is the professional body for front-of-house service, dedicated to improving the image of front-of-house service as a viable career choice as well as improving the standard of food and beverage service in the UK. The Academy does this through training programmes, master classes, events, PR and high profile competitions.

In its role as the professional body, the Academy works with individuals, colleges, employers and sponsors to achieve its aims of developing the renaissance of front-of-house service in the UK. Currently the Academy has over 1,500 members. www.afws.co.uk.

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