

Academy reveals finalists for 2013 UK Restaurant Manager of the Year

This year eight restaurant managers have made it through to the Academy of Food & Wine Service's UK Restaurant Manager of the Year competition following a testing semi-final held at the Moat House Acton Trussell in Staffordshire yesterday [16 September 2013].

John Croft, AFWS executive director, said that the quality of entrants and the diversity of sectors they work in had been particularly impressive this year, with competitors coming from casual dining, gastro pubs, ethnic restaurants, fine dining and contract catering.

'It's important to us that the competition appeals to restaurant managers from across the sector,' he said. 'A good restaurant manager, wherever they work, must have great service skills, be able to relate to customers, manage staff, work under pressure, have a strong business acumen and be as familiar with the profit and loss accounts as they are with food and wine knowledge.'

'We were delighted to have such good quality entrants for this year's competition - it's going to be an exciting final.'

The eight finalists are:

Shaun Corrigan, Grand Jersey Hotel & Spa, Jersey

Louise Denton, BaxterStorey at the English National Opera, London WC2

Rebecca Galland, The Vineyard, Stockcross, Berkshire

Clement Joseph, Royal Automobile Club, London SW1

Stephen Morrison, La Vallee Blanche, Glasgow

Paul Shanahan, Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons, Oxfordshire

Nola Sheng, The Hawksmoor, Spitalfields London E1

Janine Swales, BaxterStorey at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, London N17

The final will be held at London's Westbury Hotel on 7 October where finalists will be set a series of tasks designed to test their skills, knowledge and business sense. The competition will culminate in a Dragon's Den-style scenario in which the competitors will pitch their own business plan for a pop-up restaurant concept to a panel of potential investors.

Former winner Peter Avis, restaurant manager at London's Babylon restaurant, will head up the panel of judges.

The winner will be announced following a gala dinner attended by industry guests. As part of the prize the winner will travel to New York to spend time at Daniel Boulud's Dinex Group of restaurants, gaining a unique insight into the running of various departments. The runner-up will receive a place at the renowned business summer school run by the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne, sponsored by the Savoy Educational Trust.

Last year's competition was won by Peter McAlister of the Culloden Estate and Spa in Belfast.

Tickets for the gala dinner cost £80 (plus VAT) for AFWS members, or £120 (plus VAT) for non-members. To reserve places please call Daniel Moriss-Jeffery on 01276 417 882 or email Daniel@afws.co.uk.

Entrants that got through to the 2013 semi-finalists

Andrew Addison, Moat House Acton Trussell, Staffordshire

Felice Cernicchiaro, Fish Market, London EC2

Massimo De Venuto, Royal Garden Hotel, London W8

Dugald McGarry, The Three Chimneys, Isle of Skye,

Thomas Mercer, Coworth Park, Ascot, Berkshire

Tomas Minkley, Pasternoster Chop House, London EC4

Pierre Rizet Mosser, The Montagu Arms, Beaulieu, Hants

Lorela Movileanu, The George Hotel and Brasserie, Cambridgeshire

Pille Partel, The White Lion, Suffolk

Andrew Pratt, Box Tree Restaurant, Ilkley, West Yorkshire

Mehmet Safa Sihlaroglu, Hakkasan, London W1

Li Zhao, Red Pocket Chinese Restaurant, London SW11

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Editor's notes

About the Academy. The Academy of Food and Wine Service (AFWS) established in 1988, is the professional body for front-of-house service. It is dedicated to improving the status and awareness of food and beverage service as a viable career choice, raising standards across the industry, and by encouraging teamwork to foster good relations with other industry sectors. The Academy can offer advice and training to anyone following, or considering, a career as a sommelier, wine waiter, waiter, bar manager or restaurant manager.

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