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Budding young chefs devise and cook for 60 guests at the Kent Young Chef Award Charity Dinner

On Thursday 20 January 2011, the two winners of the KM-backed Kent Young Chef Award 2010 cooked up a storm at Woods Restaurant in Tunbridge Wells, when they devised and helped to prepare a fabulous three course charity dinner for 60 paying guests, in aid of Kent Air Ambulance.

Junior title winner Thomas Perkins (aged 11 of the Holmesdale Technology College in Snodland) and Senior winner Steven Yap (aged 16 of The New School at West Heath, near Sevenoaks) helped head chef Claire Wood of Woods Restaurant write the original charity dinner menu and then worked hard behind the scenes on Thursday night to prepare the special dinner.

Thomas and Steven were then treated as 'guests of honour' at the evening and enjoyed the dinner with the 60 restaurant diners. Starting with a 'shot' of *Leek and Potato Soup with Chive Crème Fraiche*, guests tucked into their starter of *Greenham Farm Quails Egg and Kentdown Wild Mushroom, Rocket and Twineham Grange Cheese Salad with Garlic Dressing*.

This was followed by an extravagant Haunch of Venison, from Wadhurst Park Estate, with Beetroot and Parsnip Puree, Curly Kale and Pancetta and Red Wine Reduction, and a scrumptious Gypsy and Braeburn Apple Tart with Crème Anglaise, with the apples sourced from Downingbury Farm, Pembury. The vegetarians didn't feel left out either and were treated to an Iden Manor Farm Kentish Blue Cheese, Spinach and Squash Stuffed Cabbage Leaf with Celeriac and Bramley Apple Dauphinoise.

Woods Restaurant, who was official sponsors of the Kent Young Chef Award, together with Hadlow College and kff (Kent Frozen Foods), generously donated £5 for each of the 60 paying guests – raising a grand total of £300 for the Kent Air Ambulance.

Produced in Kent, the brainchild behind the competition and awards dinner, confirmed the evening had been a big success. Julie Monkman, the manager at Produced in Kent said: "The Kent Young Chef Charity Dinner has been a huge success and the fact that all 60 tickets were snapped up so quickly, is testament to how highly the young people's cookery competition is regarded in the county. The two winners, Thomas and Steven, excelled themselves and have genuinely proved themselves to be future chefs in the making! It's wonderful to see this competition bringing out the young cooking talent in the county and to get young people excited again about cooking from scratch using seasonal and local produce. Well done to them both!"

Kent Young Chef Award 2011, will be launched in September 2011 with the Live Cook Off taking place before head chef Claire Wood of Woods Restaurant and celebrity chef Richard Phillips. If you are in Years 7-11 and go to school in Kent, be sure to watch out for the launch of the competition in the KM this Autumn.

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