



“Astonishing and amazing” Kent Young Chef Award 2011 delivers double winner & new cooking talent

The county’s prestigious and longest-running cookery competition for young people (created by Kent’s food and drink champions Produced in Kent) reached a dramatic finale at the Live Cook Off at K College, Tonbridge on Friday 25 November. Fourteen year old Alice Browning from Walderslade Girls’ School (who has reached all three live cook offs) spectacularly clinched the senior title, having previously won the junior category in 2009, whilst the junior title was won by brand new talent eleven year old Phoebe Icke, from Ashford School.

Richard Phillips, celebrity chef and leading Kent restaurateur, was tasked with the difficult job of picking the two winners, together with the esteemed panel of judges that included Brian Whiting, MD of Whiting & Hammond, Tommy Ward head chef of Woods Restaurant in Tunbridge Wells and Ian Piper manager of Hospitality & Catering at K College. Speaking on behalf of all the judges Richard Phillips said: “It’s been astonishing and amazing to see the level of skills demonstrated during the Kent Young Chef Award final. The bar just keeps on rising which is so exciting to see! The skill, the energy and the thought has gone into producing imaginative and inspired local dishes featuring Kentish ingredients. The ability and the passion were all here today, well done to you all!”

Alice Browning impressed the panel of judges with her “novel and technically outstanding” recipe ‘Tea-smoked Quail in Apricot & Ginger Glaze, with a Quail’s Egg Pasta Stack & Braised Lentils’.

Commenting on her third final and second win, Alice said: “Kent Young Chef Award has been an amazing grounding for me with my ambition to become a professional chef one day and it’s been an incredible three year experience. I’m absolutely buzzing about my second win. Cooking really makes me happy! Being part of this great competition has helped me know I’m on the right path and confirms that this is the career for me.”

Alice now plans to pursue a career as a chef and not only has ambitions to become a pastry chef and head chef, but hopes to own and run her own restaurant one day. Other finalists in the senior category included Jordan Winter, of the Weald of Kent Grammar School in Tonbridge with her sea bass in a white wine and dill sauce; Elliot Bland of Oakwood Park Grammar School in Maidstone with ‘Elliot’s Pukka Pork Devine’ and Drew Broster of Swadlands School, Lenham in Maidstone with his wild rabbit and Kentish cider pie.

In the junior category, Phoebe Icke, from Ashford School shone through as a brand new winner with her ‘Rack of Romney Marsh Lamb with Rosemary, Shallots & Beetroot’ in which she achieved “a great balance of flavours and cooked the lamb to perfection” according to the judges. Phoebe said: “I’m happy, excited and surprised! It really means a lot to me to win a Kent Young Chef Award. It was very exciting to go and cook in a proper kitchen and take part in this amazing day. I can’t wait to tell my friends I’ve won and I think lots of people will enter from my school next year when they hear what a great experience Kent Young Chef Award is!”

The other Junior competitors included Thomas Perkins (last year’s junior winner) from Holmesdale Technology College, Snodland who cooked partridge breast with apples, red cabbage, and a Kent cider and crème fraîche sauce and Hana Davis from Ashford School who made a spicy seafood stew. Charlotte Seaman from St Saviours Church of England School at Westgate-on-Sea, near Margate was the youngest competitor ever to take part in the competition. Described as “a little star” by the judges, Charlotte cooked an impressive and complex dish of seasonal squash and artichoke risotto with pan fried Kent wild duck.

Patron of Produced in Kent, Amanda Cottrell OBE, effusively thanked the sponsors that had made the Kent Young Chef Award 2011 a reality for the third consecutive year, including **Hadlow College, kff, Woods Restaurant, Bar & Produce Store** and new sponsors **Whiting & Hammond**.

Amanda said: "This extraordinarily exciting event has allowed us to watch some of the young cooks who will become the chefs of the future. The passion has been palpable and passion is contagious! These competitors will take their excitement back to their homes and schools and continue to spark a revolution in cooking with local food from this magnificent county of ours."

All eight finalists from the Live Cook Off learnt that they would be heading to one of Richard Phillips's prestigious three restaurants in the county for an amazing mini chef experience, which has already set some of the previous Kent Young Chef finalists on their way to becoming professional chefs. With striking winners' trophies and bumper hampers for the two winners (kindly donated and presented by Woods Produce Store), everyone went away with a certificate and branded Kent Young Chef Award apron. Produced in Kent will also be publishing the finalists' recipes on the Produced in Kent website on www.producedinkent.co.uk ahead of Christmas and in time for the general public to try the seasonal and local recipes during the festive period.

Kent Young Chef Award Charity Dinner

The two winners are now set to travel to the beautiful Woods Restaurant on The Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells in January 2012 to design a three course menu for the Kent Young Chef Award Charity Dinner, which will be held on 19 January for 60 guests. As well as designing the menu for the gala evening, Julie Monkman manager of Produced in Kent told the winners that they would be treated as 'guests of honour' at the charity dinner, which is being held in aid of Hospice in the Weald. Woods Restaurant is now taking individual and group bookings and the evening is open to members of the general public on a first come, first served basis. Early bookings are recommended to secure a place at this unique event and celebration of Kent's outstanding cookery talent and regional ingredients from the 'Garden of England'. Call 01892 614411 or visit www.woodsrestaurant.co.uk

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