

Congratulations Andrew Ballard for taking out Chef of the Year 2021



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Andrew Ballard has been named Chef of the Year 2021, winning the prestigious title as well as \$6,000 cash and valuable prizes from major sponsors Unox, Anchor™ Food Professionals and Australian Pork.

As a previous finalist of Chef of the Year, Bocuse d'Or New Zealand Chef 2019-2021 as well as a kitchen judge for this year's Bocuse d'Or Australia and taking out 2nd place in the ACF Restaurant Challenge on the same day, Ballard was under pressure to perform, and he delivered, winning first his heat, then the semi-final and the grand final.

"I couldn't be happier," says Andrew. "This year is bittersweet, with the passing of Gary Farrell. It really meant a lot to me to enter the competition to honour Gary's legacy. Taking out the title and the Foodservice Australia Chef of the Year Gary Farrell Perpetual Trophy was a very proud moment and I look forward to competing again to defend my title and inspire young chefs to enter the competition."

Head Judge John McFadden says Ballard didn't waiver from the heat, to the semi and the grand final and scored highly for all his dishes. He explains, "Andrew's precision in the kitchen was a delight to judge. His ability to push the boundaries and showcase multiple techniques on the plate was of an extremely high standard".

"The standard in the grand final was incredibly high," adds McFadden. "It is amazing to see the calibre of chefs entering this competition and the prestige attached to being selected."

Ballard's fellow grand finalists were Marvin Tan Head Chef at Bar Bianci in Melbourne; Trevor Jenkins, Culinary Teacher at Homes Glen Melbourne and Chris Wright, Head Chef at Terrance Restaurant Country Club Tasmania.

They each had to cook two dishes from a mystery box of ingredients in one hour, in front of a panel of expert judges and a huge crowd of cheering onlookers. This year the mystery box included pork fillet, pork ribs, pork belly, king prawns, snapper, salmon roe, baby fennel, golden beetroots and westernstar butter.

"This was a real pressure test," says McFadden. "The mystery box was very challenging, and all four chefs performed phenomenally well."

The Australian Professional Chef of the Year competition is one of the most rewarding in the country, with a total prize pool of \$10,000. The winner of each heat receives \$500, while the winner of the Grand Final receives \$6,000.

Competition Director Peter Wright says the competition was made possible by generous industry supporters including Gold Sponsors Australian Pork, Anchor Food Professionals and Unox Australia plus silver sponsors AlSCO, Oil2U, Robot Coupe, and S.A.J Fruit Supply.

“This year’s event drew the largest ever audience to the competition at the heart of the show floor at Foodservice Australia,” says Wright. “Our MCs Glenn Flood, Tawnya Bahr and Adam Moore kept the crowd informed and entertained, while the judging panel tirelessly gave their time and expertise to score each heat.”

Led by John McFadden, this year’s judging panel comprised of Executive Chef Mark Normoyle from Luna’s Food & Wine Bar, Telina Menzies from Australian Venue Co., Beth Candy from Balgownie Estate, Bas Van Uyen from ALH Group, and Matt Wilkinson from Montalto Vineyard.

The next Australian Professional Chef of the Year will be held at ICC Sydney from 23-25 October 2022.

Entries will open soon. For more information visit the event website at www.chefcompetition.com.au

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