



Roux Scholarship 2010

Announcing the six national finalists

Two regional heats took place on Thursday 4th March at Birmingham College of Food and Thames Valley University, Ealing. From the eighteen competitors who took part six emerged as the national finalists:

Gemma Almond, The General Tarleton, Ferrensby, N Yorks

Mark Birchall, L'Enclume, Cartmel, Cumbria

Kenneth Culhane, BaxterStorey, Barclays, London

Stephen Stevens, Cleifiog Uchaf, Anglesey

Kevin Sutherland, BaxterStorey, Barclays, London

Kevin Tew, Corrigan's, Mayfair, London

Facts about the 2010 finalists:

- Two Englishmen (**Kevin Tew** & **Mark Birchall**), an Englishwoman (**Gemma Almond**) an Irishman (**Kenneth Culhane**), a Scotsman (**Kevin Sutherland**) and a Welshman (**Stephen Stevens**) will battle it out to be crowned Roux Scholar 2010.
- **Gemma Almond** at 23 is the youngest competitor. A former waitress and with only a few months professional experience she is especially delighted to get to the final. This is also her very first competition which she entered along with her head chef, who was also in the regional finals.
- **Kevin Tew**, a finalist in 2008, from Corrigan's was previously at Galvin at Windows with Andre Garrett, Roux Scholar 2002 and also with Andrew Jones, Roux Scholar 2004. He puts his success this year down to developing a more simple approach to his food, with greater focus on flavour than 'cheffy' touches.
- **Stephen Stevens**, has made it through to the regional or national finals every year since 2006, this time he is determined to make it fifth time lucky! Stephen has worked for some of the top names in the industry.
- **Mark Birchall**, has been a regional finalist for the last two years and put his experience to good use. He worked hard to perfect his recipe of crab and shrimp risotto in Kholrabi which got him into the final six.
- **Kevin Sutherland**, a finalist last year, nick named 'Big Flavour' in his kitchen at Level 31 Barclays, is determined to be well prepared for the final challenge as this is his last year to be eligible to enter the competition.
- **Kenneth Culhane** also from BaxterStorey at Level 31 Barclays, trained under James Carberry, Roux Scholar 1992, at Dublin Institute of Technology. Previously a regional finalist this is his first time in the final. His approach this year was to stick to a more classic style of dish which clearly paid off.

The challenge

Finalists had 2 ½ hours to prepare their rice-based recipes (to serve four people) using the following five shellfish, with an accompanying mixed salad:

8 Razor clams, in shell

500gr Mussels, in shell

1kg Brown crab, live

4 Scallops, in shell

200gr brown shrimp, un-peeled

In addition they each made a dessert from a **mystery box** of ingredients consisting of Cox apples, cinnamon stick, lemons, sugar, milk, eggs and flour.

Prizes

It was a tough day for all the contestants and there were some great recipes created. Although there could only be six finalists, no one went home empty handed, each contestant received gifts from our sponsors, L'Unico Caffé Musetti and Global Knives plus a commemorative certificate signed by all the judges.

National Final 'Cook off' - 29th March 2010

The six finalists go through to the National Final, which takes place at Westminster Kingsway College, London. This time the recipe details are a complete surprise; 30 minutes before the start of the competition, finalists will be given the recipe and ingredients for a main dish, either classic or modern and asked to prepare and present it to the judges in 2 hours.

Award Ceremony

The 2010 Roux Scholar will be announced at the Award ceremony at The Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park London the same evening.

Useful Quotes

Judges

Michel Roux Snr

"I'm delighted that we have such a great spread of experience and backgrounds in the final, so many nationalities, some that have been cooking for years and others that are starting out."

Andrew Fairlie

"What on paper looked a simple task required a real understanding and respect of the delicate seafood ingredients, some got it and some didn't, timing is everything."

David Nicholls

"We saw huge diversity in approach to the recipes today from classic French to modern Asian, which makes the judging even harder."

James Martin

“A day that proves how difficult this competition really is. There were some great dishes, overall the best cooks got through.”

Brian Turner

“There were lots of interesting flavours today and some married together very well. There were some good dishes.”

Gary Rhodes

“I loved these ingredients; the competitors really had to get the balance of flavours just right to avoid masking the simplicity of the seafood. There were some heated debates amongst the judges in order to agree on the final winners, we are in for one of the most exciting finals.”

Finalists**Gemma Almond**

“It’s amazing I can’t believe I’m in the final. I only started working in a professional kitchen in October last year, before that I was a waitress, this is my first competition, and it’s been a whirlwind.”

Mark Birchall

“It’s an amazing feeling. I am shocked but I did a lot of work to get here, spent a lot of time getting the balance right. But luck was on my side and now I am in it to win.”

Kenneth Culhane

“It’s amazing, its my third year in the Regional’s and first time to the final, I stuck to a more classic dish and it worked for me. We’ve got a talented team at BaxterStorey, I’m proud that two of us got through.”

Kevin Sutherland

“It’s phenomenal to get to the final again, I’m stoked that Kenneth got through too, if I don’t win I hope he does.”

Kevin Tew

“This is a big achievement. Little things went wrong but overall I had a good day, it hasn’t really sunk in yet that I’m thorough to the final again.”

Stephen Stevens

“I am overwhelmed and happy that I pleased the judges enough to get through to the final. I am apprehensive as I have been in the final before but at the same time I am really looking forward to it and hope this time to be lucky”.

Supplementary Information

Full list of those competing in Birmingham:

Matthew Thomson, De Vere Slaley Hall, Hexham
Arbinder Dugal, The Bedford Hotel, Sidmouth
Oliver Pierrepont, Heckfield Place, Hook in Hampshire.
Stephen Stevens, Cleifiog Uchaf, Anglesey
Mark Birchall, L'Enclume, Cartmel, Cumbria.
Anton Scoones, General Tarleton, N Yorks

The Judges: Alain Roux, Brian Turner, James Martin (Guest Judge), were joined by Steve Love (Roux Scholar 1997) from Loves Restaurant, Birmingham.

Competing in London:

Kevin Sutherland, Baxter Storey, Barclays, London
Alastair Dale, Ince & Co, London
Kevin Tew, Corrigan's, Mayfair
Gemma Almond, General Tarleton, N Yorks
Kenneth Culhane, Baxter Storey, Barclays, London
Guy Fenton, The Dorchester Grill, London
Quinton Bennett, The Westbury Hotel, London
Christopher Hill, Whatley Manor, Wiltshire
Adam Peirson, Claridge's, London
Carl Long, Drakes Restaurant, Ripley
Nick Whatmough, Restaurant Associates, Barclays Wealth, London
Tom Sellers, Trinity Restaurant, London

Judges: Michel Roux Snr, Michel Roux Jnr, Gary Rhodes, David Nicholls, Andrew Fairlie

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