



Press Release

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Could you be the next Gluten-Free Chef of the Year?

Coeliac UK, the national charity for people with coeliac disease, along with celebrity chef Phil Vickery, is encouraging chefs from across the country to enter this year's competition to find the next Coeliac UK Gluten-free Chef of the Year.

The competition has got tougher this year with entrants being asked to showcase their skills by including gluten-free substitutes such as bread, pasta cooked from scratch at the live final.

For the third year, the competition is being run in association with the Institute of Hospitality and the Craft Guild of Chefs with the judging to be once again headed up by celebrity chef and Coeliac UK's Food Ambassador Phil Vickery.

The competition is for professional cooks and catering college students to design a three course gluten-free meal for two people. This year, entrants' menus must include at least two courses which include a gluten-free element, such as pasta, pastry, sponge, cake, bread, batter etc which must be made from scratch on the day of the live cook off by the three finalists in each group. The live cook off will take place at the Unilever Food Solutions Culinary Business Development Centre in Leatherhead on 12 November 2012. For further information on entry requirements, prizes and to view a video of last year's final please see: www.coeliac.org.uk/glutenfreechefoftheyear2012

All entrants will also be entered into a free draw for the opportunity to win one of two online catering courses recently launched by Coeliac UK.

Phil Vickery has worked with Coeliac UK for a number of years and has also written three gluten-free cookbooks: "Every year the standard of entries improves so we're raising the bar for entrants to take on the challenge and prove just how delicious gluten-free can be! More and more people are being diagnosed with coeliac disease and in today's difficult times, it's a market the industry can't afford to ignore - there should be at least one gluten-free choice on every menu," he said.

Coeliac disease is an autoimmune disease caused by intolerance to gluten. Damage to the gut lining occurs when gluten is eaten; there is no cure or medication for the condition and the only treatment is a strict gluten-free diet for life. Without a gluten-free diet, the disease can lead to other conditions, such as malnutrition, osteoporosis, small bowel cancer and also can cause infertility problems. At least 1 in 100 people in the UK have coeliac disease; representing a potential

£100 million market amongst those diagnosed with the condition and the friends and family they eat out with.

The competition comprises two categories; 'Gluten-free Chef of the Year' for those who cook for a living and are over 23 and the 'Up and Coming Gluten-free Chef of the Year' for those who are training and under 23. Entrants will be shortlisted and three finalists from each category will go head to head in a live cook off final to recreate their menu in 90 minutes.

Last year's winner Jason Church said, "After entering the competition the previous year and coming second I knew I wanted to try again – and I am glad I did! It is a great competition and since winning I have been featured in a national newspaper as well as being asked to do demos at national events all over the country which has been terrific for my profile."

Whilst Valerio Grimaldi-plant, studying at Stratford-upon-Avon College and winner of the Up and Coming category praised the one week stage prize at Pennyhill Park working under Michelin star chef, Michael Wignall. "My main challenges for the week were adapting to the level of skill and speed required to work in the restaurant. I learnt many things such as new and modern techniques and also how to work in a Michelin kitchen. My experience at Pennyhill Park Hotel will help my career because now I have seen what it is like to work in such a high standard establishment I am now working to prepare and better myself to boost my career."

Additional prizes, provided by Sodexo and 3663, include generous gift vouchers and knives, and all finalists will receive a year's Membership to the Craft Guild of Chefs.

Closing date for entries is 5pm on Friday 19 October and entrants will be notified by 31 October if they have been shortlisted for the live final.

-Ends -

Notes to editors:

- A range of case studies of men, women and children are available on request from Coeliac UK.
- Coeliac disease is a serious illness where the body's immune system reacts to gluten found in food, making the body attack itself.
- 1 in 100 people in the UK have coeliac disease, however only 10-15% of these have been diagnosed and average length of diagnosis is 13 years.
- Gluten is a protein found in wheat (including spelt), rye and barley. Some people are also sensitive to oats. Obvious sources of gluten include breads, pastas, flours, cereals, cakes and biscuits. It is often found in foods such as fish fingers, sausages, gravies, sauces and soy sauce.
- The symptoms of coeliac disease range from mild to severe and can vary between individuals. Not everyone experiences gut related symptoms; any area of the body can be affected.
- Symptoms can include bloating, abdominal pain, nausea, constipation, diarrhoea, wind, tiredness, anaemia, headaches, mouth ulcers, recurrent miscarriages, weight loss (but not in all cases), skin problems, depression, joint or bone pain and nerve problems.
- Around 1200 newly diagnosed people are joining Coeliac UK every month. For further details on membership please call the Helpline on 0845 305 2060 or go to www.coeliac.org.uk.