

Rudding Park chefs challenge for national excellence award



Two chefs from Harrogate's Rudding Park Hotel and Golf Resort have been recognised for their outstanding work by the prestigious Craft Guild of Chefs. Steve Ashburn, who is Conference and Banqueting Head Chef was one of only three chefs, out of over 200 applicants from across the UK, to be short-listed for their Banqueting Chef of the Year Awards, which took place at the beginning of July.

Now Matthew Wilkinson, Chef de Partie at Rudding Park, is through to the final round of the Craft Guild of Chefs Graduate Award, which takes place on 6th September at Westminster Kingsway College in London. He will find out if he has been successful at a high profile awards lunch in London on 11th September.

The Craft Guild of Chefs Awards are the definitive chefs' accolade and are open to all chefs across the UK. To be nominated for the Banqueting Chef of the Year Award, Steve Ashburn was required to demonstrate an innovative approach and show outstanding commitment, producing consistently high quality food. He attended a dinner at the London Hilton Metropole where he was one of three chefs shortlisted for the award however sadly, he was pipped to the post by London based chef Michael Kirk from Sodexo Prestige.

Peter Banks, Director of Rudding Park supported Steve's nomination with a ringing endorsement, saying: "Steve is the epitome of a true Banqueting Chef. He is calm, accurate, quality focussed and extremely organised. Steve's motto is that he sees no reason why the food for a function of 800 people should be of any lower quality than a meal for two".

"I believe that Steve was an extremely well deserved nominee for this award, he is passionate about the quality of the food he produces, is incredibly hard working and a marvellous leader of his team."

Matthew Wilkinson has undergone a gruelling test in The Craft Guild of Chefs Graduate Awards competition. Initial candidates are selected based on their entry form and mentor's



reference. Matthew was then chosen to compete in one of three regional heats, competing against 12 other chefs from the North of England. The regional heats comprised practical skill tests including butchery and fishmongery tasks and a written examination paper. A mystery box of ingredients was also given to the candidates, from which they were required to design a main course for four covers with appropriate garnish. Only 8 candidates from across the UK have been selected to go through to the finals, which will follow the same format as the regional heats, but with the added ingredient of the pressure to be crowned the best Graduate Chef in the UK.

Commenting on his award nomination, Steve Ashburn said: "It was a real honour to have been selected as one of the top three Banqueting Chefs in the UK by the Craft Guild of Chefs, but the real praise should go to the excellent team we have here in the Conference and Banqueting kitchen at Rudding Park."

Matthew Wilkinson is equally thrilled: "I am delighted to have made it through the regional heats and am excited, albeit a little nervous, about the final. I'm studying and practising hard for the finals and I'm really grateful to Steve Ashburn and Stephanie Moon for their support in helping me prepare for the regional heats and now the finals. Fingers crossed I'll repay them with an Award!"

Peter Banks, Director of Rudding Park concludes: "We are passionate about the quality we offer our guests; from a conference dinner, to lunch at Clocktower or a marquee event for 800. Behind the scenes that means chefs like Steve Ashburn and Matthew Wilkinson work incredibly hard and we're delighted that they're receiving the recognition they deserve, by being nominated for the Craft Guild of Chefs Awards. Everybody at Rudding Park has their fingers crossed that Matthew will return from London with an award."

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