

PRESS RELEASE

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Sodexo Salon a Sizzling Success

Michelin-starred chef and TV personality Derry Clarke had his work cut out as one of the judges at the recent Sodexo Salon Culinaire, the annual culinary competition run by services company Sodexo Ireland for its 2,200 chef and non-chef staff in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

David Fountain, head chef at PayPal in Dundalk, Co. Louth won the Chef of the Year competition for the second year running, taking home Silver and Best in Class for his three course entry. NI Chef Stephen Chambers took Gold and Best in Show for his highly impressive whiskey-themed Decorative Novelty Cake entitled '*Water of Life meets Quality of Life*' and winning six medals in total – two golds, one silver and three bronze.

Derry Clarke, who can be seen in the latest 'Lords and Ladles' on RTE 1, has been a catering consultant to the company since 2008. He commented, "*The Salon was sizzling with talent as every area of the culinary spectrum was represented, from baking and deli delights through to live cooking challenges. It's a tough audience as everyone there is involved with food professionally on several levels, and we were all extremely impressed with the high levels of skill and presentation on show.*"

Chef of the Year David Fountain prepared a starter of duck duo with foie gras, onion baghi and a sauternes jus, followed by a pan-seared Seabass with gnocchi crab, stuffed tomato confit, shallot, lettuce heart and tomato essence. His dessert was a white chocolate and basil cream with a shortbread biscuit and balsamic strawberries.

According to the judges, it was David's ability to produce three great dishes that sealed his win and Best in Class accolade. They commented on how, for his starter, the '*sweetness of the sauternes complemented the richness of the foie gras with the baghi adding a beautiful texture*'; for his main course, that the '*the lightness of the tomato essence allowed the Seabass to shine through, with the crab and lettuce simply adding another layer of sophistication*' and for his dessert, how '*the aromatic basil cut the sweetness of the white chocolate mousse and the biscuit was meltingly good.*'

David, whose prize includes a London study trip sponsored by Unilever, will now also represent Ireland in the UK and Ireland Grand Final at the Great Hospitality Show in the NEC Birmingham on 24th January 2017, where he will face the winning Sodexo chefs from England, Scotland and Wales.

A delighted David said, "*I wasn't expecting to win again as there was a great calibre of chefs this year. My aim was to deliver a well-balanced menu with an emphasis on seasonality and I was delighted that it won. I am looking forward to the Grand Final as it tests your ability as a chef and, as the judges are from Michelin starred restaurants, it's a great place to showcase your talent. This time around, I have much better insight as to what they look for when critiquing a dish and how to structure it.*"

Best in Show winner Stephen Chambers said that his Scottish origins were behind his gold medal-winning whiskey themed cake for the Decorative Novelty Class., "*I got my idea straight after the 2015 Salon, it started off with a whiskey barrel and the next few months were spent developing it in my mind before actually attempting it. It took about 12 hours on and off and the hardest part was making the thistle. There were no YouTube tutorials to help me but finally I mastered them, possibly needing a dram of the real stuff after it,*" Stephen quipped.

Margot Slattery, country president, Sodexo Ireland, said, *Congratulations to Stephen on winning six medals and Best in Show and to David on his superb performance in the Chef of the Year competition. We are very much looking forward to seeing him in action in the Grand Final early next year as he takes on the best of the best from all over the UK.*”

Sodexo Ireland, part of the global Sodexo Group the world’s largest services company, delivers services that improve the quality of life to clients in business and industry, education, financial and healthcare. It employs approximately 2,200 staff in 200 locations across Ireland, serves 90,000 people daily and spends almost €21 million annually on local Irish food.

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About Sodexo

Sodexo in the UK and Ireland

Sodexo employs around 35,000 people, and delivers services that improve the quality of life to clients at some 1,850 locations in the corporate, healthcare, education, leisure, justice and defence sectors.

With an annual turnover of more than £1bn, Sodexo delivers a range of services ranging from catering, cleaning, reception to asset management, security, laboratory and grounds maintenance services, enabling clients to focus on their core business.

Sodexo Benefits and Rewards Services in the UK provides benefit and reward services such as SayShopping vouchers; public benefits; and employee benefits such as childcare vouchers and engagement surveys.

About Sodexo

Founded in 1966 by Pierre Bellon, Sodexo is the global leader in services that improve Quality of Life, an essential factor in individual and organizational performance. Operating in 80 countries, Sodexo serves 75 million consumers each day through its unique combination of On-site Services, Benefits and Rewards Services and Personal and Home Services. Through its more than 100 services, Sodexo provides clients an integrated offering developed over more than 45 years of experience: from reception, safety, maintenance and cleaning, to foodservices and facilities and equipment management; from Meal Pass, Gift Pass and Mobility Pass benefits for employees to in-home assistance and concierge services. Sodexo’s success and performance are founded on its independence, its sustainable business model and its ability to continuously develop and engage its 419,000 employees throughout the world.

Key figures (as of August 31, 2014)

18 billion euro consolidated revenues
419 000 employees
18th largest employer worldwide
80 countries
32 700 sites
75 million consumers served daily
12.3 billion euro in market capitalisation (as of November 12, 2014)