

QHotels Announces Chef of the Year

QHotels, a collection of 21 unique hotels across the UK, has announced the winner of its prestigious Chef's Academy.

Jamie Brittain, 23, based at The Midland, Manchester was crowned Chef of the Year at the annual ceremony following a tough day of competition alongside two other finalists from the kitchens of The Park Royal and The Cambridge Belfry.

The 'MasterChef' style cook-off was the culmination of 12 months hard work for the young chefs as part of the QHotels' Intermediate Chef Academy development programme. Established in 2009, the aim of the Chef Academy is to entice new talent into the kitchens of QHotels' 21 hotels as well as to hone and nurture the skills of the group's existing and up-and-coming talent.

The competition day, held at The Midland Hotel, Manchester, saw the three finalists battle it out in front of the judging panel, which included Michael Purtill, QHotels Managing Director, Janet Harmer, Hotels Editor at Caterer and Hotelkeeper magazine and Chris Stanley from Restaurant Executive Development.

The finalists were tasked with creating a three-course meal with a focus on using locally sourced ingredients. The cook-off was supervised by The Midland's head chef, Paul Beckley, who is responsible for serving up award-winning food in The French restaurant.

Michael Purtill, QHotels Managing Director and member of the Chef's Academy judging panel, said: "I am in awe of the delicious, locally sourced, British food that has been served up by these young chefs today. It was a tough job choosing the winner, but Jamie's dishes really stood out.

"Our intermediate Chef of the Year competition, although just in its second year, has already had a huge impact on the quality of the food we serve in our 21 hotels. One of our runners up today, Gareth Rowlands, graduated from our Foundation Chef Academy last year, and has gone on to great success. We're passionate about nurturing talent in our business, and today really shows this in action."

The Intermediate level academy supports the development of young chefs to Chef de Partie level, and many of them will leave with the Level 3 Advanced Apprenticeship in Professional Cookery.

Sarah Abercrombie, Group Training Manager at QHotels, said: "Our Chef's Academy includes workshops and activities to broaden the skills, knowledge and expertise of our apprentices, over and above a standard apprenticeship framework.

To be an outstanding senior chef you must not only be able to work magic in the kitchen – it's also about leading a team whilst meeting the demands of business. Because of this, we train our budding chefs in key skills, such as time management, coaching and communication skills, and menu design and costing.”

The academy is run in association with Babcock International, the UK's leading and largest work-based training provider, and is sponsored by specialist hospitality recruitment consultancy Platinum Recruitment, both of whom provided generous prizes, with the winner receiving a holiday to Turkey, and runners up rewarded with a set of Global knives.

- That's all for now -

The QHotels 21: **The Westerwood Hotel & Golf Resort** - Near Glasgow... **Aldwark Manor Golf & Spa Hotel** - York... **The Queens** - Leeds... **Forest Pines Hotel & Golf Resort** - North Lincolnshire... **Tankersley Manor** - Tankersley, Nr Sheffield... **The Midland** - Manchester... **The Park Royal** - Stretton, Warrington... **Crewe Hall** - Crewe, Cheshire... **The Nottingham Belfry** - Nottingham... **Telford Hotel & Golf Resort** - Telford, Shropshire... **Stratford Manor** - Stratford-upon-Avon... **The Stratford** - Stratford-upon-Avon... **Chesford Grange** - Kenilworth, Warwickshire... **Hellidon Lakes Golf & Spa Hotel** - Hellidon, Northamptonshire... **The Cheltenham Chase Hotel** - Gloucestershire... **The Cambridge Belfry** - Cambourne, Cambridge... **The Oxford Belfry** - Thame, Oxford... **The Hampshire Court Hotel** - Basingstoke, Hampshire... **Norton Park** - Winchester, Hampshire... **Bridgewood Manor** - Rochester, Kent... **Ashford International Hotel** - Ashford, Kent

If you've got a question, need a few pictures or simply want to pay us a visit... you only have to ask:

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A little bit about us:

- QHotels prides itself in its collection of 21 carefully nurtured, unique properties throughout the UK. Some hide away in the most beautiful countryside, some preside over bustling city centres, but each, with its own little idiosyncrasies, ensures guests enjoy a truly unique experience - whether staying for pleasure or business.
- Founded in 2003 by Managing Director - Michael Purtil, Sales Director - David Taylor, Finance Director - Ian Goulding and investment company Alchemy Partners.
- The collection has grown from 2 to 21 properties over the last six years.

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- The collection, which boasts iconic properties, including The Midland in Manchester, The Queens in Leeds and Crewe Hall in Cheshire, has been voted AA Hotel Group of the Year 2008/09, and is ranked 17th in The Times Buyout FastTrack register of the 100 fastest growing private equity backed businesses – one of the few companies to feature in the top 100 in two consecutive years. In addition to this, January 2009 alone saw QHotels shortlisted for the Business Hotel Brand of the Year Award at the Business Travel Awards and Winchester property Norton Park scoop two HRS Hotel Excellence Awards (Excellence in Meetings and Excellence in Business Management). Since then QHotels trophy cabinet is buckling under the weight of new awards, including 'Most Improved Brand' for the second year in a row in the 2009 BDRC UK Meetings Market Survey and the 'Excellence in Training Award' in Caterer & Hotelkeeper's Best Places to Work in Hospitality 2009.
- Take a look at our website www.QHotels.co.uk