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Nine battle it out for Sodexo Chef of the Year title

But there's only one winner - Michael Godfrey

On 27 November, nine chefs competed for the coveted title of Sodexo Chef of the Year in the 2006 Culinary Championships in a two and a half hour live 'cook off' at Westminster Kingsway College in London.

Michael Godfrey, head chef at Eton College, was announced the winner the following day in front of an audience of 500 at Sodexo's annual Star Awards. Each finalist had to devise a main course using a cut of Norwegian Cod fillet suitable for a staff restaurant. The main course had to then be produced six times all of which were then served at the same time as it would in a real staff restaurant. This enabled each finalist to demonstrate their ability to produce dishes which are consistent in appearance and taste for large numbers of customers at the same time.

The finalists then had to enhance the dish so that it would be suitable as a fine-dining dish. Finally each finalist had to prepare a dessert using orchard fruits which again needed to be suitable for a fine-dining menu.

Michael's winning entry was:

- **Restaurant main course platter:**
Seared fillet of Norwegian cod with mussel broth, aioli, saffron potatoes and buttered vegetables
- **Fine-dining main course:**
Roasted fillet of Norwegian cod on a mussel ragout served with buttered vegetables and aioli beignet
- **Dessert:**
Mille fuille of pear with a spiced caramel sauce and crème fraiche and lime sorbet

Judges for the competition included celebrity chef Brian Turner; John Retallick, Craft Guild of Chefs; Andrew Bennett, executive chef at Sheraton Hotel, Park Lane, London; Martyn Nail, executive chef at Claridges, London and Gary Hunter, head of culinary arts at Westminster Kingsway College.

Michael's prize is a gastronomic study trip to Norway courtesy of competition sponsors Norwegian Seafood. All finalists received a year's free membership to the Craft Guild of Chefs; a framed certificate and a personalised chef's jacket.

The eight other finalists were:

Clarke Crawley – Business & Industry
Stephen Frost - Prestige Scotland
Gerry Henry – Business & industry
Jeanette Jowsey - Healthcare

Gavin McDonagh – Sodexo Ireland
Martin Nisbet - Directors Table
Simon Robertson – Business & Industry
Michael Shipman – Directors Table

Philip Jansen, Sodexo Chief Executive, commented: “This competition is the highlight of the year for our chefs with the title of Chef of the Year eagerly sought after. Our chefs are highly skilled, innovative, and amongst the finest in the industry, the battle for this prestigious title demonstrates their expert culinary skills. We are very proud of our chefs, and this annual award is a way of recognising them and their efforts.”

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