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Sodexo join forces with Club Gascon in exclusive chef development deal

Sodexo, a leading food and facilities management services provider, has today announced the signing of an exclusive deal with renowned restaurateurs Pascal Aussignac and Vincent Labeyrie of Michelin-starred Club Gascon restaurant in London's Smithfield.

The deal, which began at the end of July, forms part of Sodexo's chef development programme, which aims to engage its chefs through novel training and support initiatives.

The tie-up will see a number of Sodexo apprentices regularly visit the award-winning, fine dining Club Gascon restaurant to take part in on-the-job training within a bespoke Sodexo scholarship, under the stewardship of Vincent and Pascal.

Sodexo's deli offer will also benefit from the new partnership, as Vincent and Pascal will be conducting practical demonstrations put together based on their Comptoir Gascon approach. Comptoir Gascon is their bustling bistro and delicatessen, also in Smithfield. Like its older, more formal restaurant sibling, Club Gascon, it specialises in the legendary cuisine of Gascony, south-west France – where Pascal and Vincent are from.

Pascal and Vincent will also be involved in a number of activities across the Sodexo portfolio, particularly through its Prestige arm, such as: delivering a number of masterclasses based on their signature dishes; hosting Sodexo chef discussion forums where apprentices will learn about selling, profit, sourcing and planning for seasonal dishes, getting the best out of a team and innovation; judging internal Sodexo competitions; and speaking at internal conferences.

David Mulcahy, craft and food development director, Sodexo, said: "This partnership demonstrates our commitment to the training and development of our chefs at Sodexo. As a company, we strive to be at the cutting edge of culinary excellence, and believe that this tie up, with two of the most inspiring restaurateurs around, will enable us to further strengthen our expertise and skillset".

Vincent Labeyrie, co-proprietor of Club Gascon, said: "Exemplary training is the lifeblood of the restaurant industry, especially in the fine dining sector. Exciting new talent needs to be honed and refined to meet the extremely high standards required. Internally, we strive constantly to develop and improve the skills of our kitchen team and we are pleased to share our dedication to excellence and expertise through Sodexo."



Aussignac and Labeyrie – respectively from Toulouse and Dax in the stunning forested region of Landes – came to London in the late 1990s to bring an authentic taste of their homeland to the UK capital. In 1998, they opened *Club Gascon*. Ten years on, their London-based gastronomic empire consists of: two destination restaurants, *Cub Gascon* and *Le Cercle*, near Sloane Square; a bistro-delicatessen, *Le Comptoir*; and a specialist wine bar, *Cellar Gascon*. All pay homage to the legendary, luxuriantly-rich cuisine of Gascony and the area's 'douceur de vivre' – its pleasurable, relaxed lifestyle.

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About Sodexo

In the UK and Ireland, Sodexo employs 43,000 employees, and provides food and facilities management services to clients at over 2,300 locations in the corporate, education, healthcare, leisure and defence sectors.

Many companies rely on Sodexo for cost-effective solutions to their employee or hospitality catering, or to deliver services such as cleaning, reception, switchboard and help desks, mailroom, reprographics and grounds maintenance.

Sodexo is part of the Sodexo group, the leading global provider of food and facilities management services, with more than 342,000 employees at 29,000 sites in 80 countries.

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