

Making Mysterious Master Chefs

The Hospitality Excellence Awards in honour of Brett Graham are underway at Hunter TAFE. On Monday 29 November the mystery box challenge heat was held at Hamilton Campus and today, 6 December, the winner will be announced at the Brett Graham Scholarship Dinner at Hamilton Campus.

The winner of the Brett Graham Scholarship receives the opportunity to work in London with Newcastle success story Brett Graham at his renowned Notting Hill Restaurant, The Ledbury. Hunter Chefs and Co has sponsored the scholarship this year with \$3,600 to fund the airfare and travel expenses.

A Front of House competition was also held where the winner receives a work experience sabbatical shift with Rock (one of the Hunter Regions hatted restaurants.); a night's accommodation including breakfast at the Mercure Hunter Valley; a session with Senior Winemaker for Bimbadgen Estate Sarah Crowe who will give the winner an overview of the winemaking and a private tasting; and a \$150 voucher to dine in Bistro Molines – all courtesy of Hunter Chefs and Co.

The three apprentices selected to be in the running for the scholarship will produce tonight's dinner through a 'master class' style cooking session with Troy Rhoades Brown from Muse, Chris Thornton from Bistro Tartine and Peter Bryant former owner of Restaurant II - learning from the Newcastle masters in cooking.

The Brett Graham mystery began with 3rd and 4th year cookery apprentices submitting a 600 word response outlining how they meet the criteria of demonstrating high achievement within industry roles, a passion and desire for an overseas learning experience and the ability to act as a role model for Hunter TAFE students.

The successful candidates then partook in a heated cook off at Hamilton Campus where they produced four serves of a three course menu with accompanying TAFE selected wines judged by Troy Rhodes-Brown from Muse, Ebonnie Newby from Esca Bimbadgen and Hunter TAFE Commercial Cookery Teacher, Lesley Taylor.

The cook off began with an entree set for all participants by Brett Graham, then the main course was a mystery box format with a protein component of two lamb rumps. Dessert also took on an extra twist with another mystery box to surprise that tantalised the taste buds. The candidates were marked on the cookery component including hygiene, preparation, cookery skills, taste, innovation, menu planning principles, application and interview.

Hunter Chefs and Co has come on board as a sponsor of the Brett Graham Award and they also work with the students throughout the year sponsoring a number of awards, including the Hunter Chefs and Co Apprentice Chefs Awards Night.

The winner will be announced at the Brett Graham Competition Awards Dinner tonight, Monday 6 December at the Brewery Room, Hamilton Campus. Guests will also have the opportunity to tour the new kitchen facilities before the dinner.

Photo and interview opportunities are available from 2pm for more information please contact Tara Beesley on 0419 763 919.