

Africa-Middle East finalists for S.Pellegrino Young Chef 2016 announced

Registration for S.Pellegrino Young Chef 2016 closed on 7 April with the 10 semifinalists chosen from each of the twenty regions around the world. Young chefs from more than ninety countries submitted their applications to FineDiningLovers.com together with their signature dishes in the hopes to compete in the 2016 edition of S.Pellegrino's global talent search to find the best young chef in the world.



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The event is an opportunity for participants to face and learn from other talent, gain global visibility and come in close contact with some of the most renowned chefs on the planet, such as those of the impressive Seven Sages grand finale jury, composed of David Higgs, Carlo Cracco, Gaggan Anand, Elena Arzak, Mauro Colagreco, Wylie Dufresne and Roberta Sudbrack.

There's a long road ahead to the Young Chef finals in October, and ALMA - international educational and training centre for Italian Cuisine - has already been hard at work. The cooking school, in charge of the competition's regional semifinalists selection, divided the thousands of applications received into twenty geographic regions and selected the top semifinalists from each region according to five Golden Rules: ingredients, skills, genius, beauty, and message.

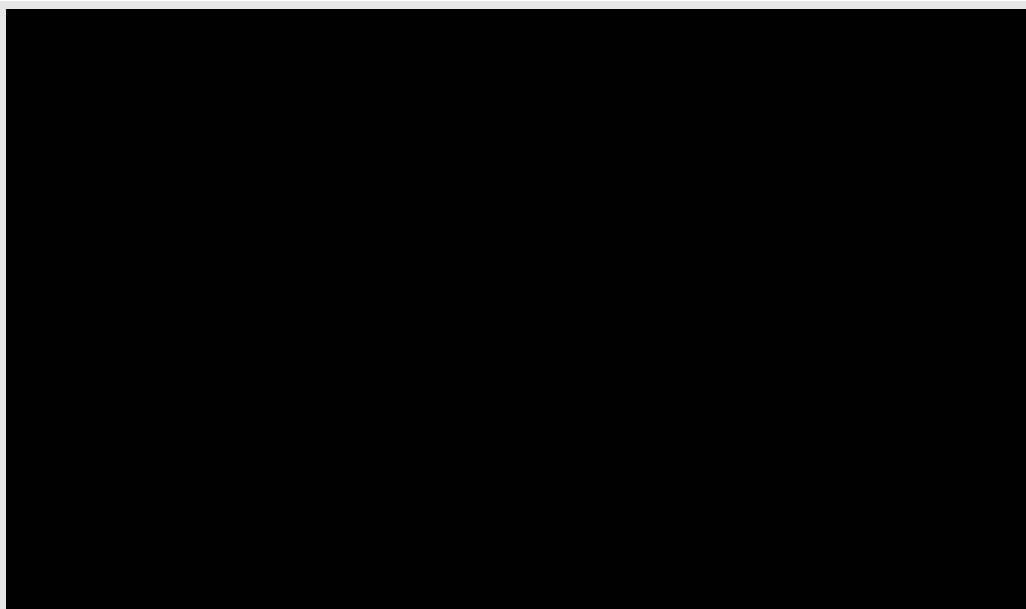
"The process was anything but easy," said Andrea Sinigaglia, general manager of ALMA. "Our chefs and experts worked hard in order to select a maximum of ten semifinalists for each region from so many interesting applications, so they had to make some tough decisions. The average skill level was quite high; it's exciting to realize how many talented young chefs there are around the world that have the potential and the passion to emerge - they're just looking for their big break."

The program was created by the world-famous sparkling water, S.Pellegrino to reaffirm its commitment to the promotion of emerging talents and to enhancing and diffusing fine dining culture throughout the world.

Africa-Middle East 10 selected semifinalists include:

1. Andrew McKinnon (South African): Sous Chef at DW Eleven-13 Restaurant, Johannesburg, with his "City of Gold" dish.

2. Jean-Claude Wagener (South African): Sous Chef at Something Good Roadhouse, Port Elizabeth, with his “Karoo Lamb” dish.
3. Dion Vengatass (South African): Sous Chef at the Belmond Mount Nelson Planet Restaurant, Cape Town, with his “Memories of shell fish curry” dish.
4. Dean Jones (South African): Chef at The Tasting Room @ Le Quartier Francais, Franschhoek, with his “Net Caught Fish & Chips” dish.
5. Phillip Nel (South Africa): Chef de Partie at Rust en Vrede, Stellenbosch, with his “The 3 little pigs went for Sunday lunch” dish.
6. Eka Mohamad: Chef at Bateaux Dubai, with his “Beetroot Salad with Goat Cheese Chantilly, Orange Dressing, and Chocolate” dish.
7. Gregoire Berger: Chef, Restaurant Ossiano Fine Dining - Atlantis The Palm, with his “Kerguelen island legine and cured goose, Ponzu Insert, potato shell stuffed with Agria Espuma, roasted and sour jus, artichoke and black truffle, Shimeji, Tarragon Powder” dish.
8. Michael O'Shea: Sous Chef at The Ivy, Dubai, with his “Texture of peas and ham” dish.
9. Kevin Hook: Chef de Partie, La Spiaggia, “Newborn palm heart cooked and raw, burnt prawns tartar in carrot "samoussas", tiger prawns cooked at low temperature with crumble of spicy dhol” dish.
10. Azman Harda: Chef de Partie, NINO (kharafi global), with his “Citrus tea smoked salmon, pickled onion, bacon white bean salad, asparagus textures, malwani masala vinaigrette” dish.





Phase III of the project will take place from May 1 to August 15, during which the semifinalists of each region will compete in local challenges. Each region will have a jury composed of top independent chefs, who will judge the semifinalists' signature dishes and choose the best one, based on the five Golden Rules. The individual winners from each geographic area will then move on to the international finals.

This year Chefs Chantel Dartnall, Meryem Cherkaoui and Christopher Lester have been named as the Middle East and Africa's jury members for the local selection of S.Pellegrino Young Chef 2016.

Come end of August, the twenty best local young chefs from each region of the world will be announced as the international official finalists. At this stage, they will also be assigned a "Mentor Chef", who will advise them on how to improve their signature dishes and help them prepare for the global finals. The twenty finalists will compete in the Grand Finale on 13 October in Milan, which will include two demanding days of cooking in front of the Seven Sages jury that will determine the winner of S.Pellegrino Young Chef 2016.

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